

CONSENT

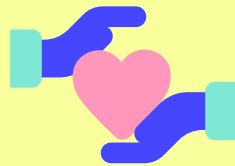
For more information about consent, including where you can get help and support, visit brook.org.uk/consent

Consent means agreeing to do something. When it comes to sex, this means agreeing to have sex or engage in sexual activity. Everyone needs to know about consent so they can keep themselves and other people safe.

Consent isn't just about penetrative sex: sexual activity can include kissing, sexual touching (like fingering or hand jobs), oral, anal and vaginal sex with a penis or sex toy.

Whatever way you choose to have sex, you always need consent from all people involved. Always, every time and throughout every encounter.

Consent is all about showing your partners the respect they deserve, which makes for great sex!



COMMUNICATING CONSENT

Giving and getting consent should be a continuous conversation about what you want, don't want, like and don't like.

It is important to practise ways of asking others for consent, listen to their response, and pause to check how they are feeling. It is also crucial to do the same for yourself!

No matter how bumpy or stilted conversations might be, practising consent every time you have sex is always the right approach.



CONSENT AND THE LAW

In the eyes of the law, consent is the agreement between people to engage in sexual activity.

All those involved must have:

FREEDOM

"I am doing this because I genuinely want to, not because I am being pressured, forced or blackmailed."

"I know that, whatever I decide, I can change my mind at any time and my decisions will be respected."

CONSENT

CHOICE

CAPACITY

"I understand fully what I am agreeing to. I am fully conscious and not too sleepy, drunk, high or confused to know what's going on."

Engaging in a sexual act without the consent of everyone involved is rape, sexual assault or sexual harassment. All are serious criminal offences.




DID YOU KNOW?

The age of consent in the UK is 16 and people under 13 can never consent to sexual activity. These laws exist to protect young people, not to prosecute them.

GETTING CONSENT

Consent can be communicated in many different ways. You should pay attention to your partner's actions, words and sounds every time you have sex.


Ask your partner if sexual activity is what they want and if it feels good.


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- "What would you like to happen next?"
 - "How are you doing?"
 - "Do you want to carry on?"
 - "Fancy going on top?"
 - "I'd like to try ____, what do you think?"
 - "You seem tired, do you want to stop?"

Listen to what they say.

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- ✓ "That feels good"
 - ✓ "I like that"
 - ✓ "Do that again"
 - ✓ "Touch me here"
 - ✗ "I'm not in the mood"
 - ✗ "Maybe later"
 - ✗ "Get off"
 - ✗ Silence

Read your partner's body language.

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- ✓ Looking at you
 - ✓ Smiling and nodding
 - ✓ Relaxed and happy
 - ✓ Kissing and touching you back
 - ✗ No eye-contact
 - ✗ Frozen or frightened expression
 - ✗ Flinching
 - ✗ Resistance or pushing you away



If someone is at risk of sexual assault or violence, you can call 999 any time of day or night if it is safe for you to do so.

GIVING CONSENT

Practising good consent involves checking in with yourself:

WHAT AM I THINKING?

Are you doing this because you have feelings for this person and want to be intimate with them, or are you being pressured or feeling worried about disappointing them?

HOW AM I FEELING?

Having sex should always be something that you want to do, not something that causes you anxiety or distress. If you feel nervous, is this linked to anticipation and excitement rather than fear or panic?

HOW IS MY BODY RESPONDING?

Do you feel turned on? Does it feel good? Remember: even if your body is responding in a certain way, like if your penis is erect or your vulva is wet, you still don't have to have sex if you don't want to.

If you need help, you should try to speak to an adult that you trust.

Brook and other sexual health services are able to offer you advice and support with sex, relationships and consent.



HELP & SUPPORT



DID YOU KNOW?

If someone forces you to do something sexual that you do not want to do, it is never your fault and it is not OK.