

# Understanding Consent

## Consent is not...

- ★ **Consent is not silence.** Just because you don't hear "NO" doesn't mean "YES." Pay attention to body language and simply ask if what you are attempting to do is okay.
- ★ **Consent is not automatic.** If you engaged in consensual sex on Monday, that doesn't mean sex is definitely happening on Thursday.
- ★ **Consent is not forever and can be changed at any time.** A person may decide to stop because it makes them uncomfortable, they are tired of doing it or are just not into it. Failure to listen and respect their choice is sexual assault.
- ★ **Consent does not mean more.** If a person consents to a kiss, this does not mean that you can feel them up. If a person lays in your bed naked, it doesn't mean they consent to sex. The best way to find out if someone wants to do something is to ask!
- ★ **Consent is not coerced.** You cannot beg someone to engage in sexual activity, or "get them in the mood." Take no for an answer and move on.
- ★ **Consent cannot be freely given by everyone.** You cannot engage in sexual behavior with someone who is drunk, incapacitated, psychologically impaired, a minor or asleep. They are not in a state to understand what is happening, therefore they cannot consent.

## Consent is...

- ★ **Consent is enthusiastic and voluntary.** It is expressed through words or actions that allow for clear, mutual understanding.
- ★ **Consent is the presence of a "YES,"** not "I guess" or "maybe."
- ★ **Consent is a process that is continuous and can change at any time.** Consent must be given before, during, and after engaging in sexual activity.
- ★ **Consent regards all parties to have equal power.**
- ★ **Consent is mandatory** and must be given at all times.
- ★ **Consent requires honesty.** It is imperative that you are honest about your STD status, birth control use, and if you are having sex with other people. Failure to disclose this relevant information with your partner leads them into consenting with a fictional person - not you
- ★ **Consent involves trust and communication.** Getting consent is a great way to show your partner that you respect them.
- ★ **Consent is a choice.** It is important that all parties involved feel as though they have a choice and not pressured. If no isn't accepted as an answer, consent cannot happen.
- ★ **Consent is EVERYTHING.** Make sure you are respecting boundaries at all times.