

What is Consent?

Consent for sexual intimacy can be really confusing, but it is critically important to understand. Here are some things to remember:

- ✓ Consent is an important part of any sexually active relationship
- ✓ Getting consent from your partner is not a chore, it is about being respectful of their needs and wants
- ✓ Affirmative consent is what you want – this means an active, sober YES, not the absence of a No.

Here are some of the ways you can know you DO NOT have consent from your partner:

- ✗ Your partner cannot consent to any form of sexual activity if they are intoxicated with drugs or alcohol;
- ✗ The absence of a No is not the same as giving consent. In fact, even if your partner does not verbally say No, but instead freezes, rolls away, tries to leave, or doesn't respond to you, these are all signs your partner is not giving you consent;
- ✗ If your partner is silent, passed out, or sleeping, then you do not have consent for sexual activity;
- ✗ Your partner must be cooperating in act and attitude, this means that they must be present in both body and mind, actively engaged, and expressing this verbally and soberly;
- ✗ If you spend a lot of time persuading or cajoling your partner to be intimate with you, and finally they "give in", this is not consent because it has been coerced;
- ✗ You cannot threaten your partner e.g. "if you don't have sex with me I will do X" or "if you don't do this then I will break up with you" – this is coercion and is illegal;
- ✗ You cannot hold your partner down to ensure they stay engaged in sexual activity with you;
- ✗ Consent for one act is not consent for all. If your partner says yes to oral sex, that is not the same as saying yes to intercourse or other forms of sexual intimacy;
- ✗ Whether you have been in a relationship for a day or 2 years you must get consent each and every time you want to engage in sexual activity with your partner;
- ✗ If you are married to your partner, the marriage does not give you blanket permission to engage in sexual intimacy with your partner. You must get consent each and every time;
- ✗ Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity.