



# Workshop: Sexual Expectations, Consent, and Power

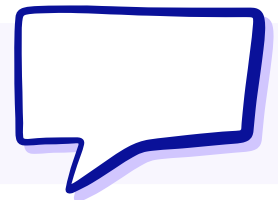
## I SAMPLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES



### LEARNERS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Describe and give examples of the expectations placed on men around sex.
- Define the different elements of consent.
- Identify when they feel pressure during romantic and sexual relationships.
- Communicate effectively with romantic partners about consent.

## II SAMPLE INTRODUCTION



“Often, consent is talked about as something for men to ‘obtain’ from women. However, this makes consent out to be a ‘transaction’ and ignores the question of whether men consent to something, entirely. So, today, I want to have a more balanced conversation that looks deeper into the foundation of consent, the expectations that exist around sex for men, and what power has to do with this all.”



## III SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- What education have you received about the topic of consent? What did you gain from it? What was challenging about it?
- What does consent mean to you?
- Have you ever felt pressured to “go along” with someone you didn’t want to do, romantically or intimately?
- What sexual experiences are boys and men expected to have? Where do we get these expectations from?
- Has anyone ever asked you for consent in a sexual situation?
- What do you agree and disagree with about how consent is discussed in school, media, or elsewhere?
- What are examples of how someone could talk someone into doing something they don’t want to do sexually or otherwise? Why do you think people do that?



## IV SAMPLE TALKING POINTS



- ▶ Consent is a topic that is often misunderstood. The purpose of discussing consent isn't to "limit" or "stifle" sexual connection. Consent is not just something to be "obtained."
- ▶ Consent is about communication and connection: How can what we say and what we do ensure that we and our partners feel safe, respected, cared for, and listened to?
- ▶ Consent is a tool. An acronym that can help us communicate effectively is [FRIES](#). This tool is not a scientific checklist. Rather it is a checklist for connection.
  - Freely-Given: There is no pressure, fear of judgment, or retaliation.
  - Reversible: We can change our minds. Kissing today doesn't mean it will feel OK tomorrow.
  - Informed: Making sure that we know what we are agreeing to.
  - Enthusiastic: Whether in friendships or sex, we should only do things we want to do, not what we're expected to do.
  - Specific: Agreeing to one thing (kissing) doesn't mean agreeing to another (sex).



## IV SAMPLE TALKING POINTS (CONT.)



- ▶ Coercion refers to “the practice of persuading someone to do something by use of force or threats” or by using hostile humor.
- ▶ For men, there are many social expectations that involve pressure and coercion, meaning that there are many ways our consent and trust are broken. If you aren’t strong enough, wealthy enough, romantically-successful enough, or your genitalia isn’t big enough, you are often belittled, shamed, and maligned.
- ▶ It is not consensual how men learn about sex. Whether from friends, songs, or pornography, there are unrealistic expectations that cannot be met.
- ▶ Men deserve to be asked for consent.
- ▶ Consent can look like: Asking how someone feels; Excitement and calmness in the body; Active listening.
- ▶ Coercion can look like: Showing disappointment if someone says ‘no’; Stress and tension in the body; Not asking about someone’s boundaries or preferences.



## V SAMPLE ACTIVITIES



### **SPECTRUM ACTIVITY: WHERE DO YOU LAND ON CONSENT?**

*Tell participants that you will provide a few scenarios. For each scenario, have them share (either with their hands, verbally, or moving around the room) if the scenario is consensual or not (1 being consensual; 10 being non-consensual). Then ask follow-up questions and discuss each scenario to parse out key factors and principles of consent.*

#### **Sample Scenarios (and others):**

- Sidney and Kai are dating. Sidney tells Kai that she likes it when he compliments her body. The next day, she overhears Kai telling his friends about her body in a way that feels uncomfortable. When she tells Kai this, he says, “I thought you liked when I complimented how you look?”

### **RESEARCH BRAINSTORM: MESSAGES ON SEX FOR BOYS & MEN**

*Instruct participants to take 20-30 minutes to brainstorm as many messages about sex that boys and men receive as possible. Prompt them to consider their own life experiences, family, friends, tv, songs, family, friends and social media.*

*Ask them to be as specific as possible and to use online research. Then, have participants share their findings. Take shared, visible notes. Finally, host a discussion about these messages and what lessons participants can take away.*

#### **Sample Discussion Questions:**

- What messages from this list have been most impactful in your life? Which are harmful? Which are healthy?
- What can we learn from these messages to help us be more connected and healthy?
- What can men do to prevent unrealistic or harmful expectations about sex (such as with friends, kids, and partners)?



## VI WORKSHOP RESOURCE LIBRARY



- **Toolkit:** Masculinity, Male Privilege & Consent Toolkit - me too.
- **Toolkit:** Consent Toolkit - Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective
- **Toolkit:** Male Athletics Playbook on Sexual Assault Prevention & Healthy Relationships - It's On Us
- **Toolkit:** Men4Change: Tackling and transforming harmful gendered norms and behaviours- University of Liverpool
- **Videos:** How Do You Know If Someone Wants to Have Sex with You? Using Consent Videos to Model Respect and Communication - National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- **Video:** Tea Consent
- **Video:** Why we need to change the way young men think about consent | Nathaniel Cole | TEDxLondonWomen
- **Video:** Men, Intimacy & The "Right to Sex" - Between The Scenes | The Daily Show
- **Article:** Your Gnarliest Questions About Consent, Answered - GQ
- **Research:** Educating Teenage Boys About Consent: The Law and Affirmative Consent in Boys' Socio-Sexual Cultures and Subjectivities