

# Teaching Consent for Teens

## Discussion Guide

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### A CONVERSATION WITH TEENS ABOUT THE WHAT, WHY, AND HOW OF CONSENT.

*At Saprea, we believe that empowering communities with knowledge is one of the best ways to prevent child sexual abuse. Thank you for your willingness to lead out in discussing this important topic. You are an essential part of everything that we do. Here are some best practices to consider before, during, and after the presentation.*

## Before

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- ◆ **Communicate clearly** when and where the presentation is taking place. Let participants know what topic will be discussed.
- ◆ **Prepare teaching materials:**
  - ◇ Download the presentation materials and review them thoroughly.
  - ◇ Read the discussion guide.
  - ◇ Print handout for in-person students or include the handout link in your virtual invite. Be prepared to share the link again during your virtual class.
- ◆ **Arrive early and set up:**
  - ◇ Ensure AV equipment is present, plugged in, and functioning properly, or that your video conferencing platform is set up, sound is working, and you can share your screen.
  - ◇ If in person, arrange seating to encourage discussion and have pens available for participants to take notes.
  - ◇ Start the presentation on the first slide in "presentation mode."
- ◆ **Arrange for support** to be offered to participants who may need to excuse themselves. When presenting to students, ensure the appropriate administrative staff with mental health training (ideally a school counselor) are on hand to assist teens who may need support when topics of assault are discussed or examples are reviewed.

## During

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- ◆ **Add energy to the room.** Be friendly, positive, and enthusiastic.

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- ◆ **Trust the material and your intuition.** Follow the organization and activities outlined in the research-based discussion guides while being yourself and considering the needs of the young people you are working with. Share personal experiences that enrich and illustrate critical principles.
- ◆ **Sit with the group, if possible.** Larger groups may require you to stand.
- ◆ **Encourage discussion:**
  - ◇ Create a safe environment where students can be honest and candid.
  - ◇ Thank participants for their comments.
  - ◇ Help as many people as possible participate.
  - ◇ Don't allow one person to dominate the conversation.
- ◆ **Manage time.** This discussion is designed to take between 60–70 minutes.
- ◆ **Emphasize the invitations to act.**
- ◆ **Post local and regional resources in a visible place.** Share abuse hotlines or community counseling centers that participants can contact for support. For students, communicate which administrative staff are able to best assist when they need to discuss a related issue with an adult.

### After

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- ◆ Make sure participants have a chance to take the exit survey.
- ◆ Review what went well and what can be improved for your next presentation.
- ◆ Follow up with any students who may have been overwhelmed by the gravity of the topic.
- ◆ Congratulate yourself for the efforts you've made to improve your community!

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### Part I: What Is Consent?

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

*By the end of this activity, participants will be able to define consent and identify its principles.*



#### Vocal Instructions



#### Facilitator Notes



**Activity and discussion:** Consent can help you stay safe and treat others with respect. Let's begin by better understanding consent and identifying some principles that are key to practicing consent. We'll start by watching a video of teens sharing their ideas.



**Watch:** Press *PLAY* to start the *Teens Talk* video.



**Reflect:** Teens like you are thinking about consent and applying it in many ways. Think about these questions as we review the definition of consent.

- ◆ Have you ever been in a situation where you were pressured to act in a way you weren't comfortable with?
- ◆ When was the last time you felt trapped?
- ◆ How important to you is it to be trusted and responsible?
- ◆ Can you think of a time where you felt empowered as part of a team?



**Explain:** Consent is an agreement between individuals that is enthusiastic, reciprocal, and continuous. It's helpful to see what this looks like.



**Review:** Review the different elements of the consent definition by taking a moment to pause and read each bullet below.



**Explain:**

- ◆ Reciprocal means we are mutually contributing in a balanced way. One-sided interactions or situations that mostly benefit only one person are not reciprocal.
- ◆ Enthusiastic means we are willing and choosing to participate without being forced or manipulated. Being forced or pushed to do something we are not comfortable with is the opposite of consenting.
- ◆ Continuous means we make a steady choice to continue to be involved. There are appropriate times when we want to stop or choose to stay where we are now, but continuous decisions mean we choose to keep going on the path we are on. When the people involved in an activity have the option to withdraw their agreement, this supports consent. Knowing where everybody stands and being aware of any change helps to confirm continuous agreement. Checking in with each other is a good way to be aware of other people's decisions and feelings.



**Facilitator Notes:** After reviewing the different principles of consent, distribute the "Understanding Consent: Guiding Principles for Young Adults" handout to all participants.



**Paired Reading/Discussion:** Have the participants complete the "What Is Consent?" component definitions, and then review the "Principles of Consent" section. Display the "Principles of Consent" slides if it's helpful.



**Take Action:** Write down your definition of consent on your worksheet using your own words. Share this and other information you learned about consent with a friend this week.

## Part 2: Why Is Consent Important?

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

*By the end of this activity, participants will be able to connect how consent helps protect them from potentially abusive situations. They will be able to describe examples of consent/non-consent and be more aware of communication styles and cues.*



**Explain:** Our last discussion focused on understanding consent, and now we want to show why consent is so important. Practicing consent can prevent you from hurting others or being hurt. It is easy to think, “something like that will never happen to me.”

- ◆ “In national surveys given to high school age teens, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 20 boys reported being sexually abused before they turned 18.”<sup>1</sup>



**Facilitator:** *When applicable, emphasize the number of individuals who are raising their hands and how this represents the wide occurrence of such situations. If teaching online, ask participants to raise their hand through their virtual platform as some may not have their camera on.*



**Engage:** Raise your hand if one of these situations has applied to someone you know personally:

- ◆ Raise your hand if you know someone who has felt pressure to do something that made them feel uncomfortable.
- ◆ Raise your hand if you know someone who was asked to share details or photos with another person that were intimate or sexual in nature.
- ◆ Now raise your hand if you have observed a friend being pressured to give physical affection (like kissing) or intimate touching by another person.

Even though the gravity of these specific situations might be different, they all have something in common: consent should have been used. Sexual assault is very prevalent. Odds are that you (or someone very close to you) will be directly affected by sexual assault. Keep this in mind as we watch this video.



**Watch:** Press *PLAY* to start the *You Have a Voice: Paige's Story* video.



**Paired Discussion:** (3–5 mins.)

- ◆ What's one thing from Paige's story that stood out to you or impacted you?
- ◆ Paige used both verbal and nonverbal communication. How can you be more aware and respectful of all forms of communication?
- ◆ What were things that helped Paige? Do you have ways to reach out for help when you are in trouble?



**Large Group Discussion:** (3–5 mins.)

- ◆ What is one idea you talked about that you could share with the group?



**Take Action:** Share Paige's video on social media with a way you are working on understanding and practicing consent. You can scan this QR code to get the link. If you are not on social media, consider texting it to a few friends who come to mind.

1. Finkelhor, D., Shattuck, A., Turner, H. A., & Hamby, S. L. (2014). The lifetime prevalence of child sexual abuse and sexual assault assessed in late adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 55*(3), 329-333.

## Part 3: How to Practice Consent

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

*By the end of this activity, participants will be able to apply principles of consent to common situations they are likely to encounter. They will be able to evaluate how well consent was practiced in common illustrations.*



**Explain:** We've discussed the definition and principles of consent, as well as why it's important to practice. Next, let's focus on how it applies to some common scenarios you could encounter.

Let's watch how one group of students partnered with us on a school media project to illustrate situations where consent can be practiced. They chose to mimic a popular television show in a playful way while still addressing how important consent is in everyday interactions.



**Watch:** Press *PLAY* to start "The Classroom" video.



**Small Group Discussion:** Ask participants to refer to the "Real Life Situations" activity on the back of the worksheet. Direct the participants to group together with individuals sitting near them and discuss the scenarios. Allow as much time as remains before concluding with the invitation to *Take Action*.



**Take Action:** During our time together today, we've focused on a variety of situations where consent should be practiced. Remember that practicing consent in small ways will prepare you for times when the stakes are higher. We hope you see how consent can help you stay safe and treat others with respect in all of your interactions.

Now that you understand more about consent and the principles that are involved, it's up to you to implement the positive ideas that you've identified and avoid mistakes that others have made.