

So what is consent?

Consent is a critical aspect of healthy sexual relationships and helps to ensure that all parties involved are comfortable and safe. Consent is a mutual agreement between all parties involved in sexual activity. It means that everyone has freely and enthusiastically agreed to engage in the activity. Below are some definitions and information to help you understand what consent is and what it is not. If you are



still unclear or have questions, please phone us at Gladstone Women's Health (contacts below) or speak to your counsellor if you are a client of our service:

- ✓ **Communication:** Communication is key in any sexual situation. It's important to have open and clear communication about what each person is comfortable with and what their boundaries are.
- ✓ **Respect:** Consent means respecting each other's bodies and boundaries, and only engaging in sexual activity when both partners are comfortable and willing.
- ✓ **Enthusiasm:** Enthusiastic consent means that both partners are excited and eager to engage in sexual activity.
- ✓ **Informed Consent:** Consent must be informed, meaning that all parties involved have the full information and understanding of the sexual activity they are agreeing to.
- ✓ **Can be Revoked:** Consent can be revoked at any time, and all sexual activity must stop immediately if someone changes their mind.
- ✗ **Coercion:** Coercion is any behavior that pressures or manipulates someone into engaging in sexual activity. Coercion is not consent. Consent cannot be obtained through coercion, manipulation, or force.
- ✗ **Not Based on Clothing:** The way someone is dressed or their previous sexual history does not give automatic consent for sexual activity.
- ✗ **Alcohol and Drugs:** Substance use can impair judgement and make it harder to give or receive clear and enthusiastic consent. Consent cannot be given if someone is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and cannot fully understand the consequences of their actions.

- ✓ **Age of Consent:** The age of consent varies by state/country, but it is generally illegal to engage in sexual activity with someone under a certain age.
- ✓ **Boundaries:** It's important to establish and respect personal boundaries, and to never engage in sexual activity without clear and enthusiastic consent from all parties involved.
- ✓ **Resources:** National hotlines and resources are available 24/7 to provide support and resources for those in need, including survivors of sexual assault and abuse.

Remember, consent is a critical part of any healthy sexual relationship. It's important to educate yourself about consent, to always seek clear and enthusiastic consent, and to respect your partner's boundaries and decisions.

Contact Us

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