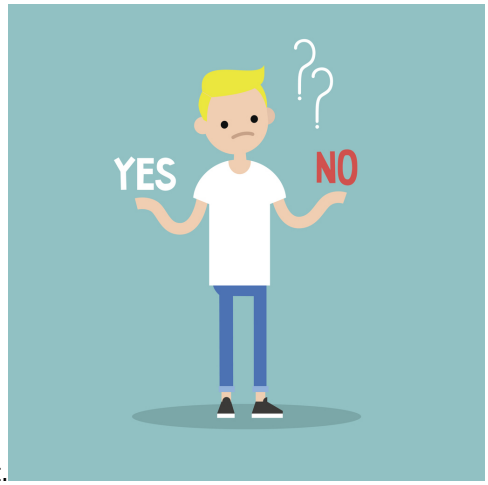
Key messages

- Consent is **deciding if you want to do something or not.**
- Consent education for **younger years** is non-sexual - it is about **bodily autonomy** and learning how to be **assertive** and **communicate feelings.**
- **Sexual consent** is both people **freely agreeing to each sexual activity.**
- **WA laws around consent** are listed.
- There are **helpful free services** for people who have **experienced sexual assault.**
- **Tips for teaching consent** are listed.

Consent



Consent is deciding if you want to do something or not.

Non-sexual consent

In the early years, consent education is about bodily autonomy and learning how to read and communicate feelings. This may be in the context of personal space, sharing possessions and physical touch (e.g. hugs). In middle primary to late primary, contexts can include online environments such as taking and sharing pictures/videos.

Exploring verbal and non-verbal body cues that show how someone might seek, give or deny permission helps students to understand how consent is communicated. It is also important to discuss what to do if someone continues to do something without consent.

Teaching tips

- Model consent in your daily practice by asking for permission before touching someone, borrowing items, taking pictures, etc.
- Draw attention to consent forms for excursions or photos and what the forms mean.
- Model ways of withdrawing consent e.g. You can borrow my pencil just for today. Now I need my pencil back please.

Sexual consent

Sexual consent is an agreement to engage in sexual activity.

Consent must be:

- **mutual**
- **freely given**
- **informed (i.e. they understand what they are agreeing to)**
- **ongoing (i.e. gained at each step of physical intimacy)**
- **certain and clear.**

Without consent, sexual activity is sexual assault.

Teaching sexual consent

Teaching sexual consent is more than just knowing the laws around consent. Young people need to know how to navigate conversations to check in with their partners at each stage of physical contact. They need to know what sexual consent looks like, sounds like and feels like.

The following diagram from *Talk soon. Talk often* outlines some of the basics of consent and offers some discussion starters to have with teens.

Asking questions like, "If someone says/does...have they consented? How can someone be sure?"



What does the law say?

- Sex is when a penis, finger, object or any part of a person is fully or partially inside another person's vagina or anus.
- Sex also includes any kind of oral sex.
- Consent means giving your free and voluntary agreement to sex.
- It is never ok for someone to assume you have given consent or to force you to keep going if you want to stop.
- In WA, the legal age for consent to sexual activity is 16 years or older.
- This means that you can have sex with another person aged 16 years or older so long as you both agree to it.
- It is a crime for a person who is caring for you, supervising you or has authority over you to have sex with you if you are under 18 (e.g. teacher, employer, coach, carer).
- A person cannot give consent (regardless of age) if:
    - they are drunk or drugged
    - they are unconscious or asleep
    - they have a mental or intellectual conditio that impacts their ability to understand what they are consenting to
    - they are tricked, forced, coerce or threatened.
- Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act or behaviour a person did not consent to or was not able to consent to. This can include:
    - unwanted sexual touching, kissing or hugging

    - making you watch a sexual act, such as porn
    - being forced to perform any sexual act.
- Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual behaviour that makes a person feel uncomfortable, offended, humiliated or intimidated.
    - This can happen at school at work, or in other places and can be in person or through social media.
    - This can include:
        - unwelcome sexual advances
        - requests for sexual favours
        - sexual jokes
        - staring, leering
        - wolf-whistling
        - physical contact (e.g. unwanted touching).

Where can young people go if they have been sexually assaulted?

There are many support services available to people who are affected by sexual assault.

In cases of recent sexual assault, go to the nearest hospital or doctor.

The Child Protection Unit at Perth's Children's Hosptial has a specialised service for children and families.

The Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC) has a 24-hour emergency helpline for people 13 years or older - 1800 199 8880.

External resources

Legal Aid WA

Teach Us Consent

Wanted and Unwanted Touching - SECCA

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