

NO MEANS NO!

or Practical Antisexism: the Concept of Consent.

Consent is defined as the act of willingly and verbally agreeing to engage in specific sexual conduct. The perception of the exact point at which a sexual interaction begins can be highly subjective, therefore: better to ask too much rather than not at all. Even a slight touch can be experienced as a boundary crossing, so it is better to ask even whether a hug or a kiss is ok for the other person.

Boundary crossing and sexual violence can be (re)traumatizing for survivors of sexual assault - therefore it is important to communicate with your partner(s) over every sexual act. By talking you learn how far your partner(s) want(s) to go and can potentially avoid crossing a boundary.

Consent means asking every time about each sexual act, for example whether it is ok for the other person when you kiss, touch, caress, etc them.

Just because you are involved with someone or regularly kiss does not mean that their body is at your disposal.

Other forms of communication such as gestures or safe words are possible, but they should be agreed upon in advance so that there are no misunderstandings. Body movements and non-verbal responses (such as moans) are not always signs of consent!

If at any point consent is withdrawn or not given for further activities, then that means NO. And be aware: SILENCE IS NOT CONSENT!

A person cannot give consent while sleeping!

Be aware of your boundaries and the boundaries of others, try always to be in a position where you can judge the situation and ask if you are not sure how well your partner(s) can judge the situation for themselves. Judgement can be impaired not only through drugs and alcohol but also physical and emotional conditions. A person who is heavily under the influence of alcohol or drugs may no longer be able to give consent.

If you know that you have a sexually transmittable infection, inform your partner(s) so that you can decide together how you want to go about things. Talk about how and whether you want to use protection.

Consent can and should be enriching - namely through the knowledge of what your partner(s) feel(s) in the moment when you kiss him/her/hir/them. Consent is a positive approach to sexuality and everything having to do with it - instead of making assumptions and waiting to hear a NO, you ask for consent at every tiny step and thereby slowly find out whether and how a person wants to get close to you.

Consent is for everybody - it doesn't matter whether you're male, female, homo, hetero, bi, trans, whichever gender expressions and whatever forms of sex - consent conveys a very practical and lustful way of dealing with our sexuality.

The concept of consent is about finding a respectful and dignified way of dealing with one another. It attempts to demonstrate possible courses of action and offers to be a guide for preventing sexual assaults. Of course there are other possibilities for dealing with one another in a trusting manner besides this concept of consent. The main principle should always be respectful dealings with others without crossing boundaries - whether you go your own way or let yourself be influenced by this conception of consent remains up to you.

Consent cannot take place under pressure, such as constantly asking for sex or threats.