



Guide to Consent

What's inside

Consent laws in Manitoba

Why is consent important?

What does consent look like?

Asking for consent

Affirmative consent

Resources

This package was created by the Healthy U program at the University of Manitoba. Healthy U is a UM student group made up of a team of friendly volunteers who are trained student health educators.

We provide students with validated health information through our health packages and outreach events, online resources, and one-on-one support. Health topics that we provide resources on include mental health, sexual health, physical health, substance use, social and cultural wellness, and finding a balance.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at:
healthyu@umanitoba.ca

Legal Consent in Manitoba

Age

The age of consent in Manitoba is **16**, however there are a few exceptions.

- 14 and 15 year-olds can consent to someone less than 5 years older than them. This means that a 14 year old can consent to someone 19 or younger, and a 15 year old can consent to someone 20 or younger.
- 12 and 13 year olds can consent to someone who is less than 2 years older than them. Anyone under 12 is never able to provide consent.
- Nobody under age 18 can consent to pornography or sex trade, regardless of the age difference. For example, it is illegal to have picture of someone under the age of 18 naked on your phone.

Power

Regardless of age difference, nobody under 18 can consent to someone in a **position of trust or authority** (examples include supervisors, coaches, etc.).

Saying no

No always means no, but so can other things. If the person hasn't said no but their body language is uncomfortable, passive, hesitant, struggling, or anything else that would suggest they aren't happy with what is happening, you do not have consent. Even if they have told you yes, you need to be aware of their body language. Using threats or your position of authority automatically means there is no consent.

Changing your Mind

Consent is step-by-step. At any point during an activity, if an individual changes their mind or becomes uncomfortable, there is no longer consent. And just because someone consents once does not mean they consent all the time, even in a relationship or marriage.

Why is Consent Important?

Sexual activity without consent is sexual violence.

Asking for and obtaining consent shows respect for yourself and your partner.

Communication, respect, and honesty are fundamental to better sex and healthy relationships. A positive approach to sex and healthy sexuality is empowering.

Neither your body or your sexuality belong to anyone else.

It is normal and healthy for people engaging in sexual activity to expect to take an active part in the consent process.

Working toward a culture of consent is an important part in laying down the groundwork for a more positive sexual culture all around.

Adapted from Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights

What does consent look like?



Consent is:

- Freely given
- Reversible
- Informed
- Enthusiastic
- Specific

Asking for Consent

When to ask for consent

Before you act! Whoever is initiating the sexual act needs to gain consent before they continue. Keep checking in, because consenting to one thing doesn't mean consenting to whatever may follow.

How to ask for consent

Here are some examples of what asking for consent can look like:

"Do you want to keep going?"

"Is this okay?"

"Are you still liking this?"

"Does this feel good?"

"How far do you want to go?"

Be mindful

Sometimes people have a hard time saying no, or they are worried about how their partner will react if they don't consent. Whatever the case, sometimes there are non-verbal signs that the other person isn't consenting anymore. For example:

Going suddenly quiet

"I'm dating someone"

Moving your hand away

"I want to go to sleep"

Freezing/shutting down

"Let's just cuddle"

Practice Asking for Consent

Asking for consent may feel awkward at first, but it's super important and can be done in a way that makes everyone feel more comfortable, not less. The more you practice, the easier it'll get!

Make a list of things you've either said or would say in the future to ask for consent. Remember that consent is needed for more than just sex - it's needed for kissing, touching, and even holding hands!

Questions I asked/could ask	How did the person respond and how did I feel?

Affirmative Consent



Understanding Affirmative Consent

✓ *Is*
Active

Consent should be enthusiastic! It can be verbal or non-verbal, but both parties should be looking for clear signs or words their partner wants them to proceed. When in doubt, ask!

✗ *Is not*
Passive

The absence of a no is not the presence of a yes. Silence does not equal consent.

✓ *Is*
Step by step

Check in with your partner as you go along. Ask before initiating anything new or different. Make sure you have active consent each time for everything you do!

✗ *Is not*
Blanket

Just because your partner is comfortable with one sexual act does not mean they'll be comfortable with everything else. Or if they've been comfortable with something before doesn't automatically mean you can do it

✓ *Is*
Knowing

Someone should be able to clearly understand the who, what, where, when, and why they are consenting to anything sexual with someone.

✗ *Is not*
Uninformed

Someone who is intoxicated to the point of incapacitation cannot fully understand the who, what, where, when, or why of consent.

✓ *Is*
Voluntary

Both partners should feel free to give and withdraw consent at any time.

✗ *Is not*
Coerced

When one partner applies an unreasonable amount of pressure, consent is not freely given.

UM Resources

Consent

Sexual Violence Resource Centre (SVRC)

Provides support, resources, information and referral services for any student, faculty or staff member who has been affected by sexual violence
537 UMSU University Centre
svrc@umanitoba.ca
204-474-6562
<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/sexual-violence-support-and-education>

Student Counselling Centre (SCC)

The SCC provides students with supports for their mental wellness. The offer offers individual counselling, workshops, and groups.
474 UMSU University Centre
204 474-8592
<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-health-and-wellness/student-counselling-centre-scc>

Health and Wellness

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.
469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)
204-295-9032
healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca
<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

Indigenous Student Centre (ISC)

The Indigenous Student Centre welcomes and supports Indigenous students and offers programming for students at any level of study, including Indigenous leadership development. They also provide opportunities for students, staff and the wider community to learn about First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture.
Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge
isc@umanitoba.ca
204-474-8850
<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/student-experience>

Healthy U

Healthy U provides students with health and wellness resources.
healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca
<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

Empower Me

Empower Me is a service that is available to UMSU and UMGSA members that have student insurance through the university. Empower Me, which has a range of specialists that can provide individualized support by phone, video conference, or by an in-person visit, depending on COVID-19.
https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_UniversityofManitoba_EmpowerMe_EmpowerMe

UM Resources

Consent Workshops

Bringing in the Bystander: Sexual Violence Resource Centre (SVRC)

Based on the concept that all community members have a role to play in preventing sexual violence. Student participants learn the importance of speaking out against social norms that support sexual violence, to become aware of and identify potential risks in various situations, to develop empathy and support for survivors, and explore how to safely interrupt or intervene in situations that can lead to sexual violence.

To register:

bitb@umanitoba.ca

Responding to Disclosures: Sexual Violence Resource Centre (SVRC)

Designed to give knowledge and skills to respond to disclosures in an effective, compassionate, supportive, and consistent way, this workshop walks participants through key elements and guidelines to responding to a disclosure of sexual violence and making appropriate referrals.

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

To register:

emily.livingston@umanitoba.ca

Consent Culture: Justice for Women

Join UMSU's Student Club, Justice for Women to learn about the importance of consent, intersectionality, and supporting survivors.

To register:

justiceforwomen.manitoba@gmail.com

Resources

Consent

Winnipeg and Manitoba

Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC)

167 Sherbrook Street

(204) 982-7800

<https://serc.mb.ca/sexual-health-info/the-basics/what-is-sex/consent/>

Online

RAINN

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/what-is-consent>

Planned Parenthood

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/relationships/sexual-consent>

Love is Respect

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/everyone-deserves-a-healthy-relationship/understand-consent/>

Teen Health Source

<https://teenhealthsource.com/sex/consent/>

Teen Health Source Affirmations Deck

http://teenhealthsource.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Affirmations_deck_fronts.pdf