



# Guide to Consent

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This package was created by Healthy U: Peer Health & Wellness at the University of Manitoba. We are a group of trained, non-judgmental, and confidential student health and wellness leaders on campus.

We provide outreach activities, workshops, and one-on-one support for our fellow students on a variety of health and well-being topics. Feel free to drop in to chat or pick up more information packages.

If you would like to request or attend one of our workshops or events, check out our website for details.

# 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.

# What does Consent Look Like?

## CONSENT



**F**reely Given

**R**eversible

**I**nformed

**E**nthusiastic

**S**pecific

 Planned Parenthood®

# Why is Consent Important?

Sexual activity that doesn't have consent isn't sex, it's sexual assault.

Asking for & 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.



# Asking for Consent

## when:

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?

"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?"

## what else to watch for:

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.