



**TEEN HEALTH**  
week<sup>SM</sup>

**GENDER &  
SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT**

## ***Teen Health Week: Gender and Sexual Development: Consent***

### **Learning Objectives:**

Students participating in this lesson will learn...

- ...characteristics of a healthy versus an unhealthy relationship
- ...the definition of consent.
- ...how to identify key behaviors or situations that can affect a person's ability to give consent.
- ...how to create a definition of consent for themselves.

**Lesson Duration: 30 minutes**

**Target Age Group: 13-18 years of age (Middle School/High School)**

### **Educational Standards:**

**Class Preparation:** You will need to print out the healthy/unhealthy relationship characteristic cards and the printable consent cards.

### **Key Terms:**

- **Age of Consent:** Age at which a person can legally give consent to sexual activity.
- **Consent:** A freely given agreement to the conduct at issue by a competent person.
- **Sexual Assault:** Sexual relations where one person does not consent or is unable to consent.
- **Sexual Consent:** An agreement between participants to engage in any sexual activity.

### **Lesson Overview:**

#### **Part One: Opening Activity: Defining Healthy Relationships (5-10 minutes)**

- Read through or print out the attached list of relationship characteristics
- Have your student(s) to look over the characteristics and evaluate which ones describe a healthy versus an unhealthy relationship
- Go over the results together, using them as a means of talking about what identifies a healthy relationship.
- Among the key elements of a healthy relationship is **consent**, which will be the topic of the rest of the lesson.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP**

**OPEN  
COMMUNICATION**

**MUTUAL  
RESPECT**

**COMPROMISE**

**HONESTY**

**RESPECTING  
BOUNDARIES**

**"NO" MEANS "NO"**

**EMPATHY &  
UNDERSTANDING**

**SELF-CONFIDENCE  
& AFFIRMATION**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP**



**CONTROL**



**CONSTANT  
CRITICISM**



**DEMANDING  
CONSTANT  
CHECK-INS**



**MAKING THREATS**



**NAME-CALLING**



**INTIMIDATION  
& COERCION**



**DISRESPECT**



**HOSTILITY**

Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship	Characteristics of an Unhealthy Relationship
Open Communication	Control
Mutual Respect	Constant Criticism
Compromise	Demanding Constant Check-ins
Honesty	Making Threats
Respecting Boundaries	Name-calling
“No” means “No”	Intimidation and Coercion
Empathy and Understanding	Disrespect
Self-confidence and affirmation	Hostility

Sources: <https://umatter.princeton.edu/respect/tools/signs>; <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/teen-dating-violence/characteristics>

## Part Two: What is Consent?

### -Definition of consent

-According to Cornell Law, The term “consent” means a freely given agreement to the conduct at issue by a competent person.

(<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/920>)

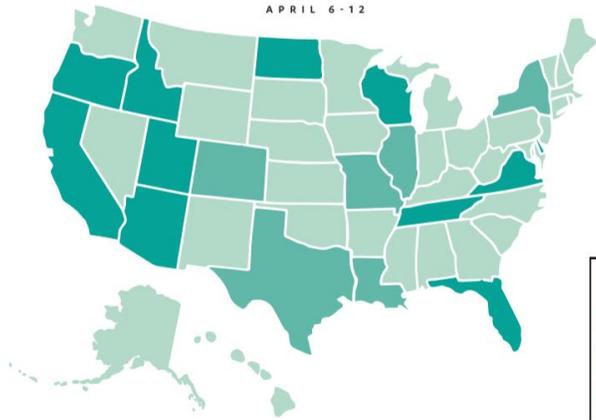
-**Sexual Consent** is an agreement between participants to engage in any sexual activity.

-**The age of consent** is the age at which a person is considered to be legally competent to willingly engage in consensual sexual activity.

(<https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/statutory-rape-guide-state-laws-and-reporting-requirements-summary-current-state-laws/sexual-intercourse-minors>)

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**TEEN HEALTH**  
week™  
APRIL 6-12



State	Age of Consent
Alabama	16
Alaska	16
Arizona	18
Arkansas	16
California	18
Colorado	17
Connecticut	16
Delaware	18
District of Columbia	16
Florida	18
Georgia	16
Hawaii	16
Idaho	18
Illinois	17
Indiana	16
Iowa	16
Kansas	16
Kentucky	16
Louisiana	17
Maine	16
Maryland	16
Massachusetts	16
Michigan	16

State	Age of Consent
Minnesota	16
Mississippi	16
Missouri	17
Montana	16
Nebraska	16
Nevada	16
New Hampshire	16
New Jersey	16
New Mexico	16
New York	17
North Carolina	16
North Dakota	18
Ohio	16
Oklahoma	16
Oregon	18
Pennsylvania	16
Rhode Island	16
South Carolina	16
South Dakota	16
Tennessee	18
Texas	17
Utah	18
Vermont	16
Virginia	18
Washington	16
West Virginia	16
Wisconsin	18
Wyoming	16

(As of 2020, Source: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/statutory-rape-guide-state-laws-and-reporting-requirements-summary-current-state-laws/sexual-intercourse-minors> )

\*Consent laws vary depending on the state. Each state jurisdiction has their own individual set of laws in reference to consent. Some of the main ways states analyze sexual consent are by:

-**Affirmative consent** (words or actions indicating consent)

-**Freely given consent** (forms of threats, violence, and persuasion being used to force a person to consent)

-**The Capacity to Consent** (are they competent, physically or mentally disabled, or in a state of distress)

(Source: <https://www.rainn.org/articles/legal-role-consent>)

## Part Three: Characteristics of Consent

### -Capacity to Consent

-According to Cornell Law the following do not constitute consent:

- Lack of verbal or physical resistance
- Submission resulting from the use of force, threat of force, or placing another person in fear
- A current or previous dating or social or sexual relationship
- the manner of dress of the person involved with the accused
- A sleeping, unconscious, or incompetent person

(Source: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/920> )

-What to be aware of (<https://www.rainn.org/articles/legal-role-consent> )

Consent requires mutual respect and healthy communication. It involves setting and respecting people's boundaries, only engaging in behavior both people want to do and respecting one's wishes if they don't want to do something. It is an essential element of any physical relationship. However, consent extends beyond sex to all aspects of interactions between people.

Sexual behavior must be mutually agreed upon by people capable of giving consent. **Sexual assault** occurs in a sexual encounter where one person is not giving consent, or is incapable of giving consent (examples: a person is below the age of consent, is sleeping or otherwise unconscious, or is under the influence of alcohol or drugs).

Planned Parenthood identifies five key characteristics of consent, described by the acronym FRIES. Consent is...

- **FREELY GIVEN**
  - Consent is not given through coercion, and a person who is unconscious or under the influence of drugs or alcohol cannot consent.
- **REVERSIBLE:**
  - A person can change their mind about having sex at any time. Just because a person has engaged in sexual activity before does not mean they have to do it again unless they want to.
- **INFORMED:**
  - Everyone involved is fully aware of what they are willing to do and partners agree to what activities they'll take part.
- **ENTHUSIASTIC:**
  - A person consents because they want to do it, not because they feel pressured or obligated to do it.
- **SPECIFIC:**
  - Consent establishes specific boundaries of what each person is and is not willing to do.
- <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sex-and-relationships/sexual-consent>

#### **Part Four: How to engage in a consenting relationship**

Consenting relationships are built on healthy and active communication. Each partner should be free to express their boundaries and the other partner needs to respect those boundaries.

Consenting relationships involve respecting partners' needs and feelings, and the power balance should be equal.

Do not pressure your partner into doing something they are unwilling to do.

Consent can be given verbally and nonverbally. However, even if a person expresses nonverbal consent or you are unsure if your partner consents, you should ask your partner for permission, and respect their wishes regardless of the answer.

For example, before engaging in an activity, ask your partner "Can I..." or "Do you want me to..."

Source: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sex-and-relationships/sexual-consent/how-do-i-talk-about-consent>

#### **Part Five: Personally Defining Consent**

- Have your student(s) fill out a Consent card, printing the cards attached in this lesson plan or writing them out themselves. As they define consent, have them consider the following questions:
  - What boundaries do I want to set in my relationships?
  - When I consent, how will I share that with my partner?
  - When I do not consent, how will I share that with my partner?
- Your student(s) do not need to share their results, as they will be personal to them

#### **Part Six: Debrief**

*To assess whether students completed the learning objectives, have students answer (individually or as a class) the following review questions:*

- What is the legal definition of consent?
- What is the age of consent in your state?
- Name three characteristics of a healthy relationship.
- Name three characteristics of an unhealthy relationship.
- Name one way you can identify whether your partner gives consent.
- What's an example of a situation where a person cannot give consent?

**CONSENT IS...**

<p><b>CONSENT IS...</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> 	<p><b>CONSENT IS...</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> 
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