

PARENT & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

How to Champion Young People in a Digital World

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WHAT'S GOOD

- I can see my friends or family wherever I want.
- I feel ok about saying 'no' to things I don't want to do.
- My partner likes introducing me to his/her friends.
- They like me for who I am.
- They listen to me and care about my opinions.
- We spend our space time together.
- When we go out, we decide together what we're doing.
- When we're together, I feel like I can be myself.
- When we're together, we laugh and have fun.
- With sex and affection, I can say what I like and don't like.

WHAT'S BAD

- I feel overwhelmed by what they want.
- I feel stuck in this relationship.
- I hate it when my partner talks to other guys/girls.
- I wish my partner was different.
- I wish we didn't see so much of each other.
- I worry that my partner is cheating on me.
- They get jealous of who I hang out with.
- They ignore me when their mates are around.
- We have the same fights over and over again.
- When we're hanging out, I wish I was somewhere else.

WHAT'S UGLY

- I have to watch what I do or say around them.
- I worried about what my partner might do if I tried to leave them.
- My partner makes me feel scared of them.
- My partner pressures or guilt-trips me into sex.
- They snoop and read my text or messages.

New Definition of Sexual Consent in Australia

"A free, voluntary and informed agreement between people to participate in a sexual act. This agreement is only present when these people mutually and genuinely want to engage in that sexual act, and actively ensure their partner does too".

“Consent is a very impoverished vocabulary for discussing and thinking about sexual ethics. It may be appropriate to focus on consent in the criminal law, where the basic project is to describe conduct so fundamentally inappropriate that it can rightly be called criminal. However, the project of ethics should be wider and deeper than talking about “consent”. Consent is too minimal a standard for it to be all that is necessary for ethical engagement in sex.”

“Sexual ethics should extend to talking about what we might want or need to negotiate sex that is actively desired, exciting, pleasurable and satisfying. What skills might be necessary? What circumstances might be required? What should happen if anyone involved is unsure, changes his or her mind about something, and wants to slow down or stop?”

Core Principles For Consent

1

**Consent must
be free**

No pressure,
threats, manipulation,
or guilt-tripping.

A "yes" given
under pressure isn't
real consent.

2

**Consent must be
voluntary**

Each person chooses
freely — without
coercion, fear, or being
under the influence.

Being drunk, high, or
otherwise unable to think
clearly means consent
cannot be given.

3

**Consent must be
informed**

Both people
know what they are
agreeing to.

No lying, hiding, or
misleading someone
(e.g. about contraception,
intentions, or STI status).

4

**Consent is
mutual**

It's not one person
"getting permission"
*it's two people
agreeing together.*

A healthy interaction
is built on care for
each other's comfort
and boundaries.

Core Principles For Consent

5

**Consent must
be genuine**

The other person
should *want to*, not just
“go along with it.”

Silence, hesitation, or
uncertainty = not consent.

6

**Consent is active,
not passive**

Both people actively check
in and make sure the other
is comfortable.

Look for enthusiastic
participation, not just the
absence of “no.”

7

**Consent is
ongoing**

Saying “yes” once doesn’t
mean “yes” to everything, or
“yes” forever.

Consent can be
withdrawn at any time, even
in the middle of an act.

**What skills might we
need when giving and
receiving consent?**

Skills for Giving Consent

Self-awareness

Knowing your own boundaries, comfort levels, values, and when you feel ready or not.

Assertiveness

Being able to say yes, no, I'm not sure, or I've changed my mind clearly and confidently.

Confidence in boundaries

Not feeling pressured into agreeing, and being okay with changing your mind at any time.

Body awareness

Noticing how your body reacts (tension, discomfort, ease, excitement) as cues to guide your choices.

Responsibility for your "yes"

Understanding that consent should be freely given, not out of guilt, pressure, or fear.

Skills for Receiving Consent

Active listening

Tuning in to both words and non-verbal cues (tone, body language, hesitation).

Attentiveness

Showing genuine concern for the other person's wellbeing and comfort.

Respect for boundaries

Accepting "no", "not now", "not like that", or mixed signals without pushing back.

Patience

Being willing to slow down, pause, or stop if someone isn't sure or needs more time.

Humility

Understanding that you don't have a "right" to someone else's consent.

Responsiveness

Adjusting behaviour immediately if the other person indicates discomfort.

Skills for Both Giving & Receiving Consent

Clear Communication

Using respectful, straightforward language to ask and respond.

Empathy

Considering how the other person might be feeling, not just your own wants.

Adaptability

Adjusting behaviour when someone's response changes or boundaries shift.

Trust-building

Fostering an environment where both people feel safe and respected to express their true yes or no.

Checking In

Asking questions like "Are you okay with this?" or "Do you want to stop/change?"

Emotional Regulation

Being able to handle disappointment, rejection, or change calmly without guilt-tripping, sulking, or anger.

Clarity about Context

Recognising that consent in one situation (a hug, holding hands, intimacy) doesn't automatically apply to another.

How could I talk about sex, relationships and consent with young people?

1

Ask them their opinion.

Young people like having their thoughts respected. They also like knowing something and having something to share with you that you may not know.

2

Convey sex and desire as normal.

Share in the context of your own values. Curiosity about our bodies, sex, and developing desires is natural.

3

Let them know they can come to you with questions.

And if you don't know that you will look into it and get back to them.

4

Remember your own challenges.

Puberty and relationships wasn't easy. Think about what may have helped you (recognising the culture has changed!).

How could I talk about sex, relationships and consent with young people?

5

Talk soon and have ongoing conversations.

Rather than having a one off big "Sex Talk".

6

Use teachable moments and media to make it relevant.

When your asked a question or if they hears something in the media, use it as a prompt to talk. Ask them what their views are on what they see online or in shows, or watch something together and follow up with a question.

7

Ask questions back to see what they already know.

If they asks you a question, ask them: what they know about the subject already?
What they think?
What made them think of this question?

8

Make it general or about people they know...

What have people at school said about _____ ? What do you think about _____ that happened?

How could I talk about sex, relationships and consent with young people?

9

Get to know the people in their life.

Talk about these people openly and ask questions so that your child can feel comfortable doing the same. Have these people round, make home a place where they can hang out and then head out together.

10

Share your own experience or story.

This makes it real and humanising or tell a story with permission about someone else's experience.

11

Talk about care and being a good friend or partner.

Not just about rules or behaviour. This tells your teen that you trust them to make good choices and to look out for others.

12

What might they do if?

Asking them what they could do in a scenario. This then gives you the chance to affirm their problem solving skills and perhaps make a suggestion they may now be open to.

Most Importantly

**Reassure them they
can always contact you,
or knock on your door
anytime, even at 3am
no matter how bad they
think it is!**

Top Tips

TOP TIPS

Champion Them

Make it clear you want them to thrive!

The Culture

What do we celebrate? What stories do we tell? Who are our heroes?

Role Models

Choose your heroes wisely. Choose your friends wisely.

Raising Good Humans

Talk to them about how a good person acts and makes others feel.

Engage Their Hearts

Have empathy for the challenges they are facing. This won't create a victim mindset. It can be a catalyst for them to see the challenges other people are facing and have empathy for others too.

TOP TIPS

Engage Their Minds

Help them to ask questions about the the culture around them. Why are they selling you these products and ideas? Who is benefitting?

Grounded Confidence

In who they are and who they are becoming.

Challenge Culture

Help them be upstanders and set an example for others.

Soft Skills

You need them. It will help you succeed in life, business, sport, team work, friendships and relationships.

Rites of Passage

Boys need to be initiated into manhood. Otherwise boys will seek the approval of other uninitiated boys to prove they are "real" men.

How would we know if our schools
and communities were respectful?

***What would
we see?***

***What
wouldn't
we see?***

What will you champion?
What will you challenge?

1800RESPECT – 1800 737 732, text 0458 737 732, www.1800respect.org.au

National sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service. This service is free and confidential. Available 24/7.

13YARN – 13 92 76

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support line. This service is free and confidential. Available 24/7.

Australian Sexual Assault Services Directory – www.nasasv.org.au/support-directory

A directory of the multiple specialist sexual assault services and rape crisis centres in each state and territory available across Australia.

Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636, www.beyondblue.org.au

National crisis support line for anxiety and depression. This service is free and confidential. Available 24/7.

Blue Knot Foundation (Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service) – 1300 657 380

Supporting adult survivors of childhood trauma and adult survivors of institutional child sexual abuse around the National Redress Scheme. This service operates from 9am to 5pm AEST/AEDT, 7 days a week.

SAMSN (Survivors & Mates Support Network) – 1800 472 676

A free service that supports male survivors of child sexual abuse.

Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

Free counselling for suicide prevention and mental health via telephone, online and video for anyone affected by suicidal thoughts. Available 24/7.

Blue Knot Foundation (National Counselling and Referral Service – Disability) – 1800 421 468

Supporting those living with a disability who have experienced or witnessed someone being hurt, treated badly or taken advantage of.

Bravehearts – 1800 272 831, www.bravehearts.org.au

Support line for children and young people who have been impacted by child sexual abuse, and their non-offending family members.

Full Stop Australia – 1800 943 539, www.fullstop.org.au

National trauma counselling and recovery service for people of all ages and genders experiencing sexual, domestic and family violence. This service is free and confidential. Available 24/7.

Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800, www.kidshelpline.com.au

National crisis support tailored for children and young people (aged 5 to 25). This service is free and confidential. Available 24/7.

Lifeline – 13 11 14, www.lifeline.org.au

Telephone crisis support service in Australia. This service is free and confidential. Available 24/7.

MensLine Australia – 1300 78 99 78

Online counselling support for men with concerns about mental health, anger management and family violence. Available 24/7.

Men's Referral Service – 1300 766 491, www.ntv.org.au

National counselling, information and referral service for men across Australia who use family violence.