

DEFINITION OF CONSENT

Consent is informed, freely and actively given, and mutually understood. If physical force, coercion, intimidation, and/or threats are used, there is no consent. If the victim/survivor is mentally or physically incapacitated or impaired so that the victim/survivor can not understand the fact, nature or extent of the sexual situation, and the condition was or would be known to a reasonable person, there is no consent. This includes conditions due to alcohol or drug consumption, or being asleep or unconscious.

University of Minnesota Policy 2.6.3

ALCOHOL AND CONSENT

Alcohol complicates sexual activity. Expectations, assumptions, as well as interpretations can be altered greatly.

By law, a person who is incapacitated is unable to give consent, according to both the University of Minnesota's Policy and MN State Law.

Alcohol impairs decision-making. You may decide against using a condom or choose to not listen or talk to your partner, which is a risky situation for both of you. Alcohol increases the risks for both men and women. For men, alcohol consumption increases the risk of perpetrating sexual assault and for women, heavy and frequent drinking increases the risk of being a victim of sexual assault. Regardless of who was drinking or how much, the responsibility for any sexual assault falls on the shoulders of

the person who chooses to assault. It is never the victim's fault.

The best way to engage in sexual activity is to wait until you and your partner are sober. This ensures that you will both be able to understand your actions and you will greatly reduce the risk to harm your partner.

CLEARING UP THE CONFUSION

There are many myths and misconceptions about consent. Take time to learn the truth and you will better understand the difference between sex and sexual assault.

MYTH: Men Only Want Sex and Will Do Anything to Get It – This myth is unfair to men because it depicts them as one dimensional. The pressure to fulfill this expectation leads to men putting pressure on women to have sex. The truth is men are emotional beings, with a variety of needs and wants. This myth, perpetuated by our culture and media, encourages bad behavior and undermines emotional health.

MYTH: Being in a Relationship Means Guaranteed Sex – Partners in relationships need to think about consent, too. Having a significant other does not mean rights to his/her body. Sex should be openly discussed; this provides a more meaningful, pleasurable, and safe experience.

MYTH: Women Who Drink Lose Their Right to Say "NO" – Just because someone opens a beer does not mean they lose their rights. Women and men should be on equal ground and able to consume alcohol responsibly in

each other's company. It is wrong to assume that a woman is promiscuous because she drinks.

WHAT CONSENT IS NOT

- Consenting to one act (kissing, hugging, touching) DOES NOT mean there is consent for anything more
- Believing your partner "owes" sex
- The absence of "NO" does not mean "YES." Silence does not mean "yes."
- If your partner does not listen to you or places you in uncomfortable decision making situations
- "Working out a 'yes'"

SO...WHAT IS CONSENT?

- Consent is the basis of healthy sexuality and relationships
- Consent is a mutual understanding
- Consent eliminates the entitlement that one partner feels over the other. Neither your body nor your sexuality belongs to someone else.
- Know your own limitations: communicating them should be where both partners feel free and safe to express their limitations
- A person can choose to no longer consent or change his/her mind at any time during the activity.
- Talking about sex is healthy and should be a fun activity. It's okay to feel scared or embarrassed to talk about it at first; chances are your partner feels the same way.

**IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED UNWANTED
SEXUAL CONTACT:**

If you are feeling confused, sad or angry or having difficulty with coursework or relationships, or any other feelings dealing with this experience, advocates at The Aurora Center are here to listen and help you. It's not your fault. You do not have to go through this alone.

Advocates are able to work with you to arrange safe on-campus housing, work with your professors if you are having challenges in school, and give you information regarding your rights to pursue criminal charges or university action against your perpetrator if s/he is a University of Minnesota Student. Advocates also have information on resources offered by the University of Minnesota for its students and employees, including support groups and on-campus counseling.

***The Aurora Center for
Advocacy & Education***

24 Hour Crisis Line: 612-626-9111
Business Line: 612-626-2929
TTY Line: 612-626-4279
407 Boynton Health Services
www.umn.edu/aurora

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SEX

Illegal Sex (Sexual Assault):

"I have access to your body even if you say 'no.' If you don't say 'no,' I'll take it as a 'yes' and if you say 'no,' I'll work out a 'yes.'"

Unhealthy View of Sex:

"I have access to your body until you say 'no' or push me off."

Healthy Sex:

"I do not have access to your body until you have shown or verbally indicated consent to me."

WAYS TO START TALKING ABOUT CONSENT

Ask, "Is it okay that I kiss you?" Wait for a response. It's okay to verify that it is something your partner really wants to do.

Say, "I really like you and want this to last, so let's take it slow....tell me what you like and don't like."

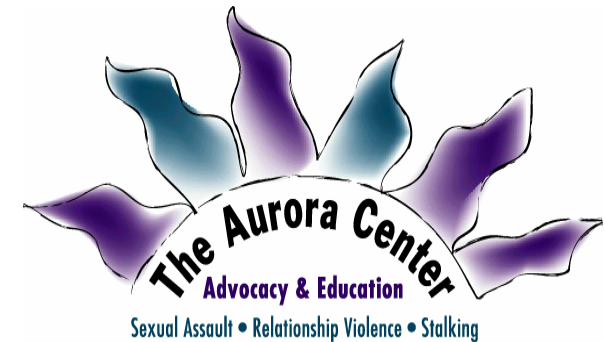
Say, "Let me know if you want to *do it* by you opening the condom/dental dam package if you're cool with the idea."

Ask, "Can you touch me over here?"

Say, "I want to kiss you and kiss you and kiss you. But let's leave it there."

Consent:

The Difference Between Sex and Sexual Assault



**From Hooking up to Relationships,
the Information You Need to Know**