



Overview

Summary

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are harmed by sexual assault more often than others. They are usually harmed by someone they know. This can include family members, other people with IDD, and support staff. Consent is a big part of staying safe.

Consent means saying yes or no to physical touch. You get to decide what happens to your body. You can change your mind at any time. It is important in all relationships. But consent can sometimes be confusing.

- Getting and giving consent makes sense with people you don't know well. But the better we know someone, the more confusing it can be.
- Some people believe you can't take back consent. The truth is that consent can be taken back or changed at any time.
- People with IDD are taught to say yes. This happens a lot with teachers and caregivers. But we are all allowed to say what happens to our bodies. We do not have to agree just because someone is powerful.
- People with IDD communicate in different ways. Some people may not use words. They can still give or withhold consent.

To stay safe, we must learn about getting and giving consent. People with IDD must have power over their bodies. People must be able to give or withhold consent. They must be able to say “yes” or “no” in the way they prefer.

You can use this toolkit in many ways.

- You learn on your own.
- You can learn with your family or others who support you.
- You can learn with other self-advocates.



Consent Toolkit

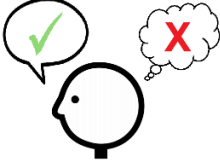
Vocabulary

This is a list of words we use in the toolkit. Read it before you start working the activities. If you don't understand one or more of the words, ask someone you trust for help. If you're working in a group, talk about each word together.

Word	Picture	Definition
Consent		Saying yes or no to physical touch. You get to decide what happens to your body. You can change your mind at any time.
Respect		Asking if a person is OK with a kind of touch. Listening to and accepting what they say.
Comfortable		Feeling safe and OK with something.
Boundary		The line between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. When a person's behavior does not match the relationship, that person has crossed a boundary.



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Word	Picture	Definition
Learned Compliance	 An icon of a human head profile. A speech bubble with a green checkmark is positioned above the mouth. A thought bubble with a red 'X' is positioned above the forehead.	When a person is taught to say yes. They are taught not to be difficult. Over time, they may start saying yes to things they don't really want to do.

Symbols used/adapted from: arasaac.org and www.sclera.be



Staying Safe & Healthy

Many people with IDD have been harmed by sexual assault. Some don't want others to know. Some do. Some don't realize it happened to them until they start talking about it. Some survivors get upset when they hear and talk about sexuality. They relive the bad things that happened to them. This can be painful. It can happen suddenly.

It's important to talk about sexuality. It's also important to keep everyone safe and healthy. Use these rules when you work on this toolkit.

Plan Ahead

- Read these rules. Share them with people you work with on this toolkit.
- Have a safe space ready. That could be a Zoom breakout room. It could be a place away from where you are talking. Tell people where it is. Tell them they can use it whenever they need. They do not need to ask permission.

Watch for Triggers

- A trigger is something that makes a person remember past harm. You can sometimes see when this happens.
- Watch faces and bodies. You may see signs of anger, fear, or sadness.
- A person may fidget. They may get up and try to leave. They may rock or hug their arms to themselves.
- Sometimes, you can't tell at all from the outside.

Give Support

- You might see someone struggling. Ask if they need a break.
- Someone might share something personal. It might be upsetting. Don't judge. Instead, use words of support:

“I believe you.”

“You are brave to share this.”



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“It is not your fault.”

“I care about you.”

“I’m sorry this happened to you.”

“I am here to help.”

Follow Up

- Check in after you work on the toolkit. Check in more than once.
- Share good resources like:
 - National Sexual Assault Hotline:
800.656.HOPE (4673)
[RAINN Online Hotline-English](https://hotline.rainn.org) (https://hotline.rainn.org)
[RAINN Online Hotline-Spanish](https://hotline.rainn.org/es) (https://hotline.rainn.org/es)
 - Your local rape crisis center. [Find a list at RAINN](https://centers.rainn.org) (https://centers.rainn.org).
 - Some self-care activities [Find some at RAINN](https://rainn.org/articles/self-care-after-trauma) (https://rainn.org/articles/self-care-after-trauma)



Schedule

There are three blocks in the Consent Toolkit. You don't have to do them all at once. You can do them in three 30-minute blocks.

Block 1: Getting and Giving Consent

1. Think Ahead, 5 min.
2. Watch the Video, 5 min.
3. Use the Role-Play, 20 min.

Block 2: Consent Confusion

1. Think Ahead, 5 min.
2. Watch the Video, 5 min.
3. Use the Role-Play, 20 min.

Block 3: Consent with Caregivers

1. Think Ahead, 5 min.
2. Watch the Video, 5 min.
3. Talk About It, 20 min.



What Is Consent?

Think Ahead

Consent means being in charge of what happens with your body. It is important in romantic relationships. It's also important with friends, family members, and others. People must be in charge of what happens with their own bodies. This keeps them safe and healthy.

Consent helps people know what to expect from each other. They learn about each other's boundaries. They grow comfortable with each other. This helps prevent mistakes. It prevents harm to people's feelings and bodies.

Learning about consent is important. So is practicing it. This includes:

- Saying how you want to be touched by friends and family. You might say yes to a high-five. You might say no to a hug.
- Saying how you want to be touched by a romantic partner. You might say yes to hand-holding or kissing. You might say no to having sex.
- Before you watch the video, read the vocabulary list. Talk about any confusing words.

Watch the Video

- Watch [Getting and Giving Consent](https://youtu.be/kiUTyM014fw?si=l8_HPKH--_0A9oit) on YouTube.
(https://youtu.be/kiUTyM014fw?si=l8_HPKH--_0A9oit)
- Remember to follow the rules for staying safe and healthy.



Use the Role-Play

Role-Play 1: Non-Romantic Consent

Read the role play out loud. Do the role-play with different volunteers. Then answer the questions.

Coach: We won the game! I'm so excited! Can I give you a big hug?

Player: I'm happy we won too. But I don't really want a hug.

Coach: That's okay. How about a high-five instead?

Player: Yes, I like high-fives.

Coach: *(Gives a high-five.)* That was awesome!

Player: Thanks for understanding. I like that you asked first.

Coach: No problem. I want you to feel comfortable.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you like to celebrate something exciting?
- Does everyone like to celebrate the same way?
- Has anyone asked you for a hug when you didn't want it? What did you say and do?
- Have you ever hugged someone without asking? What happened?
- What if the coach hugged the player without asking? How might the player have felt?
- Why should we ask for consent before touching someone?



- Were both people respectful? Why is that important?

Role-Play 2: Romantic Consent

Read the role play out loud. Do the role-play with different volunteers. Then answer the questions.

Person 1: Thanks for a nice evening. I had fun!

Date: I really like you. Can I kiss you?

Person 1: You can kiss me on the cheek, but not on the mouth.

Date: Thank you for telling me. I'll kiss your cheek.

Person 1: I'm okay with that.

Date: How was that?

Person 1: That was good. I feel comfortable.

Date: I'm glad. I want to respect your boundaries.

Discussion Questions:

- Has anyone ever asked to kiss or touch you in a way you didn't want? How did you feel and what did you say?
- How did the date show respect when asking for consent before the kiss?
- What would have happened if the date didn't ask for consent first? How might Person 1 have felt?
- How do you think Person 1 felt after they were listened to and respected?



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- Why is it okay to say no to something, even if you like the person?
- How can you tell if someone is respecting your boundaries, like in this role-play?



Consent Confusion

Think Ahead

In the last part of the toolkit, we learned what consent is. We learned to ask before hugging someone at a game. We learned to ask before kissing someone on a date.

But consent can be confusing. People may be OK with a hug from one friend, but not another. The touches people are OK with can change with how they are feeling. People's relationships also change. Consent must be able to change as well.

In this part, we will learn how consent can be confusing. We will practice changing or taking back consent when we want to. We do not have to give a reason for changing or taking back consent. It is our right to do so.

Before you watch the video, read the vocabulary list. Talk about any confusing words.

Watch the Video

- Watch [Why Consent Is Important](https://youtu.be/V5vu0Oq9Nsl?si=wB_65JXdwOXfK0rs) on YouTube.
(https://youtu.be/V5vu0Oq9Nsl?si=wB_65JXdwOXfK0rs)
- Remember to follow the rules for staying safe and healthy.



Use the Role-Play

Role-Play 1: Refusing a Hug at a Party

Read the role play out loud. Do the role-play with different volunteers. Then answer the questions.

Person 1 is at a family party. They are overwhelmed with the noise and stress. Their Aunt goes in for a hug. Person 1 puts their hand up to stop her.

Person 1: Hold on—I don't want a hug right now.

Aunt: But we always hug. Is something wrong?

Person 1: I'm feeling a little overwhelmed today.

Aunt: But I'm your Aunt! You should hug me!

Person 1: I know you're disappointed, but I said no.

Aunt: OK, I understand. Would you like to sit and talk instead?

Person 1: That sounds good. Thanks for understanding.

Aunt: It's OK. I just want you to feel safe and calm.

Discussion Questions:

- Imagine Person 1's Aunt would not take no for an answer. What could Person 1 say to show they will not give a hug? What actions could they take?
- Why did Person 1 not want to hug, even though they have hugged before?
- What other ways could the Aunt show she cares?



- Have you ever felt too stressed or tired to be social? How did you handle it?
- Why must you respect a person's choice to say no, even if they've said yes before?
- How does asking for and respecting changes in consent help people feel safe?

Role-Play 2: Taking Back Consent at the End of a Date

Read the role play out loud. Do the role-play with different volunteers. Then answer the questions.

Two people are ending their second date. They both consented to kiss on their first date. The date goes in for a kiss, but Person 1 stops them.

Person 1: Stop. I don't want to kiss tonight.

Date: But we kissed last week. I should be able to kiss you again tonight.

Person 1: I know we kissed last week. And I was OK with it then. But I'm not tonight.

Date: But everything was going so well. Why not?

Person 1: I don't have to give a reason. I just don't want to.

Date: Okay, I get it. I'm disappointed. But I respect your decision.

Person 1: Thanks for understanding.

Discussion Questions

- Has someone ever changed consent on you? How did you feel?



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- Have you ever not wanted a hug, kiss or other touch, but didn't say so? What stopped you from saying no?
- Why should you respect a person's choice, even if you don't understand it?
- How can you handle frustration in a healthy way when someone tells you, no?
- Was it OK for Person 1 to say no without telling why? Why is that their right?
- How does respecting someone's choices help build trust and safety?



Consent with Caregivers

Think Ahead

In the last part of the toolkit, we talked about changing consent. In this part, we will learn how this works with caregivers. People with IDD sometimes need help with personal care. This can include touching the person's body. But all people have the right to say no if they don't feel comfortable with someone touching them.

Learned compliance makes this even harder. It's when people with IDD are taught to say yes. They are taught not to be difficult. People with IDD should practice saying no when something doesn't feel right. Caregivers should ask for consent before they start a task. They should respect the answer. They should check back during the task. A person has the right to change their mind, even if they said yes before.

Before you watch the video, read the vocabulary list. Talk about any confusing words.

Watch the Video

- Watch [Feeling Unsafe without Consent](https://youtu.be/k7qp-BSAiSY?si=Bdm9Xl-4tTgxGC1E) on YouTube. (https://youtu.be/k7qp-BSAiSY?si=Bdm9Xl-4tTgxGC1E)
- Remember to follow the rules for staying safe and healthy.



Talk About It

Think and talk about the questions below. Watch for signs of past harm.

Remind everyone that it's OK to:

- Take a break.
- Walk away or leave the group.
- Ask to talk with someone privately about what they are feeling.

1. Why should caregivers ask for consent before touching a person's body?

- How would you feel if someone didn't ask before helping you with something personal, like bathing?
- How can a caregiver ask for consent in a respectful way?
- How can you say no to a caregiver in a respectful way?

2. Why is it okay to change your mind about consent, even if you said yes before?

- Have you ever agreed to something and changed your mind? How did it work out?
- Why should others listen when you change your mind?

3. What is learned compliance? How can it make it harder to say no?

- Have you ever said yes to something because you thought you couldn't say no?
- Why do some people with IDD feel they can't say no to their caregivers?
- How can caregivers watch for learned compliance? What should they do if they think a person is uncomfortable but is saying yes anyway?



4. How can caregivers ask for consent from the people they work with?
 - What should a caregiver do if you say no to something they want to help you with?
 - Why should caregivers ask for consent every time they help, not just once?
 - What if a person has a bad day and needs space from others?
5. How can we help people with IDD in giving and taking back consent?
 - What can you do if you see someone being pressured to say yes when they don't want to?
 - How can we help people with IDD feel confident saying no?
 - How does supporting them to say no help them stay safe?



For More Information

Visit [Seen and Heard: IDD Community](https://www.youtube.com/@SeenHeardIDD)

(<https://www.youtube.com/@SeenHeardIDD>) on YouTube. You will find more videos about this topic. You will find videos about related topics.

Credit

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