

# CONSENT: *Got it?*

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Before you engage in any kind of sexual activity, you need to make sure you have your partner's consent.

*Sexual consent can only be FREELY given if:*

- **There is a sufficient balance of power in the relationship.** There is no significant age\*, developmental or status differences. One person doesn't have authority over the other. No one has used or threatened to use violence over the other. \* See the law on the flip side.
- **Both people are aware of the consequences of sexual activity, both positive and negative, and know what will happen next.** Decisions have been made together about birth control and STD/HIV protection, both people agree to what types of contact are okay, both people understand what it means for their relationship together.
- **It is safe to say no.** There is no pressure, tricks or manipulation to say yes, no threats of harm or embarrassment. There are no negative consequences for saying no, no teasing, no pressure, no jokes or telling other people.
- **If you say yes you can change your mind or stop at anytime.** You feel comfortable that if you change your mind at any point you will be respected and listened to.
- **Neither party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.** If someone is drunk or high, they can't really say yes for sure. Save sexual activity for when you're both sober.

## Consent means:

At the time of the act, there are

**words**

AND physical

**ACTIONS**

indicating that both partners *freely*

agree, and

*really* want to

do the same thing.

*Checking for consent is a process that each person needs to keep doing.*

**Don't guess: ASK.**

## By law:

People 18 and over cannot engage in sexual activity with people younger than 16 *unless* both people are between the ages of 15 and 18. The age of consent in Vermont is 16.

(13 VSA § 3252)

## EXAMPLES

Person 1 Age	Person 2 Age	Is It Legal?	
18	14	NO	⊘
18	15	YES	✓
18	16	YES	✓
19	16	YES	✓

## Remember:

Vermont law defines sex as contact between any genitalia or breasts (without clothing) and any other part of the body including the mouth; any penetration, however slight, by any part of a person's body or any object into the genital or anal opening of another; and masturbation in front of someone else.

***You really need consent for ALL sexual activity*** including kissing, touching or rubbing under or over clothes, being naked with each other, sending fully or partially nude photos or sending provocative messages via email or text (sexting). ***Each activity needs to have clear consent from each partner every time.***

**You have a right to your feelings**, what might feel right one time may not feel right the next time. You don't have to do something again just because you did it once. You have a right to set your boundaries and talk about them.

If you or someone you know has had non-consensual sex, help is available.

***Call Vermont's 24-hour sexual violence hotline:***

***1-800-489-7273***

*It is free and you don't have to give your name.*

*You can talk about your own experience or find out how to help your friend.*

***ASKING = RESPECT.***

