



# Teens and Consent

## The What, Why, and How of Consent

### What Is Consent?

Consent can help you stay safe and treat others with respect. Let's begin by better understanding consent and identifying some principles that are key to practicing it.

**CONSENT IS AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS THAT IS RECIPROCAL, ENTHUSIASTIC, AND CONTINUOUS.**

Today, many teens have questions about consent, like what it is and how to practice it. **Watch this Teen Talks video of other teens sharing their ideas about consent:**

 [WATCH VIDEO \(0:00-2:46\)](https://youtu.be/cB7L2dBRWJM)

or paste this link into your browser: <https://youtu.be/cB7L2dBRWJM>

**Think about these questions as we review the definition of consent.**

- ◆ Have you ever been in a situation where you were pressured to act in a way you weren't comfortable with?
- ◆ When was the last time you felt trapped?
- ◆ How important to you is it to be trusted and responsible?
- ◆ Can you think of a time where you felt empowered as part of a team?

*Throughout this resource, we will share different videos that apply to consent. They are all smaller clips found at this link:*

<https://youtu.be/cB7L2dBRWJM>

## Consent has three important elements:

### RECIPROCAL

Reciprocal means we are mutually contributing in a balanced way. One-sided interactions or situations that mostly benefit only one person are not reciprocal.

### ENTHUSIASTIC

Enthusiastic means we are willing and choosing to participate without being forced or manipulated. Being forced or pushed to do something we are not comfortable with is the opposite of consenting.

### CONTINUOUS

Continuous means we make a steady choice to continue to be involved. There are appropriate times when we want to stop or choose to stay where we are now, but continuous decisions mean we choose to keep going on the path we are on. When the people involved in an activity have the option to withdraw their agreement, this supports consent. Knowing where everybody stands and being aware of any change helps to confirm continuous agreement. Checking in with each other is a good way to be aware of other people's decisions and feelings.

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## Why Consent Is Important

Practicing consent can reduce the risk of you hurting others or being hurt. It is easy to think, "something like that will never happen to me." However, sexual assault is very prevalent. Odds are that you (or someone very close to you) will be directly affected by sexual assault.

### We invite you to consider:

- ◆ Do you know someone who has felt pressure to do something that made them feel uncomfortable?
- ◆ Do you know someone who was asked to share details or photos with another person that were intimate or sexual in nature?
- ◆ Have you observed a friend being pressured to give physical affection (like kissing) or intimate touching by another person?

Even though the gravity of these specific situations might be different, they all have something in common: **consent should have been used.**

## Listen to Paige's Story:

### WATCH VIDEO (3:57-11:00)

or paste this link into your browser: <https://youtu.be/g1OIDtbaR5Y?t=237>

- ◆ What's one thing from Paige's story that stood out to you or impacted you?
- ◆ Paige used both verbal and nonverbal communication. How can you be more aware and respectful of all forms of communication?
- ◆ What were things that helped Paige? Do you have ways to reach out for help when you are in trouble?

**We invite you to share the You Have a Voice: Paige's Story video on social media with ways you are working on understanding and practicing consent.**

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## How to Practice Consent

When understood and practiced, consent is a powerful principle in stopping abuse. Practicing and honoring consent is essential to navigating our most important relationships and interactions.

There are some common scenarios you could encounter that put you at a risk. Let's watch how one group of students partnered with us on a school media project to illustrate situations where consent can be practiced. They chose to mimic a popular television show in a playful way while still addressing how important consent is in everyday interactions.

### Watch "The Classroom" Video:

### WATCH VIDEO (11:00-16:50)

or paste this link into your browser: <https://youtu.be/cB7L2dBRWJM?t=660>

**PRACTICING CONSENT IN SMALL WAYS WILL PREPARE YOU FOR TIMES WHEN THE STAKES ARE HIGHER. WE HOPE YOU SEE HOW CONSENT CAN HELP YOU STAY SAFE AND TREAT OTHERS WITH RESPECT IN ALL OF YOUR INTERACTIONS.**

**Additional Resource:** <https://defendinnocence.org/consent-guide-for-teens/>