

Sex and consent are topics that can feel overwhelming to navigate, especially with the pressure to know everything or get it right every time.

Consent isn't just about saying YES or NO; it's about checking in, being aware, and creating an environment where everyone feels comfortable, respected, and heard. In today's world, where hookup culture, mixed messages, and media portrayals of sex can make things blurry, it's essential to know how to communicate your needs and desires.

At RUSU we believe that forming exciting new connections is an important part of university life, and safety and consent should always come first. We also know that no one's experiences are the same. Whether you've had previous sexual encounters, are still figuring things out, or are just beginning to explore intimacy, this 101 is for you.

RUSU x

DATING

Affirmative/ enthusiastic consent:

explicit, informed and voluntary agreement to participate in a sexual act. Consent should be defined by the presence of a 'yes', not the absence of a 'no'.

Boundary: a limit a person imposes on an action or interaction. Boundaries can be in relation to physical or emotional actions/interactions.

Breadcrumbing:

When someone gives you just enough attention to keep you interested, but doesn't intend to commit.

catcalling: a slang term for a sexually suggestive, harassing, or threatening remark or call made in public. It's a form of street harassment and sexual harassment. a person takes information and images, typically from other people's social media or dating profiles, and

Check-in: To check in with someone regularly during an activity to make sure they're still okay with it, instead of assuming they're still comfortable just because they agreed at the start.

Coercion: persuading someone to do something by using force, intimidation, threats or by making a person feel guilty or ashamed.

Consent: permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.

Consent Fatiaue

when someone feels exhausted from constantly having to explain or reinforce their boundaries.

ALL THE FLAGS:

Red Flag a warning sign that indicates unhealthy or manipulative behaviour in a relationship, such as controlling behaviour, attempts to isolate people from their community, and/or emotional manipulation (see agslighting).

Green Flag a positive quality or behaviour exhibited by a potential partner, signifying good potential for a relationship.

Pink Flag a small issue or behaviour that may indicate a relationship isn't ideal, but that isn't necessarily a dealbreaker

FIEL FERMS

Beige Flag a quirky or odd behaviour in a romantic partner that's not a deal breaker but also not a plus.

Gaslighting: a type of emotional abuse that involves manipulating someone into questioning their own reality, thoughts, and feelings. The goal is to make the victim doubt themselves and rely on the abuser.

Ghosting:

When someone suddenly stops all communication with you.

Image based abuse:

when someone shares or threatens to share an intimate image or video of a person without their consent.

Love Bombing: when someone moves a relationship forward quickly and declares their love for you in a short time.

Love Island Effect

when people feel pressure to behave a certain way in relationships due to unrealistic media portrayals of romance.

Safe word: a word or phrase that is used to communicate a need for safety or a need to stop. Safe words can be used in sexual activity, in kink spaces, or in other situations.

Situationship: A

situationship is a romantic or sexual relationship that is undefined and noncommittal. People in a situationship are more than friends but less than committed romantic partners.

Soft launch: publishing sneak peaks of a new partner on social media before more formally posting about your relationship spiking: when someone puts alcohol or drugs into another person's drink or body without their knowledge or consent.

Stealthing: nonconsensual condom removal before or during sexual intercourse.

Victim blamina:

someone saying, implying, or treating a person who has experienced harmful or abusive behaviour like it was a result of something they did or said, instead of placing the responsibility on the person who harmed them.

Why is asking for consent so important?

It's crucial to ask for consent before engaging in sexual activity. Talking openly about what you both want and setting boundaries is important in any relationship, regardless of whether it's casual or long term. Asking for consent can involve talking about what you like and what you would like to do.

Other topics you can cover before sex include use of birth control and whether participants have been tested for sexually transmitted diseases. You should also ensure consent is ongoing during a sexual experience. Remember people who are drunk or on drugs cannot consent.

In Victoria we have laws which mean participants in a sexual act must have affirmative consent. Affirmative sexual consent places the responsibility on each individual person participating in a sexual act to take steps to say or do something to check that the other person(s) involved are consenting to a sexual activity, rather than relying on the other person to give their consent.

This means that sexual consent can never be assumed and involves ongoing and mutual communication and decision—making between each person involved. Different states have different rules but, in all states in Australia, sexual activity where consent has not been given may be considered a criminal offence.

Ways to ask for consent...

There are loads of ways to ask for consent and asking for consent will not kill any vibes. Consent is sexy.

Here are some ideas...





How far are you comfortable going tonight?



Do you like me doing this?



Do you want to have sex?



I would really like to kiss you right now. Is that ok?



Do you want to go through to the bedroom?



Can I walk you home?



Do you want to make out?



Should I get a condom/ dental dam?



Would you enjoy it if I did



I think it's hot when we do xxx, do you want to do this with me?



It feels really good when you do xxx, do you want to do this to me?



Can I do xxx to you?



Does this feel good?

Ways to Say ho or Stop...

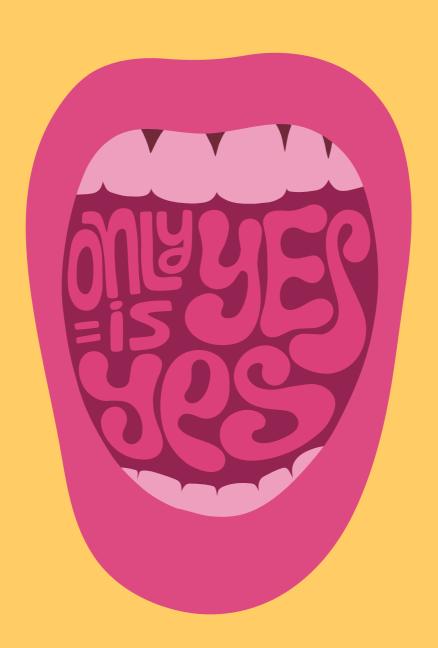
It is always okay to say no, and consent can be withdrawn at anytime. When consent is withdrawn, all sexual activity must stop.

- No, I don't want to do that.
- Stop, I am not comfortable with this.
- I'm saying no.
- This is not ok with me.
- I'm not giving you consent.
- I don't want this to become sexual.

If you want to withdraw consent for a specific activity but continue a sexual encounter you could use words like:

- I don't like that, can you do this instead?
- I'm not into that but I would really like to try this.

Remember, you do not need to give reasons for why you are withdrawing consent.



What to do if someone says no to you...

Remember that "no means no" and their choice should always be respected, even if you're disappointed.

Acknowledge their decision:

 Say something like, "I understand you're not comfortable with that," or "Okay, I respect your choice."

Don't argue or pressure them:

 Don't try to convince them to change their mind or make them feel guilty for saying no.

Don't take it personally:

 Remember that their decision is not a reflection on you, but rather about their boundaries and comfort level.

Focus on your own well-being:

 Give yourself time to process your feelings and move on from the situation. If you hear NO, you MUST stop immediately. You can respectfully acknowledge the other person's decision, express understanding, and move on without pressuring them further.

Sometimes it can be difficult to decide if someone is saying no. Remember if you do not hear an enthusiastic yes then you do not have consent. These are some things that could sound ambiguous but definitely mean that consent has not been given:

- I'm tired
- Not right now
- I'm not feeling great
- Maybe next time
- I'm on my period
- I don't know
- I'm drunk or I'm high
- Silence or hesitation

- Thank you for being honest with me. I respect your decision.
- That's alright, I understand if you're not ready.
- That's ok. Want to watch a movie instead?"
- No problem. Want to go back to the party?

Remember, rejection is normal and happens to everyone. If you experience rejection, it is ok to take some time after to look after yourself.

Acknowledge your feelings, accept that rejection is a normal part of life, learn from the experience, and seek support from friends.

Focus on positive activities to move forward instead of dwelling on the negative experience. Handling rejection appropriately is an important life skill.

SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Want to learn more or get some help and support? Check out the links below.

RMIT Safer Community

Safer Community advisors are experienced in supporting students regarding experiences of violence, concerning, inappropriate, unwanted, or threatening behaviour including sexual harassment, harm and violence.

This also includes threats or hate speech, discrimination, assault, stalking, image-based abuse/doxing/catfishing or partner and family violence

safercommunity@rmit.edu.au

Teach Us Consent

Teach Us Consent advocates for and provides holistic consent education through social media

www.instagram.com/teachusconsent

eSafety Commissioner

The online harms regulator whose mission is to help all Australians have safer, more positive experiences online. In addition to resources on safer online dating practices, Australians can report image-based abuse or serious adult cyber abuse

www.esafety.gov.au

1800 Respect

A national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling and support service

www.1800respect.org.au

Men's Referral Service

A men's referral service for any men who are concerned about their own behaviour or need support

www.ntv.org.au

Complete the RMIT Sex and Consent Module

Want to learn more about sex and consent? Complete the RMIT Sex and Consent module to build your skills.

QR Code for Domestic Students:



QR Code of International Students:



Rotes

··· HOTES

