

CONSENT

To consent means to agree to something, and the word can be used in lots of different situations. When it comes to sex specifically, to consent means to agree to have sex or engage in sexual activity. .Sex or sexual activity can include kissing, sexual touching, oral, anal and vaginal sex with a penis or with any other type of object.

(Brook, www.brook.org.uk/your-life/sex-and-consent/)

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines consent as when a person 'agrees by choice and has the capacity to make that choice'.

In the eyes of the law, consent is the agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. All those involved must have the freedom and full capacity to make that decision. Engaging in a sexual act without the person's consent is sexual violence, and is a criminal offence. For more information on consent and law and how to apply consent to real life, visit www.brook.org.uk/your-life/sex-and-consent/



Freely Given



Reversible



Informed



Enthusiastic



Specific

The acronym FRIES can be seen as a useful tool to highlight the key elements of consent.

F: Freely Given - Consent must be given voluntarily without any pressure or coercion.

DO: Wait for a clear unprompted 'yes'

DON'T: Threaten, guilt-trip, or repeatedly ask after 'no'

R: Reversible - Anyone can change their mind about consent at any time, even if they have previously agreed.

DO: Check in. Respect an immediate 'stop' without argument.

DON'T: insist to continue because they said yes before or assume you can't stop once things have started

I: Informed - All parties must have the necessary information to make a decision about consent.

DO: Be upfront with situational information

DON'T: Lie or omit key information - eg removing a condom without the other persons knowledge (stealthing) - it is a crime

E: Enthusiastic - Consent should be given with eagerness and excitement, not out of obligation.

DO: Look for enthusiastic body language, paired with verbal agreement DON'T: Assume that the absence of a 'no' means 'yes'. Silence, stillness or mumbled 'I suppose' is not consent.

S: Specific - Consent applies to a specific act and does not imply consent for anything else.

DO: Ask before you do

DON'T: Assume that because someone consents to one activity doesn't mean they consent to a different one.

