

## TALK ABOUT IT...

# Tips for ADULTS talking to youth about consent

Youth benefit from the opportunity to talk to trusted adults, such as parents, coaches and teachers, about healthy sexuality and relationships. Your student is currently learning in school about concepts and the law regarding sexual consent. We encourage you to use the Consent: Got It? handout and talking tips below to start an important dialogue with the youth in your life about the values that are important to you.

Whether you feel confident and comfortable having planned conversations or using spontaneous teachable moments, any and all opportunities are valuable.

## REMEMBER: TALK EARLY AND OFTEN

Be open and nonjudgmental, listen, and respond appropriately from your experience. Send a clear message that you are open to talking and listening about sexuality and healthy relationships. Acknowledge that it can be uncomfortable and awkward, and that's okay. Consent is all about communication.

**Here are some conversation starters:**

### Is there equality in the relationship?

Equality in relationships describes a situation in which neither partner has a clear power over the other. A sufficient balance of power is important in a relationship so that each person has as much say over what happens as the other.

Examples where there is NOT equal power:

- One person is a teacher, coach, or caregiver of the other person.
- One person is significantly older (example, a 20-year-old person cannot be sexual with a 15-year-old person).
- One person lacks the ability to understand what is happening or the potential consequences due to developmental differences or lack of access to information.
- One person lacks the ability to say no (e.g., is intoxicated) or is afraid.

### Sexual activity and consent questions

- How do you know that you are ready for sexual activity?
- How do you know that your partner is ready for sexual activity?
- How would you ask whether your partner is ready for sexual activity?
- Why do you think it is important to ask?
- If you feel pressured, manipulated, or like someone is tricking you, what can you do? What can you say?

- What can you do if you feel like you want to kiss someone, but you aren't sure yet?
- What if you decide to kiss your partner and he or she wants more?
- What if it feels good and you want to do more but your partner says "no"?
- Does it feel okay to say no when you're not ready? Why or why not?
- Do you know what to do and who to call if you feel scared or you need help?

## Consent law

- Why do you think there is a consent law?
- How old do you have to be to give consent for sexual activity?
- If someone has been drinking or getting high, can they give consent?

## Bystander situations

- What would do if your friend told you they were being pressured to have sex and didn't feel ready?
- What if your friend is boasting about how they are going to get this person they know high or drunk and have sex with them?
- What would you do if you see someone bullying or harassing someone in a sexual way?
- Do you know how to get help if one of your friends has been hurt or is hurting someone?

It may be awkward, but giving youth the chance to think and talk about consent and safe sexual activity BEFORE they need to put these skills into action will help them make safe choices when the time comes.

**For more information, see the documents your students received titled:  
Consent: Got It? and Are You Ready?**