

A Guide for Educators PRESENTED BY



Your Truth. Our Purpose.

306-522-2777 rsac@sasktel.net www.reginasexualassaultcentre.ca



Intended use and Audience for This Guide

This Guide, created by the Regina and Area Sexual Assault
Centre, was developed for the purpose of sharing the
content and delivery approach of RSAC's school
presentations with teachers, so they have the opportunity to
review what to expect from our presentation ahead of time.
It can also be used to inform any parties who may have an
interest in what content will be discussed, such as parents,
Administrators, and students themselves.

This Guide also provides helpful information and tips for educators to continue the conversation after RSAC leaves the classroom, including how to appropriately speak about violence with children and youth.

Please note: Although this guide uses language that is directed towards educators, and refers to the content covered within our presentations, it is still very much applicable and useful for any person to access - such as parents and other service providers.

This Guide will provide information on how to approach these conversations, what children and youth need to know about this topic, and how to respond to children and/or youth with understanding, validation, and compassion.



Part 1: Consent



Consent: Permission for something to happen or an agreement to do something.

This video will be played to show younger students how simple consent is by relating it to every day actions, like asking for a hug. Click **HERE** to watch or scan the corresponding QR Code.

Alternatively, for students at least 12 and older, you may choose to watch the video above, or click **HERE** or scan the corresponding QR code to watch a different video on consent, using tea as the every day example. Please note: there is a 'clean' version of this, provided here. If you search for this video elsewhere, ensure you choose the 'clean' option.









There are 5 elements of consent according to the Canadian Criminal Code [s. 273.1(1)] that apply to all folks engaging in sexual activity, which can be remembered by using the FRIES acronym:



Consent must always be:

Freely given (voluntary & sober)

Reversible (revocable)

Informed (know what you're consenting to)

Enthusiastic (ongoing & clear)

Specific (people, places, acts, times)



Affirmative consent: Identifying the presence of a yes, rather than the absence of a no. Affirmative consent recognizes that there are clear indicators to know if someone is consenting (saying yes), or if they are not consenting (saying no), through verbal and non-verbal communication. If the response is ambiguous, it should not be taken to mean consent has been received, even if someone did not technically say the word "no".

Example: If Claire puts her hand out to shake hands with Stephen, and Stephen does not reach their hand back out to Claire, this is a clear indication Stephen is not consenting to shaking Claire's hand.

Discussion

During the discussion period, students and the facilitator will brainstorm all of the different ways we say yes and no:

Saying no:

- "I'm not sure"
- "Let me think about it"
- "I don't know if I'm comfortable with this"
- "Mavbe"
- "We'll see, maybe later"
- Remaining silent or still
- Pulling away from someone or backing up
- Looking at the ground or avoiding a question
- "No."
- "Stop."

Saying yes:

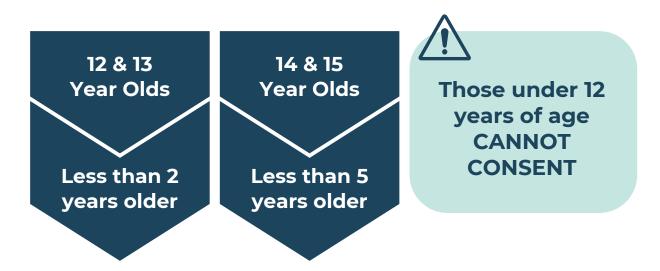
- Initiating an activity
- Actively and enthusiastically participating in an activity
- "I want to do this."
- "Yeah, that's fine with me."
- Setting parameters: "I want to do ____, but I am not okay with doing ____."
- Smiling and nodding
- "Yes."





Ages of Consent in Canada

The age of consent is the legal age in any given country that a person can consent to sexual activity. In Canada, the legal age of consent is 16 years of age, meaning that once a Canadian person turns 16, they are legally allowed to engage in sexual activity with anyone older than them. The Canadian law also includes two close-in-age exceptions, which decriminalizes age-appropriate sexual exploration within peer groups:



Although the age of consent in Canada is 16, the age of consent for filming and distribution of intimate images (such as pornography) is 18. Acts that are considered to be sexually inappropriate, such as the non-consensual sharing of nude pictures and voyeurism, are classified under section 162.1 of the Canadian Criminal Code.



Note for teachers: This information is important to know, as children will eventually reach these ages and begin to have consensual relationships. However, the ages of consent will be touched on only briefly at this level, as most students in this grade bracket are below the age of consent.



Part 2: Boundaries



Boundary: A personal guideline or rule that honours someone's individual needs and respects their level of comfortability with something. These are unique to each person, and it is just as important to respect the boundaries other people set as it is to have your boundaries respected.

Consent is the foundation for all boundaries. When someone asserts a boundary, they are communicating if they are comfortable with something (giving permission), or if they are not comfortable with something (not giving permission).

Example: If Claire is uncomfortable with someone touching her hair, she has asserted that no one has her consent to touch her hair. If Stephen touches Claire's hair anyway, this is an example of someone not respecting a boundary put in place and going against the consent of the other person.

Since boundaries are unique to each person, someone may have difficulty considering the perspective of the person setting the boundary.

If someone does not consider the boundary to be something that would personally affect them, they may not even think to ask for consent prior to doing something, not considering the other person may not have the same values as they have.







Example: If Claire values a 'make yourself at home' environment at their house, and she is used to hanging out with other people who share this mentality, at some point she may interact with another person who does not share this value, but rather thinks it is disrespectful for someone to treat their home as if it was their own. If Claire were to take food from her friend Stephen's fridge, who unknowingly does not share this value, Claire may not think to ask if this is okay first, because she is used to automatically having permission to do this that she assumes it will be the same at Stephen's house as well.

Sometimes, a person will not respect a boundary established with them, or push someone to cross their boundaries because they do not hold the same values, resulting in them looking past the person's boundaries and considering their own needs instead. The example below shows how this could happen:

Example: Claire did not complete her homework the night before, so she tells Stephen she will need to borrow his so she can copy it quickly. Stephen expresses that lying makes him very uncomfortable, and he would rather not be roped into this situation.

Claire does not see why it is such a big deal because she does not share that value, and knows that she would do it for Stephen if he asked, so she copies his homework anyway.









After learning about affirmative consent and discussing the different ways we can say yes and no to assert our boundaries, the students and facilitator will brainstorm why it can be difficult to say "No", and why it can be difficult to be told "No" and accept someone's boundaries.

A few possible responses to these questions are:

Why can it be hard to say NO?

- Everyone else is doing it; having FOMO if you say no (Fear Of Missing Out)
- Not wanting to make the other person feel judged or rejected
- Being assertive may cause undesired confrontation or conflict
- Not wanting people to think differently of you

Why can it be hard to be told NO?

- The disappointment of not getting what you want
- May feel judged, offended, rejected, or embarrassed; seeing it as a reflection of you rather than a reflection of their values
- May feel confused and frustrated if you assumed they would say 'yes' because you would say 'yes'



Boundary Assertion

The conversation shifts to addressing the validity of why it can be difficult to say no and assert your boundaries.



Intuition

Intuition: The feeling you get when you know something feels wrong/right for you, even if outside factors are indicating otherwise, or indicating nothing at all. This is commonly described as a 'gut feeling' or that 'little voice in your head' trying to tell you something important. We use the term 'red flag' when referring to how our intuition tells us when something is not right or makes us uncomfortable.

Each person has boundaries that are unique to them, and when those red flags go up, they go up for a reason. We need to trust our intuition to be able to respect our own needs.









• It can make some people feel better knowing they have explained their reasoning for why they are saying no, but know that you do not have to explain your reasons to anyone



 Stand your ground – being assertive is not being aggressive, bossy, or rude



 There are more ways to say no than a full-stop NO; you get to decide what is right for you, and it can be a good exercise to practice different ways to assert your needs







Note for teachers: We recognize that in cases of sexual assault or abuse, the perpetrator may be much bigger and have more power than the victim, combined with the trust that the child may have for the perpetrator. A child being sexually abused at home by a caregiver may be very skilled at asserting their boundaries, understanding consent, and using their skills of intuition, but experience violence regardless.

This concept is addressed by reminding students that sometimes people will not listen to their boundaries, or they may not assert their boundaries due to fear or perceived trust, and this is not their fault. No one has the right to touch anyone unwantedly, and telling a safe adult what happened can help them receive the support they need.







Boundary Acceptance

The conversation shifts to addressing the validity of why it can be difficult to be told no and respect someone's boundaries.



Empathy

Empathy: Connecting with something in yourself that can connect with what someone else may be feeling. Empathy requires switching perspectives and treating people how you would want to be treated if you were in their shoes.

We need to use the skill of empathy when respecting someone's boundaries if they tell us no. This skill can be helpful to see things from another lens, where even if you do not share the same value, opinion, boundary, or response as someone else, you are still able to recognize what they may be feeling when asserting their needs and how you would appreciate being treated if if the roles were reversed.



ips for Accepting & Respecting Boundaries

- Pause and decide how you want to make people feel (take a moment to empathize)
- Accept that being told 'no' is a reflection of the current situation, and not a reflection of your character as a person
- Let them know you respect their decision and appreciate their honesty
- Remember: There are more ways to say no than a full-stop NO; be mindful of unintentional coercion







- 1. Students partner up
- 2. Each student in their pair decides if they will be a number 1 or a number 2
- 3. Number 1's play the role of a citizen of Earth, and their goal is to practice their skills of intuition
- 4. Number 2's play the role of the alien invader from another planet, who does not have boundaries on their planet, and their goal is to practice their skills of empathy
- 5. The job of both players is to decide when they notice their 'space has been invaded'
- 6. Number 1's stand still, while the Number 2's take steps closer and closer, asking for consent before each step
- 7. When Number 1 starts to feel uncomfortable with how close Number 2 is getting, their job is to pay attention to this 'red flag' of intuition, and assert their space boundaries in a way that feels comfortable and respectful for them
- 8. Number 2's job is to watch and listen for signs of boundary crossing, using their skill of empathy to recognize when someone is uncomfortable
- 9. If there is time and desire, Number 1 and Number 2 can switch roles and each have the opportunity to practice empathy and intuition



Part 3: Relationships







Students will be asked to describe characteristics they think would make up a healthy relationship. This activity will show that a 'relationship' can be many different dynamics, like a friend, significant other, sibling, neighbour, or caregiver. It will also show the inherent strengths student's have to recognize what unhealthy relationships look like.

Potential answers to these questions are:

What qualities make a GOOD friend?

- Trustworthy
- Kind/nice
- Caring
- Thoughtful
- Loyal
- Fair

What qualities make a BAD friend?

- Dishonest
- Mean
- Selfish
- Intimidating
- Clingy
- Jealous



Dating Violence

A short, animated video will be shown to describe a few types of abuse and how to recognize when a relationship is unhealthy. Click or scan the QR Code to view the video.







Violence Definitions

Intimate partner violence: A pattern of behaviours used by one partner to maintain power and control over the other partner in an intimate relationship.

Physical abuse: physical contact like hitting, kicking, punching, or other physical intimidations, such as throwing an object at or near someone.

Emotional abuse: intimidation, humiliation, name calling, and control over someone's decisions, like what they wear or where they go.

Financial abuse: limiting and controlling someone's access to or taking advantage of their finances.

Stalking: spying, following, refusing to leave when asked, and bombarding someone with messages after they have told you to stop. Stalking is a form of sexual harassment.

Sexual abuse: forcing someone to participate in sexual acts, ignoring their sexual boundaries and consent.

Leading from dating violence, we discuss that violence can happen to anyone and can be perpetrated within any type of relationship, not only dating relationships.



The Safe vs. The Unsafe: Touch and Secrets

The facilitator will describe the differences between okay and not okay touch, and "keep secrets" and "speak secrets".

This will help students identify what is okay and what is not okay, and what to do if they have experienced a not okay touch or a speak secret.





Note for teachers: This section is handled sensitively, and tries to avoid the use of the words 'good' and 'bad', as sometimes a 'bad touch' that is sexual may 'feel good'. Messaging delivered to children by perpetrators around keeping a 'bad secret' may also imply that the abuse is normal, or that the child is doing an honourable thing by protecting this secret. This can be very confusing for the child, whose intuition may be telling them this is a bad secret, but the trusted perpetrator is manipulating them to think the abuse is normal.



Okay Touch is Always...

Wanted:

Touch where your voluntary consent has been given. This should be present for every kind of good touch.

Affectionate:

Wanted touch that shows love or praise, like a handshake, high five, fist bump, pat on the back, or a hug.

Helpful touch:

This type of touch may be more *needed* than it is *wanted*. This touch may involve routine or emergency medical procedures, such as needing to get stiches after a fall. Stiches are painful and not usually wanted, but they are necessary to make sure the wound heals well. The key that makes helpful touch an Okay touch is that it must always serve a good purpose, unlike unhelpful touch.

Not Okay Touch is Always...

Unwanted sexual touching:

Anyone kissing or touching your private parts.

Painful touch:

Touch that does not serve a good purpose and is intended to cause harm, like hairpulling, pinching, hitting, shaking, or penetrating.

Unhelpful touch:

Touch that does not keep you healthy or safe. This type of touch does not serve a purpose, like going to the doctor's office for stiches, and the doctor touching your private parts instead. Sometimes, this touch involves you being told to keep the touch a secret, which is always a sign that the touch is not okay.



Keep Secrets...

Make someone happy:

This type of secret is like getting your best friend a gift for their birthday, and needing to keep it a secret so they will be happy when they open it.

Will eventually be told:

This type of secret is only a secret for now, like knowing your best friend is going to have a surprise birthday party and not wanting to ruin the surprise.

Do not cause harm to keep:

This type of secret is like a friend telling you they have a crush on someone. They've trusted you with a secret, and the secret does not hurt anyone by keeping it a secret – and may even eventually be told by your friend and make someone happy!

Speak Secrets...

Make you uncomfortable to keep:

This type of secret may make you feel guilty to keep, like if someone is being bullied at school, being hurt at home, or if someone is having thoughts of hurting themselves.

Make someone upset:

This type of secret causes more harm to keep than to tell. It may be your own secret, or one that is told to you or witnessed, like if a friend is being hurt at home and asks you not to tell anyone.

Threaten you not to tell:

This type of secret may be kept because someone has made you afraid to tell anyone by threatening to hurt you or someone you love, or saying that you will be in trouble if you tell. This is not okay, and you will never be in trouble for telling this secret to a safe adult.



Ending



Take-aways

Students will be provided with final comments and a few reminders/take aways.

If someone...

- Uses Not Okay touch
- Asks you to keep a Speak secret
- Ignores your consent



Then remember...

- Trust your intuition you know what's right for YOU
- · You are not at fault
- Always tell a safe adult so they can help you



Question & Answer Period

If no preference is given, the facilitator will provide the opportunity for an open dialogue to ask questions. Some teachers may want to plan in advance, and provide the students with the chance to write anonymous questions for the facilitator to review and answer.

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT US:

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