

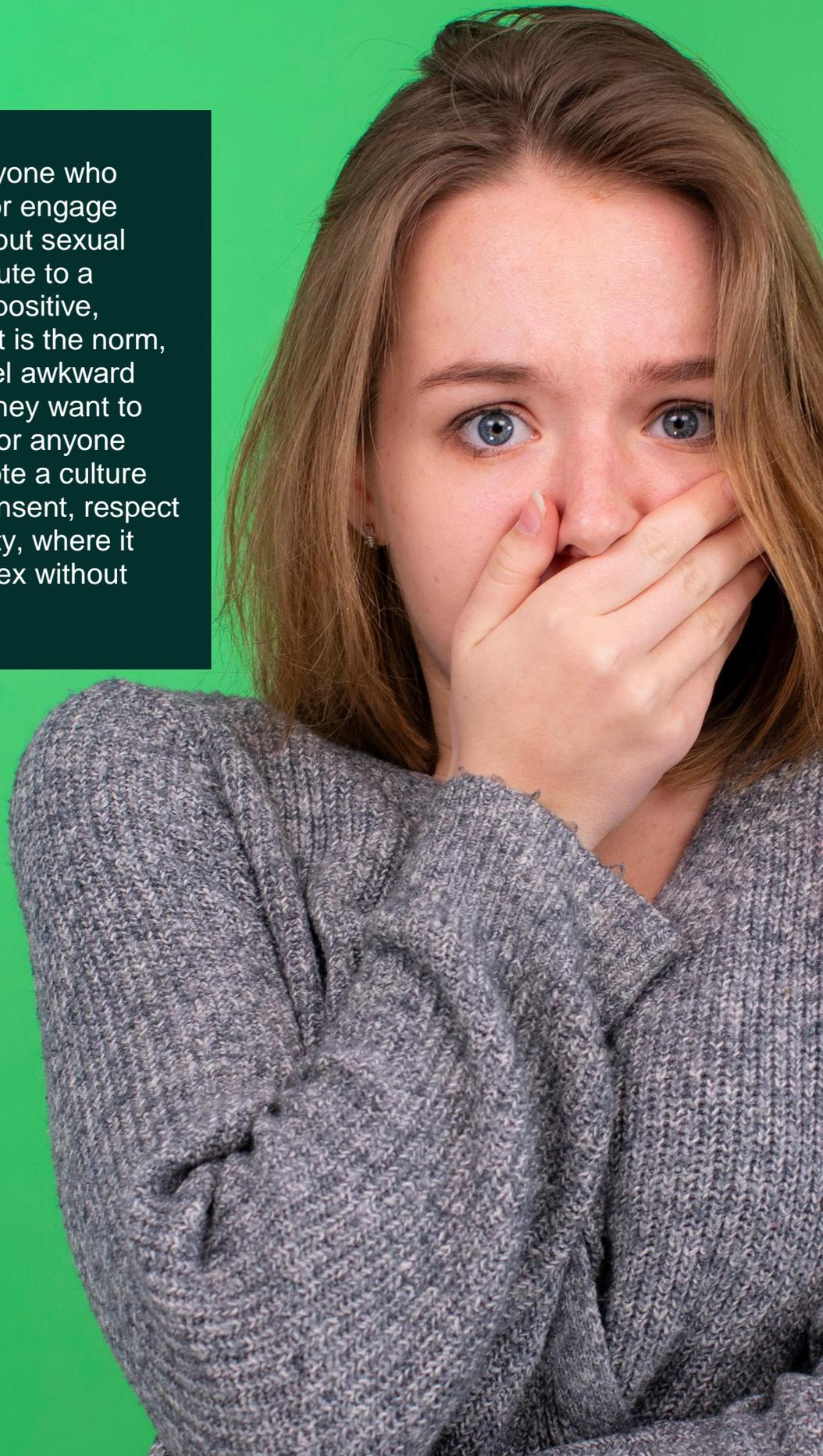


# LET'S TALK ABOUT YES

Activist toolkit

Moving from a 'rape culture' to a 'consent culture'

This toolkit is for anyone who wants to help start or engage in conversations about sexual consent and contribute to a cultural shift where positive, enthusiastic consent is the norm, and people don't feel awkward asking someone if they want to move forward. It is for anyone who wants to promote a culture based on mutual consent, respect and positive sexuality, where it is understood that sex without consent is rape.



**The toolkit has been created through contributions from Amnesty International staff and activists as part of the #LetsTalkAboutYes campaign. Other sources are referenced in the text.**

The #LetsTalkAboutYes campaign started in Denmark, developed by different organizations, survivors and other activists – to create change towards consent-based legislation and a consent-based culture: “We want to live in a society where we are free from rape, and where everyone’s sexual autonomy and bodily integrity are respected and valued.”

The campaign is expanding to other countries in Europe and builds on years of work and activism on sexual violence in different countries.

Rape is important as a human rights issue and affects people regardless of their age, sex, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity. However, the campaign focuses on women and girls, as they are disproportionately affected by this violation. For an overview of the campaign and why this is an important matter see: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2018/11/rape-in-europe/>.

The #LetsTalkAboutYes campaign seeks to engage activists, creatives and young people of all genders and diverse backgrounds to talk about sexual consent, and contribute to:

- Increasing the number of informed conversations about sexual consent among young people;
- Increasing collaboration with, and involvement of, youth activists and artists in these conversations;
- Increasing awareness that sex without consent is rape;
- Increasing engagement with, and visibility of, the #LetsTalkAboutYes hashtag.

This toolkit provides guidance and suggests ways in which you can contribute to the campaign, for more people, especially youth, to talk about sexual consent, in a light-hearted and respectful way.

#### **What’s inside:**

1. What you can do: how to get young people involved;
2. Creative guidelines: how to create content that triggers conversations;
3. This is consent: how to talk (and think) about consent;
4. Removing barriers: how to debunk myths and avoid stereotypes;
5. Being a multiplier: how to run workshops to encourage conversations and creative expression;
6. Resources for survivors and advocates: how to respond and support survivors of sexual assault;
7. Good reads and resources: how to learn more about consent.

*Note: This toolkit uses the terms “victim” and “survivor” interchangeably. While acknowledging that “victim” is the appropriate legal term, the term “survivor” better reflects the strength and resilience of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence and is preferred by many women and girls themselves and also by many human rights activists.*

The latest version of this toolkit is available online at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2020/02/letstalkaboutyes/>. If you have any questions or suggestions, send a private message to @LetsTalkAboutYes on Instagram.

# 1. WHAT CAN YOU DO: HOW TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED

*“Campaigns and sex education might have more meaningful impact if they address the awkwardness of sex and intimacy, rather than pretending it doesn’t exist.”*

*Elsie Whittington. Lecturer in Youth Justice,  
Manchester Metropolitan University*

## **To demystify the issues around sexual consent we need to demystify why it can be difficult, awkward, embarrassing, shameful, a turn off, a turn on, scary and confusing, to talk and think about sex and about consent.**

One of the strategies suggested in this toolkit is to invite young people, including activists, artists and creatives to share their expressions of what sexual consent looks like to them by creating memes, photos, cartoons, drawings and graphics on Instagram and other channels – and sharing their thoughts to engage other young people in conversations around consent, using the hashtag #LetsTalkAboutYes and other relevant hashtags.

The Instagram account @LetsTalkAboutYes is used as a “consent wall”, which is expected to be eclectic and vibrant with diversity and include interesting and entertaining expressions on the subject curated in one place.

Together with other activists and organizations, you can organize workshops and events to talk about sex and consent.

You can also have conversations with friends, family, partners and those close to you.

Here are some things you can do to engage others in the campaign:

- create memes and artwork that spark conversations;
- ask others to join: universities, creatives, local influencers;
- follow and join in online conversations;
- host events, debates, conversations, speaker panels, etc.;
- run workshops.

### **Create and share memes and artwork**

What does sexual consent look like to you?

Work out your own creative contribution to inspire others to join the conversation using #LetsTalkAboutYes. Feelings, barriers, motivations and the need for consent can all

be part of this. Create a simple meme. For example, an image with a thought or question to share – on channels such as Instagram – on what sexual consent looks like to you.

You can use different media: comics, illustration, advertising, photography, graphic design, digital arts and drawing – or other disciplines – music, poetry, rap, performance art, storytelling...

Your artwork could be featured alongside other talented artists on the *@LetsTalkAboutYes Consent Wall*.

There is guidance on how to create content that opens up conversations in Chapter 2.

### **Ask artists, creatives, activists and organisations to join**

Do you know artists and creative people who could be interested in contributing to the campaign? Any crafty friends or relatives? Activists or organizations involved or interested in the issue? Teachers or sex educators working on the topic?

Think of local organizations and individuals active in women’s rights, LGBTI rights, sexual and reproductive rights, sexuality education, organizations working with young people or led by young people. Think of students, amateurs or professionals in any artistic discipline: comics, illustration, advertising, graphic design and digital arts, drawing, engraving and printed images, painting and photography – as well as music, poetry, slam, rap, performance art, podcasts, storytelling... Think of people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives who might happily join in.

Share this toolkit or a link to <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2020/02/letstalkaboutyes/> and ask them if they’d be keen to participate in the campaign, contribute to a “consent culture” and make 2020 “the year of consent”.

### **Follow and join online conversations**

Follow the hashtag #LetsTalkAboutYes (and other hashtags related to consent) and like, share, comment posts you like – and contribute to online conversations when you feel like it.

Beware of trolls and online harassment, the best strategy is often to ignore them. For other strategies, see: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-deal-with-trolls-on-social-media/>.

There is guidance on how to open up conversations, how to talk about consent and how to debunk myths and avoid stereotypes in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

### **Engage students with the campaign on campus**

Are you part of a student community? Or any other community: youth club, sports team, work place, migrant centre, etc.? The guidance below is aimed at university students but it can be adapted to other groups and communities.

Here are some ideas:

- Working with arts societies, art departments or student unions at universities, organize workshops or creative competitions on the topic of consent. For example, a competition could be held for the duration of several months. Student unions could ask people to vote in the competition to win a prize. All this could help increase engagement;
- Lobby student unions to increase the number of discussions around consent and improve reporting and support structures for survivors of sexual violence.
- Combine creative projects with campaigns for legislative change at national and local university level;
- Encourage students to create merchandise (posters, postcards, t-shirts, etc.) using the art that is created by the students to sell across campuses with funds being raised to support relevant organizations;
- Run events or stunts on campus, linking them to the campaign on social media:
  - Panel discussions and film screenings are good for visibility and cross-campus engagement. Team up with other societies on campus and invite speakers;
  - Provide examples of stunts other students have done at their universities around the world for inspiration. (For example, [“Carry That Weight” Changes the Conversation on Campus Sexual](#)

[Assault](#) and [“A rapist in your path”: Chilean protest song becomes feminist anthem](#));

- Explore other collaborative creative events. Team up with the drama department to write and produce a play (<http://www.sin.ie/2019/09/11/active-consent-programme-to-tour-ireland-with-original-play-the-kinds-of-sex-you-might-have-at-college/>) or with the fashion department and run a fashion show to increase the visibility of the campaign.

Look out for how to avoid unintentionally reinforcing stereotypes and myths in Chapter 4.

### **Organise talks or debates on sexual consent**

Do you know, or can you identify activists or organizations working on the topic that would be willing to give a talk or participate in a debate or a panel?

- Identify one or two activists working on “consent culture” or fighting “rape culture”;
  - Big event: a lecture with a Q&A;
  - Small event: a group of 15 people or less and a talk in a circle;
- Agree on the questions or topics you’d like to explore with the group;
- Consider opportunities to raise awareness of diversity and inclusivity and to highlight people’s specific experiences. For example, people who are transgender, refugees or homeless, and how situations may differ for them.

### **Run workshops on sexual consent**

Are you well-informed about the topic and keen to run a workshop or do you know a good facilitator and experts on the topic who could support you to run it?

Invite people to share their ideas and feelings about consent and create content for the campaign together.

Find some workshop suggestions in Chapter 5.

## **2. CREATIVE GUIDELINES: HOW TO CREATE CONTENT THAT TRIGGERS CONVER- SATIONS**

One of the ways to engage other young people in conversations is through creative content on social media: memes and artwork. #LetsTalkAboutYes will focus on Instagram but you can talk about consent in whatever platform you use – as long as you feel comfortable. Let's get started.

**It might not be a straightforward task, but we hope it is a worthwhile and rewarding process. Research. Get an idea. Test it out. Find a way to convey it. Create. Share it with many others across boundaries in a Europe-wide conversation and be part of this cultural change.**

Haven't got an idea yet? Get inspiration from existing content: Follow #LetsTalkAboutYes, check @LetsTalkAboutYes, see the links in Chapter 7 and search the internet for inspiration. You might want to brainstorm with others in a group – see Chapter 5 for some ideas for running creative workshops.

Once you have one or a few ideas that you think might be good... test them out. Share them with different people and see what reactions you get. Often you can generate more ideas by sharing yours with other people.

What are your best artistic or creative skills? Have you got a secret talent? Can you draw? Take pictures? Write a song? A poem? Do you slam? Or rap? Do you have experience making animated gifs or videos? Use what you are good at to create a strong piece of content. Or simply doodle or use your words to describe what consent looks like to you...

A few tips for your content:

- Use a “Yes means yes” approach, by which people actively express that they want to have sex in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways (a “No means no” approach isn't enough. Being silent or not saying no is NOT the same as giving consent: sexual consent must be a voluntary and free choice for all parties involved. The question is not whether a person says “no”, but whether they say “yes”);
- Reflect different realities and diversity when you talk about consent – e.g. <https://megjohndandjustin.com/sex/7-tips-consensual-hook-up/> or <https://time.com/5574163/tarana-burke-metoo-time-100-summit/>;
- You can talk about consent in a light-hearted manner but please be respectful and mindful that rape is a serious crime with

- often profound impact on survivors;
- Keep it simple – consent is simple. Demystify the supposed awkwardness;
- Beware of reinforcing gender stereotypes and avoid sexualised images to reach audiences or seek attention. This is not appropriate and triggers unwanted conversations;
- Contribute to the debunking of harmful stereotypes and myths about sexual violence. Be aware that “myth busters” can generate the opposite reaction if you put a lot of emphasis on the myth and not the reality;
- Use numbers and surveys of attitudes to show the reality. The reality is shocking!
- Think about your audience: be inclusive – include men but ensure that your content and strategies to pursue different targeted audiences recognise and respect the leading role of survivors and women's groups in the struggle for change;
- Be inclusive and respectful of people who don't understand the issue but want to engage in a conversation;
- Ask a question or challenge the audience to participate. A quiz can work well, where two or more questions are asked;
- Use humour – with respect: something that makes you smile or laugh is more likely to be shared;
- People love stories. Not just Instagram stories, but a personal journey or how a challenge has been overcome, if shared willingly. If a story might trigger traumatic reactions or emotions, warn the audience beforehand. Do not use other people's stories without their consent. If a survivor's story is already in the public domain through press or social media, reach out to them to say you'd like to reflect on their experience and always ask for their consent. Avoid asking survivors to retell their stories repeatedly if it isn't necessary. The experience of being overpowered and their consent not sought is at the core of survivor's traumatic experiences;
- Lists can also work well, for example: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B7DtA3rB28O/>;
- Social media content that meets Instagram guidelines can generally work on most other social media channels. For images, animations or videos, check online to ensure that you're using the right format. For a still image, a simple square works well, but there are options for both

landscape and portrait shapes. There are lots of online guides, such as <https://later.com/blog/instagram-image-size/>.

And some tips to increase social media engagement:

- On most platforms, photos and videos should be accompanied by text. Here is some text and flow recommendations for your posts:
  - 1- Start your text with a statement – e.g. *“sex without consent is rape!”*
  - 2- Then, tell why you are involved with this campaign, what motivates you – e.g. *“I am sharing this because...”*;
  - 3- And finally ask people to join you to support this campaign by sharing your post and making their own content and sharing it via social media;
  - 4- Try to keep your text as short and simple as possible.
- Use the hashtag #LetsTalkAboutYes to be part of the conversation and feel free to use other relevant hashtags wherever you want in your text. This will increase your posts’ visibility – e.g. “millions of #women in the world are actually survivors of rape... #womensrights #girlpower”;
- You can tag relatives, friends and also influencers in your posts to grab their attention and to encourage them to join in; to comment or create their own content and share it;
- The time that you publish your post is crucial. Generally, posts published between 12-1pm and 6pm-8pm perform best;
- Aim to respond to people’s comments and answer their questions ([unless they are trolls](#)). Being a reactive user is welcomed by social media algorithms. Just a reminder, think twice about your response before sharing it ;)

Read Chapters 3 and 4 on how to talk about consent, avoid pitfalls and help debunk misconceptions – not reinforce them.



# **3. THIS IS CONSENT: HOW TO TALK (AND THINK) ABOUT CONSENT**

**To talk about consent and promote a “consent culture” matters.**

It is a much-needed step to debunk the so called “rape culture” that normalizes and even justifies sexual violence, including rape, in our societies.

## A clear understanding of what sexual consent means can help prevent rape and other sexual crimes.

In some countries, open public conversations about consent are needed to **galvanize support to reform outdated rape laws**.

Laws that define rape based on the absence of consent set a clear boundary between consensual sex and rape and contribute to important discussions about sex and consent. So far, only 9 out of 31 European countries have consent-based laws in place. See: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2018/11/rape-in-europe/>.

In other countries, where the law is actually based on consent, rape continues to be common and survivors face great challenges in accessing justice and reparations.

Unfortunately, misconceptions and gender stereotypes about what constitutes sexual violence and the meaning of consensual sex are widespread.

*“They didn’t say no”; “She was asking for it because of her clothes”; “They had consented to sex last week, therefore, today was also consented”*, are some of the all-too-common responses that attempt to blur the understanding of consent.

The consequences of these attitudes are incredibly harmful: victims are not believed, they often blame themselves, end up not reporting the rape and perpetrators get away with the crimes. Even when survivors report the rape, they may end up being retraumatized and denied justice due to the harmful myths and stereotypes embedded in the criminal justice system.

In any conversation around consent, whether it is a public talk, a workshop or as part of a social media conversation, we must be clear: **when it comes to sex, consent is everything and there are no blurred lines**.



You can use the following definition:

### Consent is...

**Given freely:** Sexual consent must be a voluntary and free choice for all parties involved. Being silent or not saying no is not the same as giving consent. Unconscious people and people incapacitated by alcohol or drugs cannot consent. Sex is not consented under coercion or intimidation. There might be other situations in which a person is not capable to genuinely consent – for example, if they don’t have the mental capacity to consent or are underage.

**Informed:** Lying or deliberately hiding certain intentions such as unprotected sex is not consensual sex. Forcing someone too drunk to refuse sex to agree to certain practices is not getting consent.

**Specific:** Consenting to one thing (e.g. kissing) does not mean consenting to everything else. A general rule is: If in doubt, ask. If you’re still in doubt, stop.

**Reversible:** Consenting once does not mean consenting forever. Even within an ongoing sexual act, one should be free to pause or stop at any time and to revoke consent.

**Enthusiastic!** The question is not whether a person says “no”, but whether they say “yes” or otherwise actively express consent in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways. This is what is called “yes means yes”. “I don’t know” doesn’t mean consent.

Consent is not about signing a contract! It’s about communication and about making sure all sexual activities happen with mutual consent. Demystify the awkwardness of talking about consent.

The Family Planning Association in the UK have compiled some verbal and non-verbal signs to express consent or lack of it: <https://www.fpa.org.uk/sites/default/files/consent-giving-getting-respecting-leaflet.pdf>. And this is what consent looks like for US-based Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN): <https://www.rainn.org/articles/what-is-consent>.

The importance of sexual consent can be explained by considering other scenarios in which consent may be important and how they might be similar to sexual situations:

- o Would you eat someone else's food without asking them?
- o Would it be ok to go into someone else's room or house without asking them? What if you were only going in to tidy up for them, or do some other kind of favour?
- o If you bought someone a jumper as a present, would it be ok to make them wear it, or threaten that you will no longer be their friend if they don't wear it?

A common analogy used to illustrate how sexual consent should work is of making someone a cup of tea. Search "tea consent" or watch the video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8>.

Other useful analogies are "handshakes and consent":

<https://megjohndiustin.com/sex/handshakes-and-consent/>

and the "consent castle":

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2016/07/metaphor-for-consent/>.



# **4.** **REMOVING** **BARRIERS:** **HOW TO** **DEBUNK** **MYTHS AND** **STEREO-** **TYPES**

The so called “rape culture” that normalizes and even justifies sexual violence, including rape, in our societies is underpinned and perpetuated by harmful myths and gender stereotypes.

**Rape can occur in all kinds of circumstances. The only way to know that it is not rape is if free consent has been given to the acts by both parties. Clothing, past behaviour, or marriage do not constitute consent.**

It is important that our activism and conversations contribute to debunking “rape myths” and not to reinforcing them.

Be aware that “myth busters” can unintentionally reinforce them. By putting excessive attention on the “myths”, we can contribute to spreading them further. There is a risk that this is what people will remember.

Think carefully if your artwork, messages and comments might inadvertently be using or reinforcing misconceptions or stereotypes about gender, sex, consent or others. If in doubt, check them with other people before sharing them publicly.

Use facts and positive framing, to show what consent is rather than what it shouldn't be.



Screengrabbed from <https://medium.com/gendered-violence/rape-is-rape-6b975ffdb496>

Here are some facts to respond to some common “rape myths” and stereotypes:

Just because someone is acting or dressing in a certain way doesn't mean they want sex. How someone dresses, how much alcohol they choose to drink, who they choose to go out with, how they behave, how they choose to live their life, does not make them responsible if they get raped. The victim is not to blame. No one is responsible for how another acts.

Rape is a violation of another person's bodily

integrity and sexual autonomy, and as such is a criminal offence and thus depends on the acts of the rapist, NOT on the victim. Whether someone wants sex is a personal and sometimes complicated question, which needs to be answered directly. It cannot be inferred from other behaviour. *(In response to: “She was asking for it because of her clothes”; “They were being flirty”; “Even if it was rape, it's the victim's own fault”; “Sex workers can't be raped”, etc.)*

It is the responsibility of both parties to ensure the other is consenting. This cannot be inferred from an absence of clear words or actions. The absence of a “no” is not a “yes” – only an enthusiastic “yes” means “yes”. There are several reasons why someone might not be able to say “no”, including power dynamics, coercion and not being heard. Different people react differently when they experience sexual violence. Fighting is one reaction, but another, a very common one, is freezing. It is not the responsibility of a victim to fight back an attacker. *(In response to: “They didn't say no”; “They didn't protest” and “There wasn't violence”.)*

Rape is a non-consensual sexual intercourse and while the majority of victims are women and girls, anyone, of any gender, can be a victim. *(In response to: “Men can't get raped”.)*

Going on a date with someone, going home with them, or previous sexual relationships do not necessarily mean that consent to sex has been given on the occasion in question. *(In response to: “They had consented to sex last week, therefore, today was also consented”.)*

Most often, perpetrators are victims' partners, ex-partners or friends. Perpetrators are not beasts or some “mythical creatures” that only do “bad things”. They have friends, families, careers, they say “hello”, “thank you”, they can be very famous or very charismatic, they can be our friends. The fact that we know the perpetrator, that we like them, and we do not expect to hear about any violence they have committed does not mean that the accusation is false. *(In response to: “Most rapes are committed by strangers, someone that the victim doesn't know, a clearly and totally 'bad person’”; “A person cannot sexually assault a partner or a spouse”.)*

Most often, rape happens at the victim's home, somewhere nearby or at a home of someone they know. *(In response to: “Many people*

*believe that sexual violence and rapes only happen at night, in public or outdoors, in some dark places like alleys, forests, parks”.)*

Raping someone is a crime, which may cause profound harm. It’s often thought that rape is not a “real crime”, or that victims report rape simply when they feel regret about having had sex BUT it’s the physical and emotional effects of being raped, and the assault on bodily integrity and sexual autonomy, which makes rape criminal. *(In response to: “It is only unwanted sex”.)*

Those who report rape must be taken seriously, whenever they report it. A delayed reporting of rape is more likely evidence that the victim is traumatised and fears their rapist, rather than evidence that the rape didn’t happen. *(In response to: “It’s probably just a made-up story anyway”.)*

Victims must show great courage and strength to report an assault to the police. Their reputation or credibility is often aggressively questioned and criminal proceedings can be an enormous burden. Victims deserve to be believed, they must receive the support to which they are entitled and the facts they report must be the subject of a thorough investigation. *(In response to: “A lot of victims lie about being raped/harassed and give false reports for revenge, or because they do not want to admit to a relationship”; “Women like to take revenge”.)*

Most survivors do not report the rape. Those who do report or tell their stories often do so several weeks, months or even years after the rape. Their experiences are still valid and important. *(In response to: “A ‘real’ survivor of sexual assault always reports it immediately” – see #WhyIDidn’tReport on Twitter.)*

Rape is much more common than people think and affects women in a disproportionate manner. In the EU, 1 in 20 women aged 15 and over have been raped. That is around 9 million women. And 1 in 10 women aged 15 and over in the EU have experienced some form of sexual violence. *(In response to: “Rapes don’t happen often”.)*

Rape affects all genders and age groups. But women and girls are disproportionately affected due to the deeply entrenched gender power imbalance underpinning gender-based discrimination and violence. LGBTI

and gender non-conforming persons are also often targeted for rape and other sexual violence as punishment for transgressing social norms around stereotypical gender roles and relations. It is important that we acknowledge the gendered nature of rape and adopt a gender-sensitive approach, while considering also the specific needs of different groups of victims of sexual violence. The measures which can empower women and girls like talking about consent, promoting a “consent culture”, providing adequate support services and reforming legislation – will also benefit men, non-binary people and people of all genders who experience sexual violence. *(In response to: “Why are you only talking about women? Men get raped too”.)*

Sex workers have the right to give and withhold consent to any sexual activity, and therefore, can be raped just like anyone else. They are often targeted by violent men because of the stigma attached to sex work and greater impunity. Sex workers have the right to consent or not like anyone else. When sex workers negotiate paid-for sex, this involves consensual activities, not rape or violence. *(In response to: “Sex workers cannot be victims of sexual assault”.)*

Sexual violence including rape is not about sex or satisfying sexual desire, it is about exercising power and control over the victim. Perpetrators are perfectly capable of controlling their sexual urges and do not engage in sexual activity in a spontaneous way under the pressure of their sex drive. *(In response to: “Sexual assault is an act of lust and passion which can’t be controlled”.)*



#ThisIsNotConsent street art meme, Ireland, 2017 - ©PAUL FAITH/AFP/Getty Images

# 5. BEING A MULTIPLIER: HOW TO RUN WORKSHOPS TO ENCOURAGE CONVERSATIONS AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

It can be very rewarding and motivating to campaign together as a group. One way to bring others in could be to design and run workshops. Here are some ideas about the process and the content, including workshop design and facilitation, tips to consider in workshops and examples to run a consent workshop and a creative ideation process. There are many different approaches and exercises for consent training and workshops. The ones below are based on experiences from activists who have contributed to this toolkit. Please get in touch if you would like to share other examples at @LetsTalkAboutYes on Instagram.

## Design your workshop

**Before designing a workshop, you should be able to clearly answer: what is its purpose or intention and what are the desired outcomes? Once you have these, you could use the I.D.O.A.R.T framework to design it: <http://www.fantasticstudios.com/meeting-design-guide>.**

Make sure you have the right space, time and facilitation methods for the number of participants, and a good facilitator who is clear with the intention of the workshop and can guide the group to reach the desired objectives, adapting as needed. Here are some facilitation resources: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5wIEVChc9NXQVNxekdiMzE1dW8/view>

### How to talk about rape and consent in workshops

- The issue must be inclusive of all participants taking into account diversity and different codes (such as wearing a headscarf or veil);
- Use inclusive language: non-binary in terms of gender; the language that we use encapsulates all audiences but also be mindful that rape is a gendered issue;
- Open up artistic forms of participation to the maximum extent possible: drawing, engraving and printed images, painting, photography, comics, illustration, comics, etc.;
- Create a safe space. Honesty is important when talking about sensitive topics like consent and must be coupled with respect for other people's points of view. It's ok if you make some mistakes when talking about rape and consent, as long as we can learn to recognise them and make changes in the way we think;
- Ensure you create a safe space for people in the workshop; discuss "ground rules" at the start, including confidentiality (e.g. what is said in the room stays in the room) and reassure participants that they can step out of the room whenever they need to. Ideally, you would have access to a room for people to take a break in and relax. If possible, one person should facilitate that space;
- Compile and share a list of resources on psychological, medical and legal support freely available in your community with all participants before the workshop. While we cannot know whether participants who are survivors are sufficiently psychologically prepared to take part in the workshop, we can minimise risks and equip everyone with support available, if needed. Be ready in case some people might "come out" for the first time during the workshop. See guidance in Chapter 6.
- Ice-breakers can be a good way to get a group of people more comfortable with each other before talking about an "awkward" topic like sexual consent. Try group introductions, sharing a funny, exciting or awkward experience you had recently, or any kind of silly game;
- Beware of personal stories. You shouldn't reveal other people's personal stories and information, especially if they are not present. People may consider using their own stories or fictional scenarios, only if they would feel comfortable to do so. Avoid using "I" or giving other participants' names when discussing scenarios;
- For many survivors of sexual violence, it is a huge step to talk about their own experiences, overcoming the stigma still attached to rape, public shaming and threats. Their bravery should not be underestimated;
- Consider opportunities to raise awareness of diversity and inclusivity and to highlight people's specific experiences. For example, people who are refugees or homeless or transgender and how situations and experiences may differ for them.

Read more about how to respond and support survivors of sexual assault in Chapter 6.

#### Example: Consent workshop outline

60 minutes (can be extended to be able to go more into depth with each question)

Divide people into groups of 4-6 people.

The workshop is divided into four questions:

### 1. List as many synonyms of consent as you can think of

- Purpose: to get the groups to define the essence of the word “consent” and to create and share a common understanding for further discussion. It is important to touch upon the fact that consent can always be withdrawn. If this is not mentioned by any participants, make sure to note it before going on to question 2a.

### 2a. What would society generally look like if it was consent-based?

- Purpose: to get the groups to discuss how we communicate with each other and get them to think about the value of sexual consent and what it would mean in practice.

#### **2b. If the groups need more help to get the discussion going: How would such a consent-based society look at sexual violence?**

- Purpose: getting the groups to discuss how a consent-based rape legislation and “consent culture” will change the way we perceive survivors and perpetrators and sexual violence and rape in general

### 3. List examples of norms, stereotypes and perceptions we have in our society that are obstacles in working towards a “consent culture” and consent-based rape legislation

- Purpose: to get the groups to reflect on harmful gender roles and stereotypes, which make it difficult for the individual to come forward, express their sexuality, enjoy sex, take a stand, support consent, to understand and respect boundaries and more.

### 4. What can you do as an individual to combat these harmful and toxic stereotypes to help transform our society into a consent-based society?

- Purpose: they now have a vision of what a consent-based society looks like and they have also reflected on some of the obstacles

that lie in the pathway towards it. The purpose of this last question is to get them involved in creating that path, by making them reflect on what role they can play. They need to be as concrete as possible and list specific examples of how they can advocate for consent in their local communities.

This exercise needs two facilitators. One to guide the discussion after each question and one to take notes.

Each question is written or printed on a sheet of paper. These are handed out one by one as the session moves on – so that they can only look at one question at a time. This means there is also room on the sheet of paper for notes at each table.

They get 10 minutes to discuss each question, followed by a five-minute (preferably more, if you have time) recap on a flipchart. With a small number of groups, you can get feedback from everyone - if you have many participants, just ask for a few to present their most important points.

#### **Other exercises**

- **Game - where are your boundaries?**  
*10-15 minutes*

Make pairs.

One person is standing and the other one is coming closer until the first one says: “stop”. Then switch, do it two times.

One or two minutes talk in pairs: how do you feel about it? What was different the second time?

Discuss it with all the group, in the plenary.

- **Stories 25 minutes**

Prepare 4-5 stories about some imagined situation where the rules of consent were or were not respected.

Make 4-5 groups, each one has one story. For 5-10 minutes they are reading and discussing the story if this was breaking the rules or not.

Then discuss it with everyone.

## Creative ideation workshop

If you want to generate ideas with a group of people on how to represent what consent looks like, you could host a creative ideation workshop.

A creative ideation workshop should ideally follow a consent workshop, or include a session where participants explore, talk and think about consent – ideally involving a sex educator or an expert on the subject (see workshop examples above).

The creative ideation process outlined below uses some great tools from MobLab's Campaign Accelerator planning process <https://mobilisationlab.org/training-coaching/campaign-accelerator-training/resources/>. The timings will depend a lot on the size of the group and participation.

### 0. Develop a focus question.

Before you start the workshop, it is useful to bring a focus question that will allow participants to keep focused on a question the ideation process is trying to solve. These questions are used at the beginning of the idea generation and development to frame the challenge and offer participants the opportunity to answer the question in a variety of ways. Your focus question could look like:

*How might we represent consent in a light-hearted and respectful way that resonates with young people and compels them to engage in conversations about sexual consent?*

*How might we create memes and other artistic expressions to talk about consent in a way that makes young people react (feel, think, smile, like, doubt...) and compels them to engage in a conversation about how sexual consent looks to them?*

*How might we engage young people to talk about sexual consent by representing what consent looks like in a visually appealing way?*

### 1. Creative principles & warm up (15-20min)

It is good to start the ideation process with a good energizer that makes participants feel energized and puts their brains in a creative brainstorming mode. See examples on pages 136 -142 of MobLab's Create module: <https://mobilisationlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CA-create-final.pdf>.

### 2. Generate ideas, with different brainstorming techniques (45min-1h)

The aim is to generate as many ideas as possible, without judging them. Divide participants into groups and set the ground rules for brainstorming. You can use a combination of different brainstorming techniques. See Idea Generation, on pages 145-154 of MobLab's Create module: <https://mobilisationlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CA-create-final.pdf>.

### 3. Select your best idea(s) (20min)

Look at all the ideas your group has generated and select the best ones. Now turn them into concepts that you can show with minimum explanation to other groups of participants. See Idea Selection, on pages 157-162 of MobLab's Create module: <https://mobilisationlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CA-create-final.pdf>.

If there is more time (+20-30min), you could develop your concept into a quick prototype to test it with the other participants – see pages 177-178 of MobLab's Create module: <https://mobilisationlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CA-create-final.pdf>

### 4. Test and refine concepts (30min-1h)

In the plenary or teaming up with another group, take turns and share your most powerful concepts or prototypes with others in the group and get feedback and reactions from each other.

Based on feedback from the other groups, review and develop your concepts further: what will you keep, drop, improve from your concept or prototype?

And with even more time, you can turn your concepts into proper prototypes and test them with audiences outside the workshop – with friends, people in your school, university or community, or young people in the street. [Read more about prototyping and testing in MobLab's Prototype module: <https://mobilisationlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CA-prototype-final.pdf>

### 5. Create your artwork (30min-1h++)

You should now be ready to turn your best concepts into actual memes or artwork using the means of expression of your choice (timings will depend on complexity, e.g. if you're writing a sentence on a board or writing a song, or making a video...)

*Note: The #LetsTalkAboutYes campaign in Denmark was developed using MobLab's Campaign Accelerator. Read more about this in MobLab's case study: <https://mobilisationlab.org/stories/when-changing-laws-isnt-enough/>*

# 6. RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS AND ADVOCATES: HOW TO RESPOND AND SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual violence including rape is widespread and systemic worldwide. Global estimates published by the WHO indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

There are no countries where people live free from its threat, and while it disproportionately affects women and girls, no gender or group of people are exempt from its destructive effects.

**With this in mind, it is more than likely that activists and campaigners advocating for consent may be survivors themselves and/or will engage and interact with survivors and victims of rape or other forms of sexual violence both online and off-line.**

Activists should not encourage individuals to disclose personal experiences, but some survivors may choose to do so. Others won't say anything but can feel some distress after reading or seeing assets and materials about rape or participating in some of the activities.

### **Effects of rape/ Common responses**

Everyone reacts differently to a sexual assault and there is no right or wrong way to feel. Common symptoms are nightmares, flashbacks, change in the mood, or lack of concentration. Sometimes people experience fear, feelings of guilt, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), shame or stigma, often linked to prevailing gender norms about sexual violence survivors, perpetrators, and the roles of men and women.

Some have no obvious external reaction. A good resource to know more about how a survivor of rape may feel and cope after a rape is: <https://ninaburrows.com/books/the-courage-to-be-me/preface/>

### ***What can we do to support?***

- Have safeguarding and referral contacts in place and available to those who may need help even if they do not ask for them (for example in the break/relaxation room). This can include free phone helplines of national or regional organizations, rape crisis centres, or women's centres in your country. You can add helpline and online resources for specialised support groups (LGBTI, migrant organizations, people of colour, minority groups, etc.).
- Add these numbers and contacts to your online campaigns or have them handy in workshops or other off-line activities;

- If you are planning to use contact numbers and information of specific smaller organizations to act as referrals, consider contacting them first so they are aware;
- When survivors are willing to or feel the need to share personal experiences, consider the following to support them:
  - o Listen to what they have to say and try to not interrupt (even if you have questions);
  - o Believe them;
  - o Let them know that you understand that it was not their fault;
  - o Give information about referrals and organizations that can help but RESPECT their decision about what to do;
  - o Do not judge or ask why they did not fight back or ask for help immediately;
  - o Respect their confidentiality (e.g. keep their personal details, such as names and locations to yourself and if you feel the need to debrief with someone or discuss survivors' stories outside of the setting, make sure that you don't disclose anything that could identify them without their consent. If you're taking notes, keep them in a secure place so that their identity is protected);
  - o Avoid telling them what to do to feel better. Let survivors stay in control of the situation;
  - o If the person is telling you that they are at risk from others or of self-inflicted harm, ask whether they feel comfortable contacting a rape helpline or the emergency services (e.g. 999 in the UK).

### **Additional resources for survivors and supporters**

- Rape and effects of rape, Rape Crisis South London <http://www.rasasc.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/rapeCrisisSouthLondonRapeAndTheEffectsOfRapeInformationForSupportersOfSurvivors.pdf>;
- Self Help Guides, SARSA <https://www.sarsas.org.uk/self-help-guides/>;
- How Do I Tell Someone About My Sexual Assault? <https://www.projectconsent.com/how-do-i-tell-someone-about-my-assault>;
- My Body Back, a London-based project to support women one year on from a sexual assault <http://www.mybodybackproject.com/>.

# 7. GOOD READS AND RESOURCES

**There are many good resources about sexual consent available online. Some have been highlighted throughout the toolkit. Here are a few more:**

Projects:

<https://www.consentcollective.com/>  
<http://www.mybodybackproject.com/>  
<http://www.consentiseverything.com/>  
<https://www.projectconsent.com/>

## **Educational resources:**

Everything You Need to Know About Consent that You Never Learned in Sex Ed:  
<https://www.teenvoque.com/story/consent-how-to>

How can men know if someone is giving consent or not?  
[https://www.scarleteen.com/how-can-men-know-if-someone-is-giving-consent-or-not\\_0](https://www.scarleteen.com/how-can-men-know-if-someone-is-giving-consent-or-not_0)

How You Guys -- that's right, you GUYS -- Can Prevent Rape:  
<https://www.scarleteen.com/article/abuse-assault/how-you-guys-thats-right-you-guys-can-prevent-rape>

TedX Talk: Why we need to change the way young men think about consent:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/nathaniel\\_cole\\_why\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_change\\_the\\_way\\_young\\_men\\_think\\_about\\_consent](https://www.ted.com/talks/nathaniel_cole_why_we_need_to_change_the_way_young_men_think_about_consent)

Quickies: Sexual Consent Basics:  
<https://www.scarleteen.com/article/disability-quickies/quickies-sexual-consent-basics>

Consent video from Amaze:  
<https://amaze.org/video/consent/>

What is Consent?  
<https://www.loveisrespect.org/healthy-relationships/what-consent/>

The Consent Castle metaphor:  
<https://everydayfeminism.com/2016/07/metaphor-for-consent/>

All About Boundaries:  
<https://www.rewriting-the-rules.com/sex/all-about-boundaries/>

The Consent Checklist by Meg-John Barker:  
<https://www.rewriting-the-rules.com/zines/#1570712847485-79489f1b-f52a>

“This zine provides a checklist that you can work through when considering how to do anything – sex, a social event, work, a relationship – consensually. It explores and unpacks the key elements needed to ensure that people are freely agreeing to something, that they can tune into their wants, needs, limits, and boundaries and feel safe enough to express them to others concerned.”

Self-consent: an introduction:  
<https://loveuncommon.com/2017/09/28/self-consent/>

“Self-consent, at its heart, is about treating your needs, desires and limits with respect. It is about being curious about yourself, and making choices that express your authentic self. It is central to learning to have a consensual relationship with others because it embeds consensual practice in your life and all your interactions. [...]”

Sexual abuse: The questions you’ve never had the chance to ask (video explainers):  
<https://ninaburrowes.com/sexual-abuse-the-questions-youve-never-had-the-chance-to-ask/>

Website about ChemSex and consent (useful resource for the discussion of consent in general):  
<https://lgbt.foundation/news/chemsex-and-consent/228>

“Yes Means Yes!: Visions of Female Sexual Power and A World Without Rape”, a collection of essays edited by Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti.

### **Training resources:**

Handshakes and consent activity:  
<https://bishtraining.com/three-handshakes-an-activity-for-learning-how-consent-feels/> and video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awrp7EJGqyc>

Top tips to teach about consent:  
<https://bishtraining.com/top-tips-for-teaching-about-consent/>

and more training resources downloadable for a fee: <https://bishtraining.com/product/the-consent-teaching-pack/>

Negotiating sex – start with the wheel of consent:  
<https://loveuncommon.com/2018/02/14/negotiating-sex-start-with-the-wheel-of-consent/>

and the 3-minute game  
<https://bettymartin.org/download-wheel/>

On disclosure and building trust in workshops (pages 14-16) <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT3000102015ENGLISH.PDF>

### **Podcasts:**

7 Tips for a Consensual Hook Up:  
<https://megjohndiustin.com/sex/7-tips-consensual-hook-up/>

Make Consent Your Aim:  
<https://megjohndiustin.com/relationships/make-consent-aim/>

Laid Bare podcast by Oloni, about sex, relationships, feminism and race (“adult content”):  
<https://soundcloud.com/laidbarepodcast>

### **Series on Netflix:**

“Unbelievable”, a series based on a true story of American survivor Marie Adler:  
<https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/80153467>

“Sex Education”:  
<https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/80197526>

#letstalkaboutyes

