**Sexual Consent notes**

**Sexual consent** refers to a positive choice to take part in a sexual activity by people who understand the nature and implications of the activity they are agreeing to. Both parties take part not because they have to, but because they *want* to. Consent must be free – an active, personal choice; it must not be inferred, assumed, coerced or gained by exploitation. In addition, the person giving consent must have the capacity to do so: they should be old enough, have all the information they need to make the decision, and be in a fit state to give consent (and not, for example, with their judgement impaired by alcohol or drugs). It is the person seeking consent who is legally and ethically responsible for ensuring that consent is given and meets these criteria, and because people may change their minds or consent to one activity but not another, the seeker of consent should not see seeking consent as a ‘one-off’ but rather a continuing process of making sure the other person is consenting.

**WHAT IS SEXUAL CONSENT?**

It doesn’t matter what age or gender you are, or whether you’re straight, gay or bisexual, if you’re planning to do anything sexual then both of you must give consent.

Consent has to be given freely and no one can be made to consent to something. It’s not consent if someone does something because they feel like they have to. You can also never assume that someone is giving consent – you have to be sure.

Consent is an essential part of healthy relationships and it’s really important to know what it is and the [many ways to spot it](https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/consent/signs-to-spot/). Both you and the person you’re with always need to consent before sex or any intimate activity.

If you want to do something sexual with your partner, the responsibility lies with you to check for consent, not with your partner to say ‘no’ if they don’t want to

**WHAT IS RAPE?** 

Rape is sex without consent. This means that rape isn’t just people being physically forced into a sexual act, it also includes pressure that makes someone feel like they had no choice but to have sex.

Most rape victims know their attacker, sometimes it is even the person they’re in a relationship with.

Anyone of any gender or sexual orientation can be a victim of rape and / or sexual assault. The most important bit to remember is that being pressured or forced to have sex or to do something sexual when you don’t want to is a crime. If you have been raped, or sexually assaulted, remember that it’s not your fault, you aren’t to blame and there are people who can help you.