PURPOSE & GOALS

The **ASK. LISTEN. RESPECT.** video was created to promote healthy communication among youth ages 11-16 by providing concrete examples of:

- How to ask for consent
- What enthusiastic, verbal consent looks like
- How to accept “no” as normal boundary-setting in relationships

USING THE VIDEO AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

This video and discussion guide can be used in a classroom setting, with a small group of youth, or one-on-one with an adult who can lead an informed discussion.

OVERVIEW

Not all youth are dating, but many of them have thought about dating, relationships, and intimacy. The attitudes and beliefs that are formed during these critical years will most likely affect how they treat their dating partners.

**According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey Report¹:**
- It is estimated that, 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 7 boys who ever experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, first experienced some form of intimate partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age.
- More than half of all rapes of girls occur before age 18, and 22% occur before the age of 12.

**According to an Urban Institute Study on Dating Violence Experiences of LGBT Youth²:**
- 23% of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual teens in relationships said they were sexually coerced, compared to 12% of heterosexual teens.
- Youth who identified as transgender/gender-queer reported the highest rates of dating violence and sexual coercion, with 89% reporting physical dating violence.

Sexual violence is a big problem in our society in part because there is a lack of knowledge and understanding around what consent is and what it looks like in our everyday lives. This video and discussion guide stresses the importance of understanding what consent means. The more we talk about consent, the more normal it will become, so talking openly and respectfully with friends and partners will become second nature to youth.

WHAT IS CONSENT?

Consent is a clear and enthusiastic “yes”.

Consent is an active, voluntary, and verbal agreement.

Consent is a process and a conversation.

Consent can always be withdrawn.

WHAT IS “FREE AND INFORMED” CONSENT?

Someone is able to give their free and informed consent if they:

• Know what they are consenting to
• Are able to choose whether or not to do something
• Know what their feelings are about the particular situation
• Are able to communicate their choice:
  ➔ without coercion; either a “yes” or “no” is acceptable
  ➔ not refusing =/= consent
• Are able to understand if something is harmful
• Are able to prevent being harmed, physically or emotionally, by another.

It is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that they have their partner’s consent before and during intimacy.

Contact with another person’s body, whether sexual or not, must always include consent. No one should touch another without their consent.

WHY TEACH ABOUT CONSENT?

Communication, respect, and honesty are the building blocks of healthy relationships, and consent is about all those things.

When we teach teens about consent, we help them learn how to express what they want and don’t want. We give them tools to express their limits. We teach them that they deserve to be treated in a respectful way.

Teaching consent also means teaching teens that it is just as important to respect the limits and wishes of others. We teach them that their friends have a right to say “no” or “yes” and have that be respected.
FACILITATOR TIPS!

Facilitating a supportive and meaningful workshop takes intention before even pressing “start” on the video.

This is especially true when talking about consent and working with youth who may have experienced sexual or intimate partner violence. Take a moment to prepare for this discussion by looking through the following tips.

Use group agreements so everyone can participate and has clear expectations. Youth are often bombarded with rules on how they can and cannot move through spaces (school, after-school programs, home, etc.) that can be oppressive. Group agreements are a great tool to empower young people to name the ways they can collectively make the space feel best for themselves and create a structure for accountability. Some example group agreements include:

- one diva, one mic (when one person talks, others listen)
- be present
- move up, move up (if you are someone who speaks often in group discussions try to move up your active listening skills; if you are someone who often listens in group discussions try to move up your speaking skills.)
- what’s said here stays here, what’s learned here leaves here

Ask about pronouns.

It’s important to refer to participants (and everyone else) in the way that feels best for them. In the English language we use gendered pronouns in place of people’s names (they/them, she/her, he/him, etc.). Rather than make assumptions about the pronouns people use, ask! When introducing yourself to the group say something like, “Hi everyone! My name is ___ and I use _____ (they/them, she/her, he/him, etc.) pronouns. Can we go around the room so I can hear your names and pronouns too?” For more information about pronouns and their importance please refer to: mypronouns.org.
Be prepared!

Have a plan with your co-facilitators or other folks that you’re working with on how you will respond if a youth discloses abuse or trauma during the activities or after.

Address mandated reporting laws before starting the workshop.

Let participants know if you are a mandated reporter (and make sure you know exactly what that means in your state and with your agency!) so that youth can make informed decisions about how and if they want to disclose abuse or trauma. This should not be framed in a scary way, but as a way to build trust and be transparent. Share resources like confidential and anonymous hotlines (like the ones listed at the end of this guide) too.

Meet the youth where they are.

Younger folks might need questions and examples to be more concrete. Some questions are repeated throughout the guide and rephrased different ways—this was done on purpose to provide examples of the different ways you can ask questions and promote discussion.

Right to pass and leave the room.

Remember that there is likely to be trauma in the room. This discussion could be the first time a young person hears language that names past or present experiences. Let youth know that participation is not mandatory and that they have the “right to pass” on certain questions or activities. If the space you are in allows for it, let the youth know that it is also okay for them to leave the room if they need to take a breath and a break. Make sure that you have support people in the room who can check in with youth who step out and provide crisis intervention if necessary.

Make the curriculum your own.

You know your community best! Feel free to have fun, change things up, and experiment to best communicate and model the necessity of consent.
OBJECTIVE: The goal of this activity is for teens to understand what consent means in the context of intimate partner relationships. This is done by breaking down the meaning of consent into smaller pieces and going over each part of the definition piece by piece. This activity utilizes ambiguous statements to illustrate how consent can be confusing in the sense that if you’re not sure, ASK.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Technology to play Ask. Listen. Respect video.

A. PIZZA INTRODUCTION:
(adapted from Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence)

Discuss the following:

• If your friend walks into your house with a pizza that has a topping you don’t like and offers you a slice and you decline, how would you feel if they asked, “Are you sure?” or said, “It’s weird that you don’t want a slice.”

• If your friend walks into your house with a pizza and offers you two slices and you eat four without asking them, what do you think their reaction would be? How do you think they would feel?

• If your friend walks into your house with a pizza and you ate it with them one day and then they came back the next day with another pizza and offered you a slice and you declined, how would you feel if they got upset? Do you need to accept something today just because you accepted it the day before?

• If your friend walks into your house with a pizza and half of it had a topping you didn’t like and half of it had a topping you did like, would you feel comfortable asking for a slice with the topping you did like? How would you react if your friend told you that you could only have a slice with the topping you didn’t like?
Discuss the following: How do you know if someone wants to hold your hand and/or kiss you? If someone wants to hold your hand does that mean they want to kiss you? If someone wants to kiss you does that mean that they want to go further? If someone wants to hold your hand and/or kiss you one day does that mean they will want to hold your hand and/or kiss you the next day?

B. VIEW THE ASK. LISTEN. RESPECT. VIDEO (AT WWW.TEACHCONSENT.ORG)

Explain to teens that they will be watching a video about consent.

Prior to viewing the video, ask teens:
- What do you think about when you hear the word 'consent'?
- How would you explain consent to someone who doesn’t know what it is?

Once teens have viewed the video, ask:
- Can you spot 2 or 3 examples of how each teen asked for consent (in the video)?

Here are the examples of asking for consent in the video:
- Girl: “Can I come over?” Boy’s response: “Sure”
- Boy: “Want to shoot some hoops?” Girl’s response: “Um no, not really.”
- Girl: “Do you want to play [this video game]?” Boy’s response: “Yeah”
- Girl: “Hey, do you want to go see a movie?” Boy’s response: “Nah…”
- Boy: “You want to kiss?” Girl’s response: (smiles) “Yeah!”

- What are a few specific examples from the video of the teens not giving their consent? How did each teen respond when the other said "no "?
- In the video, the teens ask direct questions to see what the other person wants to do. How do you ask for consent with your friends? What do these conversations look like and sound like in your life?

Discussion about consent in dating relationships:
- How do you know when someone gives their consent to hold hands, hug, kiss or touch them?
- What do you do if consent is unclear? What are some tools you can use to be 100% sure that you have another person’s consent?
- If you get someone’s consent once do you have to get it again later? Is consent a one-time event or an ongoing conversation? Why?
- Why is consent an important part of all our relationships? What are examples of using consent with people you are dating? How about people in your family? Your friends?

FACILITATOR TIPS!
- Explain enthusiastic consent and the importance of asking to kiss or touch someone. Further explain that only “yes” means “yes.” “Maybe” or “I’m not sure” do not mean “yes,” and just because someone does not say “no”, it does not mean that the person is giving consent.
- While this video features a seemingly straight couple, remember that it is important for folks of all sexualities and gender identities to learn and talk about consent! When having conversations with youth, it’s best to not assume how they identify and use examples and language that is inclusive and expansive!
C. PERSONAL SPACE INVADERS:

This activity is a movement-based activity where youth are split up into pairs. Youth will step-by-step move towards each other, exploring their own personal boundaries, asking for and receiving consent, and listening to their partner.

DIRECTIONS:

• Split your group into two even parallel lines on opposite ends of the room (or several feet apart depending on the size of your space) facing each other. The person directly across from them is their partner for the activity.

• Explain that the goal of this activity is for each pair to get as close as possible to their partner.

• Once the pairs are set-up, tell one side of the room to move towards their partner once they get their partner’s consent. It is then the other partner’s turn to ask for and receive their consent to move forward. The pairs can switch back and forth freely until one of the partners does not give their consent or the pair cannot physically get any closer.

FACILITATOR TIPS!

• Note the ways in which the participants are asking and receiving consent (or not). Are they asking clearly? Are they using verbal or physical cues? Are they confident or shy? These observations will help with the following discussion.

• Do the exercise twice—once with only verbal cues and another round with only non-verbal cues. Ask the participants about the different experiences. You can also switch half-way through the exercise and have the youth use verbal cues at the beginning and non-verbal cues at the end to save time if needed.

• Note that the word “move” is used instead of “step.” Be thoughtful about the different ways in which folks move and prepare to make adjustments to the exercise to best fit the youth in the space.

At the end of this activity, lead the participants in a discussion about their experience by using these or similar questions:

• How did you feel while doing the activity?

• How did you know when your partner was giving you their consent? Did they vocally say “yes” or did you rely on other cues? What other cues did you use to perceive consent? Were you ever unclear if your partner was giving you consent or not? What kind of cues felt unclear? What did you do when you were not sure?

• How did your partner move towards you? Quickly, or did they take their time and move in smaller increments? How did you move towards your partner? Did you make assumptions or did you and your partner talk about the size of your movements toward each other?

• What kinds of connections can you make between the video we watched and this activity?

Re-emphasize: When you don’t know, ASK. Listen. Respect.
IF A CHILD OR TEEN HAS BEEN COERCED OR ASSAULTED...

It is possible that a child or teen might talk with you about a situation where they have not been respected, and may even have been coerced or assaulted. If that happens, the most helpful first response is to listen and offer support.

1. I believe you.
2. It’s not your fault.
3. I’m here to support you.
4. Let’s get some help.

GET HELP, SUPPORT, AND INFORMATION FROM THESE GREAT RESOURCES:

**VIRGINIA HOTLINES (OPEN ANY TIME)**

Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline
Call: 800.838.8238
Text: 804.793.9999
Chat: www.vadata.org/chat

LGBTQ Partner Abuse and Sexual Assault Helpline (Virginia)
Call: 866.356.6998
Text: 804.793.9999
Chat: www.vadata.org/chat

**NATIONAL HOTLINES**

Love is Respect Teen Dating Violence Hotline
Call: 866.331.9474
Text: loveis to 22522
Chat: www.loveisrespect.org

Trevor Project Hotline
Call: 866.488.7386 (24 hours a day)
Text: Trevor to 202.304.1200
  (Mon-Fri 3pm-10pm ET / noon-7pm PT)
Chat: www.thetrevorproject.org
  (Everyday 3pm-10pm ET / noon-7pm PT)
Primary prevention is about reducing the root causes of violence and building protective factors that help promote healthy behaviors.

DO YOU addresses youth violence, dating and sexual violence, sexual harassment, and bullying by confronting its root causes and enhancing protective factors (also referred to as building resilience) to promote positive development and healthy relationships among youth ages 13-16. The UnCurriculum (the facilitator’s guide for DO YOU uses primary prevention principles and creative expression in a strategy intended to prevent violence before it starts. Find out more at vsdvalliance.org in the prevention section.
CHECK OUT THESE OTHER RESOURCES FOR TEENS

Homework folder
Healthy relationships

Two designs: Homework folders for middle school students or high school students to let teens know about trusted, accurate online resources.

Available at our online store
https://shop.vsdvalliance.org

Facilitator’s Guide
Building Healthy Relationships

An essential resource for anyone leading dating violence prevention groups.

Available at:
communitysolutionsva.org

AND MORE FOR PREVENTIONISTS...

Guidelines for the Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence & Intimate Partner Violence

A synthesis of prevention research, practical implementation experience, and the public health perspective, and offers an “organizing philosophy” to shape primary prevention strategies.

Virginia’s leading voice on sexual and domestic violence for over 30 years.

www.vsdvalliance.org
804.377.0335
info@vsdvalliance.org
@VActionAlliance