

Cultivating Consent IRL: An Affirmative Consent Training

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Goal: To promote a comprehensive understanding of consent as an active practice, so that participants can integrate consent into their personal interactions, ultimately contributing to an improved campus sexual climate.

Objectives: By the end of this training participants will be able to...

1. Verbally identify, through group activity and discussion, one (1) elaboration of the generalized consent definition, and describe how it impacts the ability to negotiate an intimate encounter.
2. Assess their intimate preferences and boundaries via an interactive sticker or worksheet activity.
3. Defend, in a large group discussion, the role of desires and boundaries in practicing consent.
4. Demonstrate the manner and challenges of communicating consent in three (3) sexual decision making scenarios as part of a party simulation game.

Target Audience: This training workshop is aimed at students in a **first year seminar course**. The ideal number of participants is between 15-30 students; however, all portions of the activity can be adapted for a smaller or slightly larger group. Participants are preferably acquainted with one another from a few prior first year seminar sessions; yet, as this training should take place towards the start of the first year experience, participants may still be getting to know one another and establishing rapport. Note that while the target audience is generally described as first year students, any number of participants may additionally identify as some or all of the following: LGBTQIA+ students; non-traditional (age) students; gender non-conforming students; student athletes; students from a variety of cultural backgrounds; international students, etc.

Program Overview

- I. OPENING (~ 15 minutes)
 - a. Facilitator briefly introduces themselves and the training program (~5 minutes)
 - i. Facilitator promptly presents three fundamental Group Agreements (“I” Statements; What’s Said Here Stays Here; Self-Care/Responsibility) and ratifies these together with the group.
 - b. Participant Introduction – Facilitator has participants pair off with a peer nearby to discuss the following: *How, if at all, have you heard the concept of consent discussed before? What were the key messages that you received about the subject?* (~5 minutes)
 - i. Facilitator invites a few pairs to share their responses – those who share include their name, etc. (~5 minutes)

Note: This Participant Introduction serves multiple functions as small ice-breaking activity and preliminary assessment to gauge general pre-existing knowledge of consent prior to the start of the program. The Facilitator may also use the information received from responses to include, adjust, or highlight particular content later in the program.

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II. **ACTIVITY 1: CREATING COMMON LANGUAGE (~25 minutes)**

- a. As a large group, the Facilitator has participants contribute their definitions of the term “consent” from existing knowledge. (~5 minutes)
 - i. Facilitator summarizes and supplements these responses with the standard dictionary definition of consent.
 - ii. Facilitator acknowledges the limitations of the standard definition as it applies real-life intimate scenarios and uses this as a jumping off point for activity.
- b. The Facilitator splits participants into groups and assigns each group a consent-related situation. Groups discuss the situation, the challenges it poses to the generic consent definition, and suggest an elaboration to the definition based on their specific situation. (~7-8 minutes)
- c. Participants share their responses aloud and once all groups have shared, the Facilitator and participants establish a revised collective definition for consent. (~5-7 minutes)
- d. Facilitator leads participants through processing discussion on definition/concept versus practice of consent. (~5-7 minutes)

Sample consent situation: You have been in a relationship with your partner for the last 2 years and you generally enjoy all of your intimate activities with them. Yet, last time the both of you had sex, they did not think to ask if you were willing before they initiated, and just assumed that you were in the mood.

III. **ACTIVITY 2: THE “WHAT” OF CONSENT – IDENTIFYING DESIRES & BOUNDARIES (~20 minutes)**

- a. The Facilitator introduces the next activity with a brief discussion of knowing desires and limitations as an initial part of practicing consent, acknowledging the challenges of intimate contexts. (~5 minutes)
 - i. Facilitator relays instructions for the activity.
- b. Participants engage activity of identifying desires and boundaries as they relate to different types of intimate relationships (long term partner; intimate friend / FWB; casual hook up). (~8 minutes)

Note: this activity normally involves participants moving around the room and placing stickers around intimate acts based on preferences and limitations; however, the activity may be adapted into worksheet format for any combination of the following reasons: (1) to accommodate participant accessibility needs; (2) small number of participants—less than approx. 8—may not allow for sufficient anonymity during activity; (3) the group dynamic illustrates low peer comfort/rapport for an openly affective activity. The Facilitator should be prepared to make a decision about methodology at the start of the activity.

- c. Facilitator leads participants through processing discussion on desires, intimacy, limits, and consent. (~7 minutes)

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IV. ACTIVITY 3 - COMMUNICATING CONSENT (~20 minutes)

- a. The Facilitator transitions to the last activity, drawing the connection between the two pieces of consent: identifying desires/limits, and communicating those to others. (~5 minutes)
 - i. The Facilitator relays instructions for a party simulation activity and distributes character cards to participants.
- b. Participants engage in three (3 minute) rounds of the party simulation game. In each round participants act out the role of their character at a college party and find one other person to briefly get to know and communicate the desires/limits for intimacy that appear on their cards.
 - i. Round 1: Participants communicate with a partner freely
 - ii. Round 2: Participants can only communicate with yes/no statements and responses
 - iii. Round 3: Participants cannot communicate verbally
- c. The Facilitator leads participants through a processing discussion on effective approaches and realistic challenges of communicating consent. (~5 minutes)

Sample Character Card:

Character Name: Jax

Year: Junior

About Me/Interests: Jax is the vice president of the LGBT group on campus, they are sociology and history double major, and are planning to study abroad next semester.

Drinks Consumed: Jax has had 3 drinks and is tipsy.

Party Intentions: Jax is hoping to meet someone at the party that they can take back to their dorm room. They are really craving intimate touch (hugging, kissing, touching) and are willing to have oral sex with a partner, but they do not want to have any sort of penetrative sex.

V. CLOSING (~10 minutes)

- a. Facilitator makes closing remarks about the components of consent, practice, and any relevant resources. (~3 minutes)
- b. Participants share in turn one new thing they learned about consent that they did not know prior to the training and/or one way they can realistically integrate the concept of consent into their intimate relationships. (~7 minutes).

Note: Participant Closing can also function as an informal post-workshop assessment to gauge gained knowledge and intent for personal implementation.

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Assessment Example

In addition to doing informal assessment at the opening and closing of the training, the Facilitator may choose to distribute a formal digital assessment (via email) a few days following the training. If participants are taking part in the workshop in exchange for course or extra-curricular credit, the credit or certification of completion may be contingent on submitting the post-program assessment. The digital assessment should include the following fields:

1. On a scale of 1-5, please rate your knowledge of consent subjects prior to this training:

Not at all knowledgeable		Somewhat		Extremely knowledgeable
1	2	3	4	5

2. On a scale of 1-5, please rate your knowledge of consent subjects as a result of this training:

Not at all knowledgeable		Somewhat		Extremely knowledgeable
1	2	3	4	5

3. On a scale of 1-5, please rate your confidence in articulating your desires and boundaries to a partner prior to this training:

Not at all confident		Somewhat		Extremely confident
1	2	3	4	5

4. On a scale of 1-5, please rate your confidence in articulating your desires and boundaries to a partner as a result of this training:

Not at all confident		Somewhat		Extremely confident
1	2	3	4	5

5. In your own words, how would you explain the term consent to a peer who has not partaken in this training?

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6. Describe one way that you intend to apply the information from this consent workshop to your personal relationships.

7. In the space below please include any additional feedback or questions that you have regarding the training.