



DEFINING MASCULINITY SERIES

Understanding Consent

Purpose: This session will focus on what consent means and how we practice it in our everyday lives. These discussions are meant to be facilitated with teenage boys and young men, although anyone can use this guide to explore these topics together.

What you'll need:

Pen and paper

Laptop/Internet access

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GUIDED DISCUSSION ON UNDERSTANDING CONSENT

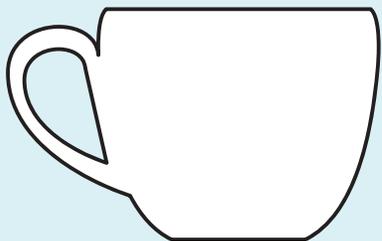
Step 1: Check In

Like the last conversation, ease into the conversation with an engaging check-in. Talk about what has made them happy recently and what has been challenging, etc.

Step 2: What is consent?

Ask participants "What is consent and what does it look like in our daily lives?" Allow them time to think and listen to what they have to say. Then, share this definition of consent:

"Consent is permission for something to happen or agreement to do something." Or, "To consent to something means you confidently agree to it based on your own free will without any pressure or influence."



Have participants watch "Consent Tea" video and discuss:

Video link: https://youtu.be/IOS5_I3Yzog

Step 3: When is consent needed?

Consent with physical contact

We traditionally think about consent when it comes to sex, but consent doesn't only apply to sexual encounters. Consent should also be provided when going in for a kiss, hug, or touching another person's body. Seeking consent shows that you respect that person and care about their level of comfort.

We should always seek consent for physical contact and be mindful of our partner's wishes, even if we're married or have been together a long time.

How would you ask someone if you have their consent to kiss or hug them?

Consent with non-physical contact

Consent can be for non-physical contact as well. One example to consider is asking if someone is ready to receive intense information from you before venting about your day. Seeking consent with non-physical contact is about respect and showing empathy for others while ensuring they are mentally and emotionally ready to hold that information. Perhaps they've had a hard day and aren't ready to hear it or the conversation could be triggering for them.

Why is consent needed in this kind of situation?

How would you go about asking for consent in this situation?

How would you let someone else know that you didn't give them consent for venting and that you don't have the mental energy for it?

Step 4: Coercion & Non-Consent

Ask participants if they have heard of coercion or non-consent.

Coercion is the practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats, using manipulation, or to compel someone into an act or choice. Examples may include trying to talk someone into doing something, manipulation, guilt trips or, not taking "no" for an answer.

Non-consent is the lack of having consent. A non-response and silence are considered non-consent. This occurs when you're not sure how the other person feels, they have not said "yes", or the other person is unsure.

Final Notes:

Acknowledge that asking for consent may feel weird or uncomfortable at first, because it may not be considered the "smooth thing to do" among their friends or peers. If done consistently, it will create a foundation of respect in their relationships and show that they acknowledge and value the boundaries of others. Also explain that consent is a choice, that young men get a choice too, and that all these rules of consent apply to them as well.

Additional Resources:

National Sexual Violence Resource Center's Consent Resources
2020 <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam/resources>

For more information on
healthy masculinity, e-mail us at
prevention@ResilienceMI.org

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