

Consent and Sexual Abuse

Grades 4-6, Lesson #7

Time Needed

35-45 minutes

Student Learning Objectives

To be able to ...

1. Define consent.
2. Recognize when consent has and has not been freely given.
3. Define sexual abuse.
4. Explain the importance of telling an adult about sexual abuse.

Agenda

1. Define consent.
2. Discuss how to obtain consent.
3. Categorize examples - consent or no consent.
4. Discuss consent and power imbalances.
5. Introduce the issues of prevention and reporting with a case study.
6. Use true/false quiz to summarize lesson.

This lesson was most recently edited October 2019.

Materials Needed

None

FLASH Key Concepts

Everyone has the right to say who touches their body and how.

It is never okay to touch someone, or make someone else touch you, if they don't want to.

If a kid has been touched in a way that made them uncomfortable, it is important to tell a grown-up who can help.

Activity

1. Define consent.

Start by defining consent: *Consent means permission or agreement to do something. For example, if someone asks to borrow my pencil and I say yes, I have given consent for them to use my pencil. If I said no, or if they take my pencil without asking, I have NOT given consent. Any questions about the definition of consent?*

What if someone tricked another person into saying yes by lying to them? Or if they threatened to hurt them or spread a mean rumor about them if they didn't say yes? Do you think that would still count as consent? The answer is no – it is only consent if the person really wanted to say yes and they did it on their own, without pressure or tricks.

2. Discuss how to obtain consent.

It is very important that people have consent before touching another person, even if they are just trying to be friendly. How would you know if you had consent to give someone else a hug? Right - you would really only know if you asked, "Can I give you a hug?" and they said yes. One way to be a good friend to someone is to ask first before touching them and give them a chance to say yes or no.

It is especially important that people ask for consent before any kind of sexual touch. Touching another person sexually without consent is called sexual assault. It is illegal and it is very hurtful to the person it happens to. Everyone has the right to say who touches their body and how, no matter what.

3. Categorize examples – “consent” or “no consent.”

Let's think about a few examples, and you tell me if you think there was consent or not in each example.

- Ben takes a pencil off John's desk and walks away with it. John doesn't say anything. No consent
- Beth says, if you don't let me borrow this pencil, I'm going to break it in half. Vivian says ok. No consent
- Liz asks Arman if she can borrow his pencil. He says sure. Consent
- Elena is excited to see her friend after winter break. She runs up behind her and gives her a hug without saying anything. No consent
- Ian sees his friend Mathew on the first day of school. He is happy to see him and asks if he can give him a hug. Mathew says yes. Consent

4. Discuss consent and power imbalances.

Sometimes people feel pressured to say yes to something because the person asking them is a lot older or has power over them. This can happen to kids because kids are taught to

respect adults and do what they ask. Usually that's a good idea, and adults are working hard to keep kids safe. Sometimes, though, an adult takes advantage of their power. Adults are never supposed to touch kids on their private parts unless it's a doctor and they have the kid's and parent's permission.

Adults are never allowed to touch kids in a sexual way. The law says that it's not possible for kids to give consent for adults to touch them sexually because adults have so much more power than kids do. When an adult touches a kid on their private parts or in a sexual way, it is called sexual abuse, and it is illegal. If a kid has ever been touched in a way that made them uncomfortable, it is important to tell a grown-up who can help.

There are a few important things to know about sexual abuse:

- It is never, ever the victim's fault. It is always the fault of the person who is doing the sexual abuse.*
- When kids are sexually abused, it is usually by an adult or an older kid. Sometimes it is by someone close to their own age.*
- Kids of all genders can be sexually abused, and the person doing the abuse can be of any gender too.*
- When kids are sexually abused by an adult, it is usually by an adult they know, sometimes even by someone in their family. Sometimes it is a stranger.*
- Sometimes it only happens once, but often sexual abuse happens for a long time.*
- People who sexually abuse kids sometimes trick or threaten kids, and sometimes they bribe them with gifts. They don't usually use a weapon. They almost always ask kids to keep secrets.*