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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CONSENT

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Effective Consent is:

- Informed
 - Freely and Actively Given
 - Mutually Understandable Words or Actions
 - Indicating an Agreement to Engage in Mutually Agreed Upon (Sexual) Activity.
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- ◆ At the heart of the idea of consent is the idea that every person, man or woman, has a right--to personal sovereignty--not to be acted upon by someone else in a sexual manner unless he or she gives clear permission to do so.
 - ◆ With this idea comes the concomitant notion that consent can be broad or narrow, and can be limited, such as in cases where someone is willing to engage in some forms of sexual activity, but not in others.
 - ◆ Consent to one form of sexual activity never can imply consent to other forms of sexual activity.
 - ◆ Consent may be given verbally or nonverbally, based on an active, informed, freely decided choice.
 - ◆ Consent means you can't make assumptions about what your partner does or does not want. Absence of clear signals means you can't touch someone else, not that you can.
 - ◆ Consent means two people deciding together to do the same thing, at the same time, in the same way, with each other.
 - ◆ The idea of consent completely rules out any need to show the use of force, or any type of resistance.
 - ◆ Consent requires that the person initiating the sexual activity get permission to do so, and that permission does not exist in the absence of resistance.
 - ◆ Passively allowing someone to touch you in a sexual manner is not consent.
 - ◆ There is no duty for an alleged victim to fight off or act in any way to stop a sexual aggressor.
 - ◆ There must be a verbal or nonverbal "Yes" in order for any permissible sexual activity to take place.

- ◆ We can't play the game of "If she doesn't want it, she'll stop me." That's based on antiquated resistance requirements. It's not her (or his) job to resist, but yours to respect her (or his) boundaries, and to find out what they are if they are unclear.
- ◆ No means no, but nothing also means no. Silence and passivity do not equal permission.
- ◆ We are not entitled to engage in or heighten levels of sexual activity like we are running through the bases. The idea that kissing always leads to fondling, which always leads to petting/fingering, which leads to some sort of intercourse is a notion that is based on male sexual patterns and beliefs, only. Mutual exchanges must involve the expectations and desires of each person involved.
- ◆ To be valid, consent must be given prior to or contemporaneously with the sexual activity.
- ◆ Consent can be withdrawn at any time, as long as that withdrawal is clearly communicated by the person withdrawing it.
- ◆ Men often ignore the subtle signals sent by women that what is happening is not okay with them, and vice versa as well.
- ◆ Where you see assumptions being made by someone in a sexual context, this is an alarm. Look at those assumptions and see if they are reasonable.
- ◆ When you get to a point where someone says no, it's time to back off completely, or have a conversation about where the interaction is going.
- ◆ Pushing ahead after someone says or indicates "no" crosses the line.
- ◆ If you get a "No" and keep right on pressuring and continuing to interact sexually, you run the risk that your behaviors are creating a coercive influence on the other party.
- ◆ Respect for another member of the community is an expectation that all members are expected to uphold at all times, including in the context of sexual interaction. Respect means paying heed to verbal and non-verbal cues, desires, boundaries, and behaviors of others.
- ◆ Just because someone wants to be alone with you doesn't mean that you have a sexual license.
- ◆ Making someone touch you is as bad as touching someone else, where no consent is given.
- ◆ If someone won't touch you, and you have to physically manipulate them to get them to touch you sexually, you automatically have a consent problem. Unless they freely give consent, you can't take it.
- ◆ There are circumstances, as well, where even when consent is given, it is not valid. Consent would be invalid when forced, threatened, intimidated, coerced, when given by a mentally or physically incapacitated person, or when given by a minor.

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