

Athletes As Leaders



Session 7: Promoting Consent

Prep Before Session:

Make Sure You Have:

- Group agreements to refer to during “Warm Up” (only if needed)
- Ball to throw during “Cool Down”
- Research your state’s laws related to sexual assault & age of consent, or save a website you can use as a reference
- Research the local resources in the school (such as names of the school counselors) and in the community (such as local sexual assault programs). You can write them on the board, make a poster, provide brochures, or display resources in locker rooms.

Optional Video to View Before or During the Session:

- “Consent is Everything” (<https://youtu.be/5rXullkp-w>)

Review Key Messages:

- Consent is important in everyday life.
- Practicing consent can prevent harm.
- Practicing consent shows care and concern for another person.

Warm Up

Introduce Topic and Give Notice About Sensitive Content: (2 min)

Welcome! Last session we talked about ending rumor spreading and shaming. Today we are going to talk about promoting consent. We will also discuss sensitive topics including sexual assault. Please take care of yourself in any way you need. We will not be sharing personal experiences today.

If you or anyone you know needs support, here are some community resources [refer to displayed resources]. You can also talk to someone you trust like a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, or friend. I am always here as a support as well. Please remember that if you report abuse or assault to someone who works at the school,

they will legally have to report it because they are mandated reporters. Keep this in mind when thinking of what options are best for you. Also, please take care of each other. If a friend or peer needs help, be there to listen and support.

Consent generally means agreement. Practicing consent looks like:

- 1) Asking for consent to do something
- 2) Listening to what the other person is saying with their words and their body language
- 3) Respecting the answer

We usually hear consent used to refer to a sexual activity with a partner. Practicing consent is necessary for any kind of sexual activity, every time. Before people engage in sexual activity, it is necessary to make sure their partner is able to make an informed decision. Consent is an ongoing process. Sexual contact without consent is sexual assault.

Consent doesn't only apply to sexual activity. Consent is important in everyday life! You can ask for consent before posting a photo of someone online, sharing personal information about someone, or giving someone a hug. It's a way to show care and concern for another person.

Work Out

Discussion Questions: (6 min) [You may want to break into small groups for the "work out" discussion if you have a large group.]

- ① **What do you think are some of the best ways to ask for consent in everyday situations?**
- ② In our society, we do not do a very good job of teaching people about consent. We also don't teach people how to be respectful when someone says no or is not interested. **What do you think are the best ways to teach people about consent and how to handle rejection?**

Talking Points: (4 min) [You may choose to share all talking points, or only those that have not been discussed already by the athletes.]

- » A person should always talk with their partner and ask them for consent before doing anything sexual. Consent is important for lots of other situations too, like posting a picture online or sharing someone's personal information.
- » Even if two people are in a relationship, both people should be checking to make sure their partner is comfortable. Being in a relationship does not automatically mean there is consent.
- » Practicing consent can prevent harm. Consent should be freely given, meaning a person is not threatened or manipulated into agreeing. And they can withdraw their consent at any point.
- » If someone says "no," the answer should be respected, and the person shouldn't feel pressured to change their mind.
- » Consent is an ongoing process, not just a one-time question. Agreeing to one type of sexual activity does not mean agreeing to other types of sexual activity.
- » Things like clothing, dancing, or flirting do not mean consent.
- » Consent is good practice, but in some cases, it is also the law. [Give a few examples of your state laws. For example, in Washington State, having sex with someone who did not give consent is rape. A person cannot have sexual contact with someone who is physically or mentally incapacitated (due to being drunk, on drugs, ill, asleep, or unconscious). Similarly, sexual contact is illegal when there is a significant difference in power, like when there is a big age difference, or when a person is abusing a position of power.]
- » Studies show that women & girls, LGBTQ+ folks, people with disabilities, and certain racial groups experience sexual assault at higher rates, which is related to oppression as we discussed in an earlier session. Although certain populations experience sexual assault at higher rates than others, it's important to know that anyone can be assaulted, including men and boys.
- » In the case of a sexual assault, the responsibility is on the person who pursued sexual contact with a person who did not (or could not) consent. In other words, sexual assault is never the victim's fault.
- » **So here is a challenge for you...** Think about how you can practice consent in your relationships—including with your friends and teammates. You could ask before sharing intense information, borrowing equipment, or touching someone's hair or body. Everyone deserves to be comfortable with what they share, and to not be pressured into something that they don't want to do.
- » **As student leaders and athletes**, it is important for you to help create a culture where consent is expected and normal. It is also important to believe and support survivors of sexual assault.

Cool Down

Team Talk: (8 min) [You may choose to have specific athletes/leaders to facilitate the Team Talk.]

Now it is time for the Team Talk! Let's get in a circle and get ready to pass the ball. We are going to think of things that you can all do as student leaders & athletes. Hopefully these will be things everyone in the group can agree to do, when you are interacting with people on your team, at school, on social media, or in the community. We are hoping they will become the new team norms that will help you take action as leaders in the community.

This week we are going to describe what consent is and when it's important to ask for consent. There are lots of right answers here, and I would love to hear from lots of people today!

? **The first one is a fill-in-the-blank. Consent is _____. This could be an adjective or a short definition.**

[Possible answers: permission, respectful, agreement, important, necessary, freely given, informed, specific, reversible, clearly communicated, ongoing].

? **When is it important to ask for consent?**

[Possible answers: before borrowing something, taking or posting a picture of someone, being intimate, sharing private information, before going over to someone's house, before having sex or doing any type of sexual activity].

? **How can a person show respect to a partner who sets a boundary or says no?**

[Possible answers: stop and listen to them, say "ok," don't pressure them to change their mind, don't make them feel guilty, ask their partner what they do feel comfortable with].

[Remind participants about the list of community resources and supports. If time permits, ask the group if they know of any more resources to add to the list.]

Thank you for all your ideas and sensitivity to this topic. Let's help promote a culture where consent is expected and respected. As student leaders, it's important to reach out and support anyone who needs it. It's time to break for the day (or get to practice).

Close the Circle with a Team Cheer.