

## 9 Ways You Can Create a Culture of Consent in Your School and Community

1. **Remember every person's inherent right to bodily autonomy.** Bodily autonomy is the right to self-governance over one's own body without external influence or coercion. NO ONE has the right to touch your body without your enthusiastic consent. The same applies to you when it comes to touching someone else's body.
2. **Challenge gender stereotypes.** Sexual misconduct has deep roots in gender expectations. Shatter the 'Man Box' and 'Woman Box.' Don't let anyone dictate what you can/can't feel, do, or look like based on your gender. Masculinity is not defined through sexual conquest nor is femininity defined by passive, 'pleasing' behavior.
3. **Practice setting and receiving boundaries (and support others in doing the same).** Remember that when a person sets a boundary it is their way of taking care of themselves and not a rejection of you. You always have this same right and should expect that your boundary will also be respected. It is a red flag if they do not.
4. **Ask for more comprehensive sexual health education.** Help your parents and administrators understand your need for comprehensive sexual health education by using the learning to drive analogy. Just as you need guidance to be a safe driver on the road, you require guidance (and lots of research-based information) to safely navigate the sexual superhighway. You can also become committed to self-educating with RELIABLE and RESEARCH BASED resources. (PORN does not meet the criteria for 'reliable' or 'research-based').
5. **Learn and practice the language and tools of consent until you become 'fluent' (F.I.R.E.).** Consent is: **F**reely given. **I**nformed. **R**evocable. **E**nthusiastic. Remember: If you are under the influence of any altering substance including alcohol, illicit drugs, or pharmaceuticals you may not be able to clearly read **your own** or **your partner's** ability to give clear consent.

**6. Be an upstanding bystander.**

*When you see something... Say Something.* Distract either the potential victim or perpetrator. Get a group of friends to help you distract or intervene. Get an authority figure. Speak up and say things like, “Did you ask for consent?” Don’t make the perpetrator the target. Don’t laugh at rape jokes or catcalling. Offer support to the victim. Refuse to participate in victim shaming or blaming.

**7. Commit to the principle of Do No Harm.**

This basic principle is not overtly taught, but is essential to living in harmony with other beings. Doctors are required to take this oath, but as responsible human beings we should all live by this principle, which includes doing no harm to yourself. When you see harm being done, speak up and be an upstanding bystander. Commit to NOT engaging in victim blaming, ‘slut shaming,’ and gossip. *THIS ALSO APPLIES TO ALL SOCIAL MEDIA INTERACTION.*

**8. Know and uphold your relationship rights.**

You have the right to privacy, both online & off. You have the right to feel safe and respected. You have the right to decide whom you want to date or not date. You have the right to choose when you engage sexually and with whom. You have the right to say no at any time (to sex, to drugs or alcohol, to a relationship), even if you’ve said yes before. You have the right to hang out with your friends & family and do things you enjoy, without your partner getting jealous or controlling. You have the right to end a relationship if it doesn’t feel right or healthy for you. You have the right to live free from violence and abuse. *(Source: LoveIsRespect.org)*

**9. Learn the four essential elements of supportive response.**

I believe you. It’s not your fault. I’m here to support you. Let’s get some help.

***\*\*\*ALL 9 of these apply to both in person behavior and AND social media interactions!!!***