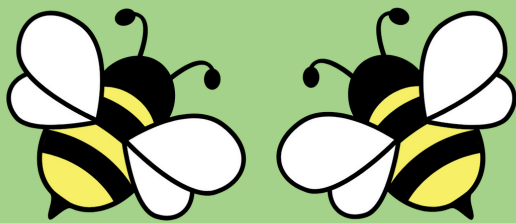


Practicing consent as individuals is vital, but ending sexual assault will take more than that. How can we build a *culture* of consent? This zine shares a few ideas pulled from conversations with advocates, activists, students, and survivors around the US:

- **Freely given.** Consenting is a choice you make without pressure, manipulation, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- **Reversible.** Anyone can change their mind about what they feel like doing, anytime. Even if you've done it before, and even if you're both naked in bed.
- **Informed.** You can only consent to something if you have the full story. For ex., if someone says they'll use a condom and then they don't, there isn't full consent.
- **Enthusiastic.** When it comes to sex, you should only do stuff you WANT to do, not things that you feel you're expected to do.
- **Specific.** Saying yes to one thing (like going to the bedroom to make out) doesn't mean you've said yes to others (like having sex). *Source: Planned Parenthood.*

Consent is:

HOW DO WE BUILD A CULTURE OF CONSENT?



Consent is a mutual verbal, physical, and emotional agreement that happens without manipulation, threats, or head games. - Project Respect

Consent is informed, freely and affirmatively communicated willingness to participate in sexual activity, expressed by clear and unambiguous words or actions. - The Aurora Center

AS INDIVIDUALS, WE CAN LEVEL UP

Learn more about consent via books, articles, podcasts, classes, and more. Especially for men: *unlearning* some of what we're taught about masculinity and sex can be necessary too. Check out the last page of this zine for some potential starting points.

Practice consent in our relationships: Be present. Communicate, ask questions, and listen.

It isn't just about sex. We can practice consent in other areas of our lives too: ask before giving someone a hug, taking their picture, etc. Let children know that they can always say "no" to tickling, kisses, etc.

Understand consent beyond the "dominant narrative." Consent matters in same-sex relationships, for people outside the gender binary, and beyond. While most perpetrators of sexual assault are men, men can also be survivors.

Get plugged in. Do a quick online search to find local or national organizations doing work to support survivors and end rape culture, and join their email lists, follow them on social media, or attend their events.

Believe survivors. Start from a place of listening to, and taking seriously, those who come forward.

IN COMMUNITY WITH EACH OTHER,

WE CAN STEP UP

Dialogue. Spark conversations with friends and family. Join a book club or discussion circle where people can meet up, share their experiences, and build community. If you're a student, take a class that explores these issues.

Speak out. Post links on social media. Write blog posts and letters-to-the-editor. Signal-boost the voices of organizers, advocates, and survivors.

Challenge the myths. Check out the "Sexual Violence Myths & Facts" resource at *OurResilience.org* for some common misconceptions and how to challenge them.

Especially for men: Bring these conversations into spaces where they aren't already happening. Refuse to laugh at sexist or violent jokes. Call people out. Don't just be a good guy, put your values and principles into action.

Support survivors: For a list of "dos" and "don'ts," check out "*Supporting a Survivor: The Basics*" at *KnowYourIX.org*

Create art. Broadcast. Plant seeds. Whatever audience you have access to, no one else has that same access. You can also *share* existing art: check out a big list of poems about consent, from multiple voices, at *Guante.info*

Organize! Here are some specific policies that people around the US have fought for and won:

- Campus affirmative consent policies.
- K-12 consent education.
- Comprehensive sexual education in schools.
- More engaging, more critical, more effective consent ed content in first-year orientation programs.
- Funding for survivor advocacy organizations and/or student groups that work on these issues.
- Resources for holding perpetrators of sexual harassment or assault accountable *outside* of the criminal justice system, like community-centered transformative justice practices.

A FEW ORGANIZATIONS

- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- PAVE (Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment)
- Know Your IX, A Call to Men, Me Too Movement, RightToBe, Green Dot, Men Can Stop Rape, and more.
- Local organizations! To use Minneapolis as an example: we have the Sexual Violence Center, MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault, The Aurora Center, and more. Wherever you live, a little research should turn up some people and groups doing good work.

TO SHIFT POLICY AND CULTURE, WE CAN SHOW UP

Show up. Find organizations doing work to support survivors and cultivate a culture of consent, and support them via donations, signal-boosting, volunteering, organizing fundraiser events, or joining them—you can become an advocate too.

Of course, not everyone can "show up" in the same ways. That's okay. No single individual has to do every thing on this list. But we can all do *something*.

Vote for candidates who share your values on these issues. Volunteer for their campaigns. Get better people into positions of power. Voting alone won't solve this problem, but it can help set the stage for future work.

Plan for the future. If you're a student, meet up with your advisor to find some classes that might put you on a career path to doing this work for a living.

Do the work where you are. Make sure your school, business, or organization has effective protocols in place for dealing with accusations of harassment or sexual assault, as well as plans to help cultivate a culture of consent, respect, and support *before* any harm occurs.

A key element of bystander intervention is that it doesn't just happen "in-the-moment." We can be proactive and have these conversations *before* harassment or assaults happen.

Part of building a *culture* of consent is remembering that it's not just about perpetrators and victims. We're all in community together, and we can all look out for one another. Whether you're at a party and you witness someone trying to take advantage of someone else, or you're on the bus and someone is being harassed, or you're just on the internet and someone is saying harmful things, a useful resource might be **The "Five D's" of Bystander Intervention** found at *RightToBe.org*. Right To Be also offers online trainings- sign up for one!

Talk to the next generation. Whether we're parents, older siblings, teachers, or other adult role models, let's have open, honest conversations with the young people in our lives about consent. Check out the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's "**6 Resources to Help Parents Talk to Kids About Consent**" at *NSVRC.org*.