

Sexual Consent

Facilitating a Conversation between Parents and Teens

Based on the YouTube video: Sex & the Price of Masculinity—A Personal Story of Consent Violation



How to Prepare:

Make a copy of this worksheet for you and your teen.

There are questions in the beginning for each of you to consider separately after viewing the video, and then questions to discuss together.

Schedule at least 90 minutes for this activity and discussion.

Also, consider breaking it into two segments, to allow for more reflection time around these uncomfortable topics.

Make sure you both have Internet access to watch the video on YouTube.

The link is below.

Have a pen and additional paper ready.

Using this video as a teaching tool:

This video about sexual consent provides a lot of education & thought-provoking topics in 21 minutes. It focuses your sexual consent & assault discussion around differing ways females & males are taught to be sexual. This video is reflective of what many young women & men experience in sexual hook-ups and how they can do things in a healthier way. This is also a powerful way to pass on your values.

Agree to these Ground Rules:

1

SAFE SPACE

It's vital to create a context that is safe, open, and nonjudgmental.

2

AWKWARD=OK

This may be really uncomfortable for both of you, and that's OK!

3

CONFIDENTIAL

Don't use anything your teen says against them or share without their permission.

Steps for Discussion

1. Watch the video separately or together, whichever you prefer.

Here is the video link for *Sex & the Price of Masculinity—A Personal Story of Consent Violation*:
<https://youtu.be/MOSU7B8iR-Q>

2. Write down your answers to these general questions separately.

- A. What stood out to you the most in the video?
 - B. What were your primary emotional reactions?
 - C. Was any of it hard to watch? Why or why not?
 - D. One topic not addressed in this video was the impact of drugs or alcohol. How do you think they impact decision-making?
 - E. Has this ever happened to anyone you know?
 - F. How do you think you would have handled that situation?
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3. Get together and go back and forth sharing your answers to the above six questions.

If either one of you wants to share if you have had a personal experience around sexual consent violation, feel free to do so. But I don't want either party to feel like they have to share something personal if they are not ready to do so in this context.

4. Read each of the following twelve quotations from the video, and discuss your responses to each theme and the questions posed. If you already addressed any of these specific themes, then move on to the next quotation.

A. Sexual health conversations

Quote: "We also talked about sex and sexual expectations. He doesn't like condoms and hasn't used them in years. That was a problem for me, because I'm not on the pill and I'm a sexual health educator...and I don't want to get pregnant and I don't want to get exposed to an STD/STI. And, I don't like to jump into sexual intercourse right away, because the intimacy of sex matters to me. It **is** a special thing to me. So I want to know someone a **little** better."

Discussion Questions: Do you have conversations about sexual health? Do you know what to ask or be concerned about? What does sex mean to you?

(Check out this link for sexual health education!
<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/stds-hiv-safer-sex>)

B. Demanding explanation

Quote: "He quickly got up and was putting his clothes back on. I asked him what he was doing. I'm leaving, he said. Oh no, you don't, you're going to stay here and you're going to talk about this."

Discussion Questions: Were you surprised Dr. Jenn told him to stay? Why do you think he was leaving? Why do you think this might be hard for many women to do?

C. Including compassion

Quote: "Despite all of this, I could see that what this guy did was an asshole thing to do, but it didn't have to mean he was an asshole. It's bad behavior versus a character flaw. And that I could be both compassionate to myself and my needs in the moment, and still compassionate (or at least not cruel) to the human being in front of me, as we talked about this until he left."

Discussion Questions: Compassion means caring about the distress or suffering of others. Do you think compassion is normal in situations like this? Is it important?

D. Pushing and coercion

Quote: “This wasn’t the first time I’d experienced a man being coercive or pushing boundaries. Howard, a college boyfriend, said if I wasn’t going to have intercourse I was obligated to give him head, and sulked when I didn’t. Ibriham in San Francisco just stopped talking to me when I only wanted our hookup to go so far.... I’d move them away. I say no don’t do that. I’m not interested. Please don’t do that. And they kept coming back. They kept pushing.”

Discussion Questions: Why do you think those men kept pushing the sexual boundaries? Do you think they realized they were doing anything wrong?

E. The need for orgasm/intercourse

Quote: “There’s this, what I’ll call ‘orgasm imperative’— a social norm that once a man is turned on, it’s the responsibility of the person he’s with to get him off....When I shared this story with a male friend recently, he candidly responded, what did you expect? You were naked, it was passionate, and intercourse is just the next “tick” in the sexual progression of how things go. Well, not really. First off, intercourse has a very different level of potential consequences and responsibility than other sexual acts...potential physical, emotional, social, financial consequences.”

Discussion Questions: Do you agree that there is a social norm around the expectation for men to have an orgasm in every sexual encounter? Do you think sexual intercourse should be expected if clothes are off and it seems like the next appropriate sexual step?

F. The “masculinity” script

Quote: “But when you look at ‘masculinity’ socialization - literally how boys are told they need to act (or not act) ‘to be a man’ —and there is a lot of training around this—this makes more sense. Men are taught from a young age that being a man means not showing weakness, but being strong, confident and going for what they want, and not giving up. And if they don’t live up to this standard, they will be ridiculed, stigmatized, shamed...and in sex, this plays out as men being the initiators and

aggressors....Why can’t the training on ‘how to be a man’ include being *strong* enough to have these uncomfortable conversations?”

Discussion Questions: Have you ever experienced or witnessed a boy or man being “shamed” because he’s not being “man enough”? Do you believe that “good men” can behave badly because they don’t know any better?

G. Sex is complicated and nuanced

Quote: “And I know some of you guys may be thinking—yes, but what about that time I didn’t initiate or push, and it turns out the woman didn’t think I was interested in her. You’re right. Sex is an incredibly complicated, nuanced, and personal topic. This is why we sometimes need to be talking more and doing less—even when it’s so vulnerable and awkward. Otherwise, it’s obvious how sexual *mis*communication is the norm. Because we are using different languages. There is a lot of research finding that women and men perceive the same interaction very differently and have no idea the other is perceiving it that way. For example, men don’t seem to know that it’s not unusual for a woman to dress sexy because she wants to feel beautiful, get attention, be liked—feel valued—but that doesn’t necessarily mean she wants intercourse.”

Discussion Questions: Why might men feel confused with the sexual messages they think they’re receiving from women? How do you think women and men might approach sex differently or have different expectations or needs?

H. Taking responsibility

Quote: “I share this text with you because—him reflecting deeply on this and owning it, mattered a lot to me. He wasn’t blaming me or shaming me. I still wasn’t going to be his friend anymore and wasn’t going to date him, but his responsible handling of his actions after the fact, meant that I wasn’t further disempowered. I had a voice, he was listening (now at least), and I didn’t feel so powerless. He seemed to be waking up to the negative impact of his ‘how to be a man’ training. He would have faced shame growing up if he wasn’t

‘man enough’, but now, he faced shame, because he hadn’t learned how to question how that training could hurt others. That’s the shittiness behind how we’re all trained to be men or women.”

Discussion Questions: How did this man approach this difficulty differently than usual? What do you think of him? Why do you think this approach can be valuable for the person who was hurt? How can our gender training hurt all of us?

I. Expectations of respect

Quote: “What did I expect? I definitely can answer *that* question. I expected caring. You’re drawn to me because you appreciate my intellect, communication skills, vulnerability, and authenticity. I respect you and honor you as another human in front of me, and honor that we’re engaging in some form of intimacy with each other. I expect the same respect and honoring in return. Is that too much to ask? Is that kindness and caring and awareness somehow not relevant in the sexual realm? It should be *most* relevant there.”

Discussion Questions: Why do you think many people don’t think that respect, kindness, or caring should be a standard part of any sexual interaction? Do you think it should be? It is easy or hard to do?

J. Respect for boundaries and bodies

Quote: “No where else do we just assume we know what someone else wants to do with their body, than in the sexual realm. You don’t just shove food in someone’s mouth when you’re out to dinner with them. You let them use their voice and have a choice.”

Discussion Question: Do you think this is a good analogy to help people realize that they are imposing their needs and assumptions on someone else’s body?

K. How to check in

Quote: “So check in. Verbally. If you don’t, you’re making a ton of assumptions and not being responsible. What’s a check in sound like? For example, a man once actually asked me: ‘Are you feeling pressured?’ It was our first time doing anything sexual and he had noted a shift in my energy, that I seemed more hesitant. Because he was looking for enthusiastic interactions from me...I felt so honored and respected and safe with his level of awareness and asking. But if that’s not what you’re hearing from your partner, than question it. And talk. Or just STOP. Because the emotional, physical, and social stakes are too high.”

Discussion Questions: Do you check in like this in sexual situations? Do you share if you want to keep going, slow down, or stop? Does this sound like an awkward conversation to keep having? What do you think could make it less awkward?

L. Sexual assault is easier

Quote: “Afterwards, the consensus was how surprised they were that I said something in the moment, and that I called out his behavior as bad behavior. The ones who shared said they probably would have just gone along with it. Gone along with it. It’s easier to allow a sexual assault to happen than makes things uncomfortable.”

Discussion Questions: Did this surprise you? Why is awkwardness so uncomfortable? What are people afraid of this kind of vulnerability?

Wrap-up and considerations moving forward

To conclude your conversation, consider and discuss the following points:

1. How you can support each other around this topic?
2. Which friends or other parents can you both share this video and/or worksheets with, so that you’re creating a community of like-minded friends who support healthy sexuality and communication?
3. Is there anything else you’re going to do differently moving forward, to be a part of the solution?

Pat yourself on the back— you’ve done a great job in helping to protect and empower your child!