**Consent to sex**

People often talk about consent or consensual sex. Do you know what consent means in this context?

Below are some different situations where two people have sex. For each scenario, write whether you think there was consent?

1. Annie is 16 and Lucas is 17. They have been in a relationship for a while now and Annie is ready to have sex with Lucas. Lucas is not sure about this, as it is his first time. Annie asks him if he wants to have sex with her and he says that he’s not sure. Annie says that if he doesn’t have sex with her then she feels like he doesn’t love her. Lucas agrees to have sex with Annie. **Was consent given?**
2. Mike and Steve have been married for 3 years. They have had sex lots of times in the past. Mike says that he is going to bed early tonight. Steve tries to have sex with Mike but Mike pushes him off and goes back to sleep. Steve continues to have sex with Mike because he really wants it tonight. **Was consent given?**
3. Talia and Josh are both 16. They are at a house party and both have been drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis. Both are intoxicated. They end up having sex at the party. **Was consent given?**
4. Ryan and Becky are both 16 and in a happy relationship. Becky has never had sex before and she feels a little nervous. They have been out for a romantic dinner and then they go back to Becky’s house. They start kissing and Ryan checks if Becky is comfortable with having sex. Becky says yes. Ryan puts a condom on and they have sex. **Was consent given?**
5. Kate and Sam are on a first date. Kate is wearing a mini-skirt and a low cut top that shows off her cleavage. She is very flirty on the date. After dinner they get a taxi together and there is some touching going on. When they get back to the flat, Kate takes ages getting out of the car. When Sam makes a move, Kate begs him to stop. Sam continues having sex. **Was consent given?**
6. Ricky and Ben are in a night out. At the start of the evening they meet and get on very well. After a lot of flirting they agree that later tonight they might go back to Ricky’s for sex. As they night goes on they get very drunk and take drugs. They end up back at Ricky’s house but they are still drunk and high. Ben initiates sex. **Was consent given?**
7. Rachel goes on a date with Will to the cinema. Whilst they are watching the film, Rachel starts touching Will and he tells her that he has got an erection. Rachel tells herself that Will must want sex. When the film they go to the care and Rachel initiates sex. **Was consent given?**

ANSWERS

Consent means that both people agree. In the case of sex, this means that both people want to have sex (this might be sexual touching, oral, anal or vaginal sex). It is important that both people feel comfortable with what is happening.

You should make sure the other person consents every time you have sex, even if you have had sex with them before. People might change their mind and that is their right. It is never okay to make someone have sex when they do not want to – this is not consensual sex and it is breaking the law.

There are different ways of checking if someone wants sex – you might ask them and wait for a verbal reply.

1. **NO- consent was not given.**

Annie has pressured Lucas into having sex when even though he was unsure. Lucas did not freely accept. Annie could be charged with sexual assault.

1. **NO- consent was not given.**

Your partner/wife/husband can sexually assault you even if you have had consensual sex before. Consent should be sought every time you have sex. Just because you are in a long-term relationship does not mean that both people will definitely want sex. In this case, Mike pushes Steve away which shows that he did not want sex.

1. **NO- consent was not given.**

Taila and Josh were both intoxicated. You can never give consent to sex if you are intoxicated from alcohol or drugs. Even if a person acts as if they want sex they might not be thinking clearly because of the effects of the alcohol or drugs. You should wait until you are sober to check that both people still want to have sex.

1. **YES- consent was given.**

Ryan and Becky are in a happy relationship. Although Becky was feeling nervous, she said that she wanted to have sex. Ryan checked this at the time. It was also good that Ryan used a condom- this protects against STI’s and unplanned pregnancy.

1. **NO- consent was not given.**

Kate takes ages getting out of the car which is a clue that she might feel uncomfortable. Then when Sam starts to have sex, Kate begs him to stop. Kate has given clear signals that she does not want sex. Sam continues against her wishes so he could be charged with sexual assault. Sam might have thought that Kate’s attractive outfit meant that she was ‘up for it’ or ‘asking for it’. This is not true- it doesn’t matter how someone dresses, you must ALWAYS get consent to have sex with them.

1. **NO-consent was not given.**

Ricky and Ben are both intoxicated when they have sex so they cannot consent. Even though they had talked about the possibility of having sex earlier in the evening this does not count. Consent for sex must be checked at the time of having sex. Someone might agree to sex earlier in the day but change their mind. In this case, their partner should respect their decision at the time of sex- if they say no then this means no.

1. **No- consent was not given.**

Rachel never checked with Will that he wanted to have sex. Sometime people think that if someone is physically turned on then they are giving sexual consent. This is not true! Our bodies can be aroused for lots of different reasons. For example, somebody might get an erection when they are watching TV, sat in the classroom or if they are raped; THEY MIGHT NOT WANT SEXUAL ACTIVITY. You must always check that someone wants sex and not just rely on physical changes in the body.