

# Dating and consent

Usyd and Sydney can be a wonderful place to meet people. **Consent** is one of the most important things to understand when dating or meeting up with someone for casual sexual fun.

## Consent is agreement

Consent is when someone **agrees to do something sexual with you**, such as touching, kissing or having sex. Before beginning any contact with anybody, you need to be totally clear that everyone involved wants to do it.

How do you know if someone wants to do something sexual with you? **You ask!** Consent doesn't have to be awkward or hard – in fact, asking first shows respect and allows everybody to feel empowered.

Find ways to ask for consent that feel good to you. Some popular examples include:

- “Is this ok?”
- “Can I kiss/touch/etc you?”
- “Would you like me to kiss/touch/etc you?”
- “Do you want to kiss/touch/etc me?”

Consent must be a continuous process of checking, asking, reading body signals and paying attention to others. **You can withdraw your consent at any time.** Even if you say yes to something, you can still say no minutes later. You can change your mind and anyone can stop at any time. And just because someone slept with you in the past, doesn't mean you have their consent for future sex.

**Consent must be specific.** A “yes” to kissing is not also a “yes” to touching. Consenting to oral sex is not consenting to penetrative sex. You can say yes to some kinds of touching/sex acts and not others.

A “maybe” is not a “yes”. Feeling confused, coerced, silent, turning a head away, lying completely still, being threatened or intoxicated means consent is NOT being given. And in NSW, someone who is under 16 years old is legally

incapable of giving consent. While **consent is not always spoken**, it is very important to **never assume it is being given**. Stop and check in, read body signals, and slow down.

## Using dating apps

Many students meet new partners through online dating/hooking up apps and sites. Dating apps and sites can be a fun way to meet people and allow you to search for potential dates and hook-ups, or screen out people you aren't interested in.

If you're going to meet up with someone for sex for the first time here are **a few safety tips**:

- meet in a public location first
- if you're meeting at someone's home, get their address in advance and give it to a friend and ask your friend to check in on you after a certain amount of time
- discuss safe sex practices before you meet and always carry your own safe sex supplies
- bring your own water bottle and don't accept drinks
- make sure your phone is recharged and on you
- if you're sending explicit images of yourself, crop your face out of images that show breasts or genitals, and relock your private album frequently

And remember to always practice consent!

In Australia, some people date more than one person at the same time. If you're dating or sleeping with someone, make sure to discuss whether your relationship is exclusive (your partner is only dating you) or not.

## Useful resources

### **University Health Service:**

(02) 9351 3484

### **SUPRA Queer Officer:**

[queer@supra.usyd.edu.au](mailto:queer@supra.usyd.edu.au)

**SUPRA International Officer:**

[international@supra.usyd.edu.au](mailto:international@supra.usyd.edu.au)

**SUPRA Women's Officer:**

[women@supra.usyd.edu.au](mailto:women@supra.usyd.edu.au)

**Royal Prince Alfred Sexual Assault Service:**

(02) 9515 9040 (24 hours)

**NSW Rape Crisis Centre:**

1800 424 017 (24 hours)

## Disclaimer

This information is current as at December 2019 and where it includes legal information is intended as a guide to the law as it applies to people who live in or are affected by the law as it applies in NSW. It does not constitute legal advice.

Last updated Feb 2020