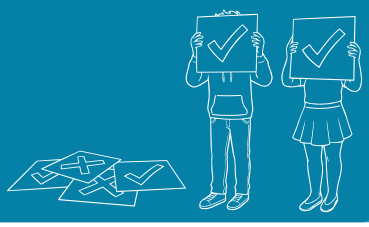
Tip sheet 6:
Talking about consent and rights



6.1 Why this matters

- Understanding consent helps young people stay safe and build respectful relationships.
- Mixed messages from friends and online spaces can cause confusion.
- Many young people feel pressured to do sexual things. Spotting this pressure helps them stay in control.
- Practicing consent skills early builds confidence and supports respectful relationships.

6.2 What you might notice

Young people may be testing boundaries or practicing consent when they:

- ask 'what's normal' or look for reassurance about personal boundaries
- use unsure phrases ('I guess…' or 'If you want…')
- seem scared or hesitant to say 'no'
- talk about drama or pressure in online chats.

6.3 What helps

Reinforcing body ownership	Use the message: *'You get to decide what happens with your body.'*
Talking about consent	Remind them of five parts of consent: • **free and voluntary** (no pressure) • **specific and informed** (they know what they're saying yes to) • **clear and communicated** (an active yes, not a guess or silence) • **ongoing and mutual** (both people can change their minds) • **reflects capacity** (they're old enough, awake and sober enough to make a choice).
Naming pressure clearly	Help them notice if someone is using guilt, power or wearing them down.
Teaching them to speak up	Respecting their own needs is important. Practice phrases like: '*I'm not comfortable,'* or *'Stop that.'*
Including online consent	Consent also applies to photos, videos and messages. Remind them: • Consent to take a photo is not consent to share it. • Consent can be taken back. Even if they sent a photo before, they can say *'stop'* at any time. • Silence or freezing online is a no.
Explaining the law	It's illegal to take, request or share sexual images of anyone under 18. If someone is using an image to threaten or blackmail them, this is a crime.

For more information, see **Support services for adults** from the Trusted Adult Guide.

6.4 What to avoid

Dismissing or rushing	Avoid: ‘You’re fine, don’t worry.’ This can teach young people to ignore their own warning signs. Go at their pace.
Reacting with shock or blame	Strong reactions or asking ‘Why didn’t you tell me?’ can shift responsibility to the young person and shut a conversation down.
Shaming	Avoid focusing on what they were wearing, who they were with, or why they were online late. Consent is about the behaviour of the person who didn’t listen to ‘no’, not the choices of the young person.
Promising to keep secrets	Pressure and threats often rely on secrecy. If a young person is at risk, taking action is the best way to keep them safe. Let them know that sharing the information with a professional is how you protect them.

6.5 Quick responses

These are suggestions. Use your own words and adapt them to suit you and the young person.

If the young person…	You can say or do…
‘I’m not sure if that was consent.’	*‘Consent should feel clear and freely given.’*
‘I said yes, but I didn’t want to.’	*‘Pressure can change choices. That’s not your fault.’*
‘They kept asking me.’	*‘Being worn down is not consent. Your no matters.’*
‘I froze.’	*‘Freezing is a normal safety response. If you didn’t say an active “yes”, it wasn’t consent. I am glad you told me.’*
‘I changed my mind.’	*‘You can change your mind at any time.’*
‘They threatened to share my nudes.’	*‘That is a serious crime called image-based abuse. You’re not in trouble. We can get eSafety to help take it down and stop the person.’* For more information, see **Support services for adults** from the guide.

If the young person shares something that feels unsafe, stay calm and follow the steps in **How to respond: The 6-step-framework**. If you’re unsure what to do, check in with another trusted adult or a professional. You don’t have to make decisions alone.

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(unless Excluded Material)