

Project Consent - YES means YES

Concept note

Background

Historically, societal norms often limited the principle of autonomy to men, constraining women's choices within patriarchal structures. In this context, consent was not widely recognized as essential to dignified relationships, particularly for women. Relationships and marriages were often arranged without the active participation of women, prioritizing family honor or social alliances over personal choice. The feminist movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries began to address this imbalance, advocating for women's rights to make choices regarding their bodies and relationships. These movements laid the foundation for viewing consent as a core aspect of women's dignity and autonomy.

As society moves toward greater equality across various domains, it is essential to introduce behavioral norms that support this equilibrium. Consent empowers individuals to set personal boundaries, make autonomous choices, and feel respected. Adolescence is a critical period for social and emotional development, where peer influence, autonomy, and identity become central. Introducing consent as a habit-forming practice during middle school is important to address these developmental needs. Such an intervention helps teenagers understand social dynamics and nurture healthy relationships.

The broader implications of consent education include minimizing violence in relationships, equipping individuals with a powerful tool to navigate social dynamics, fostering meaningful engagement in relationships, and encouraging healthy interactions.

Proposal

Consent education for young adolescents should emphasize understanding personal boundaries, respect, and communication in both physical and social interactions. It should cover fundamental concepts such as asking for permission, recognizing boundaries in non-sexual and social contexts, and responding respectfully to both agreement and refusal. This project aims to teach consent through a positive affirmation of "Yes means Yes," shifting the narrative from "No means No." The focus is not only on preventing harm but also on fostering respect, transparency, and mutual understanding in relationships.

Vision: Every student should be able to develop the skill of taking consent in their social interactions.

Learning objectives

L1: Students will be able to identify the spaces in, situations, and relationships.

L2: Students will be able to apply consent during their social interactions - both online and offline

L3: Students will be able to practice critical thinking and empathy throughout the learning experience

Learning sciences

Behaviourism: The project allows the learners to build behaviour based on external stimuli like, rewards and repetition. It emphasizes learning through conditioning and external reinforcement.

Constructivism: The project allows learners to build knowledge based on their experiences and actively construct meaning. Constructivism complements this by deepening understanding through scenarios and self-reflection, which can allow students to personalize their understanding of consent, especially important for middle and high school students who are developing autonomy and social awareness.

Measuring Impact

Assessment involves writing reflective pieces based on personal experiences, stories, and imagination, as well as noting changes in perspective.

The success of the learning can be evaluated through the depth of learners' reflections in the short term.

Long-term evidence can be gathered through:

- The vocabulary learners use in social interactions
- The nature and number of healthy relationships each learner develops
- Learners' sense of psychological safety in their learning environment

Learning Journey

This learning journey may take 12-15 weeks depending on the learner's choice and their context.

Learning Stage	Tasks/Activities	Learning context	Learning objective
:: Awareness	a. Introduction to the concept of consent through a series of stories	The learning in this activity can work either inside or outside of the classroom	L1 and L3
::Skill Building	b. Conversation charts to analyse where and how consent impacted the situation c. Choose the right question: Series of questions where the learner will make a choice based on their rationale	If the learner knows how to read and write they will be able to learn independently in this process The facilitator can engage students through peer learning The learning tool can be virtual or physical The feedback can be generated online through the app or can be given by the facilitator based on observation	L1 and L2

:: Action	d. Expressing their learning through performance (art, stories, narrative) and receiving feedback e. Role-play activities - acting it out with a partner based on real-life situations f. Hold Accountable tracking behaviour and generating a feedback loop	These activities of practice require social accountability, hence the intervention of either a peer or an adult is significant	L2 and L3
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References

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Why did I choose to do this Project?

Based on my lived experiences as a woman, I have often felt discomfort in certain situations, interactions, and relationships. In retrospect, I realize that much of this discomfort could have been avoided if a simple question had been a part of those conversations. This reflection isn't limited to my personal experiences; nine out of ten people with whom I shared my thoughts felt the same way. It's not just about asking a question but about seeking a response that is enthusiastic, clear, and comfortable for everyone involved. This is the essence of "Consent," which isn't only relevant in a sexual context but is an essential part of everyday interactions. Whether it's asking before borrowing something, joining a group activity, or initiating a physical greeting like a hug, teaching consent in these contexts can make the concept more relatable and meaningful for young learners.

Consent goes beyond simply asking; it also involves interpreting responses and recognizing non-verbal cues. Based on these experiences and principles, I wanted to create a learning experience that teaches individuals about consent. The big question was when and where to start. After extensive research, I chose to focus on middle schoolers—an ideal age group, as they are at a stage where they are developing social scripts and boundaries. Introducing consent as a key element of respectful, empathetic relationships at this age can be powerful.

This led me to design a self-paced collaborative learning experience that allows young learners to become aware of and practice consent in their everyday lives.