

“Things to Talk about Before Having Sex” Brainstorm

Goals:

- To explore the negotiations that can happen when people have decided to have sex.
- To highlight the rights, responsibilities, and risks involved with having sex.
- To discuss consent:
 - Explain consent.
 - Explore coercion, and how alcohol/drugs impact consent.
 - Emphasize support after a sexual assault and offer resources.

Have Ready:

- Write on a flipchart/whiteboard: Things to talk about before having sex.
- Markers and tape (if needed)

Instructions:

- Ask the group, “**What are some things to talk about with a partner before having sex?**” Validate their answers and add the following points if not mentioned by youth.

Sample Flipchart:

- **What each person is comfortable/not comfortable with?**
Normalize that there may be sexual activities youth want to try or like doing, and other activities they are not comfortable with.
- **Expectations**
Encourage youth to ask themselves what dating and sex means to them and their partner(s). For example, dating does not automatically equal sex and vice versa. Encourage youth to wonder, how will this affect our relationship? Would we have

different expectations after sex/making out? (Casual sex vs. monogamous relationship)

- **Birth Control**

Highlight the importance of using birth control with penis vagina sex if trying to avoid pregnancy. Ask youth, **“Where can you get birth control supplies?”** If someone is drinking and having sex it is important to use birth control because alcohol can harm the fetus.

Note: Project Choices is a free program in Winnipeg that explores alcohol, sex and birth control. It is a brief service that offers information and individualized feedback to help girls and women make healthy decisions for themselves about alcohol use and contraception. For more info call, 204.784.4072.

- **STIs and importance of getting tested**

Let youth know, **“Many STI/HIV show no signs which means getting tested is the most accurate way to know if someone has an STI.”** Highlight that condoms protect us and our partners from STI/HIV.

- **What if birth control fails?**

No birth control is 100% effective and the 3 legal options in Canada are abortion, adoption & parenting. People may have different values about which is the right pregnancy option, but the person who is carrying the pregnancy should make the final decision as their body and life are most affected.

- **Consent.** What is written below is how Teen Talk explains consent:

- When it comes to sexual situations, **“Does anyone know what the word consent means?” Consent is clear permission, which means that only yes means yes. It’s a voluntary agreement, which means it’s not something that one person does to another, but rather it’s something that people decide to do together.**

- **“Consent is about asking, listening and respecting. For example, let’s say that you want to kiss someone what would consent sound like? What would you say?”** Can I kiss you? I’d really like to kiss you. (Anything they say that is respectful). You might be thinking this is kind of weird or hard or seems really awkward but the more we do it, the more natural it becomes.

- **Part of asking for consent is listening to the response and respecting what they say/want. It's also important to pay attention to what they're doing non-verbally.**
- **"If you ask if you can touch someone's bum and they say yes, it's bum touching time! If they say maybe later, I'm not sure, or nothing at all, what does that all mean?" No. Sometimes hearing a no can feel hard or we might feel kind of rejected. Even though those feelings are normal, it's our responsibility to deal with our feelings and respect the person who is saying no. Consent is also ongoing. This means that you have a right to say no at anytime.** So if in the middle of bum touching, someone wanted it to stop, what would have to happen? Stop. If someone says "stop", or "wait", looks uncomfortable or is pulling away, stop and check in with them. This could sound like, "You don't seem really into this." **If you are unsure, always stop and ask.**
- Asking for consent can be fun and sexy and figuring out ways to talk about consent that feels comfortable for you can help. We know that it can be more complicated than just asking or saying "yes" or "no." People don't always talk about touching/sex before it happens; sometimes people communicate non-verbally, through eye contact and body language. **Ultimately, consent gives both people a chance to say whether or not they are into something and is part of creating trust and respect in our relationships.**
- **"So, we have talked a lot about what consent is, now we're going to share some things that consent is not. Consent cannot happen when a person is drunk or high, because they are under the influence. It's also not coercive, which means trying to change someone's no into a yes, for example, by pressuring or guiltting them or getting them drunk or high. Any unwanted sexual attention or contact is sexual assault."**
- **"If you have ever dealt with or are dealing with sexual assault, it is never your fault and you have a right to get support.** It can help to talk to someone you trust. You can access support for your or a friend. **The Klinik Sexual Assault Crisis Line is a great resource that people can call if they need to talk. You can also call the line if you're feeling upset or unsure about a sexual**

experience. It is open 24/7 and free to call from anywhere in Manitoba. Their phone number is 1.888.292.7565 or 204.786.8631.”

Debrief:

- These conversations may feel a little awkward at first, but the more we try to have them with our partner(s), the more open and honest relationships can be. It doesn't guarantee that our partners will always be a perfect match, but it can help us decide if we want to be sexually active with someone.