ACTIVE* CONSENT

TOOLKIT

DEVELOPING A CONSENT STRATEGY FOR YOUR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

Contents

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ACTIVE* CONSENT TOOLKIT: DEVELOPING A CONSENT STRATEGY FOR YOUR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Foreword

It is clear that there is a critical need throughout our society to address sexual violence and harassment and to promote positive, active consent. I believe the higher education sector can play a leadership role and, as befits a sector founded on knowledge generation, do so based on a comprehensive understanding of the issue, led by research and dialogue. I welcome the publication of the *Active* Consent Toolkit: Developing a Consent Strategy for Your Higher Education Institution*, as a further step toward research-based implementation of the aims of the Consent Framework.

The importance of statistical information on sexual violence and harassment was demonstrated by the Active* Consent and Union of Students in Ireland Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) published earlier this year. This revealing survey increased our understanding, pointing the way to a model of ongoing research on campus – which will ensure we understand what is happening to students and how well-supported they are in their college experience. I have also committed to a further survey, recognising the need for further research in the field, for example work that sheds light on the stories behind these figures, and on the experiences of HEI staff – both as supporters of students and as individuals who may themselves have experienced violence and/or harassment.

That continually improving understanding must be reflected in ongoing, sustainable systems of measurement, monitoring and evaluation. This ability aligns with our shared goal of addressing consent, sexual violence, and harassment – providing regular updates from the sector, enabling targets to be set, demonstrating best practice and evidence of success – and ensuring there is an evidence base for strategic dialogue with colleges around the country.

Ireland has the opportunity to put in place world leading systems for consent education – to prevent violence and promote healthy development – alongside supports for people who are affected by sexual violence and harassment.

It is encouraging that many of the actions taken in recent years have come from our higher education sector, in partnership with student advocacy and specialised NGO input. Such developments increase the sector's capacity to respond to consent, sexual violence, and harassment. Several of these were recognised in the Consent Framework, including the Active* Consent programme, the Bystander Initiative, and the ESHTE initiative which has more recently developed into the National Advisory Committee. Such initiatives enable colleges to draw on standard, research-based initiatives, and provide a forum for sharing best practice, learning, and meeting mutual challenges.

As one of the many challenges posed by Covid-19, educational programmes typically now require an online as well as in-person presence. The research tells us that face-to-face engagement is important for impactful learning about consent and sexual violence. In time this opportunity will return, yet the *Active* Consent Toolkit* steps up to the challenge of the current moment by supporting colleges with critical resources for a programme of online engagement and strategic development that extends throughout the year. The Toolkit has been designed for the needs of all groups of students. It shows how complex messages can be expressed through simple principles and engaging learning techniques, presented as an empowering narrative of personal confidence, the willingness to speak out, respect for others, and an awareness of supports and services.

The Active Consent Toolkit* is reflective of a change in how we think about consent and its relationship to sexual violence and harassment. This is fitting because it is a moment of change in our society on the issue of sexual violence and harassment.

There is a growing awareness of the problem, its causes and the impact it has on survivors and their supporters. I am conscious of the struggle and pain that many of our young people experience as a result of sexual violence and harassment. The experience of survivors should be our guiding light as we engage in the work of establishing a culture of positive, active consent.

There is also a growing realisation that our societal institutions are critical settings for delivering on the changes we all want to see. The culture and systems of our Higher Education institutions can become a national strength and example – if our enhanced understanding of the issue, the greater availability of programmes, enhanced policies and monitoring are matched by an openness among all of us to be part of a culture of change.

Minister Simon Harris T.D.,
Minister for Further & Higher Education,
Research, Innovation & Science.

Dedication

To all the students and staff at HEIs across Ireland who have helped us develop our programming and research as well as those within the secondary schools and sports sectors, our colleagues across the NGO and activist sector working to end sexual violence, and all survivors everywhere.

THE ACTIVE* CONSENT TOOLKIT

WHO WE ARE
ACTIVE* CONSENT PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

BASED AT NUI GALWAY, ACTIVE* CONSENT IS A NATIONAL PROGRAMME. WE ARE AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM, DRAWING ON PSYCHOLOGY, DRAMA AND THEATRE, AND HEALTH PROMOTION. OUR TEAM OF TEN PEOPLE ENABLES US TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE THAT ALL COLLEGES NOW FACE FOLLOWING COVID-19 TO ACHIEVE THE POTENTIAL OF THE CONSENT FRAMEWORK.

GIVEN THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES, THE SHIFT TO ONLINE DELIVERY AFFORDS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE WIDER REACH THAN PREVIOUSLY IMAGINED, THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF HAVING A STANDARDISED PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED LOCALLY BY EACH HEI.

Goal:

To mainstream effective, relevant, engaging, practical and feasible consent education and skills training with 16-24 year olds, building on a base of research on needs and experiences, and evaluated through outcomes and impact.

Ethos:

Our ethos is to promote the achievement of positive, active consent, while cognisant of the need to address sexual violence and harassment. Active* Consent is OMFG (ongoing, mutual and freely-given).

Collaboration:

The Active* Consent programme now collaborates with nearly all HEIs in Ireland. Our theory of change is that, besides working directly with young people, meaningful and sustainable change happens by supporting organisations like colleges, schools, and sports organisations to change and develop too.

Partnership is essential to scale up meaningful education with large cohorts of young people; e.g., providing training and having collaborative arrangements with HEIs, USI, Student Unions, Student Services, Schools, Sports Organisations and external expert groups.

Research-based:

Each resource we develop is based on unique Irish research evidence assembled by Active* Consent and published in 5 research reports since 2014. The evidence base is combined with our ethos, goals, and extensive experience in sexual health education. We are supported by partnerships with external expert groups who advise on content and student safety:

- Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education (PCHEI).
- Galway Rape Crisis Centre (the second largest RCC nationally).
- Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI).
- The Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

Funding and Organisation:

Active* Consent is funded from 2019-2023 by an award of 1.7 million Euro by Lifes2good Foundation, Rethink Ireland (formerly Social Innovation Fund Ireland), and NUI Galway. The funding has enabled us to expand our engagement with partner organisations across Further / Higher Education, Schools, and Sports Organisations. We used this funding to carry out the SES (2020) survey. During 2020 the Department of Education & Skills also supports us with funding.

INTRODUCTION: HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

WE HAVE CREATED THIS TOOLKIT FOR A WIDE COALITION OF OUR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION (HEI) PARTNERS WHO WORK TO MAKE POSITIVE CHANGES IN THE SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS.

IT IS AIMED AT:

- UNIVERSITY STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS INCLUDING ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF
- STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES WORKING WITH THEIR STUDENT UNIONS, SOCIETIES, OR ON BEHALF OF THEIR ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES
- THE WIDER COMMUNITY INCLUDING EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS THE RAPE CRISIS MOVEMENT, ADVOCACY GROUPS, AND POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION

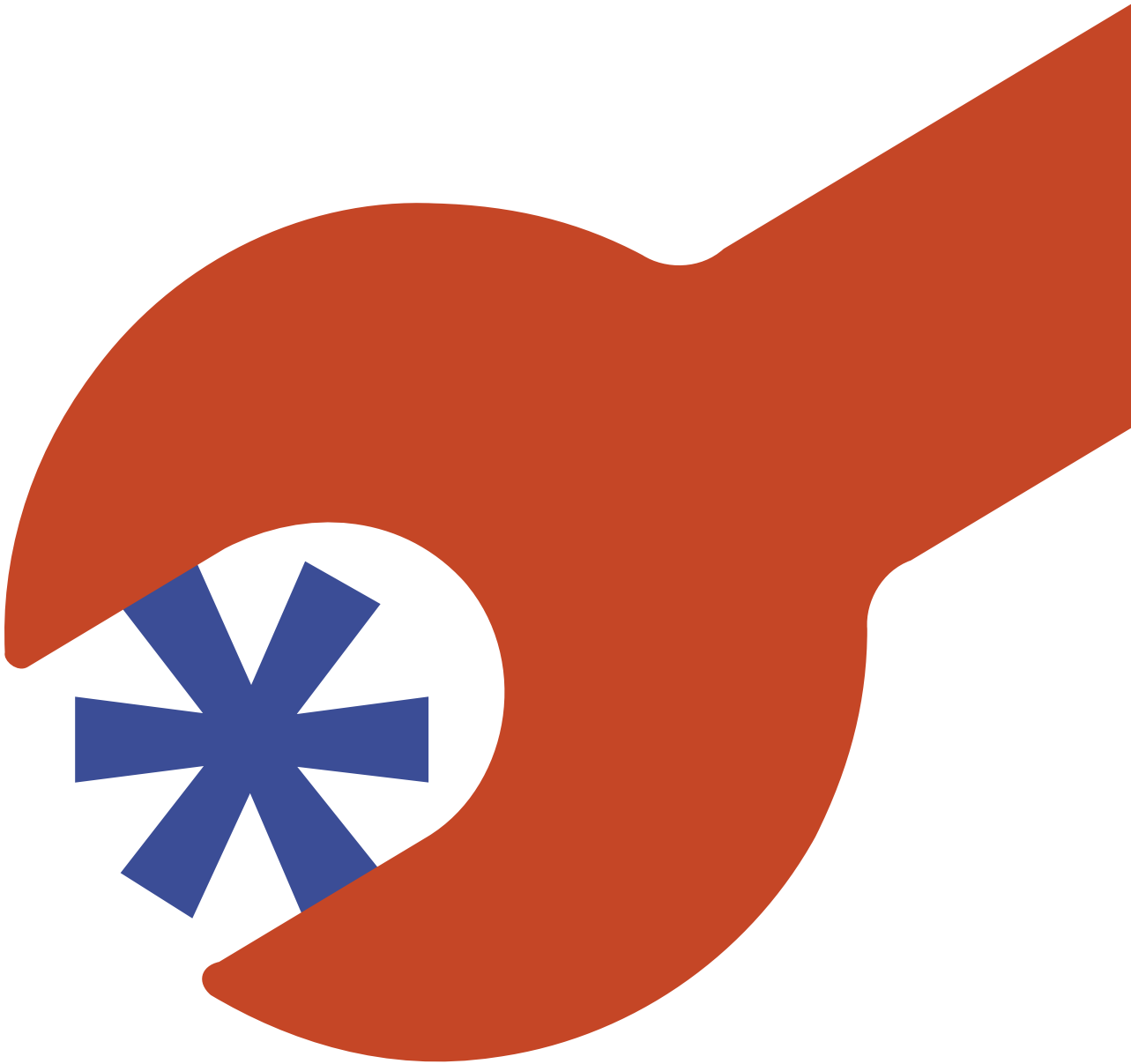
You will gain a broad introduction to what you need to know about the Consent Framework and drafting your HEI's action plan, as well as an in-depth look at Active* Consent's 2020-2021 programming as well as a deeper introduction to our research and unique vision for consent education.

We also explicitly intend this toolkit as an expansion resource for those who have engaged with our programming in the past, particularly those we have trained to deliver our Active* (formerly SMART) Consent workshop.

This toolkit expands on key areas that we do not have time to cover in shorter trainings, including, for example, more depth on our most recent research findings such as those investigating the connection between our work in colleges and the secondary school sector's needs for consent education.

You can read this toolkit straight through or jump between sections to find out what you need to know about the wider HEI context in which Active* Consent works, or how you might interact with our resources or those of our colleagues in your community.

There are also general information sections that anyone can use to direct students/peers to local resources, familiarise yourself with our key Active* Consent research findings or that someone might make use of as handouts to introduce key consent definitions and concepts to others quickly as they advocate for the Consent Framework's ongoing sustainability within and across your institution.



THE ACTIVE* CONSENT TOOLKIT

PART I:

MAKING YOUR ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSENT FRAMEWORK

1

WHY DO WE ALL NEED TO BE ACTIVE ON CONSENT?: A WIDER IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL POLICY FOR HEIS ON CONSENT, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, AND HARASSMENT HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED BY THE 'CONSENT FRAMEWORK' - *SAFE, RESPECTFUL, SUPPORTIVE AND POSITIVE: ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS*, LAUNCHED IN APRIL 2019. DESIGNED BY AN EXPERT GROUP CONVENED BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, THE ETHOS OF THE CONSENT FRAMEWORK IS FOR THE THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION SECTOR TO ADOPT VISIBLE, TRANSPARENT, CONSISTENT, AND STUDENT-CENTERED STRATEGIES ON CONSENT, SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT.

It is a framework in the sense of identifying key goals that require the engagement of all stakeholders – including students, Students' Unions, and other advocacy and campaigning groups, staff across all academic, administrative, support and research roles, HEI management and governance systems, NGOs such as Rape Crisis Centres, the HEA, and the Department of Further Education & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science.

The policy was influenced by U.S. research and models that highlight the importance of taking an ecological, whole of campus approach. It also embraced the WHO definition of sexual health that states:

> "Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence."

This definition values positive rights to development and expression alongside the right to have personal rights respected.

Accordingly, the Framework has a nuanced approach, recognising the need to support young adults with sexual decision making conducive to positive, respectful intimacy, while setting out to tackle the problem of sexual violence and harassment. All stakeholders in the HEI environment are directed to address both facets of sexual experience, to realise the potential of the college setting to shape attitudes, skills, and capabilities during the unique developmental experience of attending college.

The Framework describes the need for culture change, re-designing procedural systems, and mainstreaming targeted knowledge and skills initiative. Colleges are recognised to be complex organisations, which require support to achieve appropriate structures and processes – yet at the same time having the potential to achieve excellence and become a leading point of reference for other parts of our society.

The Framework recognises that the work involved in delivering the educational programming to deliver on this vision is "ongoing, multi-faceted and comprehensive – encompassing support for positive, healthy relationships and prevention of negative experiences, addressing the role of alcohol / drugs, and gender" (p. 17). It describes how workshops and ongoing messaging are important tools to ensure all students receive the support they need.

The organisational development promoted through the Consent Framework and associated student / staff-facing initiatives are intended as steps to help achieve the vision for students at Irish HEIs to have:

- Understanding, confidence, and capacity for active consent, at a personal level and in supporting peers.
- Skills and agency for confident reporting / support seeking for sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape.
- Awareness of equality and diversity, the impact of gender role expectations, and contextual factors such as alcohol and drug use.
- Knowledge and capacity to challenge any perceived normalisation of unwanted sexual comments or behaviour.

Given the acceptance of a whole of campus approach in the Framework, there is also a recognition that staff awareness, education and training is integral to the work that takes place. Staff should be supported to "understand and engage with the institutional initiatives on active consent, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape" (p. 17) and have the skills to support students.

At an organisational level, HEIs will assess the effectiveness of the initiatives undertaken. Colleges will also support student disclosure and complaints systems, alongside counselling and advocacy. These services will have a trauma-informed mode of delivery.

Programmes and structures – How it is being progressed and will be progressed

The Framework provides a clear roadmap for achieving the goal of supporting students and staff, however it has been released as a policy in a context where there is relatively

little specialisation and dedicated capacity within HEIs for the range of areas that it addresses. In planning how to promote its full implementation, it is critical to assess the capability that currently exists, what progress has been made in recent years, and what supports are now needed to fully adopt its recommendations.

As independent centres of learning, all colleges have significant autonomy and flexibility. These are valued characteristics that can enable new practices and procedures to be adopted relatively rapidly. Indeed, much positive development on consent has taken place in the past five years, demonstrating the possibility for sectoral change. The Consent Framework highlighted the Active* Consent programme, the National Women's Council, and the Bystander Initiative as making significant contributions so far, which can assist further in the process of positive change in the sector.

Further support came from the Department of Education and Skills in 2020 through a scheme to fund Consent Framework implementation projects. The funding scheme supported a number of information and education projects alongside policy development initiatives that will stimulate enhanced capacity and learning across the sector. The Report & Support project, led by the body of Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland (PCHEI), uses anonymous, online reporting as a strategy with several applications – to prompt organisational reflection and prioritisation, provide survivors of sexual violence and harassment with a further choice in communicating their experience, and as an additional input to yearly reporting and monitoring of progress.

The Consent Framework highlights the importance of research as a means to assess implementation and promote high quality responses. The importance of the information gathering function of research was demonstrated by the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES), which provided a comprehensive oversight of patterns of experiences of non-consenting sexual activity and sexual harassment, using internationally validated measures. The first report from the SES was published in June 2020 (Burke et al., 2020), focused on providing information on the incidence of sexual violence and harassment, and student perceptions of college supports. Further reports from it due to explore the psychosocial and peer-related factors that help to explain these patterns.

The online survey was completed by 6,026 students at 13 HEIs in spring 2020. It was one of the first examples outside the U.S. of the use of the ARC3 Campus Climate survey methodology – which supports an ecological, whole of campus perspective on consent, sexual violence and harassment. It also reflected the need for collaboration in order to achieve a joint goal, bringing together expertise from the Active*Consent research team with the Union of Students in Ireland.

A range of measures are being further developed at present. The Irish Universities Association recently published guidance for universities on investigating misconduct (*'Guidance for Universities on How to Respond to Alleged Staff or Student Misconduct Sexual Misconduct'*). The National Advisory Committee set up by the National Women's Council provides a forum for multiple stakeholders to share their knowledge and learning. These are illustrative of a groundswell of leadership, policies, and monitoring now emerging.

Such measures must be combined with student and staff initiatives, new reporting and investigation mechanisms for sexual violence to truly transform how HEIs respond. The roadmap for student initiatives includes awareness of positive, active consent alongside confidence in calling out inappropriate behaviours. The intention is for these initiatives to be supported through workshops and classes, online strategies, and ongoing work for cultural change. Despite the guidance of the Consent Framework, and the development of programmes and policy development, work still needs to be completed to achieve the aims of the Framework, which will require a collaborative approach between HEI management, Student Services, Students Unions, academics, programme designers, and researchers.

Balancing institutional autonomy with the adoption of best practice will be an important task for all colleges. Working with the HEA, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science is prompting HEIs to engage in this planning by requiring an Action Plan by early 2021. The institutional Action Plan is based on the key outcomes from the Consent Framework, and will address key areas such as:

- Systems for recording incidents and reporting on these.
- Policy development – Including integration of policies within organisational systems.
- Culture change – HEI leadership and working group, partnership with external groups.
- Targeted initiatives – Student and staff education programmes; support services incorporating disclosure, reporting, and counselling in a trauma-informed approach.

While there is considerable work remaining to achieve the vision set out in the Framework, it should be acknowledged that the policy is recognised to be highly progressive. A 2020 report from the European Research Area & Innovation Committee has identified it as a leading example of policy development to support gender equality in academia in Europe (Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation). The urgency now apparent in following through on the promise of the Framework is likely to engage colleges fully in the process. At the same time, it is critical that these efforts are guided by a clear sense of the resources and capacity required to achieve the required outcomes.

Consent Framework in Context: Justice and Education Initiatives

The implementation of the Consent Framework is taking place in the context of wider Government action that spans several different departments. These developments are in themselves reflective of a societal shift toward acknowledgement of sexual violence and the promotion of active consent. The O'Malley Report for the Department of Justice & Equality has focused on the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences. It concludes that, in the wider context, there is a clear need for enhanced preventative work through information campaigns for members of the public and which could link with key societal institutions including schools and colleges. The Report highlighted that, in line with the WHO definition of sexual health, "sexual autonomy therefore entails two complementary freedoms: the freedom to engage and the freedom to refuse" (p. 29). While noting the progress made in third level colleges through consent education programmes, the report concludes that there is more work to do in colleges and elsewhere to ensure that all members of society know the legal definition of consent:

> Section 9 of the Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act 1990, inserted by s. 48 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, provides: A person consents to a sexual act if he or she freely and voluntarily agrees to engage in that act. (p. 28).

The O'Malley Report states that it is critical that everyone has an understanding of the legal definition, and the conditions that mean the person is not capable of giving consent – in relation to intoxication or pressure for instance, which feature prominently in Active* Consent research on consent with young people. The Report recommends a public education campaign on consent, addressing schools and colleges as key settings:

> Steps should be taken by appropriate government departments and other state agencies to ensure that education and awareness programmes on consent are available in all second and third level educational institutions (p. 30).

Recent developments in the post-primary sector align with the findings of the O'Malley Report, and set up the opportunity for Framework implementation to be developed as an integrated approach to consent education that spans both schools and colleges. Reform of the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) for Irish Primary and Post-Primary schools is underway with associated research already in place (Keating, Morgan, & Collins, 2018; Nolan, 2018; NCCA, 2019). The emerging consensus is for a whole-school based approach to RSE (Nolan, 2018), grounded in a sex-positive, holistic curriculum. Schools and colleges have a shared experience of lacking specialised roles for staff to support such developments, arising from limited professional development opportunities, resourcing, and priority in the curriculum.

A comprehensive report in 2019 from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment highlighted the potential for teachers to occupy a central role in the delivery of effective RSE. School students expressed support for their teachers having specialist knowledge and training to perform this role, placing particular value on teacher openness, non-judgemental attitudes, and confidence in the role. The acknowledgement of both needs – to promote positive sexual health and development while informing students about non-consent – is again shared between the Consent Framework and NCCA conclusions.

The attention paid to post-primary sexual health education sheds light on the experience of students entering college – Active* Consent research shows that they are largely dissatisfied with their sexual health education at school, particularly on healthy relationships and consent. As advised by the American College Health Association (2016), the existing knowledge, attitudes and skills of target groups must be taken into account when designing student-facing targeted initiatives for the college setting – meeting students where they currently are in their learning about health sexual development.

In addition, there is a similarity in conclusions between schools and colleges – where the third level sector has adopted the Consent Framework, parallels can be seen in the call at post-primary level for clear curriculum guidelines and a whole of institution ethos, informed by consultation with stakeholders,

interagency collaboration, and an opening up of opportunities for ongoing professional development to support the capacity to deliver on reform.

Supporting Action Plans – Staff and Organisational Development

Given the priorities to be addressed in the institutional Action Plans that will be devised by early 2021 in each HEI, there is a need to identify how the priorities will be supported by specific plans, actions, and processes. As noted above, the priorities for Action Plans are:

- Systems for recording incidents and reporting on these.
- Policy development – Including integration of policies within organisational systems.
- Culture change – HEI leadership and working groups, partnership with external groups.
- Targeted initiatives – Student and staff education programmes; support services incorporating disclosure, reporting, and counselling in a trauma-informed approach.
- Policy development including review of policies that support staff and students who report sexual harassment or violence, including research on awareness among staff and students of choices for seeking support and engaging in anonymous or named reporting.
- Integration of initiatives at institutional level to ensure a sustainable, programmatic approach to organisational change and development.
- Institutional research – on objective measures of engagement with targeted initiatives, organisational impact and effectiveness, case studies, and monitoring of different sources of data on sexual violence and harassment.
- Establishing or enhancing partnerships with external groups and organisations.
- Participation in national initiatives including research and systems development.
- Integration with related programming for shared learning and opportunities – such as mental health, drugs and alcohol educational programming and supports.

Each HEI is likely to engage in a programme of staff and organisational development that will enable systems and processes for reporting, policies, cultural change, and targeted initiatives. As with other non-specialised settings such as schools, novel demands and opportunities will arise for HEIs when ensuring sustainable delivery of this programme of activity – some of which are likely to be institutionally-specific, while others will be shared across the sector or groups of colleges.

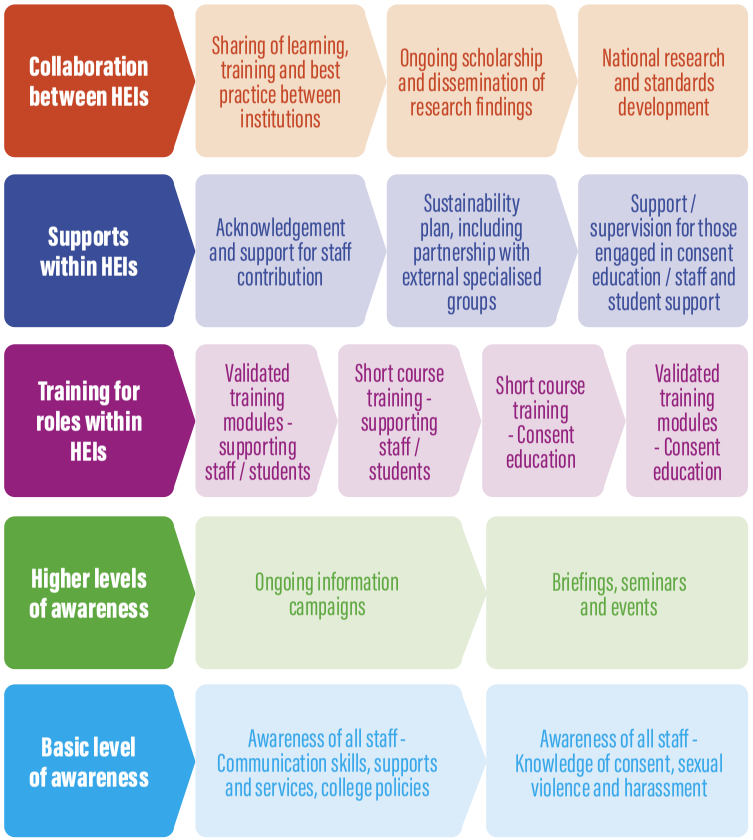
The following areas could require particular support as HEI engage in a journey of cultural change and systems development leading to all members of the college community being appropriately informed and skilled responders on consent, sexual violence, and harassment:

- Briefings and training for institutional consent framework implementation groups, key influencers and change leaders.
- Consolidation of training programmes for staff and students involved in consent education, cultural change, and signposting for disclosures.
- Ongoing support for staff and students involved in providing education or other supports.
- Consolidation of a year-long programme of student and staff initiatives, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and ongoing development.

Some of these tasks will involve consultancy, training, or service provision from specialised services, potentially as an ongoing feature or at least during an initial phase. The integration of awareness, education and training for students and staff will be made sustainable by building capacity within HEIs, with resourcing required for assimilation and acknowledgement of duties into workload planning.

There is clearly scope to incorporate many of the key roles to support Consent Framework implementation in the development of a Campus Coordinator role, who can lead the necessary work on an applied level, linking to other college resources, community partners, national standards and programmes. Given there is an overlap in ethos and the use of similar educational programming strategies, a joined up approach with mental health, drugs, and alcohol initiatives should also be explored as part of a wider commitment to supporting students with a substantial programme for transition to college and student success.

The integration of awareness, education, and training in an institutional plan for addressing consent, sexual violence and harassment.



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HOW DO I ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CONSENT FRAMEWORK IN MAKING MY HEI'S ACTION PLAN?:

A QUICK GUIDE FOR STUDENTS, STAFF AND COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

THE CONSENT FRAMEWORK SETS DIFFERENT AIMS FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS DEPENDING ON THEIR NEEDS WITHIN THE HEI SECTOR: STUDENTS, STAFF AND COLLEGE LEADERSHIP. THESE AIMS HAVE BEEN FURTHER REINFORCED BY MINISTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION SIMON HARRIS' MANDATE FOR EACH HEI INSTITUTION TO PRODUCE AN ACTION PLAN FOR TACKLING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ON THEIR CAMPUS.

You need to identify what the group within your HEI needs to learn or achieve in order to satisfy the Consent Framework and prepare for contribution to your HEI's submission of an action plan.

Once you know that, you can continue or begin acting to increase understanding of consent on your campus and end sexual violence and harassment through the drafting and implementation of a strong action plan and provision of regular, sustainable consent education programming.

Regardless of your role, this task will always involve collaboration between students, staff and college leadership. Our Quick Guide outlines what is involved for each of these groups.

STUDENTS

The Consent Framework's aim is that they:
- Have knowledge and skills for achieving mutual consent in their relationships
- Have an understanding of what is meant by harassment, assault, and sexual misconduct,
- Feel skilled in influencing others around them
- Identify college and community support services as accessible and welcoming
- Know how to report incidents of sexual misconduct.

In order to achieve this, students might:
- Work with college staff or leadership to engage partners including Active* Consent, or the UCC Bystander Intervention Programming to offer on-campus or online programming. With Active* Consent, you can also gain access to ongoing messaging campaigns that can be tailored to your needs.
- Liaise with on-campus support services including health, counselling, etc. to unify and make prominent advertisement of on-campus sexual health and violence related supports.
- Liaise with local partners including rape crisis centres and Gardaí to unify and make prominent advertisement of off-campus sexual health and violence related supports and reporting mechanisms.

STAFF

The Consent Framework's aim is that they:
- Have a basic understanding of consent and non-consent,
- That some staff are trained to effectively listen and offer guidance on next steps for support, if a student or colleague made a disclosure.

In order to achieve this, staff at a discipline/school or college level might:
- Engage partners including Active* Consent or the UCC Bystander Intervention Programme to offer programming including eLearning interventions, workshops, or special events on your campus. With Active* Consent, you can also gain access to ongoing messaging campaigns that can be tailored to your needs.
- Take advantage of staff training by Active* Consent or other partners including your local rape crisis centre or your own on-campus units including student health or counselling on supporting student disclosure.
- Contribute to university working groups or task forces on creating an Action Plan for your HEI at school.

COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

The Consent Framework's aim is to ensure:
- There are policies, monitoring, resourcing, and leadership in place to ensure sustainable and effective support.

Minister Harris has reinforced this by mandating an Action Plan from all HEIs to fulfill the Framework.

In order to achieve this, college leadership must:
- Engage partners including Active* Consent or the UCC Bystander Intervention Programme to offer on-campus or online programming. With Active* Consent, you can also avail of ongoing messaging to the student body, through your student union and working with college leadership.
- Convene an inclusive on-campus working group to draft your HEI's action plan with key management, staff and student stakeholders. In putting together this group, bear in mind the importance of ensuring a diversity of representation (as defined by sexual orientation, gender identity, race/ethnicity, international vs. Irish student status as well as rank or position within the university.) For our Action Plans to be meaningful, they must serve those on the front lines of supporting students as well as take into account the differential needs of our student body and staff.
- Develop coalitions across the university and with external partners including local rape crisis centres and Gardaí to draft, implement and evaluate clear reporting mechanisms whether based on campus or in the local community
- Make appropriate budget provisions to support sustainable consent framework initiatives as well as the immediate delivery of Minister Harris's Action Plan for your campus.

72%

OF STUDENTS SAID THEY THOUGHT THAT THE COLLEGE WOULD RESPOND TO A REPORT OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT FAIRLY AND RESPECTFULLY.

3

TRUE AND FALSE: FACT CHECK ON ENGAGING WITH THE CONSENT FRAMEWORK AND MAKING AN ACTION PLAN

WORKING WITH HEIS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, LIAISING WITH DIVERSE SUPPORT STAFF, STUDENTS, AND UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT TEAMS, WE'VE ENCOUNTERED SOME COMMON CONCERNS ABOUT MAKING AND IMPLEMENTING AN ACTION PLAN BASED ON THE CONSENT FRAMEWORK THAT OUR ACTIVE* CONSENT TEAM WILL ANSWER HERE.

I'm a staff member. If a student discloses to me, doesn't that mean I'm fully responsible for making sure they follow through and get help and report?

Firstly, not all survivors will approach recovery in the same ways. You are not responsible for ensuring they take particular actions- either suggesting them or following up to make sure they have done so.

Instead, here are some brief steps for handling a disclosure.

1. **Tell them you believe them**. Opening up about a negative sexual experience isn't easy, so reassure the person that you believe them and are there to support and listen.
2. **Really listen to the person disclosing to you**. Follow their lead- they might just tell you a little bit, or they may need to tell you the whole story. The best thing you can do is listen without judgement. Don't rush them into sharing the whole story if they don't want to.
3. **Focus on their feelings**. Remember to listen and focus on their feelings instead of your own.
4. **Ask "What do you want to do next?"** What happens next should be their choice, and they might not know what they want to do right away. Pushing them to take action can be disempowering and traumatizing for them, and this is not your job as someone working in higher education.
5. **Direct them towards support services**. Remind them that you are not a counsellor, but that there are qualified people on campus and in the community who can help including: Student Counselling, Student Health Centre, SU Welfare Office, Chaplaincy, Rape Crisis Centre, Sexual Assault Treatment Unit.

But if I'm an academic/administrator, it's not my job to handle these kinds of disclosures. I'm not prepared, and I might say the wrong thing.

It is true that universities are not rape crisis centres or sexual assault treatment units, and you are not expected to behave as if they are. We have given you a national list of non-university contacts in this area at the end of this toolkit.

However, given the intensive nature of a higher education experience and the time of life people typically pursue their education, which statistically have been connected to higher incidents of sexual violence, you may hear a disclosure. And if you do, it makes sense to be prepared to respond sensitively while maintaining appropriate boundaries. A very real reaction can be for you to express anger against the perpetrator, a desire to seek retribution or shock at hearing details of a negative incident, all of which can actually make the whole situation worse for the person disclosing and may re-traumatise them or shut them down.

There is some language in the previous answer to use before directing a student on to other resources if you ever do experience a disclosure.

If we keep pushing consent, aren't we at risk of making students feel that sex is compulsory during their time in college? What about students with religious and/or cultural reasons for abstaining or who just aren't ready?

We know that in Active* Consent/Union of Students in Ireland's 2020 Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) of 6,026 students, 87% of respondents reported participating in oral sex, 84% reported vaginal sex, 36% reported anal sex, and 49% reported other genital stimulation or penetration. This means that a large percentage of our college population is sexually active.

However Active* Consent's interventions make clear that sex is not compulsory and that, with fuller knowledge, more informed choices can be made now or in the future.

And nevertheless, because of high reported levels of sexual violence and harassment at HEIs, even if an individual is not sexually active, they or someone close to them maybe affected directly in some way.

Ultimately, the goal of both our Consent Framework and Active* Consent's programming is to ensure students' wellbeing and safety.

But even if they are having sex, aren't we pushing them towards having casual sex?

As the above current statistics show, most students are sexually active, and just over half stated they were in an exclusive relationship.

However over years of research we have seen consistently that everyone thinks their peers are having more sex and are more comfortable with casual sexual behaviours than they actually are.

In addition, a common belief is that 'having lots of sex' relates to having many different sexual partners when surely it also means having the time and inclination to explore lots of sexual experiences with one willing partner.

Therefore, providing research-based consent education highlights many of the social norm gaps and how such misinformed beliefs can influence behaviour. Being better informed helps students strengthen their own convictions regarding their choice whether or not to be sexually active; especially when it becomes evident that their peers are not as comfortable with this as they think they are having casual sex.

Ultimately, the decision to be sexually active in long-term or casual relationships is up to the individual and their partner(s). But in order to minimise the risks of peer pressure (internal or external), our students do need to be accurately informed.

Doesn't an issue as complex as consent, sexual assault and rape in university life require a more holistic approach rather than thinking we can solve it through a few workshops? Won't individuals need different things?

Yes, absolutely.

It is about having consistent messages and creating a campus culture of respect and support for everyone. As we've identified, the work of the Active* Consent programme has always depended on a wide range of stakeholders across the university. We recognise that a negative sexual experience can affect every aspect of a student's life, not limited to academic performance.

This means that staff need to be engaged with core messages on consent education across university units, including basic steps for handling a disclosure.

Staff responsible for implementing consent framework policies need to collaborate with their student union and other student representatives, We have heard on the ground that students disclosed to by their peers feel that they have little or no training or resources to access about sexual violence or harassment with which to respond appropriately.

This means, for example, ensuring that Student Union Welfare Officers receive adequate training and on-going support throughout the year, not just during their initial training .

Are we at risk of creating programming for minority of students who have experienced confusion around sexual consent or sexual violence and losing site of the majority?

The SES survey revealed that high percentages of our students are directly affected by these issues. If they have not experienced them themselves, it is likely a peer/close friend has.

For example:

- 29% of females, 10% of males, and 28% of non-binary students reported non-consensual penetration through force, or threat of force, or while incapacitated and unable to give consent.
- Just over half of first year students reported experiencing sexual harassment in the form of sexual hostility since beginning college. This rose to 62% for second year students, and 66% for undergraduate students in third year or higher.
- Over half of students with a disability reported an experience of sexual misconduct by any tactic (56%), compared with 42% of other students.

97%

OF FEMALE STUDENTS SAID THE PERPETRATOR OF THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT WAS A MAN

59%

OF MALE STUDENTS SAID THE PERPETRATOR WAS A WOMAN.

PART II:

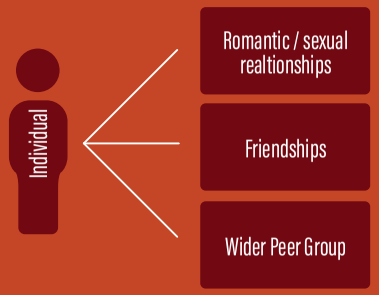
ACTIVE* CONSENT'S VISION FOR CONSENT EDUCATION

ACTIVE* CONSENT'S VISION FOR CONSENT EDUCATION

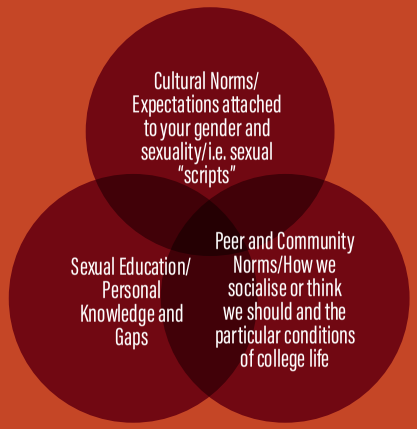
Building on our years of research and evaluated interventions across the Irish HEI sector, Active* Consent offers the following vision for consent education.

Active* Consent's programming begins with addressing the individual student and their understanding of consent in order to positively impact their ongoing and/or future sexual and romantic relationships.

We believe, and our evaluation of our programming over time evidences, that an individual's change in knowledge and skills also increases that person's capacity in a supporting and advisory role within friendships and their wider peer group- a role we now refer to as that of the Active* Bystander.



Active* Consent programming activates this ripple effect by directly and dialogically addressing three key interlinked areas in a college student's lifetime experience.



By working through these factors dialogically in our interventions, we empower students to:

- **Communicate** with their partners and friends/peers through an expanded consent vocabulary
- Achieve **Confidence** in knowledge and skills to navigate consent as OMFG (ongoing, mutual and freely-given) both verbal and non-verbally after gaining fuller understanding of accurate peer norms and accurate legal and other definitions
- **Challenge** negative and/or non-consensual behaviors to advocate for themselves within sexual/romantic relationships and step up as an Active* Bystander when safe and appropriate to do so on behalf of friends or peers.
- **Support** others and themselves in being able to identify how to access appropriate services following a negative sexual experience.

OVER

80%

OF STUDENTS SAY IT IS IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT CONSENT

4

OUR KEY MESSAGE: ACTIVE* CONSENT IS OMFG (ONGOING, MUTUAL AND FREELY-GIVEN)

THE ACTIVE* CONSENT PROGRAMME'S RESEARCH HAS CONSISTENTLY SHOWN THAT COLLEGE STUDENTS CARE ABOUT SEXUAL CONSENT, AND BELIEVE IT IS AN IMPORTANT TOPIC TO DISCUSS WITH THEIR PARTNERS AND PEERS.

84% OF STUDENTS AGREE THAT THEY SHOULD GET CONSENT BEFORE THE START OF ANY SEXUAL ACTIVITY.

BUT THEY BELIEVE ONLY 38% OF THEIR PEERS FEEL THE SAME WAY.

"**YOU** SHOULD ALWAYS GET CONSENT BEFORE THE START OF ANY SEXUAL ACTIVITY"

84% AGREED

"**MY PEERS** THINK THAT THEY SHOULD ALWAYS GET CONSENT BEFORE THE START OF ANY SEXUAL ACTIVITY"

38% AGREED

This disparity is what we call a social norm gap- the difference between what an individual thinks is important and how important they think their peers feel it is.

In terms of consent, this could mean that young people might not discuss consent at all with their partners or peers for fear of being judged.

This leads to embarrassed silences where people are not being clear with each other about what they want, don't want or might be willing to try. This increases the chances that things get assumed, or people act on what they 'think' their partner wants, without actively checking in first.

HERE IS THE ACTIVE* CONSENT PROGRAMME'S SHORT INTRODUCTION TO SEXUAL CONSENT.

Consent to sexual intimacy can be expressed...

VERBALLY OR NONVERBALLY.

"YES, KEEP GOING"

A smile

A sigh

Hugging someone closer

Taking off your clothes

ACTIVELY

Saying yes when someone asks if they can kiss you or be physically intimate with you

OR PASSIVELY

Not pushing someone away when they start to kiss you or touch you intimately, and kissing or touching them too

THIS CAN BE COMPLICATED ENOUGH, PARTICULARLY WITH NEW PARTNERS.

"ARE THEY SMILING TO BE POLITE, OR DOES THAT MEAN THEY'RE INTO IT? INTO ME?"

"WOW, I DIDN'T EXPECT THEM TO PUT THEIR HANDS DOWN THERE SO QUICK, IS IT TOO LATE TO SLOW THINGS DOWN?"

BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ARE INVOLVED?

"SHOULD WE REALLY BE DOING THIS AFTER SO MANY PINTS?"

"I WAS SO OFF MY HEAD I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER."

WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL/PEER EXPECTATIONS OF OUR GENDER AND/OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

"WILL HE THINK I'M SLUTTY IF I SEEM LIKE I'M TOO INTO THIS?"

"I'M REALLY NOT OKAY DOING THIS WITHOUT A CONDOM, BUT EVERYONE SAYS I'M PARANOID. NO ONE IS GOING TO WANT TO HOOK UP WITH ME."

"I JUST DON'T AGREE WITH HER THAT THERE HAS TO BE PENETRATION FOR US TO ***REALLY*** HAVE SEX."

"I JUST REALLY WASN'T INTO IT, BUT CAN GUYS EVEN ***BE*** ASSAULTED BY GIRLS?"

"THEY WERE BOTH DRINKING. AND THEY TOLD THEM THEY HAD A CONDOM."

OR IF THERE'S A POWER IMBALANCE, OR A COERCIVE OR ABUSIVE DYNAMIC?

"BUT THEY'RE MY MANAGER, AND THIS FEELS WRONG..."

"IF I CAN JUST GET THIS OVER WITH, THEY'LL LEAVE ME ALONE FOR A WHILE."

Sexual consent is sometimes just seen as giving a clear 'yes' or 'no', but it can also be far more complicated - especially when you take into account all these external factors.

This leads to misunderstandings that can open up **grey areas**.

Misunderstanding can be unintentional, but it can also be willful.

Misunderstanding can lead to bad and unsatisfying sex, or worse - those **grey areas** can facilitate opportunities for rape and sexual assault to occur. They can also be used as justification to blame survivors.

"WELL, THEY WENT HOME WITH THEM, WHAT DID THEY EXPECT?"

This is why we need to practice **Active* Consent** with our partners - whether they are:
ongoing or new,
male,
female,
trans*,
non-binary,
straight or
LGBTQ+.

ACTIVE* CONSENT IS **OMFG.**

ONGOING.

MUTUAL.

FREELY-**G**IVEN.

It's **ongoing** because sexual consent is not a once-off in a sex act, a full evening's encounter or a relationship. If someone consents to one thing, that doesn't mean they're consenting to everything, just to that one thing.

You or your partner can change your mind at *any time* and stop or re-direct what you're both doing, even after already saying yes.

"I THOUGHT I'D BE INTO THIS BUT I'M NOT, CAN WE TAKE A BREAK?"

"CAN WE GO BACK TO WHAT WE WERE DOING BEFORE? I LIKED THAT BETTER."

"WOW, I DIDN'T EXPECT THEM TO PUT THEIR HANDS DOWN THERE SO QUICK, IS IT TOO LATE TO SLOW THINGS DOWN?"

It's **mutual**. Both people are really into it and make their feelings clear verbally and/or non-verbally. It shouldn't be one-sided or simply assumed. Check in, to be sure.

"THEY LIKED THAT I WAS COMING ON SO STRONG, THEY WEREN'T SAYING NO, SO WHY SHOULD I HAVE STOPPED?"

"WHOA, I DIDN'T THINK THAT'S WHERE THIS WAS GOING..."

It's **freely-given**. That means no one feels coerced, pressured, is intentailly manipulated, misled, or is incapacitated by drugs or alcohol.

Know the Irish law, know *your* limits and boundaries and check in with your partners on theirs.

And you don't owe sex to anyone, especially not if you feel like you have to do something to stay safe or avoid physical harm.

"THEY SEEM REALLY OUT OF IT. I DON'T FEEL RIGHT ABOUT GOING ON WITH THIS."

"I'VE DEFINITELY HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK. I'M CALLING IT A NIGHT."

"I JUST DON'T WANT TO MAKE THEM ANGRY."

ACTIVE* CONSENT IS ALWAYS OMFG. PASS IT ON.

5

ACTIVE* CONSENT'S PROGRAMME OFFERINGS 2020-2021: OVERVIEW AND CONTENT

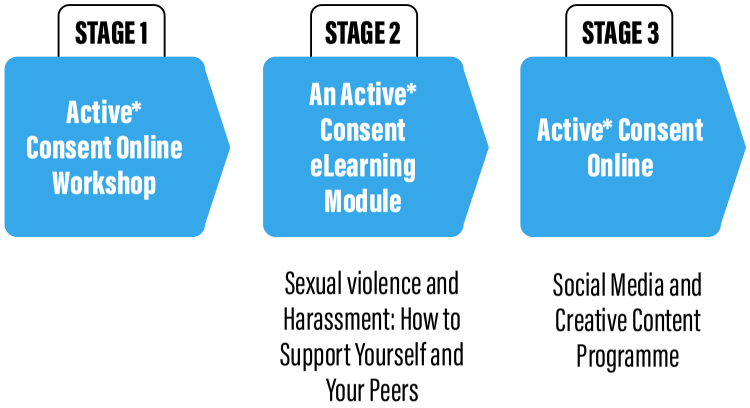
OUR CONSENT FRAMEWORK AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT REPEATED ENGAGEMENT WITH CONSENT EDUCATION WITHIN A COMMUNITY ACROSS THE YEAR AND OVER A STUDENT'S ACADEMIC LIFE CYCLE WILL BE THE MOST IMPACTFUL. WE HAVE DESIGNED A RANGE OF ACTIVE* CONSENT PROGRAMME RESOURCES TO FACILITATE ONGOING ENGAGEMENT WITH EACH COLLEGE COMMUNITY, AND TO WORK IN DIALOGUE WITH OTHER IRISH-BASED PROGRAMMES' MATERIAL.

We know that our research-based consent programming is effective as the SES survey (2020) identified that there is a significant impact.

Six months after attending a workshop, **48%** of those students who had attended a consent workshop or related activity said they knew how to access supports / services on sexual violence and harassment for themselves or a friend – compared with **20%** of students who had not engaged with any event or initiative.

Active* Consent 2020-2021 Programme will ensure: at least one hour's student participation through an online workshop and self-directed learning; with additional engagement during the year taking place through ongoing messaging provided via social media.

This engagement comes through a **three-stage Active* Consent programme**:



Sexual violence and Harassment: How to Support Yourself and Your Peers

This three-stage programme delivers on the student-centered goals of the Consent Framework to:

- Support positive, active consent.
- Empower students to address negative situations.
- Ensure awareness and accessibility of supports and services.

In addition, we will also be rolling out a staff awareness/training programme in 2020-2021 that will cover topics including major findings from the SES survey and handling disclosure of negative sexual experiences.

STAGE 1:
ACTIVE* CONSENT ONLINE WORKSHOP

The Active* Consent online workshop aims to give first-year students, as well as those who have not had previous training, the skills and knowledge to navigate the college landscape and establish healthy, consensual sexual relationships, as well as an awareness of sexual violence and harassment (SVH) and local supports/services.

Research shows that young adults arriving at university face a "perfect storm of risk factors" that can lead to sexual assault (living away from home for the first time, the likelihood of experimenting with alcohol and drug use, the probability of becoming more sexually active).

We draw on over five years of Active* Consent research into young people's sexual behaviour, as well as leading Irish research evidence, to deliver a live online workshop with humour and variety of mediums to deliver the information to keep students engaged. We aim to be as inclusive as possible within a limited time frame to all gender identities, sexual orientations and levels of intimacy.

The Active* Consent workshop is delivered by peer facilitators coached by our own expert training unit, to increase student's engagement and ease in discussing sensitive subject matter. This delivery targets both students who might not readily identify with consent, as well as students with existing knowledge and openness to the idea of consent.

When is the workshop delivered?

- The workshop is ideally delivered within your first-year orientation programme, or during first semester academic programming. However, it can also be delivered later in the year.

What does the workshop contain?

- Animated video highlighting how they all practice consent communication in everyday situations and that Active* Consent is OMFG
- Dramatised video consent scenarios presenting students with realistic situations relevant to their own experiences
- Real-time voting activity where students are asked for their ideas on the importance of consent
- Examples of effective consent communication

What are the learning outcomes of the Active* Consent online workshop?

- Students understand that active consent is OMFG - Ongoing, Mutual and Freely Given
- Students understand that active consent is required for all sexual activity, not just penetrative sex
- Students feel more informed about consent and non-consent, and how to recognise the difference between the two
- Students feel better equipped to talk about consent in their own sexual relationships, as well as with their wider peer group

How HEI's can support the success of the Active* Consent workshop

Having support from your HEI is integral to the success of the workshop in your institution.

Here's how your HEI can support the success of the workshop:

- Advocate and support training for staff and student leaders to host the workshop at your institution.
- Publicise the workshop in first year orientation packs and/or academic programme to ensure credibility and visibility to new students.
- Provide follow up support for facilitators (e.g. protocol in the event of students disclosing incidents of SVH, etc).
- Provide follow up support for students (e.g. signposting to student counselling, SU welfare, local rape crisis centres, etc).

What Staff Say about Working With Active* Consent

We work with a variety of staff stakeholders across HEIs from counsellors to nurses to Student Services to academics to those in university management.

Across these roles, those we've engaged with agree that Active* Consent has changed the conversation on their campus, and given many students an expanded vocabulary to talk about consent and their sexual experiences.

"Active Consent workshops' information is vital to have a healthy population of young people going forward who are the future of our country, who are going to be future parents and teachers and trainers themselves. We need to give the information to let them know, actually this is it, this is your choice, it's about choice, it's about having the knowledge, having the language and keeping it simple. It's vital that it's things they can identify with: the performance, the video, plays. Vital, absolutely vital because that's what they identify with."*

"In the first month after the training was delivered, three students have come forward to report cases, which are now being dealt with. This is a very positive development that cases are now being reported. Also there is a much higher awareness about consent around the college, and among student leaders in Clubs and Societies".

"The difference Active Consent has made is to give the student, female or male, a common language. ... if it's an acknowledged , on-site part of the induction ... it will become part of their language".*

"I think that it's absolutely imperative that the staff who're involved in student health and on student welfare on every campus should attend the consent workshops and be actively listening and learning so that we can have the language which we need to have. We may have the medical language, the technical language but not the personal language."

"If you took part in one of these and you are 18 and then you went into a situation, you would definitely have a much stronger sense of whether you were giving consent or not".

"And that's the great thing about these workshops, it really does seem that students who attend talk to other students".

"It has made me feel a lot more solid and assured about the area, it's made me a lot more clear ... a lot more confident in the whole area".

"This is what the workshops do - students came into me telling me something happened without consent and they used the word consent.

"I wasn't comfortable, I saw that play, I saw that video, I heard what they said ... and can I tell you what happened to me" That's powerful. And you need to know that you are having that effect".

"I find that the language that flows out of the consent workshop, I'd call it a movement, is really empowering".

"The training really opened up people's eyes to reality of students' lives. it generated really good conversations and moved the support services forward in terms of the support they felt they needed to provide and increase coordination amongst the services".

"Many of our Counselling team participated, ... it has increased their profile among the general student body. It has also given a large cross-section of the college - students, chaplains, Student Union staff, Counsellors - a very valuable opportunity to work together. Feedback from the student facilitators has been very positive, and they feel they are making a very valuable contribution".

"This was our first year delivering workshops during orientation, and over 1,500 students attended the workshops during orientation week. It was a tight schedule, and very gruelling for the facilitators, but it has had a very positive impact".

"That OMFG is just brilliant. The sense that it has to be freely given and that it's ongoing is another extremely strong message to get out in a very direct and simple way. Because as I often say to students, you don't give up your human rights just because you go up to someone's place for Netflix and chill. And quite a lot of students have that kind of a sense that they do give up their right to say no. So I think that these workshops are a very important part of what's changing that assumption.."

STAGE 2:

AN ACTIVE* CONSENT ELEARNING MODULE *SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT: HOW TO SUPPORT YOURSELF AND YOUR PEERS*

Our Active* Consent eLearning module, *Sexual Violence and Harassment: How to Support Yourself and Your Peers*, builds on topics explored in the Active* Consent online workshop to introduce a more nuanced understanding of sexual violence, harassment and support services available to students who have had negative sexual experiences.

Our creation of this module is directly informed by Active* Consent and USI's 2020 Sexual Experiences Survey (SES), which shed light on areas where we found students reported gaps in understanding that need to be addressed.

Key gaps included understanding of the definition of rape and sexual assault and different forms of harassment as well as how to access support services.

Our eLearning module brings users on a self-directed and gamified journey that closes these gaps in knowledge. Users immediately test new knowledge by applying it to fictionalised scenarios and compare their own expectations for peer experiences of sexual violence and/or harassment (SVH) with current national statistics from the SES survey through frequent quizzes and polls.

Ultimately, this module moves users from understanding and applying Active* Consent to becoming an Active* Bystander. We provide viewers with introductory skills in supporting friends who disclose negative experiences and how to safely call out and intervene in developing negative situations in their peer group and community. By empowering users to not only learn new terms but build a proactive skill set, we believe that together we can step up to and work on ending sexual violence and harassment on our campuses.

How is this delivered?

- Via a self-directed module hosted on your HEI's Virtual Learning Environment (e.g., Blackboard, Moodle), which is permanently available to students as a hub of relevant information on the topic of consent and SVH.
- It will also be openly available through Active* Consent's page on the NUI Galway website.

What does this contain?

- Recap of content introduced in Active* Consent online workshop
- Looking at the definition of consent and SVH in Irish law
- Exploring how external factors (e.g. alcohol and drug use, social norms and gender roles) can influence our perception of SVH
- What to do if someone discloses a negative sexual experience to you
- Introduction to the Active* Bystander model and how to intervene in a case of harassment, as well as exploring why it may not be helpful/appropriate to directly intervene in a case of harassment
- Exploring how misperceptions of peer norms act as a barrier to being an Active* Bystander
- How to seek out support systems and services available
- Interactive polls and quizzes on SES survey and other Active* Consent research data around young people's sexual behaviours throughout

How long does it take?

- The SVH e-learning module takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete, with extra optional engagement features.

What are the learning outcomes?

- Deepens students' clear understanding of what is meant by positive, active consent (which has been covered in the online workshop) and non-consent.
- Students will be able to recognise different forms of SVH, their prevalence, and some skills relevant to challenging or addressing these issues.
- Normalising open, supportive communication between friends and peers when someone is affected by SVH
- Students have the knowledge and skills to seek out supports and services available to them and feel equipped in supporting peers to engage with these supports.
- Students understand the concept of being an Active* Bystander, and can apply this awareness and skills needed to respond to instances of SVH.
- Students understand that there is a shared responsibility among their community to prevent SVH and harm.

How HEIs can support the success of this programme

- Establish expectation for participation in Stages 1 and 2 of Active* Consent education resource (online workshop and eLearning module).
- Publicise Active* Consent student training resources in freshman orientation packs and/or through academic programmes to ensure credibility and visibility to new students.
- Give maximum possible visibility to the Active* Consent eLearning module on Virtual Learning Environment (e.g., Blackboard, Moodle).
- Provide follow up support for staff to monitor usage of eLearning resource.
- Provide follow up support for students (e.g. signposting to student counselling, local rape crisis centres, Gardaí etc).

KEY GAPS INCLUDED UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEFINITION OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DIFFERENT FORMS OF HARASSMENT AS WELL AS HOW TO ACCESS SUPPORT SERVICES.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BYSTANDER AND WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?

What We Know about What It Takes To Develop This Skill from Active* Consent Research

Bystander intervention is an important skill for young people to acquire in order to become active in improving the culture and behaviours around them to be congruent with the values of respect, trust, and safety. Arising from social psychology experiments that demonstrated worrying levels of inaction due to perceived social pressure, bystander intervention can apply to a range of behaviours – such as intervening if a peer is experiencing poor mental health or excessive drinking habits (Orsini et al., 2019).

The Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was used in the SES 2020 campus climate survey tool to assess bystander intentions. Selected findings are presented below to illustrate the trends noted in students' responses to the items. The students responded by indicating their likelihood that they would engage with particular active bystander behaviours related to sexual violence and harassment.

The items were presented on two occasions in the SES, first in relation to 'personal likelihood' of engaging in the behaviours, and later in the survey the students were asked to rate the 'perceived likelihood' that other students would engage in the same behaviours.

Previous research suggested that a social norms gap would be observed, whereby other students' peers would be seen as less likely than themselves to engage in active bystander behaviours. A gap would be concerning as perceptions of other people's likelihood to act is believed to influence the person's own decision as to whether they will actually intervene or not. Four of the bystander behaviour items are presented below to illustrate trends in the responses made by college students. The percentages refer to the number of students who chose the 'highly likely' option, focusing attention on those students who had the strongest tendency to action.

A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE STUDENTS INDICATED THEY WERE HIGHLY LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN ACTIVE BYSTANDER BEHAVIOUR

Percentage of college students who made 'very likely' ratings in respect of their own likelihood of engaging in active bystander behaviours and perceptions of peer likelihood to engage in the behaviours.

	Males - Personal likelihood	Males - Perceived peer likelihood	Females - Personal likelihood	Females - Perceived peer likelihood
Confront a friend who is hooking up with someone who was passed out.	84	69	93	73
Confront a friend if I hear rumours that they forced sex on someone.	68	58	76	61
Check in with my friend who looks drunk when they go to a room with someone else at a party.	33	28	72	48
Express concern if a friend makes a sexist joke.	12	14	38	28

Three important observations can be made about the likelihood of engaging in bystander action:

- Compared with males, a higher percentage of female students indicated they were highly likely to engage in active bystander behaviours.
- There was a consistent difference in students' personal likelihood of engaging in the behaviours and perceptions of peers' likelihood of action. This social norms gap was up to 24% in the case of female students, but was smaller among males – with no appreciable gap at all for males in responses to two of the four illustrative items. This is an important lesson for programming on choosing priorities for bystander intervention education that focuses on correcting social norms misperceptions.
- The students were sensitive to the different forms of bystander behaviour. Nearly all could see themselves actively intervening with a friend who is hooking up with someone who was passed out (i.e., an ongoing sexual assault). A large majority said it was highly likely they would challenge a friend rumoured to have forced sex on someone else (i.e., a rape).
- The percentage of students who would intervene declined in the case of behaviours that are risky or unacceptable rather than illegal. This reduction was particularly marked in the case of male students (e.g., 33% said they were very likely to check with a drunk friend who goes into someone's room at a party, compared with 72% of females). Only one in eight of the male students said they were very likely to intervene on casual sexism (i.e., a sexist joke) and less than four in ten of the female students were very likely to intervene.

Building on our research in this area, our Active* Consent eLearning module begins to develop students' skills in bystander intervention so that we can translate our learning from these statistics into building blocks for cultural change, one student at a time.

OUR ACTIVE* CONSENT ELEARNING MODULE BEGINS TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' SKILLS IN BYSTANDER INTERVENTION SO THAT WE CAN TRANSLATE OUR LEARNING FROM THESE STATISTICS INTO BUILDING BLOCKS FOR CULTURAL CHANGE, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME.

27% OF ASEXUAL
39% OF BISEXUAL
45% OF GAY OR LESBIAN,
27% OF HETEROSEXUAL,
41% OF QUEER OR OTHER
SEXUAL ORIENTATION
STUDENTS EXPERIENCED
SEXUAL HARASSMENT
VIA ELECTRONIC
COMMUNICATION.

STAGE 3:
ACTIVE* CONSENT ONLINE: OUR SOCIAL MEDIA AND CREATIVE CONTENT PROGRAMME

The Active* Consent Social Media and Creative Content Programme aims to support, reinforce, and extend the learning achieved in Stages 1 and 2.

Through a blended approach of original video content as well as organic and sponsored social media campaigns, we hope to build upon the knowledge and skills introduced in Stage 1 and 2 of the Active* Consent programme year-round, as well as increasing accessibility to our material to those who are unable to Stage 1 and 2. We also hope to see a returning tour of our widely successful original drama *The Kinds of Sex You Might Have in College*, depending on COVID-19 restrictions.

Our online presence addresses rolling topics balanced between positive sexual health, preventative behaviours, and increasing awareness of supports and services through several social media theme clusters identified below.

- Active* Consent is OMFG: Ongoing, Mutual and Freely Given
- The Grey Areas of Consent - how external factors (media, gender roles, social norms, drugs and alcohol, etc.) can influence our perception of and ability to give consent.
- Confronting sexual violence and harassment (SVH): Legal definition of various forms of SVH in Irish Law, how to support your friends/peers who have experienced SVH, and how to seek out support services for SVH
- Sexual health promotion and awareness days e.g. SHAG week, Pride, Masturbation Month, etc.

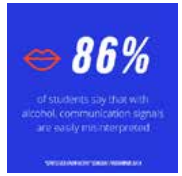
Our Creative Content Programme also includes an upcoming web series dedicated to exploring the nuances of topics introduced in Stage 1 and Stage 2 including:

- Amplifying Active* Consent's core message that Consent is OMFG (Ongoing, Mutual, Freely-Given)
- Active vs. passive consent
- Sexual violence and harassment
- Building Active* Bystander skills
- Relationship between gender identity and sexual orientation
- Popular media and culture's treatment of sexual consent

How HEIs can support the success of the Active* Consent Online Programme

Follow us on social media at facebook.com/ActiveConsent, and Instagram and Twitter @activeconsent

- Reshare our content on your own social media channels to increase awareness of Active* Consent programme
- Contact us to book a live showing of our drama *The Kinds of Sex You Might Have in College* (suitability dependent on COVID-19 guidelines).
- Contact us to collaborate on a social media partnership/takeover.
- If you run a social media account related to your HEI (e.g SU account) you can sign up to the Active* Consent asset library, and gain exclusive access to a library of social media content to share for your own digital Active* Consent campaign (pictured below). These assets are updated throughout the year as we publish new data around young people's sexual behaviours.



What Students Say After Experiencing Active* Consent Programming

After experiencing the workshop and/or the play, students have talked to us about what they've felt, learned, and the questions they're still asking.

Here are some of their thoughts...

"Powerful... You're getting two sides of the story... it's not black and white so I think that's probably the most powerful thing".

"I think it's brilliant overall. And no matter what you think you know. No matter what age you are. No matter whether you had a sexual experience or not previously."

"If it's verbal you can be like "she said yes, she said no" but if it's non-verbal it's like "well she invited me in, she brought me to her room ... But then she could be like, "oh well I never said this" whereas if it's verbal it's much more black and white".

"It actually changed the way I'm looking at sexual consent. And it kind of gave me a bit more confidence to actually, first of all, not be expecting anything, and secondly, be more assertive if I feel like it. ... So for me personally, from both sides, I understand now a bit more that if I'm not comfortable myself, I shouldn't be ashamed of saying no to begin with. And then at the same time, if I am engaging with someone, I shouldn't be looking for the absence or no. I should be rather looking for the yes, yes, yes part."

"If you're uncomfortable. You know, don't be afraid to speak up because 99.9% of people aren't going to keep going. And then there's no grey area anymore. If you've said "no", like if it is verbal and you've said no, then it isn't grey. That's 100%".

"The best way to deal with a situation like that is to avoid getting into that situation in the first place...how to behave on a night out and how much you should drink and how much you shouldn't".

"Even the fact that we were just talking about it openly, and discussing it makes it easier for us to talk about it again, and with other people who weren't there, and discuss things that we learned."

"I don't think that's a fair argument that a girl should watch how much she drinks on a night out for risk of being taken advantage of ... Just teach people not to rape like".

"The personal stories had a really strong impact without pointing blame but instead helping people to see how those situations could be avoided".

"The first workshop I went to had a great impact on me. It opened up a discussion about consent between me and my friends and what we thought about the topic".

"From my own experience of the workshops there's definitely been a huge impact on the students. I remember going to an event a few days after running a workshop and overhearing two students having a conversation about the workshop and about consent. And that really stuck with me, it's 9 o'clock and you are sitting in a pub and there's two first year students sitting beside you looking back at their experiences and saying 'you know maybe that wasn't consensual, maybe that shouldn't have happened, do I need to talk to somebody about this now.' That really struck me that a few days afterwards, they were reflecting on their own choices and the experiences they had had with others. ..."

"The fact that she says at the end that she was like 'and he asked, I needed to be asked', I think that's like the most powerful two sentences of the whole minute and a half, ... Like she was sure, she did want it ... she just needed that little reassurance of whatever is going to occur".

6

ACTIVE* CONSENT ONLINE HOW-TO:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND HOW TO GET YOUR INSTITUTION INVOLVED

How do I find you?

facebook.com/ActiveConsent
twitter.com/ActiveConsent
instagram.com/activeconsent/

Why do I gain from engaging with your social media accounts?

By engaging with our accounts and encouraging your students/peers to engage, your HEI community can:

- Gain access to up-to-date, relevant and easily shareable information to keep an active dialogue on sexual consent going all-year round.
- Quickly link in with expert responses to sexual consent themes and topics as we respond in real time to current events, popular media and culture.
- Remain up to date with new research, events, or opportunities that your HEI might want to access through your ongoing engagement with Active* Consent.
- Amplify your own work with us if you use our programming or we visit your campus.

How can I start a communications campaign with Active* Consent on my campus?

There are several ways that you can engage in a comms campaign with us, on social media and on your campus:

1. Reshare our posts as they appear in real time if they are broadly relevant to your own student base or on-campus campaigns you are running yourself at that time.
2. You can request Active* Consent materials such as posters and badges for your campus or campus event.
3. You can request access to a library of reshareable images that cover key messages and themes from Active* Consent's programming. You can then reshare these images in your own time with your own post text as part of individual campus campaigns (for example, Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance Week or a smaller campaign on disclosure run solo or in partnership with your local rape crisis centre).
4. When you work with us or reshare our images, tag us (@ActiveConsent) when you post about us or reshare our posts about our collaboration. You can also tag us if you are running your own on-campus campaigns or events on sexual consent so that we can amplify your work as well.

To sign up for our social media image newsletter/library, contact activeconsent@nuigalway.ie.

I'm ready to start tagging. What are your hashtags?

#ACTIVECONSENT
#CONSENTISOMFG

7

TAKING IT FORWARD: *HOW TO WORK WITH US*

If you are interested in working with us in 2020-2021 through:

- Provision of our blended and online learning resources to your HEI
- Linking up with or tailoring our social media campaigns to your institution
- Booking a performance of *The Kinds of Sex You Might Have in College* when the tour resumes

You can email us at activeconsent@nuigalway.ie or visit www.nuigalway.ie/activeconsent

Don't forget to follow us and keep up to date with our ongoing developments:

facebook.com/ActiveConsent
twitter.com/ActiveConsent
instagram.com/activeconsent/

48%

OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED A CONSENT WORKSHOP OR RELATED ACTIVITY SAID THEY KNEW WHERE TO GO TO GET HELP ON CAMPUS IN THE CASE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, COMPARED WITH 20% OF STUDENTS WHO DID NOT ATTEND ANY EVENT OR INITIATIVE

PART III:

SPOTLIGHTS ON ACTIVE* CONSENT RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING

8

SPOTLIGHT ON ACTIVE* CONSENT RESEARCH:

WHAT THE NUMBERS TELL US ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLES' REAL ATTITUDES TO POSITIVE, ACTIVE CONSENT IN THE MOVE FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

THE ACTIVE* CONSENT TEAM HAVE UNDERTAKEN A CONTINUOUS THREAD OF RESEARCH ENQUIRY WITH STUDENTS SINCE 2014. THIS RESEARCH IS A UNIQUE KNOWLEDGE BASE - SHARED PUBLICLY THROUGH RESEARCH REPORTS AND EMPLOYED TO DEVISE AND REVISE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS USING WORKSHOPS, DRAMA-BASED, AND ONLINE METHODOLOGIES.

This spotlight on our latest research findings shows how, as a group, young people have multi-faceted beliefs about consent, including:

- Positive beliefs and knowledge that are a strong, enabling resource.
- Doubts and social challenges to being personally confident in acting on these beliefs.
- Attitudes that undermine positive consent and support non-consent.

These are reference points that illustrate the spectrum of beliefs about consent – from endorsement of verbal consent, to concerns young people have about expressing active consent, and the attitudes that work against a positive consent culture.

Positive, active consent	Measured through attitudes to verbal consent and beliefs about what supports consent.
Limited self-confidence for active consent	Embarrassment and awkwardness as barriers to acting on positive beliefs about active consent - barriers that stem from personal confidence and perceptions of peers.
Negative attitudes to consent - Rape myths	Rape myths illustrate the existence of negative attitudes that are antagonistic to achieving consent, and in turn help perpetuate sexual violence and harassment.

This section provides background research in these three areas, which explains our assumptions in engaging young people in consent education. We also explore the developmental nature of consent in these areas, comparing research findings with young people in school and college students. Tracing the roots of consent attitudes and beliefs is vitally important. It identifies the consent education needs of young people in schools, shows the set of beliefs that young people bring with them when joining college, and allows us to plan for an integrated approach to consent education that spans both schools and colleges.

Beliefs About Consent

Secondary School Students

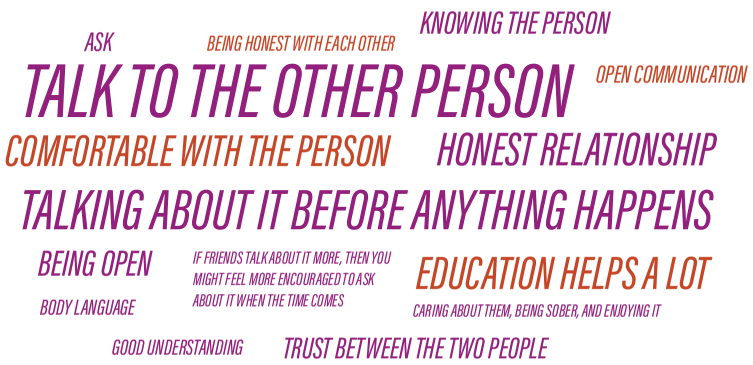
We surveyed 600 secondary school students in 2019 on their attitudes to consent as part of the research and development phase of the Active*Consent workshop for schools. Students responded to an open-ended item on '*What do you think helps people with consent*', providing information on positive beliefs about achieving active consent. When responding, students may have been referring to their own experiences and attitudes or making general observations about their peers.

Qualitative keyword analysis was used to identify patterns in the responses. These highlighted an awareness of verbal consent, trust, and communication as integral to consent.

The findings demonstrate that secondary school students already associate consent with talking, establishing trust, and being comfortable with the other person. This is a strong base to build on when designing educational interventions. Highlighting their existing knowledge ensures that young people are acknowledged to be capable and skilled. Respecting their knowledge enables us to engage with them to address the challenges they see in putting this positive disposition into practice, and to target negative attitudes that are incompatible with active consent. Although nonverbal consent could be implied within the openness and trust that they refer to, the teenagers foregrounded verbal consent in their views on 'good consent'.

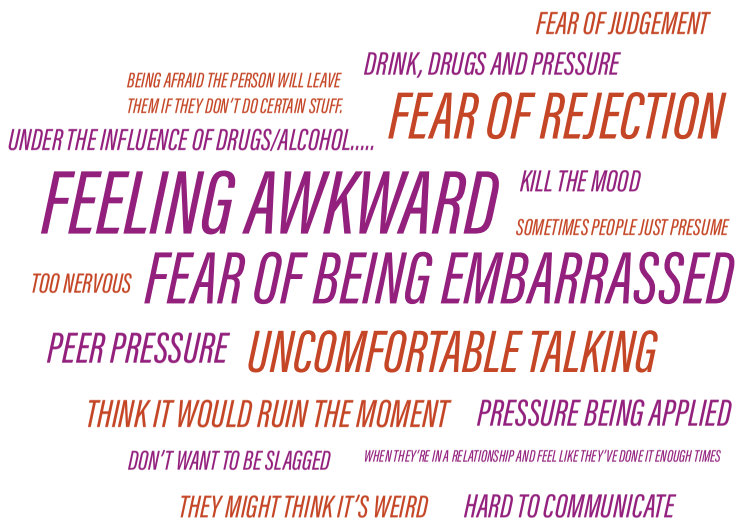
WORD CLOUDS

What Helps People Communicate About Consent?



The positive beliefs identified above existed alongside challenges documented by the secondary school students, which may in turn impede them in acting on their knowledge about communication and trust. These challenges were documented in written responses to the open ended question *'What stops people communicating about consent'*. The barriers that emerged from this key word analysis revolve around the challenge of achieving personal confidence and self-efficacy (i.e., the belief that you are capable of acting in the way that you want to do).

What Stops People Communicating About Consent?



These findings portray the reasons for avoiding talking and open communication. When talking is referred to in this context, it is to note that talking about consent would be difficult. The negative and aversive feelings that the young people described – embarrassment, awkwardness, and being afraid – need to be countered in order to achieve positive, active consent. These terms were associated with concern about being judged, highlighting the importance of trust between partners and friends as a foundation for consent-supportive relationships and peer groups. Concern about judgement extends across key words in the analysis such as appearing weird, being slagged, and ruining the mood.

A second cluster of barriers described the impact of other people went beyond negative judgements, referring to active, applied pressure on the person to engage in actions they do not want to engage in. Taken together, the direct, imagined, or implied influence of other people on personal choices and actions was prominent in the young people's analysis of consent. The prominence of social concerns supports the Active* Consent approach of focusing on perceptions of social norms and the freedom to say no. In addition, alcohol and drugs were acknowledged to disrupt and threaten the ability to give consent.

The impact of beliefs about verbal consent as socially challenging can also be tracked in quantitative survey responses. Transition year students were recently surveyed on consent beliefs as part of the Manuela intervention programme evaluation (D'Eath et al., 2020). The Manuela programme is an extensive and innovative programme for schools that was pilot tested by a national team comprising Tusla and the rape crisis centres. Members of the Active* Consent team conducted the evaluation of this programme. The survey responses referred to here come from 626 students who responded to a pre-intervention survey that included items on consent beliefs.

One of the items was *'I think that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward'*. 35% of the school students agreed that verbally asking for consent is awkward (41% of males and 29% of females). 48% of the students disagreed that it was awkward (42% of males and 54% of females). The number of male students who agreed that verbal consent is awkward was similar to those who disagreed about it being awkward – whereas more female students disagreed that verbal consent is awkward. The remaining 17% were neutral as to whether it was awkward.

Beliefs about verbal consent being awkward or not were a distinctive marker for responses on other items concerning consent attitudes and behaviours. For example, 38% of the teenagers who agreed that asking for consent is awkward also agreed that they could ask consent from a new partner, compared with 68% of those who did not feel that asking for consent is awkward.

There was an even bigger gap between these two groups in responses to an item about whether verbalising consent was difficult due to being shy. 61% of those who said that asking for consent was awkward also said that verbalising consent is difficult for them because they are too shy – compared with only 16% of those who did not consider asking for consent as awkward.

The findings support the idea that it is important to support the translation of positive intentions into personal confidence to act on the acceptance that consent should be active and mutual. It is possible to build on the positive finding that teenagers have a strong awareness of positive consent. This approach needs to engage with social concerns and promote the confidence that individuals and groups can overcome perceptions of peer norms.

38%

OF THE TEENAGERS WHO AGREED THAT ASKING FOR CONSENT IS AWKWARD ALSO AGREED THAT THEY COULD ASK CONSENT FROM A NEW PARTNER, COMPARED WITH

68%

OF THOSE WHO DID NOT FEEL THAT ASKING FOR CONSENT IS AWKWARD.

Percentage of Transition Year students who expressed agreement with consent beliefs, broken down by students who agreed / disagreed with the belief 'I think that verbally asking for consent is awkward'.

	Students who agreed that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward.	Students who disagreed that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward.
Positive beliefs		
I would talk about it with my partner.	77	93
My peers think that sexual consent is an important issue.	62	76
I would be confident talking about sexual consent with my peers.	45	58
I feel confident that I could ask for consent from a new partner.	38	68
Barriers		
I would have a hard time verbalising my consent in a sexual encounter because I am too shy.	61	16
I would be worried a partner could think I'm weird or strange if I asked for sexual consent before starting any intimacy.	59	13
I would worry that other people would think I was weird or strange if they knew I asked for sexual consent before intimacy.	54	6
People my age would think that talking about consent with a partner is odd.	38	25

College Students

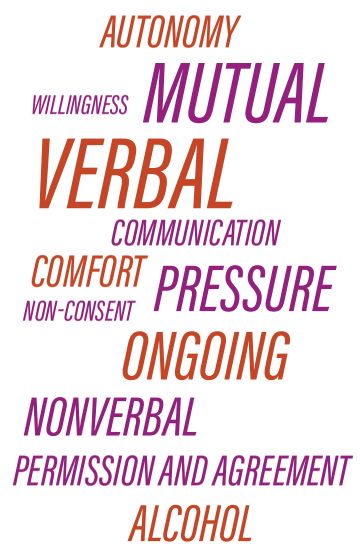
Having carried out comparable research with college students, we can add a developmental perspective on active consent beliefs and the degree to which social concerns continue into young adulthood. In an online survey in 2019, 281 college students (200 females and 81 males) provided written responses to say what consent meant to them. They identified the top three characteristics they associated with defining consent.

The resulting qualitative content analysis of the college students' responses largely supports the definition used in the research literature that consent is the *"verbal or non-verbal communication of a feeling of willingness to engage in sexual activity"* (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999). It is also consistent with the Irish legal definition concerning freely given, voluntary action. The findings are consistent with the key word analysis of school student responses. Consent was highlighted by both groups as a verbal activity, with much less description of non-verbal consent.

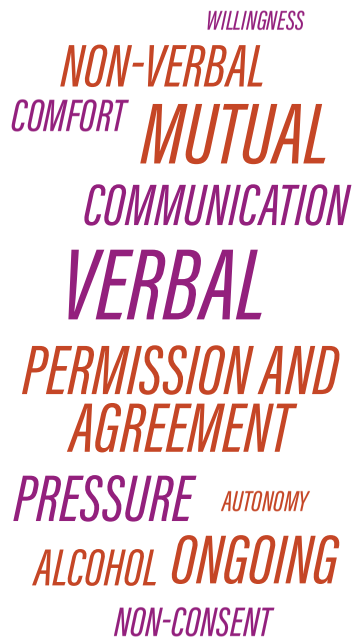
There was a further overlap between college and school students in the prominence of communication and trust – with the college students describing mutuality, ongoing consent, permission or agreement, autonomy, and personal comfort. Alcohol / drug use and pressure were cited by both college and school students as threats to consent. When asked to define consent the college students did not emphasis non-consent, suggesting a potential disconnection between their beliefs about consent, sexual violence, and harassment.

WORD CLOUDS

What Consent Means to You: Male



What Consent Means to You: Female



A qualitative analysis of the written descriptions linked to these categories was made to represent the consent process, grounding existing research definitions of consent in the views of students themselves. The process is based on open and clear communication, predicated on individuals exerting a choice to engage or not engage in a sexual activity. This is reflected in descriptions of feeling comfortable, willing to take part, and achieving a mutual understanding.

The communication strategies described were verbal and non-verbal. While both strategies were endorsed, there was more development of verbal consent in the descriptions. In addition, different associations were made for the context in which each strategy is used. For instance, non-verbal consent was associated with actions like kissing and touching. It was also seen as subject to misinterpretation and requiring confirmation through verbal consent.

Verbal and non-verbal strategies were used in order to seek permission and agreement, both of which were in need of ongoing consent. Aside from seeking the other person's consent, individuals could use verbal or nonverbal means to communicate their choice to take part or not. The students wrote in their descriptions that there should be no pressure to engage in something the person does not wish to do. Any departure from this, where something happens that is not your choice, could occur through pressure, alcohol use, or force. This would then lead to non-consenting activity such as assault or rape.

I think that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward			
Males		Females	
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
34	19	20	17

I have heard sexual consent issues being discussed by other students on campus			
Males		Females	
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
34	18	42	15

Most people that I care about feel that asking for sexual consent is something I should do			
Males		Females	
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
54	32	53	33

When initiating sexual activity, I believe that one should always assume they do not have sexual consent			
Males		Females	
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
53	28	60	27

I would just keep moving forward in sexual behaviour or actions unless my partner stopped me			
Males		Females	
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
49	51	49	51

As with the analysis of secondary school students' responses, the college students' description of consent highlights the importance of verbal agreement and permission. However, just as with the school students, there is also evidence that some college students identify verbal consent as embarrassing and can experience concerns about social judgement. Evidence for this comes from the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) 2020 carried out by Active* Consent and USI. College students who took part in the SES responded to a similar set of questions on consent as the Transition Year students who took part in the Manuela programme survey.

A significant proportion of the college students indicated that verbal consent was awkward for them. 25% agreed with the item *'I think that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward'* (34% of males and 20% of females). 58% of the students disagreed that it was awkward (47% of males and 63% of females). The remaining 17% were neutral as to whether it was awkward. These figures are broadly comparable with the findings from the pre-intervention Manuela survey (D'Eath et al., 2020).

Students who agreed that *"verbally asking for consent is awkward"* are highlighted in red below, while those who disagreed that it is awkward are highlighted in green. The percentage of each group that agreed with other consent items is presented.

Those college students who did not feel that verbally asking for consent is awkward gave more positive responses on related items. For example, 43% of the college students who felt that verbal consent is awkward agreed with the item *'I have discussed consent issues with my current (or most recent) partner at times other than sexual encounters'*, compared with 63% of students who did not feel that asking for consent is awkward. 40% of them agreed with the item *'Most people that I care about feel that asking for sexual consent is something I should do'*, compared with 63% of students who did not feel verbal consent is awkward.

More of the college students who felt that verbal consent is awkward agreed with items such as *'Not asking for sexual consent some of the time is okay'* (37%, compared with 18% of the students who did not feel that verbal consent is awkward), or *'The need for asking for sexual consent decreases as the length of an intimate relationship increases'* (59%, compared with 38% of students who did not feel verbal consent is awkward).

A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE COLLEGE STUDENTS INDICATED THAT VERBAL CONSENT WAS AWKWARD FOR THEM.

Percentage of college students who expressed agreement with consent beliefs, broken down by students who agreed / disagreed with the belief 'I think that verbally asking for consent is awkward'.

	Students who agreed that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward	Students who disagreed that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward
Positive beliefs		
Tell my partner what types of sexual behaviour I want to engage in.	75	91
Sexual consent should always be obtained before any sexual activity.	66	86
Discussed sexual consent issues with my current (or most recent) partner at times other sexual encounters.	43	63
Verbally asking for sexual consent should occur before proceeding with any sexual activity.	42	70
Most people that I care about feel that asking for sexual consent is something I should do.	40	63
Consent should be asked before any kind of sexual behaviour, including kissing or petting.	26	45
Barriers		
The need for asking for sexual consent decreases as the length of an intimate relationship increases.	59	38
I would have a hard time verbalising my consent in a sexual encounter because I am too shy.	41	8
Not asking for sexual consent some of the time is okay.	37	18

Rape Myth Beliefs

Secondary School Students

Unlike personal confidence and social concern, rape myths do not simply make it challenging to act on positive consent beliefs. Rape myths undermine active consent by raising doubts about mutuality, capacity, and choice, or by directly contradicting these values. Transition year students were surveyed on rape myth beliefs as part of the Manuela intervention programme evaluation (D'Eath et al., 2020). The rape myths scale (Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale) was used to assess the degree to which students agreed, were neutral, or disagreed with particular rape myths. Responses on several of the items included in the pre-intervention survey are presented here, from 626 students.

The students' responses are reviewed to assess the impact of rape myth beliefs on related beliefs and on intentions concerning consent. To study the impact of rape myths, students were broken into one group who agreed with the rape myth that 'If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex', and a second group of students who disagreed with this rape myth. This item corresponds to the 'ongoing' nature of consent – that kissing or being more intimate does not imply consent to have sex. It also situates ongoing consent within a traditional sexual script, that males are pushing to have sexual intimacy while females act as gatekeepers to further intimacy.

30% of the students agreed with the item (17% of the females and 41% of the males). They gave their support to the idea that the male script presumes consent for sex from earlier kissing or hooking up.

43% of the students disagreed with this idea, rejecting the rape myth belief (62% of the females and 27% of the males). The remaining 27% of students chose the 'neutral' response, and so did not agree with this rape myth but did not dispute it.

Overall, three in ten of the students agreed with the viewpoint that consent may not be ongoing, while four in ten disagreed with this idea. In addition, a clear gender difference was observed, with males more likely to agree with this myth.

The figure shows how students who disagreed with the rape myth belief had different beliefs overall from those who agreed with it.

Percentage of Transition Year students who disagree with rape myth beliefs, broken down by students who agreed / disagreed with the belief 'If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex'.

	Students who agreed that a girl should not be surprised when a guy assumes they want to have sex	Students who disagreed that a girl should not be surprised when a guy assumes they want to have sex
When girls are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.	57	82
If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.	55	79
If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.	37	62
Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	17	37

There were clear differences between the two groups of school students in their endorsement of other rape myth beliefs. For example, of the teenagers who disagreed with the idea that a girl should not be surprised if a guy assumed she wanted sex after some initial intimacy, 79% also disagreed with the item *'If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control'*, compared with 55% of those who agreed with the idea that a girl should not be surprised.

There was considerably more tolerance among the school students for the rape myth that *'Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away'*. Far fewer (37%) of the students who disagreed with the belief that a girl should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants sex disagreed with this belief. However this disagreement figure was still higher than that of the teenagers who had agreed with the item about a girl not being surprised by male assumptions. Only 17% of this group disagreed with the idea that males who carry out rape may do so unintentionally.

College Students

The responses of college students to rape myth items are reviewed here to assess their impact on related beliefs and on intentions concerning consent. As part of the SES (2020) campus climate survey, college students completed a number of the same items on the rape myths scale (Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale) as the secondary school students. They indicated the degree to which they agreed, were neutral, or disagreed with particular rape myths.

As with the school students, we broke up the student group into those who agreed or disagreed with the rape myth that *'If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex'*. As noted above, this corresponds with the 'ongoing' nature of consent and invokes a traditional sexual script.

17% of the college students agreed with the item (12% of the females and 28% of the males). They gave their support to the idea that the male script presumes consent for sex from earlier kissing or hooking up.

66% of the college students disagreed with this idea, rejecting the rape myth belief (74% of the females and 50% of the males). The remaining 17% of students chose the 'neutral' response, and so did not disagree with or dispute this rape myth.

While levels of agreement with the item on verbal consent being awkward were largely comparable between school and college students, endorsement of the rape myth item was substantially lower among college students. However it should be noted that the two groups were not recruited on a comparable basis, so differences between them may be accounted for by sampling differences.

The figure opposite shows that college students who disagreed with the rape myth belief had different beliefs overall from those who agreed with it.

Percentage of College Year students who disagree with rape myth beliefs, broken down by students who agreed / disagreed with the belief 'If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex'.

	Students who agreed that a girl should not be surprised when a guy assumes they want to have sex	Students who disagreed that a girl should not be surprised when a guy assumes they want to have sex
When girls are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.	72	95
If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.	72	96
If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.	52	78
Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	38	69
I believe that the need for asking for sexual consent decreases as the length of an intimate relationship increases.	20	40
The extent of a man's resistance should be a major factor in determining if he was sexually assaulted.	55	79
I would express concern if a friend makes a sexist joke.	47	28

Four important patterns can be noted among the college student responses to rape myths:

- **There was a consistent difference in ratings between the two groups of students, with students who agreed that girls should not be surprised if guys presume they want sex more likely to accept other rape myths too**. 38% of these students also disagreed with the idea that males who rape females do not normally intend to do so but simply get too carried away (compared with a 69% disagreement rate for students who had rejected the rape myth of males assuming female agreement). Nearly all students (96%) who disagreed with the ongoing consent rape myth also disagreed with the myth that females who are raped while drunk are at least somewhat responsible themselves for the rape. Although a large percentage (72%) of college students who agreed with the ongoing consent rape myth subsequently disagreed that females raped while drunk are at least partly responsible, this figure is still 24% below that of the percentage of students who disagreed with the ongoing consent rape myth.
- **There was a clear pattern in rape myth acceptance across both school and college students for differences by gender, with male students consistently more likely to be neutral or to express agreement with these erroneous beliefs**.
- **As a group, the college students who responded to the SES 2020 study were consistently less accepting of rape myths than Transition Year secondary school students**. This difference may be partly attributable to sampling differences. There may be a developmental change in rape myth acceptance, tending toward increasing rejection over time from adolescence into young adulthood. Nevertheless, there was still a substantial number of students who agreed with rape myth beliefs – which is a priority for educational efforts.
- **Besides those students who agreed with rape myth beliefs, there was an additional group who gave 'neutral' ratings on these items**. While the focus of intervention efforts would tend toward those students who agree with rape myths, it is also important to engage students who express neutrality on these myths so that they come to reject them.

Conclusion

This spotlight on research has shown that young people's understanding of consent is multi-faceted. Contradictory beliefs on consent do co-exist in our college community and even within the same person. It should be a priority for education and engagement initiatives to address these inconsistencies in a manner that is inclusive and supportive – meeting people where they are (American College Health Association, 2016) – using an approach that endorses positive values while not being judgemental of individuals.

The research shows that beliefs and intentions toward positive, active consent are strong, and are endorsed by a clear majority of young people. Targeted initiatives should endorse this strength – that young people have an existing understanding of the script for affirmative, active consent and clearly support the right of the individual to say either 'yes' or 'no'.

Alongside this acceptance of verbal consent, the research also shows that embarrassment and shame continue to exist. These issues too should be a target for our actions – that in removing embarrassment, active, positive consent will influence the confident development of autonomy and a sexual self image that is not ashamed to communicate with a partner or talk with a friend.

The research finally demonstrates that the existence of beliefs that undermine the achievement of active consent and can cause harm. These are illustrated by rape myth beliefs that some young people agree with and others are neutral towards and do not reject. From the perspective of supporting change, it is important to understand that these beliefs are likely to emerge from social influences and a cultural history of gender inequality.

Most of the young people that either agree with or are neutral on rape myth beliefs are males. Initiatives must find a way to engage young people in examining the illusory nature of these beliefs. Going beyond that, they should be supported through education and skills development to interrupt and disrupt the transmission, endorsement, and acting out of negative beliefs. A supportive and developmental approach to this will view a negative belief system as something people have been socialised into but not necessarily consciously decided to adopt.

All of the conclusions of this applied research are designed to inform initiatives that are supportive of the Consent Framework. Underpinning these initiatives is the need to use these engagement opportunities to ensure that young people have the knowledge and skills that empower them to access the network of supports and services in their colleges and communities.

THE RESEARCH SHOWS THAT BELIEFS AND INTENTIONS TOWARD POSITIVE, ACTIVE CONSENT ARE STRONG, AND ARE ENDORSED BY A CLEAR MAJORITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

OVERALL

75%

OF STUDENTS AGREED / STRONGLY AGREED THAT THEIR PEERS THINK SEXUAL CONSENT IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE

(79% OF FEMALES; 65% OF MALES; AND 80% OF NON-BINARY STUDENTS).

9

SPOTLIGHT ON COLLABORATION: ACTIVE* CONSENT AND RAPE CRISIS NETWORK IRELAND

MEMBERS OF THE ACTIVE*CONSENT TEAM HAVE COLLABORATED WITH RAPE CRISIS NETWORK IRELAND (RCNI) SINCE THE PUBLICATION IN 2014 OF THE FIRST QUALITATIVE REPORT ON PERCEPTIONS OF CONSENT AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN IRELAND. 'WHAT'S CONSENT GOT TO DO WITH IT' BROUGHT TOGETHER OUR RESEARCH CAPACITY WITH SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE FROM RCNI, AND ESTABLISHED THE USE OF CONSENT STORIES AS A BASIS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT SENSITIVE ISSUES WITHOUT HAVING TO DISCUSS THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

Reflecting the developments that have taken place since then, our latest partnership with RCNI sets out to understand the perspectives, training needs, and personal experiences of staff – as a necessary step for the Consent Framework to be sustainable within each college community. The project is supported by the Department of Education & Skills through funding provided to support the implementation of the Consent Framework.

To date, access to formal training has not been systematic or standardised, and the sector is also at an early stage of assessing staff members' own experiences of harassment. While underserved and seldom researched, it is essential to address these issues, given the need for capacity building within the sector and to engage with barriers arising through institutional culture.

This scoping research project by Active*Consent and RCNI will assess HEI staff preparedness and needs on consent, sexual violence and harassment. The goals are to:

- Enable us to better understand staff members' perspectives and experiences across different job roles in HEIs.
- Carry out pilot research on staff members' personal awareness and experiences of harassment.
- Engage with experts from Ireland, the UK, and U.S. to review of findings and strategy development for meeting key development needs and addressing cultural barriers within institutions.
- Inform future research on staff experiences of harassment.

This work illustrates the value of bringing together different sets of specialist knowledge and skills on a collaborative basis on a focused, project management basis. The findings will be made available to the Higher Education sector as well as providing valuable input to awareness, education, and training projects with stakeholders such as Galway Rape Crisis Centre and Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland.

An initial pilot survey with staff members in one HEI has already shown that:

- Staff commonly reported having had a student disclosure of sexual violence or harassment, but were less likely to say they felt well prepared for responding to this.
- Most staff reported having 'good' or 'excellent' knowledge of what is meant by sexual violence and harassment.
- By comparison, a minority of staff reported 'good' or 'excellent' interpersonal skills relevant to disclosure, knowledge of supports for students or of college procedures for student reports or complaints of sexual violence and harassment.
- The need for additional support for staff members was underscored by their perception of being better prepared to support students experiencing mental health distress.
- While agreeing that it is important to offer support to students affected by sexual violence and harassment, staff members also highlighted the need for this role to be acknowledged within workload models and in their academic department or unit.

10

SPOTLIGHT ON ACTIVE* CONSENT (FORMERLY KNOWN AS SMART CONSENT) WORKSHOPS:

FROM IN-PERSON TO BLENDED

THE ACTIVE* CONSENT TOOLKIT

"THE FIRST WORKSHOP I WENT TO HAD A GREAT IMPACT ON ME. IT OPENED UP A DISCUSSION ABOUT CONSENT BETWEEN ME AND MY FRIENDS AND WHAT WE THOUGHT ABOUT THE TOPIC".

AS RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS, WE ARE AWARE NOT MANY PEOPLE ACTUALLY READ RESEARCH REPORTS AND ACADEMIC PAPERS THAT DETAIL ALL OUR FINDINGS. OUR DATA GATHERED ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE SINCE 2009 INDICATED THAT STUDENTS WERE MORE WORRIED BY UNWANTED SEXUAL ACTIVITY THAN OTHER CONSEQUENCES OF HEAVY ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUG CONSUMPTION. WHEN THIS BECAME CLEAR TO US, THE FOCUS OF MUCH OF OUR RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY CHANGED TO EXPLORE CONSENT PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOURS AS WELL AS LEVELS OF NEGATIVE SEXUAL EXPERIENCES.

The Active* Consent (formerly known as SMART Consent) workshops co-created by Siobhán O'Higgins and Pádraig MacNeela grew out of our wish to translate all of that research data and insights gained about young peoples' perceptions, behaviours and attitudes into interventions that could inform more active consent understanding and behaviours.

Our first workshops were piloted in 2016 and adapted following feedback from students and then rolled out as a Randomised Control Trial (RCT). Students found the workshops relevant, enjoyable and effective, in that, for example, there was an increase in awareness of the importance of consent and students stated they were more confident to communicate about consent, after just 60 minutes of an intervention.

The workshops ask participants to share anonymously their ideas on what consent looks like, what helps and what stops people communicating consent. We then deconstruct student and official definitions of consent and start to explore the language students actually use to communicate about consent. Using three different stories which aim to be both inclusive and challenge gendered sexual scripts, small groups discuss what consent might look like in real life situations and how intimate situations could be more clearly consensual. A first year student stated *"the personal stories had a really strong impact without pointing blame but instead helping people to see how those situations could be avoided".*

Through participatory exercises, students explore social norms about degrees of comfort engaging in different levels of intimacy and the importance of gaining consent before the

start of any sexual experience. As we share data from studies with thousands of other students, participants see that there are social norm gaps between what they, as individuals, think and what they believe others think. We've repeatedly witnessed students realising that sometimes they and others do things they are not comfortable with and they don't communicate about consent out of a belief that people will judge them harshly if they actually did. For example, one male student was heard to say following this exercise ... *"so last night when she ******* she did it because she thought she had to, not because she wanted to..... that's not great now is it?"*

Following a launch of the positive results from the RCT we were aware we needed to scale up our efforts. We created a training day for staff and students, with a facilitators' manual and slides, so others could deliver our scripted workshop. Starting with TCD, the number of HEIs we work with has increased every year. Pre and post surveys for all participants reflected how the impact was very similar whether others facilitated or we did ourselves. Student workshop facilitators have told us about their experience of originally attending the workshop before being trained by us to deliver it. One male facilitator at a Dublin college said: *"The first workshop I went to had a great impact on me. It opened up a discussion about consent between me and my friends and what we thought about the topic"*. A female student facilitator reiterated the Active* Consent approach: *"A balance between light, humorous activities and learning with great open-minded discussions"*. She felt the training and support for facilitators had been excellent, enabling her to appreciate the positive impact she was having in this volunteer work: *"It was wonderful to feel everyone in the room grow more comfortable with the topic and gain understanding"*. Staff members remarked on the personal growth achieved by students who train and perform as Active* Consent workshop facilitators: *"Individual student facilitators have grown and contributed enormously to this project and it is great to see them develop skills in facilitation and grow in confidence"*.

Following the generous support and encouragement from Lifes2Good Foundation and Rethink Ireland we were able to extend our reach so that in the academic year 2019-20, pre-COVID, 18 HEIs were working with us and 7,382 students had attended one of our workshops, facilitated by trained staff and students in each of those HEIs. We also worked with all of the 7 Tegasc education centres and Drogheda further education college. We have continued to evaluate all of the workshops and then update them to ensure that they remain relevant, engaging and effective as Ireland has changed quite considerably in terms of public awareness and government initiatives on the importance of sexual consent since the first roll out of our consent workshops in 2016.

Using this same model of gathering data on perceptions and behaviours and then developing engaging and relevant interventions, in 2019 we began working with second level pupils. We gathered data, and working with our youth panels created a workshop that was piloted in one school (March 4th 2020). We are hoping, fingers crossed, that the plan (developed late 2019) with 2 more schools to train staff and pupils to facilitate the workshop and evaluate the whole process before offering it more widely, will be possible sometime in the next academic year.

With the advent of the global pandemic and lockdown in March 2020, we remained in contact with all of the HEIs who had been working with us to date, and have now added several more to that list. The team explored with them how best we could work together to support the continuation of consent education within each campus. As the months went on, the team and our HEI colleagues realised that the likelihood of face to face engagement was becoming more and more remote. So we pivoted and created our new three-stage programme that is available to audiences on-line. As the first stage in our new programme, we spent our summer piloting the 30 minute on-line workshop with our national youth panel and then training trained teams of staff and students in 22 HEIs to support the roll out of this resource. Through on-going consultation and working with all the multidisciplinary expertise within our team, we are now ready to launch our 2020-2021 programme. While we may have moved online, our aims with our workshop and all the stages of this new programme remain the same: to use our research base to create programmes that spur dialogue and increase understanding and engagement with consent.

"THE PERPETRATOR WAS A STUDENT AT THE SAME COLLEGE"

29%

OF STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

47%

OF STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED SEXUAL HARASSMENT

THE ACTIVE* CONSENT TOOLKIT

11

SPOTLIGHT ON THE KINDS OF SEX YOU MIGHT HAVE AT COLLEGE

AN ORIGINAL DRAMA BASED ON ACTIVE* CONSENT RESEARCH DATA

THE ORIGINAL ACTIVE* CONSENT DRAMA, *THE KINDS OF SEX YOU MIGHT HAVE AT COLLEGE*, HAS BEEN IN DEVELOPMENT SINCE 2014 AND HAS BEEN CO-WRITTEN BY ACTIVE* CONSENT PROGRAMME LEAD CHARLOTTE MCIVOR AND A COHORT OF OVER 30 DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES CURRENT AND FORMER STUDENTS AND COUNTING.

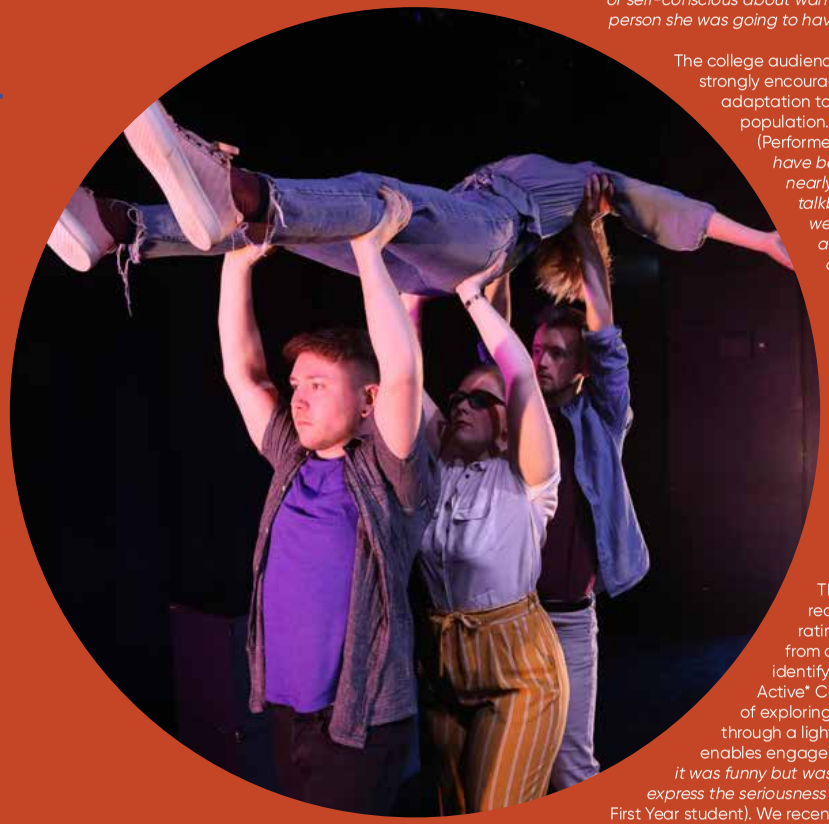
Working collaboratively, McIvor and the students take Active* Consent research data and bring it to life in scenes and monologues that reveal and reckon with sexual consent's grey areas by dramatizing them. Constantly being updated to remain timely and relevant, this drama draws from the real-time research of the Active* Consent team but presents fictional stories that are a composite of these statistical findings while also commenting on broader cultural topics and themes contemporary to each new cycle of the drama's production.

The drama began in 2014 as a class project in support of the now Active* Consent programme team's ongoing research on sexual consent and exploratory interest in using drama as a mode of outreach. This direction proved valuable and the drama (originally titled *100 Shades of Grey*) would be revived and reworked multiple times before becoming part of the Active* Consent Programme's offerings.

The Kinds of Sex You Might Have at College did its first national tour of HEIs in 2019-2020 featuring a company of professional NUI Galway alumni actors and is scheduled to return post-pandemic. The first year of the drama's tour received extensive media coverage, appearing on RTÉ news and website, and, along with our consent workshops, was the subject of reports on two consecutive days on RTÉ Radio 1 Drivetime – with over 200,000 listeners.

This is a unique theatre project, due to the extensive input of third-level students in developing the drama, the direct use of cutting-edge research statistics, and its inclusion of multiple perspectives, including exploration of male perspectives/pressures. The actors' experiences with audiences reflects this assessment. Gavin Friel (Performer) said *"I knew about the research the team carried out from my final year. But being on the ground, being able to translate these stories to young people, and seeing them respond with vim and vigour on how this work is important to them is like nothing else".*

"I KNEW ABOUT THE RESEARCH THE TEAM CARRIED OUT FROM MY FINAL YEAR. BUT BEING ON THE GROUND, BEING ABLE TO TRANSLATE THESE STORIES TO YOUNG PEOPLE, AND SEEING THEM RESPOND WITH VIM AND VIGOUR ON HOW THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT TO THEM IS LIKE NOTHING ELSE".



The ethos of Active* Consent is the assumption that most people see open communication as positive but fear that their peers do not. The drama helps erode that gap in perception. Fiona Buckley (Performer) recalled that *"A young woman approached me after one of the performances and spoke about sexual consent in the Irish culture. She said that the show made her question why she would normally be nervous about verbalising consent with her partner. It helped her to understand that she shouldn't feel ashamed or self-conscious about wanting to talk to the person she was going to have sex with".*

The college audiences have strongly encouraged the drama's adaptation to a school population. Alice Keane (Performer) said that *"We have been asked at nearly every show talkback when will we be bringing an adaptation of this show to secondary schools. There is a strong consensus that this style of consent literacy should be shown to even younger audiences to aid in positive communication in relation to sex".*

The drama has received positive ratings and feedback from audiences, who identify with the hallmark Active* Consent approach of exploring difficult topics through a light touch that enables engagement (*"I thought it was funny but was still able to express the seriousness of the topic"*, First Year student). We recently conducted an anonymous survey of our college staff stakeholders, who identified the drama as being a positive new addition to our consent education portfolio. One staff member reflected that the drama was "Very good, no negatives and amazed given that there were such big groups that students participated in Q&A". Another person said it had a "Great impact, very well produced. Went down very well with students and we had all 1st years involved – 1000".

McIvor shares that: "This play was created collaboratively with young people for young people. We hope it empowers audiences to critically examine their own attitudes about sexuality and the way they communicate with partners concerning consent. We approach the subject unflinchingly in our treatment of assault, harassment and rape, but also with humour and optimism. This is because we hope our audiences leave better informed and prepared to act in terms of calling out unacceptable behaviours and attitudes and pursuing more mutually pleasurable and consensual sexual practices if they want to."

The Active* Consent team believes that the arts are a powerful medium for through which to create dialogue regarding sexual consent. We use arts-based approaches to pose questions as well as give answers to our audiences through the mediums of theatre and film as well as other visual means. Our ultimate aim is to show audiences the human and emotional dimensions of sexual consent as a lived experience and model strategies for more open and direct communication between partners. *The Kinds of Sex You Might Have at College* turns this aim into a theatrical experience.

With thanks to those who have contributed to the writing of *The Kinds of Sex You Might at College/100 Shades of Grey* since 2014: Richard Brown, Fiona Buckley, Eibhleann Caffrey, Darragh Cooney, Aoife Corry, Jérémie Cyr-Cooke, Mark Crumrine, Emily Dolan, John Donlon, Conor Duffy, Sam Ó Fearraigh, Gavin Friel, Michael Foley, Marie Hegarty, Jim Hynes, Siobhan Jordan, Muireann Kavanagh, Alice Keane, Ger Kelly, Peter Kenny, Nathan Mannion, Shannon McHugh, Charlotte McIvor, Laura McNulty, Charlotte Moore, Siobhra Ní Chianain, Megan O'Connor, Jonathan Ryan, Cristina Scobee, Jack Scullion, Rebecca Spelman, Sarah Vargo and Clarke Whitehead.

THE ACTIVE* CONSENT TOOLKIT

PART IV:

FURTHER RESOURCES

12

BREAKING IT DOWN: BASIC CONSENT AND SEXUALITY DEFINITIONS

ASEXUAL

Refers to people who may not experience sexual attraction or aorusal, or people who experience these things without feeling the need to act them out sexually or with a partner.

BISEXUAL

People who may be attracted to more than one gender, or for whom gender identity is not a factor in who they are attracted to. See also pansexuality.

CISGENDER

A person whose gender identity aligns with the one they had or were assigned as having at birth.

CONSENT

Active and freely-given agreement to engage in a sexual act, acts or intercourse, communicated verbally and/or non-verbally.

According to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, we consent to a sexual act if we "freely and voluntarily" agree to it - that's the Freely Given in OMFG. Legally, this is how you know if sexual activity is non-consenting:

- Force or the threat of force: When someone applies force, threatens to do so, or there is well-founded fear of force.
- Being asleep or unconscious
- Incapable of consenting because of the effect of alcohol or some other drug
- Physical inability to communicate due to a disability
- Mistaken identity or understanding of the act: Being mistaken as to the nature and purpose of the act, or the identity of anyone involved in the act
- Being unlawfully detained at the time at which the act takes place
- Someone else giving permission for you: If consent or agreement to the act comes from somebody other than the person themselves.

Active* Consent summarises this as: Consent is OMFG (Ongoing, Mutual, and Freely-Given).

This law on consent also makes it clear in addition to being FREELY GIVEN, legal consent must always be ONGOING: "Consent to a sexual act may be withdrawn at any time before the act begins, or in the case of a continuing act, while the act is taking place."

And finally, active, positive consent must be MUTUAL, as not saying 'no' or using body language to resist does not mean consent is given.

DISCLOSURE

When an individual tells someone about an experience of sexual assault, rape, or harassment.

GAY

An individual who has sexual or romantic attraction to an individual of the same gender.

GENDER

Refers to 'socially acquired' psychological and cultural characteristics, i.e. learned femininity and masculinity.

GENDER BINARY/GENDER BINARISM

Classification system of gender into two categories, male and female, and/or the belief that all cultural, social and biological understandings of gender should be informed by this classification system.

GENDERQUEER

An individual who does not subscribe to a binaristic male or female gender identity but may identify with neither, both or a combination of these identity markers in their gender expression.

HETEROSEXUAL

Refers to people who are attracted to people who they understand to be of the 'opposite ' gender. 'Homosexual' was previously commonly used as the inverse of this to refer to people attracted to the same gender, but should be avoided due to its clinical history and frequent use in homophoic contexts.

LGBTQIA+

An abbreviation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer, intersex and asexual with the plus connoting an ongoing evolution of named sexual orientations and desires. Grouping these together implies solidarity shared by non-heterosexual individuals and communities, not homogenisation of these experiences and identities.

NON-BINARY GENDER IDENTITY

A term used to describe individuals who may experience a gender identity that is neither exclusively male or female or is in between or beyond both genders. Non-binary individuals may identify as gender fluid, agender (without gender), third gender, or something else entirely. Also used as an umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'.

PANSEXUAL

An individual who is attracted to someone regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. As "pan-" means all, this orientation is considered by some to be broader than bisexuality as it refuses gender binaries altogether in thinking about sexual attraction.

PASSIVE CONSENT

Allowing sexual intimacy to continue without any form of verbal or non verbal communication. For example, "I would allow my partner to do whatever they like" and on the other side: "I would keep going until my partner stops me"

PERPETRATOR & VICTIM/SURVIVOR

These terms are used in the context of sexual violence and harassment. Perpetrator refers to the individual who commits these acts against individuals or groups. The individual who experiences these acts is usually referred to as the victim. Advocacy groups also frequently refer to survivors to emphasise the possibilty of resilience and recovery following sexual violence.

PORN OR PORNOGRAPHY

The portrayal of sexual subject matter for the exclusive purpose of sexual arousal.

RAPE

When a person intentionally penetrates another's vagina, anus or mouth with a penis without the other person's consent. Legally, Irish law defines rape as "Penetration of the vagina by the penis where the man either knows that the woman does not consent to sexual intercourse, or is reckless as to whether she consents or not. Penetration (however slight) of the anus or mouth by the penis. Penetration of the vagina (however slight) by any object held or manipulated by another person" (Rape under Section 2 Criminal Law (Rape) 1981 Act as amended. Rape under Section 4 Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act 1990 as amended.)

RAPE MYTHS

Rape myths are false beliefs people hold about sexual assault and rape that shift blame from the perpetrator to the survivor. Rape myths have grown out of the long-standing gender roles, acceptance of violence, and incorrect information concerning sexual violence that exist in our society. These false statements not only shame survivors into silence; they also damage society's general knowledge of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. The most effective way to confront and tackle rape myths is to educate on the facts.

SEX

Refers to either of the main categories (male, female or intersex) that humans, and most other living things, are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions. Hence 'sex' is seen as a "biologically given" state. Sex is also used as a term for sexual intercourse.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

The overall definition of sexual or indecent assault is an act of physical, psychological and emotional violation in the form of a sexual act, inflicted on someone without their consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts. Not all cases of involve violence, cause physical injury or leave visible marks; sexual assault can cause severe distress, emotional harm and injuries which can't be seen – all of which can take a long time to recover from.

Legally, the definition of sexual assault falls into two categories, aggravated and not. Aggravated sexual assault involves *"A sexual assault that includes serious violence or the threat of serious violence or is such as to cause injury, humiliation, or degradation of a grave nature to the person assaulted"* (Aggravated Sexual Assault under Section 3 Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act 1990 as amended.). More broadly, *"An assault which takes place in circumstances of indecency is known as sexual assault. It includes any sexual touching without consent and is not limited to sexual touching involving penetration. Technically, the word "assault" also covers actions which put another person in fear of an assault"* (Sexual Assault under Section 2 Criminal Law (Rape) (Amendment) Act 1990 as amended). Absence of consent is necessary to prove in both instances.

SEXUAL COERCION

Unwanted sexual activity that happens when someone is pressured, tricked, manipulated, threatened, or forced in a nonphysical way. Coercion can make people think they owe sex to someone. It might be from someone who has power over them, like a teacher, landlord, or a boss or even an intimate partner or family member.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment takes place where one or more people make unwanted sexual comments or similar actions in a workplace or college setting, a social situation or anywhere else in the community around us.

Legally, the definition of sexual harassment is of *"any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which in either case has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person"* (Equal Status Act, 2000).

SEXISM

Refers to all double standards based on a person's sex, gender and /or sexuality. Traditional sexism is the assumption that femaleness and femininity are inferior to or less legitimate than maleness and masculinity.

SEX-POSITIVE

Having or promoting an open, tolerant, or progressive attitude towards sex, sexuality, and discussions around sex.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion.

SEXUALITY

One of the fundamental drives behind everyone's feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviours towards other people. Sexuality is diverse and personal, and an important part of who someone is. This set of specific (and changing) cultural and historical ideas about how people should feel, think and act influence what a society deems to be normal or deviant at any one time.

STRAIGHT

A slang term for heterosexuals.

SOCIAL NORM GAP

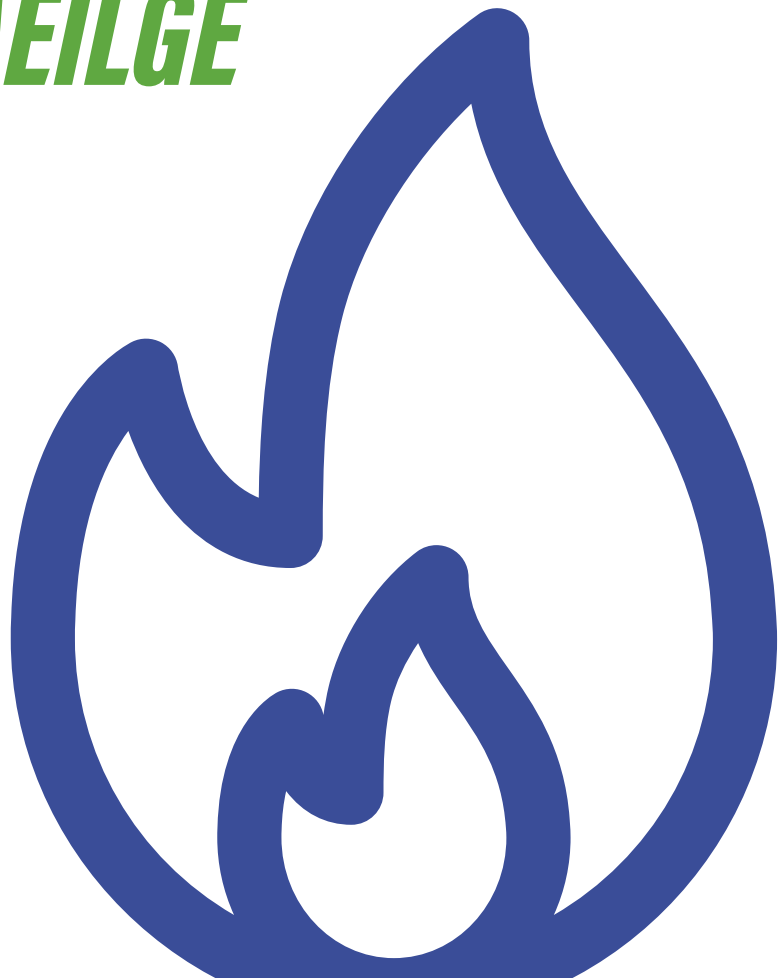
The difference between what an individual thinks is important and how important they think their peers feel it is.

TRANSGENDER/TRANS/TRANS*

Transgender/Trans includes everyone whose gender identity is different than the sex/gender they were assigned at birth, meaning that it can also encompass those who identify as genderqueer or non-binary (see above). Trans is sometimes shortened with an asterisk (Trans*) to emphasise inclusion of these broader communities as Transgender/Trans can sometimes be misunderstood as only including people who transition M to F or F to M. Individuals identifying as transgender/trans/trans* will make a range of decisions about medical or non-medical approaches to transitioning- there is not one way to transition so be mindful of not making assumptions or assuming a moment of completion if you know someone who is Trans.

13

CONSENT AND SEXUALITY TERMS AS GAEILGE



EXCERPT FROM AN FOCLÓIR AITEACH/ THE QUEER DICTIONARY

This project was a joint collaboration between the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland (TENI).

They had this to say about their inspiration for the project: "...we believed that it was right that everyone would be able to recognise themselves in any language, and that they would be able to describe themselves in any language. The Irish language showed us that she was up to this challenge, and it gives us great pleasure to say that we succeeded in putting *The Queer Dictionary* together. As language changes, and as people change, however, the Dictionary will change in the future. It is a working document."

They have generously given us permission to reprint the below excerpt.

You can read the full dictionary here: https://usi.ie/focloir-aiteach/

Forainmneacha/Pronouns

Siad/Iad	They/Them
Sí/Í	She/Her
Sé/É	He/Him
Lesbian	Leispiach
Gay	Aerach
Bisexual	Déghnéasach
Transgender	Trasinscneach
Queer	Aiteach
Questioning	Ceisteach
Intersex	Idirghnéas
Pansexual	Painghnéasach
Two-Spirit	Dé-anamúil
	Duine a bhfuil dhá spiorad ann/inti/iontu
Asexual	Gan-ghnéasach

ACTIVE* CONSENT AS GAEILGE

Inspired by USI/TENI's *An Foclóir Aiteach/ The Queer Dictionary*, our Active* Consent team has translated some of our key catchphrases and recommended consent communication phrases into Irish.

We believe Active* Consent is for all genders, sexual orientations and relationships (Le haghaidh chuile inscne, gnéaschlaonadh agus caidreamh) and should be communicated across ALL languages but especially in both of our national languages!

Send us your ideas for more necessary Irish consent phrases on social media or talk to us when you're working with us...

Consent is OMFG (Ongoing, Mutual, Freely-Given)

Ongoing - Leanúnach

If you consent to one thing, it doesn't mean you're consenting to everything. - Má aontaíonn tú le rud amháin, ní chiallaíonn sé sin go bhfuil tú ag aontú le gach rud.

You can change your mind at any time, even if you said yes initially. - Is féidir leat d'intinn a athrú ag aon am, fiú má d'aontaigh tú ag an tús.

Mutual – Comhthoil/le toil a chéile

Not one sided, with everyone on the same page. - Gan é a bheith leataobhach, gach duine ar an leathanach céanna.

Freely – de do dheoin féin

Given – Tugtha

Not drunk, drugged or pressured. - Gan a bheith ar meisce, drugáilte nó faoi brú.

Your Irish-language consent shorthand

What do you want? – Céard/ cad/caidé atú ag iarraidh?

I can't wait/I'm excited – Tá mé ag súil go mór leis /Táim ar bís

It's my first time - Is é seo mo chéad uair riamh

We can stop if you want - Is féidir linn stopadh más mian leat

Of course we can stop - Cinnte is féidir linn stopadh

Keep checking in - Coinnigh ag seiceáil isteach

Don't stop - Ná stop

I love that - Is breá liom é sin

14

OTHER IRISH PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCES

CONSENT FRAMEWORK

You can read the Consent Framework in full here: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/678fee-framework-for-consent-in-higher-education-institutions-safe-respectf/

OTHER IRISH SEXUAL HEALTH PROVIDERS FOR HEIS: BYSTANDER INTERVENTION, CONSENT

UCC Bystander Intervention Programme
The UCC Bystander Intervention Programme has been adapted from the Intervention Initiative (Fenton, Mott, McCartan, & Rumney, 2014) which was created at the University of the West of England and funded by Public Health England.
http://bystanderintervention.ucc.ie

ESHTE (Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Third-Level Education)
The ESHTE (Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Third-Level Education) project aims to prevent and combat sexual violence and harassment (SVH) and build a culture of zero tolerance in third-level education throughout Europe. The project is funded by the European Commission. The 'It Stops Now' campaign is running as an integral part of the ESHTE project.

You can access their toolkit here:
https://www.itstopsnow.org/en/toolkit

LGBT+ SUPPORT SERVICES

BeLonG To
Organisation that supports LGBT+ youth around Ireland, aged 14-23.
https://www.belongto.org/

Shout Out
Charity that supports young LGBT+ youth, and provides corporate & educational workshops to around Ireland.
Shoutout.ie

Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI)
Non-profit organisation supporting the Irish trans community and their families.
Teni.ie

GOSHH (Gender, Orientation, Sexual Health, HIV) Limerick (formerly Red Ribbon Project)
https://goshh.ie/

SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES

Irish Family Planning Association
Sexual health screening service with information on reproductive rights, sexual health and wellbeing.
https://www.ifpa.ie/

Sexual Health West (formerly AIDsWEST)
Galway sexual health & screening service.
Sexualhealthwest.ie

Sexual Health Centre Cork
sexualhealthcentre.com/

YOUTH SERVICES

Spun Out
NGO that provides young people with information on mental health, employment, education and life advice.
spunout.ie

Union of Students in Ireland (USI)
The national representative body for third-level students' unions in Ireland
Usi.ie

Foroige
foroige.ie/

Squashy Couch Waterford
https://www.facebook.com/Squashy-Couch-193145250812793/

Irish Youth Foundation
iyf.ie/

National Youth Council of Ireland
youth.ie/

Youthwork Ireland
youthworkireland.ie/

MIGRANT SUPPORT SERVICES

Immigrant Council of Ireland
Service providing legal support to migrants living in Ireland.
https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/

Irish Refugee Council
Support service for refugees living in Ireland.
https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/

Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland (MASI)
MASI is the collective Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland, a platform for asylum seekers to join together in unity and purpose.
https://www.masi.ie/about-us/

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
Support service working for justice, empowerment, and equality for migrants and their families living in Ireland.
https://www.mrci.ie/

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

Safe Ireland
National network of support services for victims of domestic violence.
Safeireland.ie

Women's Aid
Support service for individuals affected by domestic violence.
https://www.womensaid.ie/

SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES

One in Four
Support service for individuals affected by childhood sexual abuse.
https://www.oneinfour.ie/

Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
Representative body for rape crisis centres across Ireland.
https://www.rcni.ie/

REGIONAL RAPE CRISIS CENTRES

Athlone/Midlands Rape Crisis Centre
http://www.amrcc.ie/

Carlow & South Leinster Rape Crisis Centre
http://www.carlowrapecrisis.ie/

Donegal Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre
http://www.donegalrapecrisis.ie/

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
drcc.ie

Galway Rape Crisis Centre
http://www.galwayrcc.org/

Kerry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre
https://krsac.com/

Limerick & Midwest Rape Crisis Centre
https://rapecrisis.ie/

Mayo Rape Crisis Centre
mrcc.ie/

Rape Crisis North East
https://www.rcne.ie/

Sexual Violence Centre Cork
sexualviolence.ie/

Sligo Rape Crisis Centre
https://www.srcc.ie/

Tipperary Rape Crisis and Counselling Centre
https://trcc.ie/

Tullamore Rape Crisis Centre
http://tullamore-rape-crisis-centre.counselling-and-advisory-services.health.tullamore.tel/

Waterford Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre
https://www.waterfordrsac.ie/

Wexford Rape Crisis Centre
http://www.wexfordrapecrisis.com/

SEXUAL ASSAULT TREATMENT UNITS

Cork SATU
South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital.

Phone: 021 492 6297
weekdays from 8am to 4.30pm.
Phone: 021 492 6100
weekends and after 4.30pm, ask for SATU.

Donegal SATU
Unit 1 Letterkenny Business Park, Oldtown, Letterkenny.

Phone: 074 9104436
Monday - Sunday from 8am to 8pm
Phone: 087 068 1964
Monday - Sunday before 8am or after 8pm

Dublin SATU
Rotunda Hospital Campus.

Phone: 01 817 1736
weekdays from 8am to 5pm.
Phone: 01 817 1700
after 5pm and weekends, ask for SATU.

Galway SATU
Phone: 091 76 57 51 or 087 63 38 118
weekdays from 8am to 8pm.
Phone: 091 75 76 31
after 8pm and weekends, ask for SATU.

Mullingar SATU
Midland Regional Hospital.

Phone: 044 939 4239 or 086 04 09 952
weekdays from 8am to 5pm.
Phone: 044 934 0221
after 5pm and weekends, ask for SATU.

Waterford SATU
University Hospital Waterford.

Phone: 051 842 157
weekdays from 8am to 5pm.
Phone: 051 848 000
after 5pm and weekends, ask for SATU.

Notes

Funders and Partners

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Improving people's lives

RETHINK IRELAND Our Social Innovation Fund

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