



TIP SHEET

Consent - for parents and caregivers



How can you talk to your child about consent?

Although it may feel uncomfortable, teaching children about consent will help keep them and others safe.

Start by educating your child on what consent means:

- 'Consent' is another way of saying 'I give permission'. When it comes to sex, 'consent' is when someone verbally agrees to a sexual activity either online or in-person.
- Consent is more than saying 'yes' or 'no'.

You can also demonstrate consent in other situations.

For example:

- Asking a friend if you can give them a hug
- Giving your child the choice to greet people in a way which makes them feel safe
- Politely but firmly asserting your boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others
- Asking permission before taking a person's photo and/or sharing it online

Consent IS:



- 'Yes' or agreement
- Free of pressure or guilt
- Given before and ongoing during every sexual activity
- Reversible and can be changed at any time

Consent is NOT:

- 'I'm not sure', 'I guess so', 'no' or silence
- Convincing, pressuring or threatening someone
- Presuming that saying 'yes' to one activity means 'yes' to every activity
- Communicated by clothing or appearance
- Valid if someone is intoxicated, asleep, under the age of consent or unable to understand what they are consenting to

We also need to get better at addressing unsafe behaviours between peers such as:

- offensive nicknames
- social bullying
- revenge porn
- sexualised or degrading jokes
- teasing or shaming others for speaking up

Much like any behaviour, offering praise and reinforcing safe attitudes and behaviours is the most effective way to see a positive cultural shift. How we can do this is by praising young people who: report their concerns, stand up for victims and encourage a supportive social environment.



What if my child was the one who harmed someone else?

- Sometimes children harm others. In most cases, it's not intentional and they need education about healthy relationships and consent.
- Other times, the child may have an awareness that what they did was wrong and require support from trained counsellors to address the causes of the behaviour.
- In all instances, it is vital that parents address the behaviour in a non-confrontational manner, reduce shame and seek support from experts.

Who can help me navigate this situation?

Bravehearts counsellors are trained to help young people who have either been harmed or who have harmed others.

Our Information and Support Line is open from 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday AEST.

Call us on 1800 272 831:



- If your child or someone you know has disclosed. We will be able to provide you with support and advice about how to proceed to protect and support your loved one.
- If you would like advice on the process of reporting concerns of current sexual harm of children to the police or child protection authority in your State.

Bravehearts will always act in the best interests of the child.

You can also contact your local child protection service to get advice on how to manage the situation and any legalities.

Where can I learn more?

Bravehearts offer leading child protection online courses, including Supporting Hands: An introduction to child protection.

For as little as \$50 and 1 hour of your time, you can learn more about sexual assault and exploitation including indicators and the effects of abuse, recognising and responding to grooming behaviours; and responding to disclosures and reporting concerns.

You can also talk to your child's school or sports club and encourage them to take part in our child safety programs for children and young people including our highly popular ProjectYou! workshops (for teens), as well as courses and workshops for teachers and staff.

Visit bravehearts.org.au for more information.



**Together, we can make
Australia the safest place in
the world to raise a child.**