

Buck-I-CARE about Preventing Sexual Violence

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month so let's talk about prevention. What is one way you can prevent sexual violence? Consent. Every time. As a community we need to talk about it- in and out of the bedroom. So, what is consent? Consent is the affirmative, unambiguous and conscious decision to engage in mutually agreed upon behaviors. Consent must be knowing, active, explicit, voluntary, never implied, and can be withdrawn at any time. You need consent for all physical and sexual interactions.

Why is consent important?

Everybody has the right to control what happens to their body. Consent is how you interact with other people without violating their boundaries. This isn't some terrible contract though. Consent and communication are how you know that someone is into you and how you express that you are into someone. With consent each person can communicate what they like and dislike to create a more satisfying experience for everyone involved.



How do we make sure all our sexual experiences are consensual? Use the CARE method.

Check: It is your responsibility to make sure that your partner(s) can make an informed decision and give consent. Are they substantially impaired by alcohol or drugs, unconscious, sleeping, experiencing emotional or physical trauma, underage, or unable to reason due to a disability? Then it's not consensual. Using force, threats, blackmail, size, or strength is coercion and coercion is NOT consensual. Check the power dynamic. Does this person hold something over you like a job or a grade? If so, this relationship is not consensual.

Ask: Once you've checked, you actually have to ask. But this doesn't have to be super awkward! Tell the person what you want, ask them what they like, whisper in their ear, use dirty talk.

Asking takes practice and may be awkward at first, but this is how you know you aren't violating anyone's boundaries.

Respect: After you've checked and asked, you need to respect their response. **If they do not answer with an enthusiastic yes, respect that.** It is ok to show your honest emotions. But your response shouldn't make the person feel guilty and change their mind. What are other ways you can respect your partners? Believe them the first time they say something. Comfort your partner and affirm their decisions.

Empower: Empower your partner(s) to make their own decisions. **Respect and affirm their boundaries inside and outside of the bedroom.** Think about your own boundaries and desires and encourage your partner(s) to do the same. Have conversations with your family and friends about the importance of consent and respecting that everyone gets to set their own boundaries.

So how can you prevent sexual violence? Make consent a priority and practice it. Use the CARE method every time. Talk about consent with your friends. Preventing sexual violence starts with you and your community. Buckeyes value consent and care about creating a community based on respect and personal responsibility. Because Buckeyes CARE and so should you.

-Lauren Tucker, Relationship Education and Violence Prevention Ambassador