

Risk Reduction

You owe respect to yourself and to your partner. Carefully consider these suggestions before engaging in sexual activity:

- Clearly communicate your intentions to your sexual partner and give him/her a chance to clearly relate his/her intentions to you.
- Understand and respect personal boundaries.

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT:

- Consent
- Someone's sexual availability
- Whether a person is attracted to you
- How far you can go
- Whether s/he is physically and/or mentally able to consent

If there are any questions or ambiguity, you DO NOT have consent.

- Mixed messages from your partner are a clear indication that you should stop and communicate better because you may be misreading each other. Your partner may not have figured out yet how far s/he wants to go with you.
- Don't take advantage of someone's drunkenness or drugged state. The choice to use alcohol or drugs is NOT a choice to engage in sex. A person who is incapacitated cannot give consent.
- Realize that your potential partner could be intimidated or fearful of you because of a power advantage simply because of your gender or size. DO NOT abuse that power.
- Understand that consent to some form of sexual behavior does not automatically imply consent to other forms of sexual behavior.
- Silence and passivity cannot be interpreted as an indication of consent. Read your potential partner carefully, paying attention to verbal and nonverbal communication and body language.

Watch this short video to better understand consent: [What does tea have to do with consent?](#)

While non-consensual sexual acts are NEVER a survivor's* fault, the following may help reduce the risk of experiencing a non-consensual sexual act:

- Make your limits known as early as possible.
- If you are able, tell a sexual aggressor "No" clearly and firmly.
- Find someone nearby and ask for help.
- Take care of your friends and ask that they take care of you.

**While we use the term "survivor" on this page, people who experience sexual violence have the right to identify in any way they choose. We use the word survivor here because it is a concise word that fits the context of this section.*