

consider sharing this zine
with others when you've
finished reading it...

Author

Title

Date Due

Borrower's Name

Hygloss Products, Inc.

this zine was a challenge to put
together, for many personal
reasons. thank you so much for
reading it! i really appreciate
you taking the time to read
my thoughts on consent & all
of the interconnected issues.
if you have any comments on
something written in this zine
please contact me:

love-and-liberation@riseup.net

FOR TOTAL LIBERATION!

xo

THIS ZINE IS DEDICATED TO:

ALL SURVIVORS xoxo stay
strong

!NO MEANS NO!

NOT NOW = NO
I HAVE A PARTNER
= NO
MAYBE LATER = NO
NO THANKS = NO
YOU'RE NOT MY
TYPE = NO
FUCK OFF = NO
I'D RATHER BE
ALONE = NO
DON'T TOUCH ME
= NO
I REALLY LIKE YOU, BUT... = NO
LET'S GO TO SLEEP = NO
I'M NOT SURE = NO
SILENCE = NO



CONSENT ~ it might be debated on an increasingly regular basis within the counter-culture but it's not discussed enough as a whole. It remains awkward for people to bring up at the best of times



& regrettably the concept is commonly misunderstood, with little information circulated on how to gain, grant, or refuse consent. Thus, it's imperative discussions take place to ensure there is wide-spread agreement on its importance for all of us. Yes, ALL OF US!

This zine will explore many areas, including:

- ♥ WHAT IS CONSENT & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
- ♥ CONSENT IN RADICAL SPACES.
- ♥ FIGHTING PATRIARCHY & HETERO-NORMATIVITY.
- ♥ RAPE CULTURE (MYTHS & TOOLS) & THE LACK OF RESISTANCE.
- ♥ SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF RAPE & SEXUAL ASSAULT.
- ♥ SEX-POSITIVITY & SAFE(R) SPACES
- ♥ HOW TO GAIN, GRANT, & REFUSE CONSENT.

TRIGGER
WARNING

BE AWARE:
SOMETHING
IN THIS ZINE
MIGHT
TRIGGER YOU!



This zine discusses rape, rape culture, sexual abuse/assault/harrassment, stalking & other unpleasant & violent situations. Unfortunately this is the reality of modern society; no discussion about consent can (or should) take place without acknowledging the above... & remember that even if something mentioned isn't part of your personal experience it doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

However, if you are triggered by something written in this zine, seek out someone to sit with or speak to. Do not suffer in silence, please. It is important that we never suffer in silence. Ever.

SAYING NO
& HAVING IT
RESPECTED:

The desire to not have sex (or engage in any other sexual or non-sexual interaction) is equally as valid as any other person's desire to have sex. Unfortunately it can be hard to say "no", not least because society has taught us that the onus is on the recipient to "speak up" & say no, rather than on the initiator to ask for consent & gain a clear "yes" before proceeding OR to accept AND RESPECT a "no" if given. It can also be hard to feel comfortable, empowered, or encouraged to be completely honest & say "no", either for fear of embarrassment & rejection, or the "no" not being respected. When we ask for consent we must be open to the possibility of hearing "no" (however much we hope to hear "yes") & understand it is NOT an invitation for argument, debate, guilt, manipulation, nagging or any other form of coercion. Plus, no one should have to say "no" once.

HOW TO ASK...

CONSENT?

ASKED FOR

GRANTED

↳ what's up to them!



may i _____?
... touch _____?
... put my _____?
... Kiss _____?

would you like _____?
... to _____?
... me to _____?



is it ok if i _____?
... you _____?
is this ok?



does this feel comfortable?
... good?
... _____?



how would it make you feel if
i _____?
... did/didn't _____?

hi there, i think you're absolutely incredible... i'd love to hang out with you... perhaps eat vegan pizza, watch a movie, & make out... how does that sound to you?



WHAT IS CONSENT

Plain & simple, consent refers to the provision of agreement or approval. It is believed there are several forms of consent:

- EXPRESSED VS. IMPLIED
- INFORMED VS. UNINFORMED

as well as "general" or unanimous, & I want to begin by dismissing both implied & uninformed.

THE PROBLEM WITH "IMPLIED":

→ this refers to instances where consent is NOT granted (with agreement or approval) but instead is inferred from someone's actions or inactions... the circumstances surrounding a particular situation... or even someone's silence. For this/these reasons implied consent is unacceptable. The decision to assume (the operative word here) consent has been given is subjective, & furthermore...

REMEMBER: the absence of "no" does not mean "yes" - this includes silence.

ONLY YES = YES!

THE PROBLEM WITH "UNINFORMED":

→ this refers to situations when someone's unaware of what they are consenting to, including (but not limited to) when intoxicated or unconscious as a result of alcohol or drugs, suffering from mental or physical health which impairs judgement, or not given all the necessary information without being of clear & sound mind, or in possession of sufficient information to know what they are consenting to, uninformed consent is unacceptable.

CONSENT can be defined as a wanted, voluntary, verbal, sober, mutual, informed, imaginative, honest, enthusiastic, & creative ACTIVE AGREEMENT which should never be implied, coerced, or assumed. What's deemed appropriate is expressed & informed unambiguous consent that is clearly & unmistakably given. YES! YES! YES!

Furthermore, consent is a process; situations can change & consent can be revoked at any time.

MORE GOLDEN RULES OF CONSENT for comfortable situations:

- ★ the person who initiates (sexual) contact is responsible for verbally asking for consent.
- ★ the person with whom (sexual) contact is initiated must verbally express consent. ~ no assumptions, no coercion, no pressure from initiator
- ★ consent must be obtained at each new level of (sexual) contact & on each new occasion.
- ★ methods of non-verbal consent can be used, if the actions are decided upon earlier between all parties.

ask what form/style of consent your partner likes, & know what works for you. ask up front about how they prefer to communicate their boundaries, desires, & needs.

THOUGHTS & VIEWS ON ABORTION / PREGNANCY /
STDs & TESTING:



[CUT OUT AND KEEP SOMEWHERE SAFE & SECURE]

Remember: I am entitled to say "yes" to non-
sexual affection & "no" to sexual activity in
ANY relationship, at ANY time, or ALL the time.
It does not make me a bad friend, person, or
partner. I don't owe anyone ANYTHING, ever.

WHY IS CONSENT IMPORTANT? OH, WHY

Plain & simple, asking for consent reduces the chances of someone feeling disrespected, uncomfortable, or unsafe. In asking for consent for all actions, in all situations, we facilitate open communication. This creates an honest environment which helps to build confidence in each other, while enhancing genuine respect for beliefs, boundaries, & values. This genuine respect should extend to enabling someone to say "no" & having this accepted.



While consent is often only debated in relation to sexual encounters it should be asked for in all interactions, something most people fail to do. Be it taking a sip from a person's drink, touching their arm during conversation, or giving advice, the only way to know if it is OK to do so is by asking. We all have the right to choose & if you don't ask for consent you are at risk of doing something the other person doesn't want you to do... & this is **NOT COOL!**

hi there... would it be ok if i came & sat down next to you?

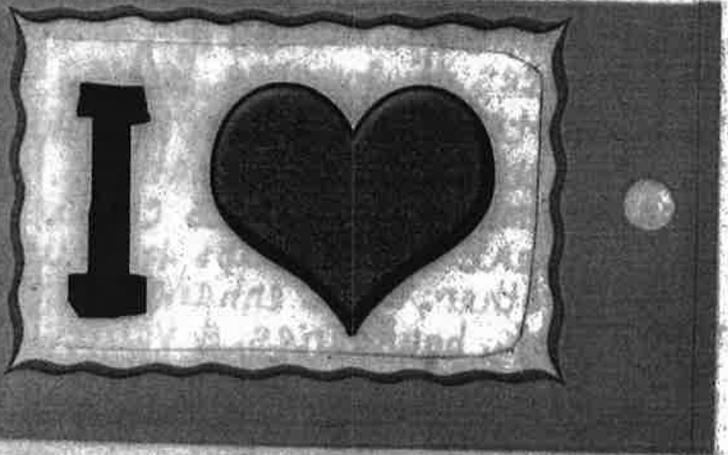


i would love you to!



CONSENT?

- ASKED FOR
- GRANTED



CONSENT

The best way to perfect asking for, as well as granting or refusing consent? PRACTICE... PRACTICE... PRACTICE... In time it will become second nature. It's also a good idea to learn to love & respect yourself. It is hard to know what consent means (let alone give & receive it) without first believing that we are worth being afforded the respect of consent.

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL ~
FOR MY EYES ONLY ! (AND THOSE I CHOOSE TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH)

NON-SEXUAL BOUNDARIES:

... HOW WILL I COMMUNICATE THESE?

SEXUAL BOUNDARIES:

... HOW WILL I COMMUNICATE THESE?

- NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION?

[CUT OUT AND KEEP SOMEWHERE SAFE & SECURE]

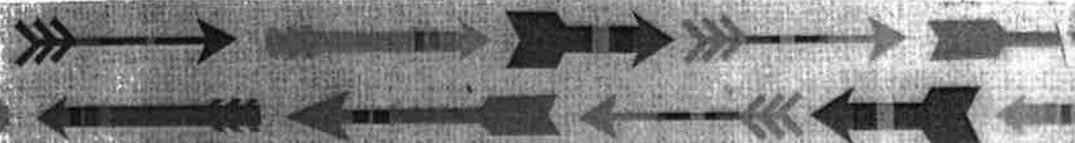


WHAT DO YOU WANT...?

- HOT CHOCOLATE & ANIMAL LIBERATION
- TO BE ASKED BEFORE & DURING EACH ENCOUNTER IF I WANT TO DO / PERMIT SOMETHING
- VEGAN ICE CREAM & CATS the cats are not for eating!
- PEOPLE TO CHECK-IN WITH ME & MAKE SURE THAT I AM OK
- PEOPLE TO ENSURE THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS I'VE SAID & ASK IF THEY'RE NOT
- CAPITALISM & PATRIARCHY TO FALL
- PEOPLE TO CHECK THEIR PRIVILEGE, AS WELL AS THEIR ACTIONS, BEHAVIOUR, & LANGUAGE... ALL OF THE TIME

don't just check your privilege but... the whole damn box!

So, if we can grasp how important it is to gain consent for even the smallest of actions, it should be blindingly obvious how essential it is during intimate & sexual encounters. Of course, while all consent is important, the consequences & ramifications of not obtaining it in such situations are multiplied; we're talking about people's bodies &, at times, their most intimate parts. We should be comfortable with what's happening at each moment & thus consent should be the basis for all such encounters.



REMEMBER: the only way to be sure anyone wants you to do anything is to ASK!

HOW CAN ANYONE BE EXPECTED TO KNOW

...WHAT YOU REALLY REALLY WANT...

IF THEY DON'T ASK?

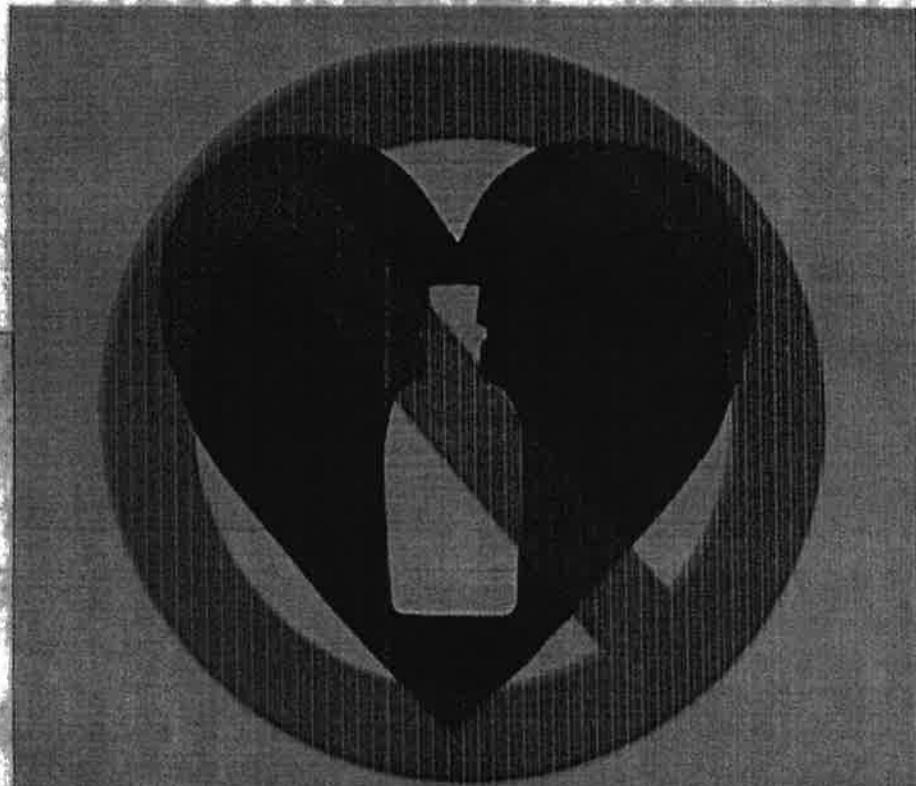
To do this effectively we need to remember that ALL oppression is bad, & just because we work to establish a counter-culture where oppression is less prevalent does not mean it's non-existent! To lay the groundwork for pro-consent sexual norms we must fight the systems that make us hate our desires (of whatever nature) & ourselves. We must fight for the acknowledgement that is typically only afforded to white, middle-class, monogamous, & heterosexual people. We must fight the forced assimilation of a married & monogamous couple, with a nuclear family & white picket fence. We must fight the numerous ways that homosexual, queer, & trans* people get excluded from the narrative. We must fight the exploitative & objectifying way in which people are sexualised. We must fight it all... but we will fight it together!

FIGHT THE SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION



LIBERATION!!!

FIGHT FOR



LOVE POTIONS DO NOT EQUAL CONSENT

COERCION THROUGH MAGIC IS ILLEGAL
COMBINED WITH THE USE OF LOVE POTIONS IT IS RAPE



PURCHASES OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE TO BE REPORTED
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MAGICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Ashwinder eggs
rose thorns
Moonstone

CREATING SAFE(R) SPACES:

The idea behind "safe spaces" or "safer spaces" is that certain areas should be free from oppressive behaviour, language, or people (or all three!) It's also widely believed that neither alcohol nor drugs are a great combination / component for creating safe(r) spaces or aiding consent. So perhaps we should be looking to build more safe(r) AND sober spaces. Consent violations occur more often in non-sober spaces. Such spaces are also not safe for people who have a current or past history with addiction, for those who have experienced abuse because of alcohol or drug-dependent family members / partners, & they are definitely not safe if there is the chance of police interference. Building & sustaining safe(r) sober spaces will help to create genuine, long-lasting connections, & help the advancement of movements.

TRIGGER WARNING

(mentions: rape, sexual assault, violence)

We've all heard of cases where men have walked out of sexual encounters feeling that all was consensual & fair, while their partners were left feeling abused. A possible conclusion to be drawn here is that at least some men have a sense of entitlement when it comes to sex, acquired over a lifetime of indoctrination that equates masculinity with aggression & power - the latter being defined, in our patriarchal culture, as the capacity for subjugation & violence.

"When rapists engage in sex acts without bothering to gain their partner's consent, they are not "accidentally" raping someone. Rapes don't come from miscommunication. They are not isolated, unpreventable incidents. They are a product of institutionalized, reinforced, life-long privilege. They are the symptoms of a flaw in the rapist's entire worldview. They are the product of the way the rapist has habitually devalued women, laid claim to the bodies of others, pursued what he wants no matter what—and never thought anything of it because he has never been called on it. That's not an accident. That's a system."

~ *Legal Consent, Morning-After Regret, and "Accidental" Rape* | Amanda Hess | *The Sexist* (Washington City Paper)



**FIGHT
PATRIARCHY**

Men want what they want & so much of our culture caters to giving men what they want. There is an ongoing problem of MISOGYNY, SEXISM, SEXUAL ASSAULT & HARRASSMENT, RAPE, & PATRIARCHY... Countless women are telling all manner of stories about how, without their consent, they are groped, ogled, lured into hotel rooms & back to people's apartments

under false pretences, physically lifted off the ground, & more. But men want what they want & we should all lighten up, right?

It's hard to be told to lighten up because if you lighten up anymore you're going to float the fuck away. The problem is not that one of these things is happening, it's that they're all happening, concurrently & constantly. (*)

This throws up another problem & that is: in the heterosexual world consent is thought to be a male directed action. It would seem that a lot of individuals assume men must always initiate sex, & women are the ones to say "yes" or "no". Consent isn't a gendered activity & is in fact everyone's responsibility! Communicating about sex is important irrespective of where we fall on the gender spectrum. Fact.

SEX-POSITIVE LIFE:

We are rarely shown how to have a healthy & fulfilling sex life. Despite the "sexual revolution" of the 1970s it remains taboo, not only to have sex but to talk about it. There isn't sufficient dialogue & that which does take place is regulated, policed, & even punished. We need to create a new standard & one that's focussed on pro-consent, sex positive, & safer experiences.

Sex-positivity is about creating empowering, healthy, inspiring, pleasurable, & positive experiences for all people involved.

Of course, human sexuality is infinitely complicated... & to ensure we all have CONSENSUAL & SAFER sex we need to be talking about it, especially if we're doing it!

The key to another sexual revolution - one that makes consent as standard as using a condom - is:

COMMUNICATION!

LET'S CREATE A
PRO-CONSENT, SEX-
POSITIVE REVOLUTION
FOR ALL!



PLEASE SPECIFY:

- MALE
- FEMALE
- BOTH
- NONE
- OTHER

GENDERS ARE INFINITE

While it should be acknowledged that consent is not a gendered activity a substantial percentage of REPORTED rapes & instances of sexual assault are committed by cis men against women - Women-born-women, queer "women," & trans*women. Thus, a lot of the material on the next few pages will relate to the above. This does NOT mean, however, that ALL instances of rape & sexual violence are committed by cis men against women. Every single person has the potential to be a perpetrator of such crimes, & every single person has the potential to be a survivor. Irrespective of gender: Irrespective of sex. Irrespective of every other distinction one could make about a person.

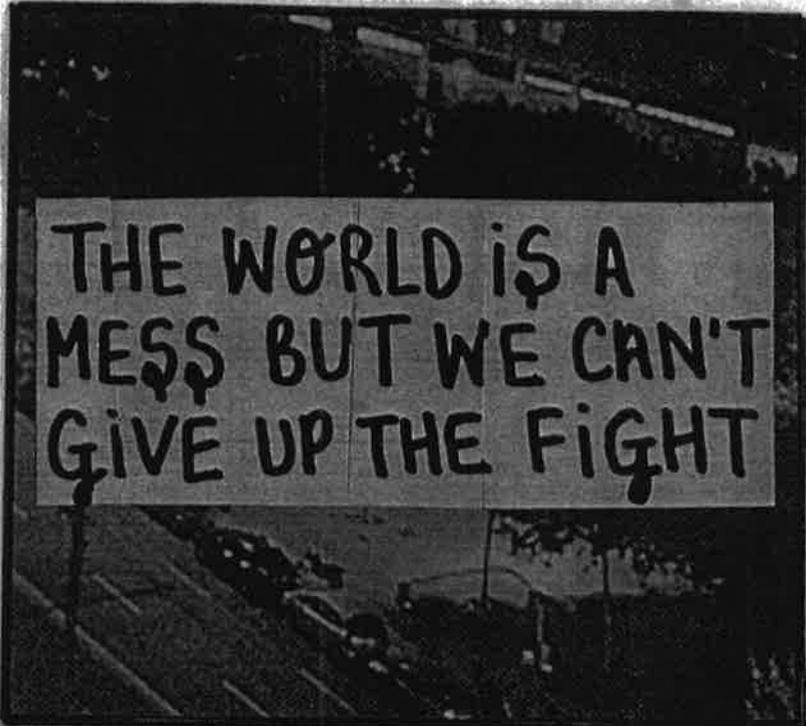
TRIGGER WARNING

(discussion surrounding rape culture)

RAPE CULTURE 101

While it remains an unpleasant topic of conversation it's important for there to be dialogue surrounding the perpetuation of rape & rape culture, & for it to be challenged.

One of the biggest problems faced today is that instead of viewing rape (& the culture surrounding it) as something to be changed, individuals think that the persistence of it is "just the way things are"... But can we blame them when people are surrounded with images, language, laws, & other everyday phenomena that perpetuate & VALIDATE rape? Every where we look - advertising, images, jokes, laws, music, & TV - sexual coercion & violence (in particular against women) seems so normal that individuals believe rape is "inevitable". Rape is ingrained in our consciousness, with the current society believing these actions & attitudes always have been... & always will be. Prevalent attitudes & practices normalise, excuse, tolerate, & even condone rape.



THE WORLD IS A
MESS BUT WE CAN'T
GIVE UP THE FIGHT

We all deserve to have empowering, fulfilling, pleasurable, & positive sexual experiences. We all deserve to feel safe in public too, not just intimate & private experiences. While consent is of fundamental importance to sexual encounters, it isn't inherently sexual. It's about real communication & the creation of safer spaces.

It stands to sense the issue of consent is intrinsically related to social pressures & societal norms. Although rape culture is prevalent, our society tells us sex is bad, or at least some forms of sex... sex remains taboo & it absolutely can not be discussed in an honest & open way, even when necessary.

"If you think being accused of rape is worse or more egregious than the raping of a woman, then you can go ahead and delete me as a friend right now because we are not on the same team. If someone were to try and harm the reputation of a person, why go the route of accusing them of assault? Because it works so well? Because people *always* support the survivors so he'll surely be smeared? Because of the fame and fortune? Fucking check yourself. I will die of shock if a woman ever comes forward claiming an assault and is met with anything but scrutiny, contempt and a request for further, more compelling evidence. Do you know how difficult it is to even say the words "I was raped"? Unless you've had to utter the words, you don't. Until you know, don't discount the courage needed to step forward. It's not a tactic typically used for attention or revenge...

This is EXACTLY why women who have been sexually assaulted, are made to carry pain in silence and in secret. Because being told that we ought to be ashamed of ourselves for disrupting the life of someone who has ruined our own is crossing a line. Because we are rejected by our communities for rocking the boat. We only get to be victims if we are good victims, who go through the proper channels and are polite and kind—oh and if we have video footage of our rape, to prove to every person who comes along that it actually happened. Otherwise, how dare we attack this poor man? This man who does great work and smiles at everyone... or who comes to protests or who bakes for bake sales. Our value becomes weighed against him almost immediately, and for many of us, the process itself is like being re-betrayed.

Because being raped isn't enough, we have to meet everyone else's burden of proof before anyone will stop calling us liars. "Prove you aren't lying and I'll support you." Who are you protecting? **Why is one man worth more than the women he drives out with his actions.** Re-evaluate your reactions, please. You don't have to cry for his blood, but you also need to not cry for proof, police, or personal corroboration either."

~ from: OneFight.Org

Behaviour associated with rape culture includes sexual objectification & the sexualising of rape, trivialising rape, victim blaming, as well as apologising for or sympathising with rapists.

Rape culture has also been observed to correlate with other social behaviours, including an increased incidence of ageism, classism, homophobia (as well as queer- & transphobia), racism, religious intolerance, & other forms of discrimination.

• OPPRESSION = OPPRESSION •
• VIOLENCE = VIOLENCE •

MYTHS & "VICTIM" BLAMING

To have any hope of preventing rape, ever, we need to be honest about the realities of rape as it is happening to people... as it is being lived by its perpetrators & survivors. Instead we have created a cloud of myth around rape to protect ourselves from the uncomfortable truths. These rape myths prevent our culture from progressing, & perpetuate an environment of sexual violence.

There are two particularly problematic myths:

RAPE MYTH 1.

WOMEN SHOULD NOT
(insert something ridiculous)

OR THEY WILL GET RAPPED...

Women are told they are not supposed to do a lot of things, lest they will get raped &/or murdered... & if they do these things only to survive they're told they are "lucky" that they weren't raped. In fact, most women who report assault, rape, or being stalked were attacked by a current/former husband, cohabiting partner, boyfriend, or date. Thus, the most dangerous place for women is the same place they're being told to stay to protect themselves. The fear of rape is therefore used to control women & limit their lives & personal freedom.

The discourse around how to prevent rape is completely wrong. Rape prevention is directed towards people who are "rapeable", not people who are rapists. Imagine a society in which the responsibility is placed where it belongs? Instead of telling women to limit the way they move through the world or to "watch their backs" we would tell everyone to obtain clear (verbal) consent from their partners; & the only message we would send to survivors is: **IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT.**

5. RELAX & BE PATIENT

Be patient with the survivor. Recovering from trauma can take a long time; healing is a slow process & can't be rushed, so it's important to respect the space & time needed to heal.

Recovery is not a RACE!

Whatever happens, do not apologise for or sympathise with the perpetrator. The survivor needs your full support. In being a rape apologist or sympathiser you're excusing them of responsibility & validating their desire to rape or sexually assault individuals. When situations like this occur we're reminded there's no-one we can trust, sharing struggles doesn't generate help, & it's not even safe to tell the truth. The result? We all learn secrecy, shame, & silence. If the survivors are blamed, ridiculed, or shunned this leads to further denial, isolation, & silence, all of which offer a perfect breeding ground for the abuse to continue & thrive. If you're not angry about & fighting the situation you're **NOT PAYING ATTENTION!!**

Almost everyone knows at least one survivor of rape / sexual assault. If a survivor decides to talk about it with us it's therefore crucial we know what to do...

1. WITHOUT DOUBT BELIEVE THEM!

If someone tells you their boundaries have been violated it's important to believe them. The way you (& others) react to this information may affect the way they deal with the situation in its entirety. Make comments such as "I BELIEVE YOU."

2. CLARIFY & VALIDATE ABUSE

Help them to validate the abuse & their experience. All abuse is harmful, there is no neutral or positive abuse. It's also important to remember that their past experiences have nothing to do with what they're telling you now. Make comments such as "IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT."

3. ENCOURAGE & VALIDATE FEELINGS

It's also important to help them validate their feelings. Anger... fear... grief... pain... sadness... these (& more) are natural responses to traumatic situations. Survivors must feel able to express these & have them heard. Remember that no two people or situations are the same, so it's important to support the survivor irrespective of their reactions/responses.

4. REASSURE THEM & OFFER SUPPORT

Let the survivor know you're there for them & you want to help. If you have feelings of anger, compassion, or pain, share them with the survivor - genuine & sincere support is comforting.

RAPE MYTH 2.

RAPE IS CLEAR & OBVIOUS... & CONDUCTED BY "RANDOM" STRANGERS:

The narrative of rape that we hear in the media is of a crazy rapist lurking in dark alleys or waiting in the bushes... of this man overpowering a woman, with a gun, knife, or sheer physical force... the man aggressively violating the woman as she tries to stop it, but cannot. Although this is one way, it is not the only way, & unfortunately most survivors are raped by people that they know.

By calling the rapists "strangers" they are put in another category & society as a whole can distance itself. But perpetrators of such violence are not "strangers"... they live within our communities & are people that we know. The darker truth of rape & sexual violence is much harder to stomach. Furthermore, the experiences of survivors that fall outside the paradigm of "forceable rape" are left with their experience unrecognised. One of the first steps of healing is naming the trauma & those whose experience doesn't meet the narrow definition of rape struggle to name what happened to them. Thus, to support survivors of rape & sexual violence we need to embrace the fact that rape isn't clear or obvious.

Let's also be clear that the standard for measuring the health of sex should not be whether one of the parties acted in a criminal manner, but rather whether the sex was empowering, pleasurable, & positive for all involved. We must therefore shift the responsibility to the sexual partners to always obtain clear, verbal consent.

Focussing on consent we move away from "victim blaming", which is the phenomenon of the victim (survivor) of rape, sexual assault etc. being held entirely/partially responsible for the transgressions committed against them.

This is problematic due to the stigma created against the survivors rather than the aggressive actions of rape & the rapists.

Rapists are people that have done something wrong &, unfortunately, are people that we know. To prevent rape & sexual violence we need to confront those who are committing these atrocities, rather than the survivors. We also need to confront society: what in our culture & ourselves creates this epidemic of rape & sexual violence?

DON'T
RAPE.



• DON'T
RAPE. •

ACCOUNTABILITY:

We must create an environment where the perpetrators of rape & sexual assault are held accountable, & by those other than the survivor. It's important to check with the survivor before confronting the perpetrator to ensure that they're comfortable with how the situation is being handled. Talk to the perpetrator & make sure they know you don't agree with their actions. Beyond pointing out what they did was wrong (which is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT**), it's good to tell them they can be healthy & respectful in romantic & sexual situations.

**SURVIVOR
SUPPORT
IS ESSENTIAL**

The term "survivor" is more empowering than "victim". It is used to refer to someone who has survived sexual oppression or violence, especially assault, harassment, rape or stalking.

REMEMBER: this person comes **FIRST!**
It's important to act in solidarity with survivors. This is a long-term participation in the struggle against abuse that involves deferring any sense of authority, leadership, or privilege you might have, dropping your own agenda, & creating active change within communities. It also involves creating allies for allies, so there is support for everyone.

TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE & SURVIVOR SUPPORT:

Transformative justice is solution-based & helps to achieve justice in matters involving our peers, neighbours, friends & families. It entails direct action which is directed towards the culture perpetuating certain behaviour (such as rape & sexual violence), while creating support for both the survivors & perpetrators.

We need to develop a way of addressing these situations that focus on promoting communication & understanding (rather than establishing who is "in the wrong") it might make it easier for those who commit boundary violations to hear & learn from criticism, & less stressful for those whose boundaries have been crossed to address the situation. Regardless of whether or not a court of law would find there to be "sufficient evidence" to substantiate charges those involved must be held accountable.

tool of rape culture

THE PHYSICAL TOUCH ESCALATOR:

in direct violation of consent

The physical touch escalator is based on the premise that each form or level of touch on the spectrum (between a handshake & full-blown penetrative sex) automatically & undoubtedly implies a progression to the next form or level. However, the physical touch escalator involves attitudes that are essential to rape culture, which is the biggest reason it's so problematic:



1. If you consent to one kind of physical interaction with someone, you're implicitly consenting to all other kinds that come after it up to penetrative sex, which means stopping the escalator before sexual intercourse means you're a "tease" & being "unfair."



2. Giving someone else any kind of physical, non-genital affection entitles you to sexual intercourse with them, which can easily turn in to the classic rapists defence: "she/he was asking for it."

The physical touch escalator creates a situation where it's dangerously easy for rape to happen. You might want affection & intimacy but you just don't want sex... & it's your right not to want sex. It's your right to say "yes" to cuddling & "no" to oral sex, or "yes" to kissing & "no" to penetration. But in our culture millions of people still don't understand that it's possible for rape & other forms of sexual assault to happen in an affectionate, intimate, loving, & romantic relationship... & what can we expect in a culture where physical affection is sexualised so totally & undeniably in the collective social consciousness?

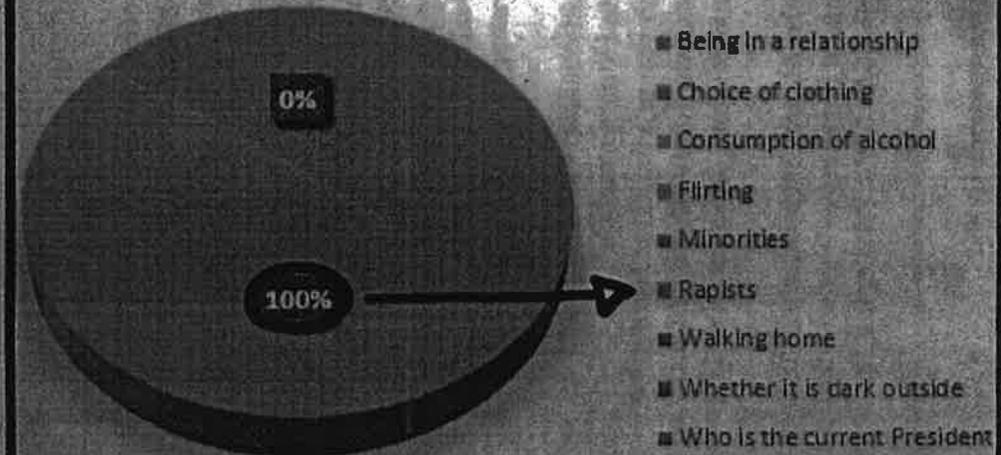
The physical touch escalator is in **DIRECT VIOLATION OF HEALTHY CONSENT** in relationships of any kind. It is a tool of rape culture.



REMEMBER: to engage in an intimate or sexual act without the other person's consent is considered rape or sexual assault.

**NO.1 TIP TO HELP PREVENT RAPE:
DON'T RAPE PEOPLE**

THE CAUSES OF RAPE



"Yes, false rape accusations happen. Run the protocol anyway. I've heard that perhaps the military has the highest number of 'em. True or not, **RUN THE PROTOCOL ANYWAY**. Because in 15 years of investigating rape accusations, I can count those that panned out as false on one hand. Meanwhile, the one time I almost skipped the protocol, the one time I almost didn't believe a petty officer, because I was naive as an investigator and a young woman, because her commanding officer described her as "a party girl, always late, always out drinking, don't bother with this one", she turned out to be the victim of one of the most brutal assaults I've ever investigated. She shouldn't have still been -alive-, let alone up and making the accusation. So let me repeat: five false accounts in fifteen years. And one time I almost failed a woman 'cause of the bullshit way it's normal to talk about us. Take your shipmates' word, and then run the protocol. Every. Single. Time."

~ JAG lawyer, speaking during Sexual Assault Prevention Month.