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# Introduction

#### **Purpose of This Youth Engagement Guide**

This youth engagement guide aims to help people who are facilitating discussions with youth (referred to throughout this guide as "facilitators") communicate about sexual consent. Facilitators lead, assist in or help connect youth in discussions and activities. They engage young people in direct, respectful and healthy communications about sexual consent. Helping to facilitate discussions and teach young people about the importance of communicating about sexual consent is a crucial component to improving sexual health outcomes in the community. By using this guide, facilitators will learn how to make conversations about sexual consent — from personal boundaries and wants to bodily autonomy and respect for others — more comfortable and a normal part of daily life and relationships.

Do you like that?

#### About the Ask Before You Act Sexual Consent Campaign

In 2017, more than 7% of teenagers in the United States (U.S.) reported having been forced to have sex at some point in their lives when they did not want to, and 6.9% of U.S. teenagers reported experiencing sexual dating violence — including kissing, touching or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse — in a dating relationship within the past year.<sup>1</sup> In New York City (NYC), intimate partner violence among teenagers is increasing. In 2017, more than 15% of NYC teenagers reported experiencing sexual dating violence within the past year.<sup>2</sup>

Over the last several years the **#metoo** and **#timesup** movements have strengthened and increased awareness of and response to the prevalence and long-term health impacts of gender-based harassment, discrimination and assault. On both the national and international stage, young people are engaging in conversations about consent and how to communicate about it effectively. **Consent is considered effective when it is clearly and freely communicated, at every new interaction, so that boundaries are understood and respected**. It is essential to increase education about, investigation of and action on these topics within communities and to support young people in advocating for their sexual and reproductive health. Visit **metoomvmt.org/learn-more/statistics** and **timesupnow.org/about** to learn more.

The Sexual and Reproductive Health Unit of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department) aims to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes

through outreach among collaborative networks of community partners. This work is grounded in an understanding of health equity (when everyone is able to reach their highest level of health regardless of social position, social identities or where they live) and reproductive justice. This framework, **launched in 1994**, is rooted in the idea that people are experts when it comes to their own well-being, capable of advocating for and choosing appropriate and relevant interventions regarding their health. Visit **sistersong.net/reproductive-justice** to learn more.

Since 2016, the NYC Health Department has engaged NYC youth and community partners to develop awareness about sexual consent communication. Through a youth participatory action research (YPAR) project, the NYC Health Department brought together a network of youth and community partners to host focus groups with NYC youth to make sure to include their input. These focus groups helped the NYC Health Department learn more about how youth navigate sexual consent communication and informed the creation of the NYC Health Department's **Ask Before You Act campaign** and its corresponding campaign **videos**. To learn more about the campaign and to watch the videos, visit on.**nyc.gov/consent**.

#### How to Use This Youth Engagement Guide

This Youth Engagement Guide contains resources and activities for facilitators to share with the youth in their discussion groups to help provide information on, discuss and practice sexual consent communication.

The **Digital Tools** section includes scannable QR codes to different tools, including a playlist of three videos to use in group discussions; a short survey for participants to send the NYC Health Department feedback about the **Ask Before You Act** campaign; and a link to the NYC Health Department's Sexual Consent webpage.

In the **Sample Group Agreements** section, facilitators will find sample agreements to help with group discussions about sexual consent or to use for creating new group agreements in partnership with the youth in the discussion groups.

It is very important for facilitators to be aware that sexual consent can be difficult to discuss and may bring up strong emotions or responses from some youth and participants — this may be the case particularly for youth with past experiences with sexual assault, violence and rape. Youth with these experiences may benefit from being connected with other support services. Safe Horizon is a great place to start. For more information, visit safehorizon.org.

 We also call on facilitators to be intentional in centering (the act of making someone or something the main subject) youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and/or queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQ or LGBTQIA) in this work. The Ask Before You Act campaign videos make a point to be inclusive across race, ethnicity, sex and sexual orientation. Though achieving complete representation in three short videos is difficult, we encourage facilitators to use this guide to deliberately engage in conversations that look at intersectional experiences and challenge heterosexist (a system of bias in favor of femalemale sexuality and relationships) views.

The **Discussion Guide for the Ask Before You Act Campaign Videos** section provides facilitators with an outline to process (think about, understand and use) the campaign videos, along with recommended questions and general guidance notes. Facilitators can decide which campaign videos to process with young people. Recommended processing questions are organized by campaign video and theme.

The **More Educational Activities** section gives facilitators tools to make discussions about sexual consent communication more interactive. Youth can tap into their creative or artistic skill sets by producing their own storyboards in which they write the next scene in one of the current campaign videos or create a new storyline on the topic of consent. The storyboards they produce could be content for sharing their own ideas and messages about the importance of consent or for discussing further with friends, family and community members. This section also contains an exercise on rejection scenarios that asks participants to consider how to set boundaries and practice effective and respectful rejection, whether they are the one who is delivering or receiving a rejection. Important note: Rejection does not always mean a whole rejection of a person but more often of an activity or act.

Finally, in the **Outreach and Community Engagement Activities** section, facilitators will find:

- A calendar of events to consider when planning activities or community outreach projects throughout the year with youth
- Four consent cue cards for youth to fill out and share in group discussions or on social media; each card asks participants to say what consent means to them.

#### Acknowledgments

The NYC Health Department's New York City Teens Connection (NYCTC) would like to thank all of its youth and community partners working to improve teens' sexual and reproductive health throughout the city:

- Center for Community Alternatives
- Families on the Move of New York City, Inc.
- The Teen Outreach Program @ WCS
- Inwood House at Children's Village
- New Settlement's Program for Girls and Young Women
- Project Hospitality

- Project SAFE: NYU Family Health Centers
- Staten Island University Hospital Northwell Health Teen Risk Assessment Program (TEEN R.A.P.)
- SUNY Downstate Teens Helping Each Other (THEO)
- The Pride Center of Staten Island
- United Community Centers

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#### References

2. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Epiquery: NYC Interactive Health Data. Diseases and Conditions, Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2000-2016. https://nyc.gov/health/epiquery



<sup>1.</sup> Centers for Disease Control. Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Data Summary & Trends Report, 2007-2017. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/trendsreport.pdf



#### Video Playlist

Scan this QR Code to access the **Ask Before You Act video playlist**. This playlist features three different videos that show how to ask for and communicate about sexual consent. You can also visit **bit.ly/askbeforeyouact** to access the videos.



#### Ask Before You Act Survey

After watching the videos, scan this QR code to access the **post-video survey**. This survey will ask you which videos you watched, your opinions of them and what you learned. This will help inform the overall campaign and future initiatives and resources. You can also visit **bit.ly/askbeforeyouactsurvey** to access the survey.



#### **Additional Resources**

For more information about consent, relationships, body language and verbal communication, and more, visit the NYC Health Department webpage about sexual consent at **on.nyc.gov/consent**.

# **Sample Group Agreements**

Group agreements help create a brave space (a space with full, respectful and equitable participation) so participants feel more comfortable engaging in group discussion sessions. The agreements also help the group understand expectations and boundaries for the discussion space.

Each group should come up with their own set of agreements. Below are some sample group agreements to consider when creating agreements for specific groups.

- **Create a brave space:** Acknowledge that there are no guarantees that what is shared in the group will not be shared outside the group. So, while we cannot promise a totally safe space, we can encourage a brave space where participants should share only what they feel comfortable telling others.
- **Be respectful:** Encourage mutual respect among all participants; no one should disrespect any participant during sessions, regardless of differing opinions.
- Make space, take space: Participants should be aware of how much they are speaking and participating. If they feel they are speaking up a lot, they should "make space" to let others speak. If they find themselves not talking or participating, they should try and "take space" by contributing their comments, ideas or suggestions.
- "One Mic" (microphone): Encourage only one person to speak at a time, so everyone's voice can be heard.
- **Emphasize self-care:** Encourage youth to take care of their physical and emotional needs during the session, particularly if they are emotionally triggered, by taking a break (for instance, breaking for snacks or to use the bathroom), taking deep breaths or walking away for a moment to collect themselves.
- **Champion people before electronics:** Ask participants to keep phone use to a minimum, if at all, during the discussion group session.

- "Don't yuck my yum": When participants share their likes and dislikes, all participants should respect their personal opinions and preferences.
- ELMO (Everyone Let's Move On): In the interest of time, using this acronym helps to prevent the discussion from going on tangents.
- "Oops" or "ouch": In an effort to provide a space for participants to own their feelings and the impact of their words, without pressuring anyone to explain in detail, anyone can say "ouch" if someone says something that hurts or offends them. Anyone can say "oops" and genuinely apologize for the ways their words impacted others.
- Use "I" statements: Everyone should speak from their own experiences by using "I" instead of "you."
- **Have fun!:** While the topic of consent may be intense at times, participants should be encouraged to be present and try to engage in, and even enjoy, some of the interactive activities.

I know we did that last time, but I do not want to do that today.

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l love kissing you.

# Discussion Guide for the Ask Before You Act Campaign Videos

This discussion activity can take between 15 and 90 minutes, depending on how many videos and questions are selected to be discussed.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By discussing sexual consent, participants will be able to:

- Examine the way technology impacts sexual consent communication
- Examine the way relationship dynamics impact sexual consent communication
- Explore the role that rejection plays in sexual consent communication, and how to practice respectful and clear rejection
- Determine verbal and nonverbal (such as body language) ways of communicating sexual consent

#### Themes

The discussion will explore topics such as:

- Rejection
- Verbal and nonverbal communication
- Relationship dynamics
- Technology, such as social media and texting

### Note for the Facilitator

The goal of the **Ask Before You Act** videos is to show an exchange between people about an interaction that may be perceived as sexual in nature. One character imagines acting on their sexual desire and the audience is shown two possible imagined outcomes: one outcome that is potentially positive or one outcome that is potentially awkward, confusing or harmful. Ultimately, the character who is initiating the exchange realizes they should ASK for consent before they ACT on their desires to avoid potential awkwardness, confusion or harm from assuming another person's interest.

It is important to acknowledge that the ways in which consent is asked for or given may look different. There is no one right way to ask for consent, but the purpose of this discussion is to stress that verbally asking can help avoid potential awkwardness, confusion or harm that might arise when someone does not ask for consent verbally with respect and clarity. Also, consent is not just necessary for avoiding awkwardness and confusion and preventing harm; it can also be pleasurable for people who are interacting, as a sex-positive way to encourage healthy communication patterns.

#### Materials

- Internet access
- Television or computer for playing the videos
- Group agreements: Use one or more of the sample agreements provided in this guide or ask the participants to create their own based on the samples.
- Large pieces of paper such as chart paper (for example, 25 x 30 inches) and markers or pens, if you are asking participants to write out their responses, or a virtual whiteboard

#### **Optional Modifications for Facilitators**

Facilitators can modify discussions to make them more or less interactive as needed. The following suggestions can help facilitators increase participation with large groups or when leading groups virtually.

- **Pair and Share:** Break up the larger group into pairs and assign them a few questions to discuss together. After the discussion time is up, ask each pair to share something from their smaller discussion with the larger group.
- **Round Robin:** Ask for each participant to give their response to a question. Go around the room in order, or one-by-one from a list if meeting virtually. Allow enough time for each participant to respond.
- Four Corners: This modification can be done in person or virtually using large sheets of chart paper or a virtual whiteboard. Choose two to four questions to write out on paper to hang around the room or on the virtual whiteboard. Break up the larger group into small groups and assign each group to a piece of paper and question. Give each smaller group two to five minutes to answer their question, then tell the groups to switch questions. When the discussion time is up, you will have chart papers full of answers from the various groups. Depending on how much time you have left with the group, you can ask the smaller groups to report out to the larger group on one of the answers to their question.

- Venn Diagram: This modification shows the relation between two things when answering question 15. On a large sheet of chart paper or the virtual whiteboard, draw two circles: one labeled "Feelings of Being Rejected" and the other labeled "Feelings of Rejecting Someone." Give participants pens, markers or sticky notes and ask them to write out the feelings they think correspond with each circle (being rejected or rejecting someone). Discuss where there is overlap and how similar feelings can be felt in either rejection scenario.
- Feelings Identification: This modification can be used for answering questions 4, 15 and 19. Consider using an emotions worksheet, as these questions deal with emotions. An emotions worksheet or "Feeling Face Book" includes a long list of emotions with corresponding images. When working with groups, facilitators can cut out the emotions and their images from the worksheet and lay them out for the group to use as needed. When participants are asked to share what emotions go with a certain activity, they can choose two or three images from the cutouts in front of them to tape on a large sheet of chart paper on the wall or talk about verbally with the larger group in relation to the question. Facilitators can also include a few blank cutouts for participants who want to add emotions that might not already be listed. You can find a sample Feeling Face Book by typing this URL into your browser: tipjunkie.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/Feeling-Face-Book.pdf.

#### Introduction

Facilitators can introduce the topic of consent by asking participants the following questions.

# Question 1: What is consent in the context of relationships? How would you define consent?

Facilitators can write out participant responses on a large sheet of chart paper or a virtual whiteboard, or collect verbal responses in the group or over a virtual chat box.

#### Share this definition of sexual consent

Sexual consent means that all people involved in a sexual or romantic activity clearly and freely agree to participate. A person can give consent by words or actions, but their intent should be clear: The person is willing and gives permission to specific activities.

### **Note for the Facilitator**

While consent applies to endless situations in life, such as borrowing someone's phone charger, permission to go on a field trip, or sharing personal or medical information, be sure to focus the conversation on consent as it relates to sex, intimacy and relationships.

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### **Note for the Facilitator**

Make sure participants know that each video will show two different imagined sexual scenarios that play out as daydreams in one of the character's imaginations. After the daydream portions of the video end, the character will proceed to ask for consent.

A person cannot give consent if they are not awake, aware or otherwise able to make decisions. Also, a person can change their mind at any time. Remember, clear verbal communication is best when it comes to consent.

#### Question 2: Are there any questions about the definition of sexual consent?

#### Watch and discuss the Ask Before You Act videos

Facilitators can use this script: "The videos we are about to watch were made collaboratively with NYC teens. Please watch closely and we will have a discussion after."

A link to the **Ask Before You Act** videos is available on the NYC Health Department webpage about sexual consent at **on.nyc.gov/consent** and hyperlinked below:

- Full Playlist: bit.ly/askbeforeyouact
- The Text Video: Ask Before You Act: The Text YouTube
- The Necklace Video: Ask Before You Act: The Necklace YouTube
- The Party Video: Ask Before You Act: The Party YouTube

Facilitators have the option of playing all three videos at once or playing each video separately before working through the questions related to the videos.

#### What happened in the videos?

Duration: Five to 10 minutes

After watching the videos, the facilitator can ask the group for volunteers to answer a few questions.

Question 3: What was shown in the videos?

Question 4: What emotions did you witness in the videos?

#### What does it mean?

Duration: Five to 20 minutes, depending on how many questions the facilitator asks

#### Questions for "The Text" Video

Question 5: We communicate a lot over technology, such as texting, chatting or direct messaging (DMing). What are some potential benefits and dangers of communicating this way? Are there differences between communicating over technology and in person?

Question 6: In the video, which character do you think might feel pressured to have sex? Why?

Question 7: In the video, one of the characters asks, "Are you wit it?" What do you think they mean by that?

Question 8: Is the phrase "are you wit it?" a clear way to give consent? Why or why not? What would make it clearer?

Question 9: Do you think a person's gender affects how people ask for or give consent?

### Note for the Facilitator

People might find it less awkward to talk about sex and consent through social media or texting versus in person. However, communication over technology can also lead to confusing or hurtful situations. If participants are hesitant to share responses, ask for examples of miscommunication on social media, such as posting a selfie in which people assume a person is being sexual, or how people might misread emojis in comments or DMs.

Traditional gender role expectations (for example, women do this and men do that) create double standards (unequal expectations) in how people are taught to act or communicate in sexual relationships. In practice, for instance, double standards can potentially pressure men when people believe they always want to have sex or shame women who are not expected to have sexual desires.

Remember to share this message with participants in the group discussion:

Consent must be continual and can be changed at any time.

- For example, if someone gives consent online or by text, they can still say "no" and change their mind in person.
- This rule also applies to online sharing. Just because someone sent you something by text or on social media does not mean they consent for you to share it with others.

Resource: Youth can learn more about how to deal with sexting challenges by visiting **netsmartz.org** and searching for **sexting tip sheet** or typing this URL into their browser: **cdn.netsmartz.org/tipsheets/You\_Sent\_A\_Sext\_Now\_What.pdf**.

#### **Questions for "The Necklace" Video**

Question 10: Is consent needed for kissing? Why or why not?

Question 11: Individually, think about whether you or someone you know ever had a crush on a friend and did not know how to tell them. What about the friendship dynamic can make expressing romantic or sexual feelings toward a friend awkward?

> I really like you. Can I kiss you?

### **Note for the Facilitator**

Emphasize to group discussion participants that anyone, regardless of sexual identity or orientation, can experience having a crush on a friend. This is not specific to same-gender or different-gender friendships.

Tell group discussion participants that practicing consent is continuous for each and every action of a sexual or romantic nature, including kissing. Each person's boundaries are unique to them and can change over short or long periods of time, in particular settings, or based on different relationship dynamics.

#### **Questions for "The Party" Video**

#### Question 12: Why is consent still important when you are in a relationship?

#### Question 13: What do we mean when we say that consent is continuous?

Continuous consent means checking in with someone about their boundaries when interacting physically, even if you have engaged in the behavior before. For example, if you have kissed before, the next time you are with the person, asking them if they are OK to kiss again. Making assumptions about another person's boundaries can create awkward or harmful moments. Each person can work to avoid such moments by NOT making assumptions about what another person wants or thinks. Assumptions can lead to miscommunication.

Regularly communicating consent, including a person's wants and boundaries, is important and healthy. Also, a person should not assume that they have consent if they or the person they are interacting with is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. When someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or unconscious, they are not able to give consent and their consent is not considered continuous.

Resource: Youth can learn more about consent, drugs and alcohol by visiting **sexetc.org** and searching for **being drunk is not consent** or typing this URL into their browser: **sexetc.org/info-center/post/being-drunk-is-not-consent/**.

**Note for the Facilitator** 

Express to the participants that regardless of certain aspects of a relationship (or the relationship dynamics, including the length of a relationship, the ages of each person in the relationship or how they each identify), consent must be present and communicated throughout each and every sexual interaction.

Be clear with participants that whether or not someone is in a relationship, has had sex in the past, or engaged in certain intimate activities with another person, they should never assume that they do not need consent. Again, consent is necessary for each and every sexual interaction.

Setting can have an impact on consent. Discuss the positives and negatives of group settings.

# Question 14: If the partners in the video were not at a party, would they have acted or reacted differently? Why or why not?

Some positives of a group setting might include:

- Cues that you are in a safe space
- Being around affirming people and friends and feeling support from peers
- Feeling comfortable enough to be affectionate with a partner

Some negatives of a group setting might include:

- Group dynamics (how multiple people act together versus in smaller groups or individually)
- Rejecting a partner or being rejected by a partner in front of others
- Being embarrassed or having your boundaries crossed in public
- Possible peer pressure, such as alcohol and substance use

#### **Questions on Rejection and Asserting Boundaries**

Question 15: What makes saying "no" or setting boundaries challenging? What might a person feel when they hear "no" when making sexual advances or when they say "no" to another person's sexual advances?

# Question 16: What advice can we give a person to deal with receiving or delivering a rejection?

- a. How can a person handle or process rejection?
- b. How do they stay respectful even if they are upset or disappointed by rejection?
- **c.** If a person wants to continue a relationship with someone after undergoing a situation involving rejection, how can they assert their boundaries and continue the relationship?

Regardless of what is being rejected or what someone's feelings are, a person cannot force another person to do anything they do not want to do.

Maintaining respect even in the face of rejection and the feelings that go with it (such as anger, embarrassment and sadness) is important.

### Note for the Facilitator

Rejection itself is not disrespectful and is a normal part of life. Learning to initiate or process rejection is a life skill.

In the discussion group, share various examples ("Are you wit it?" or "Can I kiss you?") of both respectful and disrespectful (or clear and unclear) approaches and discuss the differences. Ask participants what they think are the most respectful ways to start a conversation about consent.

#### **Putting Knowledge Into Practice**

Duration: 15 to 20 minutes

Question 17: What are verbal ways to ask for or give consent?

Question 18: What are some other ways, including nonverbal communication, to ask for or give consent?

**Question 19: What does consent feel like?** 

#### Evaluation

Duration: Five minutes

After watching the videos, ask discussion group participants to share their thoughts by taking this **survey**, which will help inform future **Ask Before You Act** initiatives at the NYC Health Department. You can also visit **bit.ly/askbeforeyouactsurvey** to access the survey.

Resource: For more ideas, watch the Just Ask! video by Planned Parenthood of Greater New York Action: Visit **YouTube.com** and search for **Just Ask! PPGNYAction** or type this URL into your browser: **youtube.com/watch?v=ZrLmZBmFRbA**.

Note for the Facilitator

Asking participants to think about what consent feels like can help them visualize scenarios in which consent is achieved. Some possible answers can include empowering, exciting, balanced, warm, loving, equal or respectful.

Use the activity in the section of this guide titled "The Next Scene: Creating a Storyboard" to continue discussing these scenarios. Participants can write their own ending to a scenario or create their own consent storyline. Ask the group for their ideas for practicing and applying effective consent communication in everyday life.

l love it when you...

# **More Educational Activities**

## **The Next Scene: Creating a Storyboard**

#### Description

This activity helps youth think creatively by producing original storyboards for continuing the **Ask Before You Act** campaign video scenarios or creating unique scenarios after they are finished watching the campaign videos.

After viewing the videos and starting to engage with participants to discuss the videos, facilitators can use this activity to further explore consent, relationships, body language and verbal communication.

#### Materials

- Ask Before You Act videos
- Sample storyboard and blank storyboard
- Drawing utensils such as pens, pencils, markers and crayons
- Optional: Camera or smartphone

#### What is a storyboard?

A storyboard is a sequence of drawings or photographs, similar to a comic strip, that tells a story. A storyboard is typically used for films or television to help plan each shot of every scene and is a great way to tell a story visually. The sample storyboard included is based on a storyboard by NYCTC youth leaders and used in the creation of the campaign video "The Necklace."

#### Activity

This activity can be done individually or in small groups (two to five participants per group). Facilitators can ask each participant or the full discussion group to think of what the next scene of a campaign video (or new scene of a unique scenario) could look like in different situations: For instance, if the person being asked for sexual consent wants to say "no," how can the person say "no" and make sure they are being heard? Use the blank storyboard to draw the next or new scenes. Participants who do not want to draw can also stage and take photographs or find stock photography online to insert or tape into the blank spaces. Participants can:

- Tell the story of what happens next in any of the **Ask Before You Act** videos if the person being asked for sexual consent rejects the other person's advances. How would someone say "no" or set boundaries in this scenario?
- Make up their own new scenario that highlights another type of situation concerning sexual consent communication.
- Use the storyboard idea to plan out other creative projects (such as social media posts or their own art) about additional topics important to them.

Below each drawing or photograph used in the storyboard, ask participants to describe what is happening in the scene and include any dialogue, body language or emotions that the characters in the storyboard are expressing.

#### Discussion

Once the group has completed the storyboard activity, facilitators can ask participants to share back with the full group.

Discuss what type of communication they used to express rejection in the scene they created.

- Did they use aggressive (hostile or combative), passive (submissive) or assertive (confident or firm) communication?
- Was the rejection respectful?
- Was the rejection respectfully heard and acknowledged by the other person?

If participants wrote their own new scene about consent communication, facilitators can discuss the types of consent communication they showed.

- Did they show verbal or nonverbal consent?
- What emotions did the consent scenario explore?

#### **Beyond the group**

Facilitators can consider supporting participants if they want to continue creating their own art or media that explores the topic of sexual consent. Participants might use their storyboards from the group discussion or new storyboards they produce to showcase their own art or media to raise awareness about sexual consent.

## Sample Storyboard — The Necklace



Two friends watch a movie together.



One girl gets up to retrieve a necklace and intimately puts it around her friend's neck.



The girl receiving the necklace takes this as a romatic gesture, and starts kissing her. It is a beautiful moment and the two girls are happy.



We rewind the scene to the point just as the girl receiving the necklace approaches for a kiss, but this time the girl who gave her the necklace makes it clear that it was ONLY a gesture of friendship.



The girl who received the necklace is very embarrassed.



We rewind the scene to the moment just **before** the girl who received the necklace tries to kiss the girl who gave the necklace. This time, instead of moving toward her immediately, she looks into the other girl's eyes and asks if she can kiss her.

#### Ask Before You Act Storyboard Sample

Visit on.nyc.gov/consent for more information about sexual consent.



## **Create Your Own Storyboard**

in the next scenes after watc	oxes below, draw or insert photographs showing hing the <b>Ask Before You Act</b> videos, or create yo appening in each scene in the lines provided belo	our own new
		]
	[ ]	

Ask Before You Act Create Your Own Storyboard Visit on.nyc.gov/consent to watch the Ask Before You Act videos.



## **Sexual Consent Scenarios About Rejection**

#### **Teaching Rejection**

It is not always easy to be rejected or reject someone or their actions. After watching the **Ask Before You Act** videos, facilitators can engage youth in a discussion about respectful, clear ways to give and receive rejection.

#### **Materials Needed**

- The scenarios and activities in this section
- Youth willing to participate in groups of two or three people
- Paper and markers or pens if participants are being asked to write down their responses

#### **Practice Makes Perfect**

#### **Activity 1: Use the Sample Scenarios**

Ask participants to break up into groups of two or three people and discuss one of the scenarios listed in this section. Each group should answer the following questions:

- Did the people in the scenario handle rejection well?
  - If yes, how?
  - If not, how could it have been handled better?
- Was the rejection clear?
  - If yes, how?
  - If not, how could it have been made clearer?

#### **Activity 2: Participants Create Their Own Scenarios**

Ask participants to break up into groups of two or three and write their own scenarios about rejection. Each group should answer the following questions:

- In the new scenario, did the people handle rejection well?
  - If yes, how?
  - If not, how could it have been handled better?
- Was the rejection clear?
  - If yes, how?
  - If not, how could it have been made clearer?

#### **Sample Scenarios**

#### Scenario 1: A Love Triangle

Kiara and Mars are coming back from a date and bump into Jasmen, a friend of Mars' from school. Mars and Jasmen start talking while Kiara is standing there. Jasmen says, "Your butt looks so good in those jeans, Mars!" while grabbing Mars' hands. Kiara gives Mars side-eye and gets mad. Mars looks at Jasmen and says, "I have a girlfriend," while taking back their hands from Jasmen and glancing at Kiara. Jasmen turns to look at Kiara and apologizes, "Oh, I'm sorry — no disrespect. I didn't know you two were dating."

#### Scenario 2: Nonconsensual Hugging Between Friends

Alex and Taylor just became friends and are going to Alex's house for the first time. Taylor is overly affectionate and hugs Alex from behind as they are removing their books from their book bag. Alex pushes Taylor away. Taylor quickly becomes super-apologetic. Alex explains that they are not used to being affectionate since they grew up in a family that did not give much physical contact. Taylor realizes that they should have asked Alex for their permission before hugging them. The two make up and Taylor learns to ask for permission before initiating any physical contact with Alex.

#### Scenario 3: Power Differences in Age and Gender

Aaron is a senior at Curtis High School and Emma is a freshman. It is the beginning of a new school year, and Emma is lost and turns to Aaron for help.

- **Emma:** Hey, you look like you know your way around. Do you know where I can find room 185? I'm completely lost.
- Aaron: That room is in the other wing of the building. Do you want me to walk you there?
- Emma: I think I know my way over there, but thanks so much!
- Aaron: It's fine really; I have a class down there anyway.
- [Emma hesitantly follows him. They talk about school while they walk.]
- **Aaron:** It's nice to talk to you on the way to class. I could show you around the rest of the school later if you want. And maybe after, I can take you to the best pizza place around here, just you and I, cutie?
- **Emma:** [Feeling like she has to say yes] I don't know...
- Aaron: I know I'm a senior, but you seem really mature for a freshman.

Emma: I'm just new to this school and I don't think I'm looking for anything romantic.Aaron: Gosh — I'm just trying to be friends. Don't get so full of yourself.[Emma ignores Aaron and just walks into the classroom.]

#### Scenario 4: Public Display of Affection (PDA) and Boundaries

Jordan and Sarah are at the movie theater. They have been dating for a few months. As they are watching the movie, Jordan starts to put his hands on Sarah's thighs. Sarah, feeling uncomfortable, says, "Get off me; why are you always touching me like that?" Jordan, who is annoyed, says, "It's not even that deep, girl — let me touch you. Why are you always moving funny like this?" Sarah, looking upset, states aggressively, "That is not OK. I already told you how I feel doing stuff in public." Jordan sucks his teeth. Sarah, even more annoyed, texts one of her friends to pick her up so she can leave.

#### **Scenario 5: Cheating as Rejection**

Shameeqa and Malik have been dating for nine months. Shameeqa likes Malik because he has a great personality, they both want to go to medical school when they graduate and they both are very sexually attracted to each other. They have been having sex and Shameeqa wants Malik to perform oral sex. Malik does not want to perform oral sex with Shameeqa but does not know how to tell her. During lunch one day, Shameeqa mentions that her parents will be out of town this weekend and asks if Malik wants to come stay over and try something new. Malik says, "I am down to come over, but oral is just not my style. I am not comfortable doing it." Shameeqa, upset, tells Malik, "Well, if you won't do it then I'm going to get it from someone else." Shameeqa leaves and proceeds to cheat on Malik that weekend.

#### Scenario 6: Unreciprocated Crush

Shania and Lesley have been friends for five years. A new boy named Jaden comes to school. Both Shania and Lesley like Jaden because he is really funny and outgoing. Word gets back to Jaden that they both like him. Jaden is overwhelmed because he does not want to make anyone feel bad, but he is also excited because he likes Lesley as well. Jaden comes up to Shania at lunch and says, "I know you like me, but I am not feeling you like that — plus, your girl Lesley is way more my type." Shania begins to cry and leaves the room.

#### Scenario 7: Asking Someone on a Date

Aiden and Nathan have been friends for a while and, over time, Nathan has begun to develop feelings. Nathan finally builds up the courage to ask Aiden out on a date while in the park after school one day.

- Nathan: Hey, I don't want to make it awkward or anything, but I really like you. I know we've been friends for a while, but I want to be more than that. I was wondering if I could take you out on a date.
- Aiden: Oh, wow, that's cool. I never thought you would ever have feelings for me because I thought we were just strictly platonic. Honestly, I don't feel the same way, so we should just remain friends sorry.
- Nathan: Damn, I actually thought you were feeling the same type of way because of how we've been vibing lately. I guess you don't. It's OK; I get it. I hope I didn't make anything awkward.
- **Aiden:** To be honest, it is a bit awkward now. It's OK, though. I'll see you around bye. **Nathan:** Bye, Aiden.

#### **Scenario 8: Peer Pressure**

A lesbian couple, Paris and Paige, approaches a girl named Laura at a party because they both think she is attractive. The couple brings Laura a drink and starts to make conversation. Paris and Paige bring up the fact that they want to do something sexual with Laura. Laura tells Paris and Paige, "Thanks, but I'm not into females." Since she rejected them, Paris has been trying to get Laura to loosen up and change her decision by giving her another drink, despite Laura previously saying no. Laura notices that they are trying to pressure her with alcohol. Laura feels uncomfortable and calls her close friend Tyler to help her get out of the situation. Tyler arrives and walks away with Laura, making sure she is safe.

#### **Scenario 9: Texting Miscommunication**

Alex is 17 years old and plays football. He notices Christina and tries to talk to her because he thinks she is beautiful. Christina is a quiet girl and Alex is very popular. He gets her Snapchat username from one of her close friends and messages her. Christina is shocked that the popular guy is texting her. They surprisingly have a lot in common. She feels sparks when they are talking and hanging out, but he does not. One day Alex asks Christina for nudes, asking, "Can I see your body?" Christina is shocked and upset by this and says, "I like talking and hanging out with you, but that is not something that I am comfortable with." Alex accepts her decision and says, "OK. Let's start over."

## **Using Acronyms to Learn About Rejection**

This activity is focused on discussing rejection and how to process the emotions that might come with having to reject someone or being rejected.

#### Materials

- Large sheet of paper or virtual whiteboard if holding the session virtually
- The discussion questions listed below
- The Amaze videos linked below

When discussing rejection in a group setting, facilitators can use a large sheet of paper such as chart paper (for example, 25 x 30 inches) or a virtual whiteboard. Using the sample questions below, use the paper or whiteboard to collect responses from the group.

#### **Discussing Rejection**

Rejection is a natural part of life and can occur in relationships with others. The questions below can help discussion groups think about healthy ways to interact with others.

- What are some of the emotions a person feels when they or their actions are being rejected?
- What are some of the emotions a person feels when rejecting someone or making their boundaries clear?
- Do any of these feelings rejecting someone or their actions or being rejected overlap?
- What are some respectful ways to handle being rejected?
- What are some respectful ways to reject someone or their actions?

Once participants have finished discussing these questions, facilitators can pick one of the short videos below to share with the group. To find the videos online, visit **Amaze.org** and search for the video's title.

- Dealing With Rejection: What's the Best Way (1:31)
- How to Deal With Rejection (2:10)

#### Acronyms

After viewing the videos in the discussion group, facilitators can ask the group if they have any questions about the videos. Then, facilitators can tell the group they will be using acronyms to workshop the topic of rejection and ask participants to break up into smaller groups to create their own acronyms for rejection.

Facilitators can ask the group, "Does anyone know what an acronym is? If yes, can you please explain it to the group?"

When the group is finished sharing their definitions, facilitators can share this definition: An acronym is a word or an abbreviation formed from the initial letter or letters of each word in a series of words. For example, ADHD is the acronym for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and LOL is the acronym for laugh out loud.

Acronyms can be used to shorten the name of something (for example, ADHD) or to communicate more quickly (for example, LOL). Acronyms can also be used to teach people about certain topics.

Acronyms can be used in an educational setting. The acronym below can be used to teach people about consent.

**F.R.I.E.S** is the acronym for freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, specific.

This acronym was developed by Planned Parenthood to teach people about consent.



Freely Given Reversible Informed Enthusiastic Specific

#### **Group Activity**

So far, the group has discussed rejection, how to handle rejection with others in a healthy and respectful way, and what an acronym is. Now facilitators can ask the group to create their own educational acronyms. The goal of this activity is to get the group thinking about the steps involved in respectfully and clearly rejecting someone or how to process their own emotions when they are being rejected. Facilitators can break up the larger group into smaller groups and give each smaller group a large piece of paper, such as chart paper, with markers or pens.

Next, facilitators can tell the groups that their task is to create their own acronym that teaches people about how to deal with rejection. The acronym can be any word (such as bike, calm, chill, breath, vibe or root), but each letter in the word should relate to helping someone deal with and process rejection in a healthy and respectful way. For example, this acronym below was created by the NYCTC youth leadership team.



**T.A.C.O.** 

Think about the situation before reacting Analyze why the rejection is happening Cope in a safe space; do not let the rejection define you Open yourself up to future opportunities

To help guide the discussion group during the acronym activity, facilitators can ask the following questions:

- What message would you give a friend to help them deal with being rejected or rejecting someone or their actions?
- What are some things to consider when teaching people about rejection?

After the smaller groups have brainstormed acronyms and written them down on their paper, facilitators can bring the groups back together as a full group and ask them to share their final acronyms with everyone.

I just want to be friends.

## Outreach and Community Engagement Activities

### **Consent Awareness Calendar**

Incorporate consent awareness in your work and interactions with others all year long! This calendar includes suggestions for notable dates throughout the year to promote consent awareness.

#### January

- New Year's Day
- Human Trafficking Prevention Month
- School winter breaks

As a New Year's resolution, create and share ideas about new ways to practice consent.

While New Year's Eve and school winter break celebrations can involve alcohol or substance use for some, it is important to remind people that they cannot consent while under the influence.

#### February

- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
- Self-Love Month
- National HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (Feb. 7)
- Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)
- National Condom Day (Feb. 14)
- National Condom Week (Feb. 14 to Feb. 21)
- Healthy Relationship Week (Feb. 14 to Feb. 21)

Consent is a crucial part of any healthy relationship. Ask people, "What are some romantic or sex-positive ways to practice consent for Valentine's Day?"

#### March

- Women's History Month
- National Women and Girls HIV Awareness Day (Mar. 10)
- LGBTQ Health Awareness Week (last week in March)

Create and implement activities with others that examine how gender roles impact consent communication. Communicating about consent, similar to challenging gender-based expectations, is a lifelong skill to practice.

#### April

- Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness Day (April 7)
- **Denim Day** (last Wednesday in April, and the longest-running sexual violence prevention and education campaign)
- Teen Health Week
- Get Yourself Tested Month

Improving consent communication is crucial to preventing sexual assault and sexual violence. At your next community or school event, talk about what consent is and what it means to you or others.

#### May

- Masturbation Awareness Month
- Sex Ed (Education) for All Month
- National Mental Health Awareness Month
- National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

Masturbation is a great way for someone to practice self-care, relieve stress and find out what feels pleasurable to them. When a person knows what they like and do not like, it can help them have conversations around consent, their boundaries and what feels good.

#### June

- LGBTQ Pride Month
- National HIV Testing Day (June 27)
- Graduation, prom and last day of school

Representation matters. This Pride Month, support work and activities that include and celebrate the LGBTQ community. Consent applies to all relationships.

#### **July and August**

- Independence Day (July 4)
- Summer love and summer heat

Summer is a great time to go to the beach, the pool, block parties or barbecues — these are all great places to meet new people! In the heat, wear whatever you want — remember that clothing is not consent. All summer long, be sure to create awareness about practicing consent by sharing the message: "Ask before you act."

#### September

- World Sexual Health Month
- Bisexual Awareness Week (Sept. 16 to Sept. 23)
- Bisexuality Day (Sept. 23)

As people return to school, make sure to incorporate work and activities that promote sexual health practices in September, which is World Sexual Health Month.

#### October

- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- National Bullying Prevention Month
- Halloween (Oct. 31)

Not getting consent can be scary! Be sure to continue to share the message: "Ask before you act."

#### November

- Thanksgiving
- Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov. 20)

Consent is not just for intimate relationships. Promote the message that people can also talk to their family about consent at holiday gatherings. Ask them, "How does consent show up or not show up in your/our family?"

#### December

- World AIDS Day (Dec. 1)
- End-of-year holidays

Share the message that people should talk openly with their sexual partners about their sexual histories and sexually transmitted infection (STI) statuses. Consent is not just a yes or no to sexual acts — it applies to all aspects of sexual intimacy including condom use, getting tested for STIs, sexual exclusivity and more.

## **Consent Cue Cards**

To promote the practice of consent awareness at community or school events and through social media, facilitators can use these consent cue cards to ask people to share why consent matters (#consentmatters) to them. Here are a few ideas for how to use the cue cards:

- Make photocopies of the blank cue cards included in this guide or visit **on.nyc.gov/consent** to download a PDF of the blank cue cards to use in group activities when discussing consent communication.
- Take the cue cards to events or discussion group sessions along with some colorful markers and a smartphone to document the activity and responses gathered.
- When someone has shared their written responses on a cue card, take a photograph of the card (or of the respondent with the card **only if you have their consent**), then share the photograph on social media. Suggested hashtags include:
  - #consentmatters
  - #consentissexy
  - #consentcommunication
  - #consentisrespectful
  - #consentculture
  - #consenteducation

Participants can also create a new hashtag of their own.

- At events or discussion group sessions, write out the cue card prompts on a whiteboard and have participants add their responses on the board or by using sticky notes.
- If an event is virtual, ask people to write the cue card prompts on a piece of paper and share their responses — they can turn on their smartphone cameras to share photographs of the responses using a virtual whiteboard or the chat function, or create their own social media post with #consentmatters while the virtual event is happening.

l like it when you do that.

# **Consent matters because...**

**#ConsentMatters** Visit **on.nyc.gov/consent** for more information about sexual consent.



# **Consent sounds like...**

#### #ConsentEducation

Visit **on.nyc.gov/consent** for more information about sexual consent.





# Consent looks like...

**#ConsentCulture** Visit **on.nyc.gov/consent** for more information about sexual consent.



# Consent is...

**#ConsentCommunication** Visit **on.nyc.gov/consent** for more information about sexual consent.





# Glossary

**Assumptions:** In the context of consent, assumptions can be when someone thinks they have permission to engage in a sexual act because they have done it in the past, or for any other reason.

**Body language:** The nonverbal way in which a person moves their face and body to let others know about their physical, emotional or mental state. (**thefreedictionary.com**)

**Boundaries:** The limit or edge of someone's personal space. Boundaries can be physical, psychosocial or interpersonal, and can change over time or across environments.

**Bystander:** Someone who witnesses a situation, including violence or the beginnings of violent situations such as bullying, harassment, dating violence or sexual violence. (**216teens.org**)

**Consent:** Permission for something to happen or agreement to do something. Sexual consent means that all people involved in a sexual activity clearly and freely agree to participate. A person can give consent by words or actions, but their intent should be clear — the person is willing and gives permission to participate.

A person cannot give consent if they are not awake, aware or otherwise able to make decisions. Also, a person can change their mind at any time.

**Culture:** In the context of values, these are the shared beliefs and practices of a particular group of people, transmitted

from one generation to the next. The patterns of culture guide the thinking and action of the culture's members. (**thefreedictionary.com**)

**DMing:** The abbreviation for direct messaging. Social media such as Instagram include the Direct Message feature. (google.dictionary)

**Double standards:** Unequal expectations, moral standards or rules that allow one group to have more privileges than another. For example, in sexual relationships, there may be more restrictions placed on those assigned the sex at birth of female or who identify as women than on those assigned the sex at birth of male or who identify as men. (**plannedparenthood.org**)

**Gender:** Gender is socially constructed, often related to cultural norms, behaviors and roles that vary between societies and over time. Gender is often confused with a person's sex assigned at birth (which is based on how medical professionals interpret an infant's genitals). Gender examples can include man, woman, transgender man, transgender woman, genderqueer, nonbinary and gender nonconforming, among others.

**Gender identity:** How a person feels and understands their gender. Sometimes these feelings will match a person's sex assigned at birth, which is referred to as cisgender, or a person may be transgender, meaning their inner sense and understanding of their gender does not match their sex assigned at birth. These are not the only possible gender identities. (**Sexetc.org**)

**Gender roles:** Society's standards and expectations of people about the appropriate behavioral or psychological traits associated with being feminine or masculine. (**plannedparenthood.org**)

**LGBTQ or LGBTQIA:** These acronyms stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and/or queer, intersex and asexual. (**merriam-webster.com**)

#### Nonverbal communication: Any

communication that is not verbal, including body language, movements and facial expressions. These can be intentional or unintentional.

**Public display of affection (PDA):** Physical contact between people in a public setting, including kissing, hugging, holding hands or exchanging light touches.

**Rejection:** A refusal of unwanted advances or activities. (**thefreedictionary.com**)

**Relationship dynamics:** Aspects or patterns of a relationship that can affect how people talk about consent with their partner, including length of the relationship, the ages of each person in the relationship or how each person identifies. These can affect the power dynamics unique to every relationship.

**Sexting:** Sending or receiving sexual text messages or images. If they are unsolicited (not requested), they are not consensual.

**Sexual attraction:** Attractiveness on the basis of sexual desire. (**thefreedictionary.com**)

**Sexual assault:** Using force to engage in a sexual behavior (kissing, touching or intercourse) with another person when that person has not consented. Sexual assault is illegal. (**Sexetc.org**)

**Sexual coercion:** Using alcohol, drugs, or pressure (physical, emotional, mental or financial) to have sexual contact with another person against their will. This includes guilt or emotional manipulation to force sexual contact with another person who has already refused. (**loveisrespect.org**)

**Sexuality:** A broad term that encompasses how people feel about themselves, how they see and express their gender and sexual identities, how they care for their sexual and reproductive health, and how they interact with other people. (**Sexetc.org**)

**Sexual harassment:** Unwanted sexual advances from another person, including suggestive gestures, language or touching. (**plannedparenthood.org**)

**Sexual orientation:** Refers to who a person is attracted to and wants to have relationships with. Sexual orientations can include gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, pansexual and asexual. (**plannedparenthood.org**)

**Verbal communication:** Communications that are spoken face-to-face or by telephone, radio, television or other media.

# **Additional Resources**

These resources may be helpful for thinking about ways to create and implement activities about sexual consent awareness and practices.

For more information about consent, relationships, body language, verbal communication and more, visit **on.nyc.gov/consent**.

- AMAZE: Resources to Educate Young People About Consent: AMAZE uses digital media to provide young people and the supportive adults in their lives access to medically accurate, age-appropriate, affirming and honest sex education. Information can be accessed directly online on a range of topics including consent! Visit **amaze.org** and search for **consent**.
- Feeling Face Book: This PDF can be used by facilitators when discussing questions that ask participants to identify different feelings. To find the Feeling Face Book, type this URL into your browser: tipjunkie.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/Feeling-Face-Book.pdf.
- Planned Parenthood: All About Consent: This webpage gives a brief overview for teens about sexual consent, including what it is, why it matters, and some examples of ways to say "yes" and "no." Visit plannedparenthood.org and search for All About Consent or type this URL into your browser: plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/sex/all-about-consent.
- Intimate Ways to Ask a Partner to Make Love: This is an excerpt from Columbia University's Go Ask Alice!, an online health Q&A that shares tips on how to ask someone consent for sexual intercourse. Visit GoAskAlice.Columbia.edu and search for Intimate Ways to Ask a Partner to Make Love or type this URL into your browser: goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/intimate-ways-ask-partner-to-have-sex.
- Joyful Heart Foundation: The Joyful Heart Foundation aims to transform society's response to sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse by educating the public, advocating to improve the criminal justice system and supporting survivors. This webpage provides resources for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse. Visit joyfulheartfoundation.org.
- **#MeToo:** This webpage provides resources for survivors of sexual violence, a history of the #MeToo movement, toolkits and training materials, and other resources to disrupt the systems that allow sexual violence to proliferate in the world. Visit **metoomvmt.org**.

- **Reproductive Justice:** This website provides a definition and history of reproductive justice and outlines the aims of the movement. Visit **sistersong.net/reproductive-justice**.
- **Safe Horizon Offers:** This webpage offers support services and a 24/7 hotline for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Visit **safehorizon.org**.
- **#TimesUp:** TIME'S UP provides resources and action steps for creating a society free of gender-based discrimination in the workplace and beyond. Visit **timesupnow.org/about**.
- You Sent a Sext: Now What?: From the National Center for Missing or Exploited Children, this is a PDF that helps break down what someone can do if they sent a sexually explicit image that is shared without their permission, the steps they can take to report it and how to get support. Visit cdn.netsmartz.org/tipsheets/You\_Sent\_A\_Sext\_Now\_What.pdf.
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Data Summary & Trends Report: 2007-2017: This survey
  provides representative data of high school students and their health issues, including
  sexual behavior. Find the data summary and trends for 2007 to 2017 at
  cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/trendsreport.pdf.

#### **NYC Health Department Resources**

- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Epiquery: NYC Interactive Health Data System: This NYC Health Department webpage provides a wide variety of health-related data specific to NYC. Visit a816-health.nyc.gov/hdi/epiquery.
- The NYC Health Department's **Sexual Health Clinics** webpage offers information about finding low- to no-cost service for those age 12 and older. Call **311** for more information or visit **nyc.gov/health/stdclinic**.
- The NYC Health Department's **Sexual and Reproductive Justice** webpage defines sexual and reproductive justice and outlines the NYC Standards for Respectful Care at Birth. Visit **nyc.gov/health** and search for **sexual and reproductive justice**.
- The NYC Health Department's Sexual and Reproductive Health: Information for Providers webpage provides online resources and documents for providers about a variety of sexual and reproductive health issues. Visit nyc.gov/health and search for sexual and reproductive health.



