

# Creating a Culture of Consent: Parent Session

By Beth Wynkoop, MSW, MSSP



# *Speaker Information*

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Prevention and Education Policy Advocate

- Silver Spring Resident
- Lover of animals (this one's Kelpie), music, and reading
- Preventionist-experience with campuses across the country, government agencies, workplaces , and the DoD



# *About MCASA*

## **The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault**

MCASA works to help prevent sexual assault, and advocates for accessible, compassionate care for survivors of sexual violence

## **The Sexual Assault Legal Institute**

SALI provides comprehensive legal services to survivors of sexual violence statewide, as well as training and technical assistance for professionals working with survivors.

# *Today we have two goals:*

- Review content that students may be learning about consent, sexual assault, and prevention.
  - These are skills you may be able to use in your own life or reinforce at home.
- Discuss how we can have open conversations with students, help keep them safe, and support them if they ever do experience harm.
- Focus on prevention, but response resources will be shared.

# *Self-Care Station*

We'll be talking about sexual violence. Please take care of yourself as needed throughout the presentation.

VASAP:

301 Piccard Drive Suite 4100, Rockville, MD 20850

Crisis Line: 240-777-HELP (4357)

TAKE CARE



OF YOURSELF

# Consent

Building healthy relationships for life.

# Why Consent?

- Consent is a fundamental part of all relationships.
- Learning about consent as early as possible is ideal.
- Understanding consent can help students:
  - Communicate their values to their peers;
  - Practice consent in all their interactions;
  - Recognize abusive or harmful conduct from others.

Comprehensive sex education is thoroughly demonstrated NOT to increase the likelihood of teens having sex.

<https://advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/sexuality-education-2/>

# *Poll #1*

How comfortable do you feel talking to your children about consent?

1. I feel comfortable talking about consent.
2. I feel uncomfortable because the subject is sensitive/personal.
3. I feel uncomfortable because I don't fully understand consent.

# *Consent and Healthy Relationships*

- Understanding consent is an important part of socializing and being in a healthy relationship. The concept should be introduced as early as possible.
- Consent means to actively agree to something.
- One of the major ways we talk about consent is in terms of sexual relationships.
  - Agreement/Affirmation
  - Free will
  - Capacity
- All consent should be “affirmative”-active agreement instead of lack of “no.” Led to shifts in attitudes and policy.

# CONSENT



**Freely Given  
Reversible  
Informed  
Enthusiastic  
Specific**

- Consent does not come from begging, convincing, guilt, threats, or coercion.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time, even if they initially agreed or they'd engaged in a sexual act before.
- Consent means everyone knows all the facts.
- Consent means everyone participating is happy or excited to participate.
- Consent applies to specific actions and doesn't imply consent for other actions.

# CONSENT



**Freely Given  
Reversible  
Informed  
Enthusiastic  
Specific**

"There are laws about who's able to consent. If the person you're with is...

- Drunk or high
  - Asleep or passed out
  - Below the legal age of consent or much younger than you
  - Disabled in a way that affects their ability to understand you
- ...then they can't consent, and it's not okay for you to do anything sexual with them."

# *Add it Up: Consent in Action*

- Consent is an ongoing process throughout any sexual encounter.
  - Each partner has the capacity to consent and there's no major power difference.
  - Each partner is responsible for regularly checking in with their partner for consent. Look for cues of their agreement and interest and remember FRIES.
  - Non-verbal cues can be confusing or misinterpreted. It's easy to check-in verbally to be sure that everyone is on the same page.
  - When in doubt, ask!

# *Knowledge Check (Poll #2)*

1. Maya wants to have sex with her partner, Taylor, but Taylor is initially not interested. Maya gets frustrated and, after asking multiple times, eventually tells Taylor that if they don't have sex soon, she'll break up with them. Taylor is scared of losing her and finally agrees.
2. Keith and Aalia meet at a party and hit it off. They start kissing and he asks her to go somewhere more private, and she agrees. However, when they're alone, she begins to feel nervous, and asks him to slow down. Keith pauses and asks her if she's ok and if she wants to go back to the party.
3. Kristen and Jake meet on Tinder and agree to hang out. Kristen is nervous and drinks several beers. She starts slurring her words and feeling fuzzy. When Jake starts kissing her, she goes along with it.

**Which of these scenarios is a good example of consent?**

# Understanding Sexual Assault

Knowledge is Power.

# *Why talk about sexual assault?*

- Sexual assault disproportionately affects young people. Waiting too long to talk may enhance stigma around disclosing or confuse teens about their experiences.
- More than 40% of female victims of rape were first assaulted before the age of 18.
- One in 10 high school girls—and one in 20 high school boys—reported being forced into sex.
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college.
- Awareness of sexual assault is a fundamental first step for both prevention and response.

# *Connection between Consent and Sexual Assault*

- When we talk about sexual assault and preventing harm, we talk a lot about consent.
- Consent is important to healthy relationships and healthy sexuality.
  - It also is how we define when sexual assault occurs.
- But remember; misunderstandings around consent are not the root cause of sexual violence.
- Sexual assault is an act of power and control.

# *Understanding Sexual Assault*

- Sexual activity without consent is sexual assault.
  - Anyone can potentially experience an assault, and it is never the fault of the victim.
  - We know that many young people, teens and young adults, experience violence. We also know that even one assault it too many.
- We're going to focus today on **prevention**, interrupting an act of sexual assault or stopping it before it ever starts.
- **Your small actions can play a big role in keeping your friends and community safe.**

# Prevention

You can make an impact.

# *Why Bystander Intervention?*

- Consent is important to enhance healthy relationships and feel empowered.
- However, understanding consent alone (or awareness-building more broadly) hasn't been demonstrated to significantly reduce incidents of assault.
- The approach of risk reduction is also typically ineffective and controversial.
- Bystander intervention is one of the most promising prevention approaches, particularly when it's paired with efforts to shape social norms.
- We want to give students the tools to contribute to a safer environment.

# *Bystander Intervention*

- Recognize Warning Signs
- Consider Barriers
- Take Action using the 3Ds

# *Recognizing Warning Signs*

## **Warning Signs**

- Touch that seems unwanted
- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Trying to get someone alone
- Testing boundaries
- Pushing drinks
- A friend focusing on someone who seems uninterested.
- Pushing or shoving
- Aggressive language
- Talking about plans to hook up with someone
- Talking about getting someone drunk.
- Making sexist or inappropriate jokes.

# *Poll #3*

- Have you ever observed any of these warning signs before?
  - Yes
  - No
  - I'm not sure
  - No, but I've noticed other things that concerned me.

# *Barriers*

- Barriers to intervening are completely normal. Intervening is hard!
- You may experience barriers like:
  - Being shy or introverted;
  - Worry that you'll get teased or be embarrassed;
  - Feeling like its none of your business;
  - Not wanting to be a snitch;
  - Not wanting to make things worse;
  - Being unsure of what you're seeing;
  - Thinking someone else will do something;
  - Your identities make it difficult to step in.

# *The 3Ds*

<b>Direct</b>	<b>Delegate</b>	<b>Distract</b>
Intervene directly with the person doing the harm or the person being targeted.	Bring in another person or people to check-in or follow up.	Do anything to disrupt or interrupt a situation to keep it from escalating.

# *Poll #4: Scenario 1*

You are at the park with your sibling and you see a young couple sitting together on a picnic blanket. You see him leaning close to her and putting his arm around her waist, but you see her looking away and her body language is very tense. What would you be most likely to do?

- Direct-Go up to the couple and ask her if she's OK or tell him to back off.
- Delegate-Ask your sibling if the situation seems weird, and see if they can speak up.
- Distract-Go sit on a nearby bench to add a little awkwardness to the situation.
- Distract-Walk nearby and pretend you know her. “Hey, weren’t you in my chem class last year?”

# *Poll #5: Scenario 2*

You are in group text with a bunch of friends. You've noticed one girl you don't know super well only will text in response to one of the boys in the group. She is super flirtatious, and her comments sometimes make you uncomfortable. What are you most likely to do?

- Direct-Make a joking comment addressing her behavior.
- Distract-Change the subject quickly in the chat every time she starts making comments.
- Delegate-Send a private message to a few other people in the group chat and ask if you all can address it next time it happens.
- Direct-Send him a message asking if her texts make him uncomfortable and if he wants you to say something.

# *Actually, the 5D's...*

- When you're talking about harassment, you can also:
  - Document-Keep a safe distance, record, take notes, detail the date, time, location-but don't post without consent!
  - Delay-Check in after an incident of harassment, sit with a person, ask how you can support, share resources.

# *Helping someone who discloses*

- Be supportive
- Be flexible
- Be present

# *What if it's my child?*

- Same rules apply, but your reaction holds a lot of power.
- Listen, don't interrogate. Believe, don't blame.
- Try to keep your emotions level.

# *Mandatory Reporting*

- In Maryland, child sexual abuse is defined as sexual molestation or exploitation of a child (age 0-17) by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member.
- Maryland law makes everyone, except attorneys and clergy, a mandatory reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect.
- If you or someone you know suspects child sexual abuse, please contact your local Department of Human Services Child Protective Services office ([www.dhs.maryland.gov/child-protective-services/reportingsuspected-child-abuse-or-neglect/local-offices](http://www.dhs.maryland.gov/child-protective-services/reportingsuspected-child-abuse-or-neglect/local-offices)) or your local law enforcement agency. If you are unsure of the local jurisdiction to report to in Maryland, call 1-800-332-6347.

# *Creating Cultures of Consent*

- Effective prevention begins with your actions, but it takes root when a critical mass of a community joins in. How can you share your values and get others to do the same?
  - Posting on social media.
  - Talking to friends and family.
  - Attending community meetings
  - Contacting government officials or school officials.
  - Support your children in their efforts.
  - Displaying values through signage, clothing, etc.
  - Ask a friend to attend a training like this.
  - Share media that promotes healthy sexuality/consent.



# *Advocate for Change*

- Your voice and the voice of your peers is powerful!
- Consider: What would it look like to have a school or community free of violence? AND What actions would need to happen to get you to that point?
- Organize: Find other like-minded individuals, and listen to and incorporate their concerns.
- Mobilize: Get your voice out there! Go to virtual meetings, post on social media, sign petitions.
- Repeat: Change is an ongoing process, and you can play a major role.

# Supporting your child

Putting this information into action

# *Talking to your child*

- You can play a major role in talking to your child about consent, healthy relationships, and preventing assault.
- Open the door to conversation.
  - Don't think of it as a one-time lecture, but an ongoing, nuanced conversation.
  - Find conversational openers-this training, a news story, a piece of media, etc.
  - Avoid shaming or pressuring.
  - If they are extremely uncomfortable, try other formats. Talk through a bystander lens, talk during a car ride, have the TV on while you talk, use email or a notebook.

# *Talking to your child*

- During your conversation:
  - Assume best intentions.
  - Learn together!
  - Talk about setting and respecting boundaries.
  - Talk about consent, and the different dynamics that impact it: power, pressure, alcohol, etc. Talk about verbal and nonverbal cues.
  - Talk about how to look out for a friend.
  - Talk about what sexual assault is and how they or a friend can get help if they need it.
  - Ask open-ended questions and allow your child space to reflect.
- Practice what you preach every day.

# *Resources for Home*

## **MNCASA: Prevention Starts at Home**

<https://www.mncasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/At-Home-Activity-Pack-1.pdf>

## **Making Caring Common Project: The Talk: How Adults Can Promote Young People's Healthy Relationships and Prevent Misogyny and Sexual Harassment**

<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/the-talk>

## **MCASA consent resources**

<https://mcasa.org/prevention/sexual-assault-awareness-month>

# *Resources for Home*

## **Articulate Training: Prevention at a Distance**

<https://rise.articulate.com/share/48NorPeVirWiJ0l-ceifghap5ipZbUyD>

## **Advocates for Youth: Sexuality Education**

<https://advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/sexuality-education-2/>

## **Planned Parenthood**

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/sex/all-about-consent>

# Works Cited

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Jozkowski, K. N., & Humphreys, T. P. (2014). Sexual consent on college campuses: Implications for sexual assault prevention education. *Health Education Monograph*, 31(2), 30-36.

NISVS 2010 Summary Report: [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS\\_Report2010-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS_Report2010-a.pdf)

# *Local Resources*

## **VASAP**

301 Piccard Drive Suite 4100, Rockville, MD 20850

Crisis Line: 240-777-HELP (4357)

## **Montgomery County Family Justice Center**

600 Jefferson Plaza, Suite 500, Rockville, MD  
20852

Phone: 240-773-0444

## **JCADA**

Phone: 1-877-88-JCADA

## **Maryland Schools Safe Tip Line**

1-833-MD-B-SAFE

## **MCPS Student Welfare and Compliance**

COS-TitleIX@mcpsmd.org

# CONTACT INFO

## Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault & Sexual Assault Legal Institute Contact Info

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Evaluation Link:

<https://forms.gle/dingwVMB3isbBr687>

**Website**

[mcasa.org](http://mcasa.org)