



Parents & Carers Resource



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Consent Labs - Who are we?



We are expert consent and respectful relationship educators.

Consent Labs is a youth-led not-for-profit organisation that empowers young people and their communities with consent and respectful relationship education. Our work ultimately reduces sexual violence in Australia.

Global research demonstrates that education is a powerful tool in preventing sexual violence. We offer national evidence-based and engaging consent education programs for **high school students, tertiary students, parents and carers, and, educators.**

Aligned to the Australian curriculum as dictated by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), we have worked with over 75,000 people across Australia.



Consent Labs is a quality-assured program in the NSW Department of Education's Student Wellbeing external programs catalogue in the themes of Behaviour & Sense of Belonging.

The Consent Labs programs have been vetted by industry experts:



Paul Dillon
Drug and Alcohol Research
and Training Australia



Katrina Marson
Former Senior Prosecutor
(Sexual Offences Unit), ACT
Director of Public Prosecutions



Matthew Keeley
Director,
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Dr Melissa Kang
Associate Professor, General
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Renee West
PDHPE Advisor 7-12,
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Dr Eleanor Freedman
North Sydney Sexual
Assault Service



Why We Exist.

The current statistics

Key statistics addressed during the Parents & Carers session:

43% of year 10 students, and **68.9%** of year 12 students have engaged in **penetrative sex**.

95.5% of boys, and **81%** of girls in years 10-12 have **viewed pornography**

23.6% of students said they felt highly confident talking to their mother about sex.

8.8% of students said they felt highly confident talking to their father about sex.

Source: The 7th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health 2021.

Abstinence only education does not delay teen sex or reduce the number of sexually risky behaviours.

Source: UNESCO International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach 2018.

We aim to change the culture around sexual assault and harassment. The most powerful way to do this is through proactive programs for young people that are comprehensive, evidence-based and inclusive.

The power of consent education

There has been substantial evidence demonstrating the potential of school-based education in:

- Improving sexual health outcomes including delayed initiation of sexual intercourse, decreased frequency of sexual intercourse, reduced risk taking (increased use of condoms & increased use of contraception)
- Improving young people's healthy relationship skills in relation to their friendships, sexual partners and their familial relationships.
- Reducing rape myth acceptance, victim blaming and sexist attitudes
- Increasing empathy and respect for others, improve communication and the ability to manage feelings and can also increase a sense of self control and safety.

Source: UNESCO International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach 2018.



Key Takeaways.

Every young person deserves to be **safe and respected in relationships**.

Parents are a key part in shaping their child's values. Our vision is that young people and their parents and/or carers can have conversations about these topics without any awkwardness. We want to help you bridge the gap to your children, and give you tools to have **meaningful conversations** about respectful relationships.

How do I start the conversation about these topics with my kids?

- Talk about consent in everyday situations.
 - Encourage them to think about and set their own boundaries - both physical and emotional and reinforce that it's ok for your child to say no.
- Remind them setting boundaries is an ongoing process:
 - They can change all the time as someone becomes more or less comfortable with things and this is completely normal.

Talking to your child about sex:

- **Don't make it a one-off talk.**
 - Evidence shows that sex and consent education needs to be revisited multiple times so you can build on the basics.
- **Be realistic:**
 - They will probably have already talked about sex with their friends, or have been exposed to something on the internet. It's better for them to hear it from you and other educational resources, versus something else on the internet.
- **Be honest and approachable:** talk about your own experiences in your education, where relevant and appropriate, because it will encourage them to be honest in return.
 - For example "I never got taught about consent so I didn't know it was important" or "I sometimes find it difficult to talk about this because of the way I was brought up, but I want to ensure you feel more comfortable than I did"
- Finally, use **everyday opportunities to talk about sex and consent:**
 - If you're watching something on TV, or listening to a song on the radio, use it to naturally segue into a conversation. Ask them their thoughts, and whether they think things like the media are reflective of real life.

Additional Resources

These online resources provide useful information for you and your child

Consent & Relationships:

- Talking about consent: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/connecting-communicating/tough-topics/sexual-consent-how-to-talk-with-children-teens>
- Talk Soon, Talk Often: https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Talk-soon-Talk-often

Healthy Relationships:

- <https://raisingchildren.net.au/>
- Talking about consent: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/connecting-communicating/tough-topics/sexual-consent-how-to-talk-with-children-teens>

Sexual assault and Abuse:

- What is sexual assault: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/young-adults/issues/understanding-sexual-assault>
- How to respond to a disclosure of child abuse?
<https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/responding-disclosures-child-abuse>



Key Takeaways.

Consent with Alcohol & Other Drugs

How do I start the conversation about these topics with my kids?

- **Start the conversation early.**
 - Like with consent, start talking to your kids about alcohol and other drugs when they are young - think in year 7 or 8. You can frame it as “I want to start talking about this before it becomes relevant” or “in the next couple of years you’ll start to hear about your friends or other kids in your year going to parties and drinking”.
- **Make it clear to them what your stance is on these matters.**
 - Whatever your stance, be non-judgemental and non-threatening when you tell them. You want them to feel comfortable coming to you if they do make the decision to drink, even against your advice, if they need safety or help.
- Reassure them that if they do reach out to you, you will not be judgemental and **your only priority will be their wellbeing.**

Consent & the Digital World

How do I start the conversation about these topics with my kids?

- **Speak to your kids about pornography**, make it a topic that they can talk about.
 - To make it easier, you can depersonalise it like, “do kids at school ever talk about pornography”, or “At the presentation I went to the other day, they were talking about how common pornography is with kids and I think we should talk about it”. You can then follow it up with “do you know much about what pornography is?”.
- **Share ideas and ask them to collaborate with you in the conversation.**
 - “I didn’t have to deal with this when I was growing up, because the internet wasn’t as popular as it is now”. “Do you think pornography would be a bad or a good thing? What makes you say that?”
- **Refer them to other resources** to learn about sex and relationships, and state openly how pornography is not the place for them to learn about this. They can borrow a book from the library about puberty or sex, they could look at government websites for information about healthy relationships or other evidence based resources and websites.

Additional Resources

These online resources provide useful information for you and your child

Alcohol & Other Drugs:

- <https://positivechoices.org.au/parents/drug-education-parent-booklet>

Technology & Consent

- eSafety Parent Resources: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/resources>
- Do you need to make a report of harmful online content?
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/report/illegal-harmful-content>
- For parents of Secondary School children:
<https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/parents/topics/?audienceLevel=secondary>



Our Efficacy.

What do participants say about our programs?

Feedback surveys are distributed to all students at the completion of every session. This data is then compiled into a Feedback Report and provided to each individual school so you know exactly what your students had to say.

Consent Labs combined feedback at the end of 2023:

91%



of students stated their understanding was 'Good' after our presentation, compared to 61% before.

87%



of students said that they had learnt something practical that they could incorporate into their lives.

92%



of people rated our sessions as 'Engaging' or 'Very Engaging'.

83%



of students said that they would want to see Consent Labs back at their school.

100,000+

students, young adults, parents, carers and educators reached to date.

