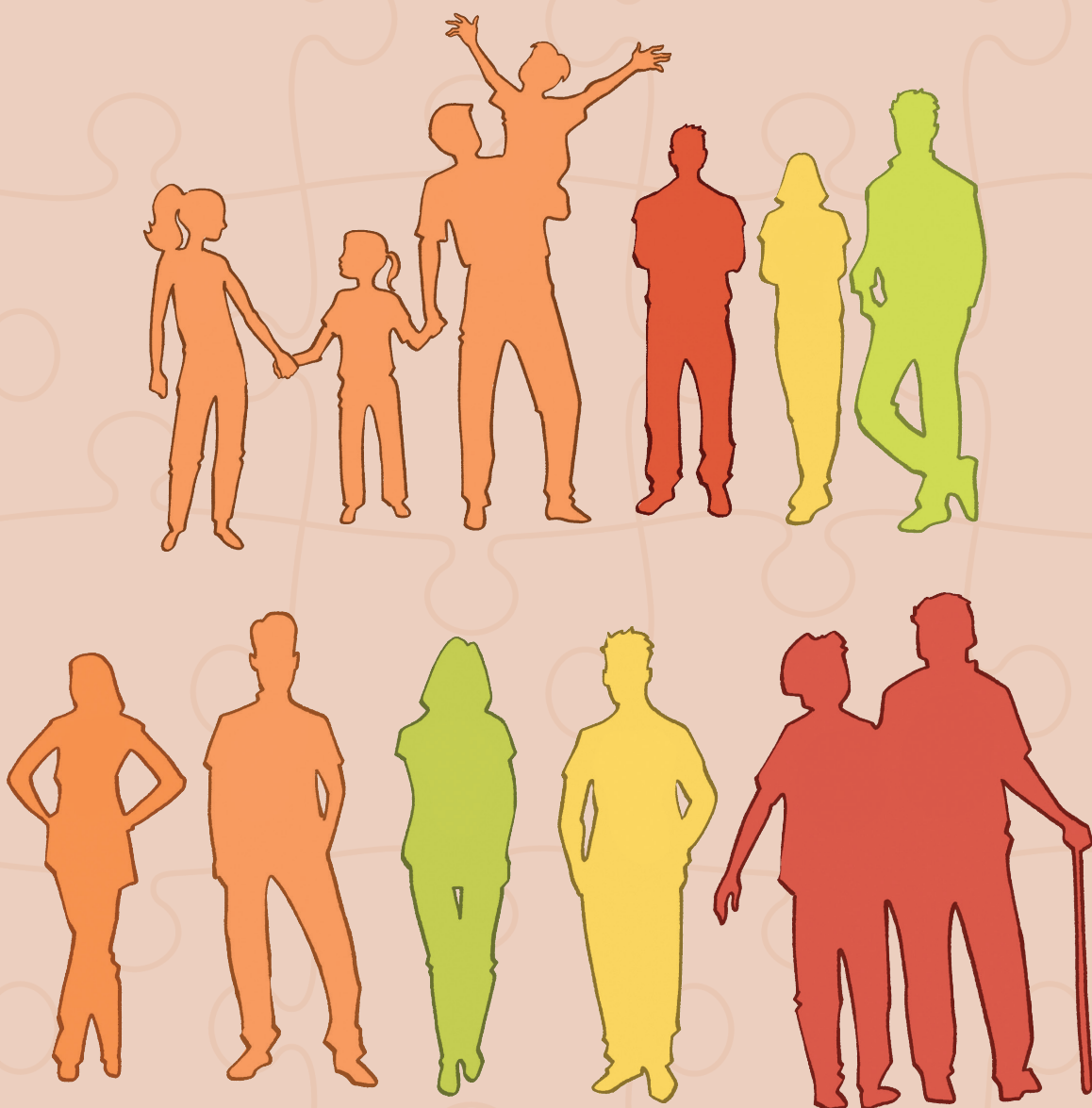


CONSENT AND HOW TO SAY “NO”



Ресурсни центар за специјалну едукацију

INTRODUCTION

This lesson plan is for educators and support people working with young people with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It focuses on *Consent and how to say "no"*, and follows the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) framework under the theme *Skills for health and well-being*. The lesson teaches students that they have the right to make choices about their own bodies and relationships. It explains that consent means saying "yes" freely, that it should be clear for everyone involved, and that it can be changed or taken back at any time. Students also learn how to set boundaries and say "no" in a confident, respectful way. This supports safety, builds self-advocacy skills, and encourages healthy, respectful relationships.

This lesson plan uses evidence-based practices (EBPs), which are recognised as best practice for teaching students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It supports teacher delivery through structured resources, scenario-based activities that incorporate peer modelling, video modeling, and age-appropriate educational videos developed by [Amaze.org](https://amaze.org).

This lesson is part of *Sex education for students with intellectual disability and on the autism spectrum: A practical methodology guide*, a resource that supports educators to deliver accessible, inclusive, and trauma-informed sex education to students aged 15 and over with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. Grounded in evidence-based practices, the Guide promotes the rights of students to sexual autonomy, safety, and well-being, aligning with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals, which call for inclusive education, gender equality, and good health for all. The lesson content also reflects the key concepts outlined in the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE), ensuring that teaching is comprehensive, rights-based, and responsive to the learning needs and aspirations of students with disability.

[Full Guide](#)

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Consent and how to say "no"



What does it mean?

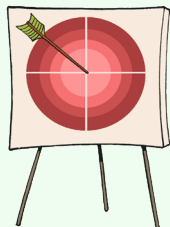
Consent means that a person has the right to make their own choices about their bodies and that they should feel comfortable and safe in expressing their willingness or unwillingness to engage in any activity. It involves clear and mutual agreement, and students should understand that they can withdraw consent at any time. Saying "no" means confidently and assertively expressing their boundaries, ensuring that their personal comfort and safety are respected. Consent can include engaging in sexual activity, consenting to medical procedures or going to the movies with a friend.



Why is it important?

For young people with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum, understanding consent and the ability to say "no" are vital components of sex education. It empowers them to make informed decisions about their own bodies and relationships¹. This knowledge helps protect them from potential abuse and exploitation by ensuring they understand their right to refuse any unwanted contact or behaviour². Understanding consent fosters the development of healthy, respectful relationships based on mutual agreement and respect for personal boundaries. It also enhances their self-advocacy skills, enabling them to confidently express their needs and boundaries¹. Additionally, it provides essential knowledge about their legal rights and societal expectations regarding personal interactions. Learning these skills contribute to their well-being, autonomy, and ability to interact safely and respectfully with others.

Learning outcomes based on teacher's and student's perspectives



Learning outcomes

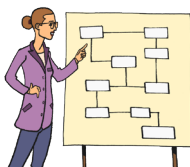
Students can explain the principles of consent.

Students can describe the importance of mutual respect and communication in obtaining and giving consent.

Accessible learning outcome

I can explain what consent is and what it means.

I can describe why respect and communication are important for giving and getting consent.



EXAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Topic: **Consent and how to say "no"**

Note for teachers:

Some students in your class might have experienced sexual assaults, abuse or rape. It is crucial that you provide students with a 'content warning' about the topic and that if they need a break or do not want to participate in these lessons, they do not have to. Additionally, it is important that you know the correct procedures for how to support students (school counsellors, hotlines and referral to additional support) and report incidents of sexual assault, abuse or rape. Be aware of the protocols for reporting disclosures.

Try to avoid abstract concepts when discussing consent, such as the tea analogy. Students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum have difficulties understanding abstract concepts and generalising learnings that are

not concrete. Additionally, it is important to be open about talking about sex with young people to reduce stigma and taboos about sex and sexuality.

Some students may require individually tailor supports and interventions. Teachers can use social narratives as an intervention to target these behaviours. Refer to [Appendix 1: How to ask for permission](#).

Learning outcomes	EBP/teaching strategy	Resources needed
Students can explain the principles of consent.	Video modeling Peer modelling	Video player
Students can describe the importance of mutual respect and communication in obtaining and giving consent.		Appendix 2: How can I ask for consent? Appendix 3: How to say "no"

Lesson sequence

Introduction: Ask students what they know about consent.

Prompts:

- Have you heard the word 'consent' before?
- Can you think of any situations where it's important to ask for permission or consent?
- How can you show that you have given consent?
- How can you show that you don't want to give consent?

"Consent means agreeing to something freely, without feeling pressured. It is when someone says "yes" or gives permission for something to happen. Consent is important because it helps us respect each other's boundaries and make sure everyone feels safe and comfortable."



Activity 1: Consent and your boundaries

As a class, watch the [Consent and communication](#) video on Amaze.org.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- Can you touch someone without their consent?
- Can you touch someone if they haven't heard you ask?
- What can you say if you don't want someone to touch you?
- If you say "yes", can you change your mind and say "no"?
- What is the rule that Bear told us about consent? "You have to get consent before you touch someone. That means they have to verbally agree."



Activity 2: Video Modelling of how to ask for consent

As a class, watch the [Ask. Listen. Respect: A video about consent](#) video from Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance on YouTube.

Did the two teenagers in the video have consent to kiss?

Prompts:

- How did they get consent?
- Was it clear that they both wanted to kiss each other? How do you know that?
- What are some ways you can ask for consent?

"This is a good example of consent, because both people said that they wanted to do something together. They both verbally agreed".



Activity 3: How to ask for consent

The teacher distributes [Appendix 2: How to ask for consent](#) to the class and reads the scenarios aloud to the class. The teacher reads a scenario aloud to the class, students can volunteer to come up and practice how to ask for consent based on that scenario.

Scenario 1: Asking a friend for consent	Scenario 2: Asking a family member for consent	Scenario 3: Asking your partner for consent
You are at your friend's house and see that they have the new video game you want to play. You would like to ask them if you can borrow the game to play at home. Prompts: • How could you ask for consent to borrow the game? • How could you respond if your friend says "no", they don't want to let you borrow the game?	Your extended family is over at your house. You have a cousin name Sammy who is 5. You want to give Sammy a big hug to say hi. Prompts: • Do you need to ask Sammy before you give them a hug? • How could you ask Sammy for a hug? • What can you say if Sammy says "no" and doesn't want to give you a hug? • What can you say if Sammy says "yes" to a hug and then says, "that's too much"?	You have been dating your partner Ky for a few months. You both really like each other. You want to kiss them for the first time. Prompts: • Do you need to ask Ky before you try to kiss them? Why? • How could you find out if Ky wants to kiss you too? • How could you ask Ky for a kiss? • What would you say if Ky says "no, I don't feel ready for us to kiss"?



Activity 4: What does saying no mean?

As a class, watch the [Consent explained: What is it?](#) video on Amaze.org.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- Can someone touch you without your consent?
- If you don't answer someone when they ask to touch you, have you given consent?
- If you have consented to holding your partner's hand, does that mean you have consented to having sex with them?
- If you have consented to having sex with your partner once, does that mean you have consented to having sex with them whenever they want?
- Can you change your mind at any time?

Reinforce with your students that:

- You must give consent for someone to touch you.
- If you are silent and do not respond, you have not given consent.
- If you say "yes", you can change your mind and say "no" at anytime.
- The other person needs to stop when you change your mind or say "no".
- If a person doesn't get consent or if they don't listen to when you say "no", get help from someone you trust.



Activity 5: Peer modelling how to say 'no'

The teacher distributes [Appendix 3: How to say "no"](#) to the class and reads the scenarios aloud to the class. Students can volunteer to come up and practice how to say "no" on that scenario.

Scenario 1: Saying "no" to physical touching	Scenario 2: You have changed your mind	Scenario 3: They don't listen when you say "no"
Jamie and Clair are spending time together at Clair's house. Clair leans in for a kiss. Jamie does not feel like they are ready to kiss Clair, but they don't want to hurt Clair's feelings. Prompts: • Is Jamie allowed to say "no"? • How could Jamie say "no"? • What should Clair say when Jamie says "no"?	Eric and Jazzy are spending time together at Eric's house. Jazzy tells Eric they want to kiss them. Eric wants to kiss Jazzy too. After a few minutes of kissing, Eric starts to feel uncomfortable, they don't want to kiss Jazzy anymore. Prompts: • Is Eric allowed to change their mind? • How can Eric say "no" after they have said "yes". • How should Jazzy respond when Eric changes their mind?	Jessie and Danny have been dating for a few months. Jessie and Danny have had sex a few times. Jessie and Danny are kissing, and Danny tries to take off Jessie's clothes. Jessie says "no, I don't feel like having sex today". Danny doesn't listen to Jessie and keeps trying to take off Jessie's clothes. Prompts: • Is Jessie allowed to say "no" to Danny? Even if they have had sex before? • What could Jessie do? • How should Danny have responded when Jessie said "no, I don't feel like having sex today"? • If you were in this situation, who could you talk to about it?

Conclusion: Recap the key concepts discussed in the lesson, emphasising the importance of getting and giving consent.

- Ensure that your students can define consent.
- Highlight the significance of consent in establishing healthy and respectful relationships. Discuss how consent is essential for maintaining boundaries, fostering trust, and promoting open communication.
- Remind students that they can change their mind at any time.
- Discuss how students can get help and who they could talk to if their boundaries are not respected.



Teacher reflection

Reflect on the lesson asking yourself:

- Did the lesson cater to the diverse learning preferences and needs of the students?
- Did I effectively communicate the definition of consent?
- Did the lesson provide opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss their understanding of consent?
- Did I emphasise that consent is revocable?
- How can I build on this lesson to support students to continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills about consent and saying "no"?
- Were there any parts of this lesson that should be recapped or repeated to help students consolidate their learning?

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- 2 Chou, Y. C., Lu, Z. Y. J., Chen, B. W., & Lin, C. J. (2019). Awareness of sexual rights and empowerment: Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of a sexual health intervention for adults with intellectual disability. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 57(9), 1202-1216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1629383>

Appendix 1: How to ask for permission

[BACK](#)

Who is Nicole?

Nicole is a young girl on the autism spectrum who attends Year 7 in a mainstream school. She has strong communication skills and is able to express her thoughts verbally. Academically, she manages the curriculum well and has a particular passion for music, enjoying the sounds of different instruments. She is also a confident reader, though she sometimes finds it challenging to understand more complex texts.

Nicole is a friendly and social student who actively seeks out interactions with her classmates. At times, she expresses affection in ways that may not align with social expectations, such as hugging classmates tightly or gently touching their faces. With support, Nicole is learning how to recognise personal boundaries while continuing to engage positively with her peers.

Recommendations made by Nicole school counselling centre

Based on recommendations from the school's counselling team, Nicole receives level one support (DSM-5, 2022). While she thrives academically and is highly engaged in learning, she benefits from additional guidance in developing her social, emotional, and communication skills. A teacher's assistant provides in-class support, helping Nicole build strategies to navigate social interactions and express herself in ways that foster positive peer relationships.



Phase 1 IDENTIFY SKILL OR BEHAVIOUR

individual intervention for Nicole was based on observations from her teachers. They noticed that she enjoys showing affection by hugging her classmates throughout the day, often approaching them unexpectedly. However, some of her classmates were uncomfortable with this, responding by stepping away or avoiding the interaction.

As part of sex education, the teacher had already introduced discussions on consent and peer relationships. Despite these lessons, Nicole continued to express affection through spontaneous hugs. To support her in understanding personal boundaries while maintaining positive social connections, the teacher introduced an individual intervention. With the support of a teacher's assistant, they used a simple recording sheet to track how often Nicole initiated hugs with her classmates. This data was collected over two weeks to gain insight into patterns of interaction.

The teaching team then reflected on the key question: What is the target skill we want Nicole to develop through this intervention? From this, they formulated the following SMART goal:

Nicole's SMART target

By the end of the month, Nicole will only hug her classmates if they give her permission.

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time Bound



Phase 2 INVESTIGATE EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

To support Nicole in developing her understanding of social interactions and personal boundaries, the teacher sought an evidence-based intervention. They consulted *AFIRM*—a free database grounded in rigorous international research—to identify an approach suited to Nicole's needs.



Phase 3 **SELECT EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES**

The teacher selected social narratives as an appropriate evidence-based practice to help Nicole navigate social communication and peer interactions more effectively.



Phase 4 **PREPARE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The teacher starts with the social narrative draft. This is Nicole's social narrative:

How can I ask for consent?

	I like being at school I have many friends at school
	I like to touch my friends Touching them by • giving them a hug • holding their hand
	When I am happy or excited, I want to • hug my friends tightly

	Some of my friends do not like • being touched • being hugged
	They can feel • uncomfortable • angry

	"To hug my friends, I need to get consent." Consent mean • agreeing to something • not being pressured • saying "yes"
	When I want to hug my friend I need to ask • "Can I hug you?"

	I need to wait to hear an answer
	If my friend says • “Yes, you can hug me” I can hug them.
	If my friend says • “No, I don’t want a hug” I cannot hug them.
	If my friend is silent, I cannot hug them Because they have not given consent
	I will • ask my friends • listen to their answer

	I will only hug my friends if they • give consent
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Phase 5 **IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**

How was Nicole involved?

Nicole was actively involved in the intervention process. The teacher invited her to a meeting after class to discuss the situation with her classmates in a supportive and constructive way. She offered to help Nicole better understand social expectations around consent and peer relationships, and asked about her own thoughts on the topic.

To provide clear guidance, the teacher introduced a social narrative, which Nicole read and engaged with. She agreed to meet weekly to review and adapt the story together. During these sessions, Nicole contributed new ideas, and they collaboratively set goals. They then adjusted the story to reflect this.



Phase 6 **MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Each week, they revisited the story, discussing progress and making updates based on Nicole's suggestions. After reading the story, the teacher posed a reflective question to encourage further discussion and understanding. The teacher observed how Nicole was following the expectations of asking for permission and waiting for consent before hugging her peers. When the teacher observed this she would reinforce these behaviours "Nicole, you are being a respectful friend who is able stop and ask her peer if you can hug them".

Appendix 2: How can I ask for consent?

[BACK](#)

Scenario 1: Asking a friend for consent

You are at your friend's house and see that they have the new video game you want to play.
You would like to ask them if you can borrow the game to play at home.

Scenario 2: Asking a family member for consent

Your extended family is over at your house.
You have a cousin named Sammy, who is 5.
You want to give Sammy a big hug to say hi.

Scenario 3: Asking your partner for consent

You have been dating your partner, Ky, for a few months.
You both really like each other.
You want to kiss them for the first time.

Appendix 3: How to say “no”

[BACK](#)

Scenario 1: Saying "no" to physical touching

Jamie and Clair are spending time together at Clair’s house.
 Clair leans in for a kiss.
 Jamie does not feel like they are ready to kiss Clair, but they don’t want to hurt Clair’s feelings.

Scenario 2: You have changed your mind

Eric and Jazzy are spending time together at Eric’s house.
 Jazzy tells Eric they want to kiss them.
 Eric wants to kiss Jazzy too.
 After a few minutes of kissing,
 Eric starts to feel uncomfortable, they don’t want to kiss Jazzy anymore.

Scenario 3: They don’t listen when you say "no"

Jessie and Danny have been dating for a few months.
 Jessie and Danny have had sex a few times.
 Jessie and Danny are kissing, and Danny tries to take off Jessie’s clothes.
 Jessie says, “No, I don’t feel like having sex today”.
 Danny doesn’t listen to Jessie and keeps trying to take off Jessie’s clothes.