



# **SEXUAL ASSAULT & TEENAGERS**

**An Exercise for Parents and Teens about sexually appropriate ways to interact with others**





# What is Sexual Assault?

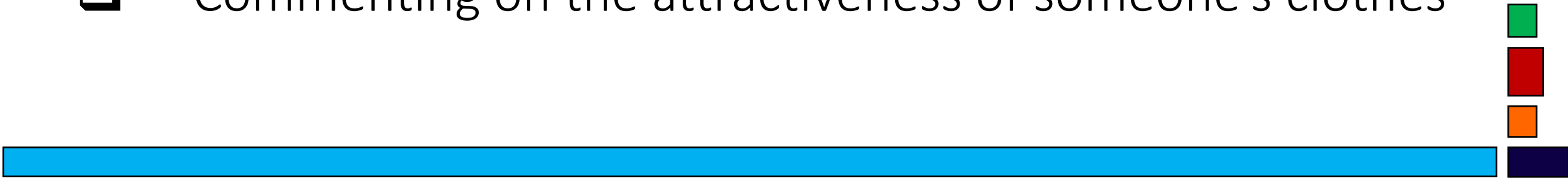
Legally, sexual assault is any type of forced or coerced sexual activity that you don't agree to. It includes

- RAPE,
- sexual contact that does not include sex (that will be referred to in this exercise as SEXUAL ASSAULT) and
- SEXUAL HARASSMENT (because the definition of assault is defined in part by your actions creating a sense of fear in another person).





# Which of the following is considered sexual harassment?

- Staring at someone's sexual body parts
  - Noticing an attractive person who walks by
  - Slowly licking your lips while looking at a person
  - Turning obviously to check out someone's butt
  - Referring to someone as "hot" or some other sexual term
  - Commenting on the attractiveness of someone's clothes
- 



### **Staring at someone's sexual body parts**

*Any obvious looking, staring, checking out of someone's sexual body parts for an extended period of time*



### **Noticing an attractive person who walks by**

*Discreetly looking at someone you are attracted to is not harassment. Leering or making a scene while looking is. A civilized person doesn't make it obvious they are noticing how hot someone is.*



### **Slowly licking your lips while looking at a person**

*Definitely. Grabbing your crotch, making hip thrusting motions, wagging your tongue to imitate oral sex are all sexual harassment.*



### **Turning obviously to check out someone's butt**

*Yes. Politeness and civilized behavior includes not making someone unnecessarily uncomfortable in public. Gawking and snapping your head around to check out a hot person is sexual harassment because it makes your sexual interest obvious.*



### **Referring to someone as "hot" or some other sexual term**

Focusing on the sexual attractiveness or availability of another person is sexual harassment. Even saying "you are beautiful!" is sexual harassment due to it being uninvited and focusing on a superficial, sexually related characteristic of a person. Saying that to someone you are dating? OK. Saying that someone when y'all are mutually flirting? OK. Just because someone is beautiful? Not OK.



### **Commenting on the attractiveness of someone's clothes**

*Not sexual harassment. Just complimenting UNLESS you say it all the time in a way that seems like you are not really talking about the clothes but what is underneath "That is a really pretty blouse. I like how it fits your body" = not OK*





Can giving someone a hug be considered sexual assault?

Yes


No






## Yes

When you have a relationship (e.g., friendship, dating relationship, etc.) with someone that includes hugging each other, it isn't assault. If you DON'T have a pre-established relationship with someone who is comfortable hugging, hugging can be sexual assault. Consent (i.e., the other person invites and approves of the interaction) is everything. You can't take for granted that someone else wants to have physical contact, especially physical contact that is similar to what you do with a dating partner.



What about acting like you  
are going to touch someone  
in a sexual way (e.g., reaching  
toward a guy's penis)?  
Is that assault?






✓ **Yes**

Patting someone on the butt, caressing someone's arm or hair, putting your hands on someone's sexual body parts or acting like you are going to do these things, even jokingly, can all fit the legal definition of sexual assault. That doesn't mean you can't be playful, even playful in this mildly sexually intimidating way. You just have to be sure the other person is OK with that kind of playfulness. You don't get to take for granted that the other person "should" be OK with it because, of course, you were "only kidding around."







Is “moonng” someone  
considered sexual harasssment?

Yes

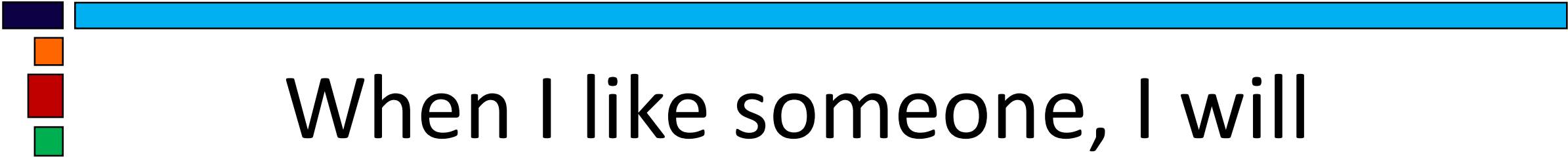
No





## Yes

Exposing your sexual parts to another person (e.g., mooning, shaking your limp penis, hanging your testicles out of your shorts, females flashing their breasts, etc.) when it is not invited or wanted is sexual harassment. It is only a joke when the other person considers it a joke. Keep your nibblies under wraps unless you are specifically invited to display them!



When I like someone, I will sometimes stand really close to them when we talk. Is that OK?

Yes


No





## Maybe

If you are simply standing close so your conversation will be more private, that can be OK. If you stand close and start talking in sexual ways without making sure the other person is interested in that kind of conversation, then it is sexual harassment. If you are standing close to block her into a corner or press her up against a wall then it is a problem. Physical intimidation and pushing your body against someone else is definitely harassment, and potentially sexual assault; especially if a part of your body that is touching them is a sexual part (e.g., your butt, crotch or chest).



There are times when I have to beg my dating partner to do something sexual.  
Is that sexual harassment?

Yes

No

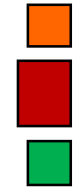




# Afraid so

OK. Sexually intimate relationships are complicated and communication is crucial and often difficult and awkward. Talking about what you want and like sexually is an important part of a healthy sexual relationship. BUT. Pressuring someone to do something sexual is NOT healthy. Begging is the mildest form of this. If your partner ends up “giving in” to shut you up, you have sexually harassed them. Also, if you threaten them (e.g., “Maybe we should break up”) or emotionally manipulate them (e.g., “if you really loved me you would . . .” “If you do it with me then we can be together as a couple”) you have sexually harassed them and some people have been successfully prosecuted for sexual assault when they did this. What’s the answer? Consent without pressure for everything you do. And being able to be sexually frustrated without trying to make someone else take care of your sexual needs!





Is touching someone's sexual body part considered rape?

Yes

No

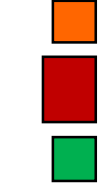






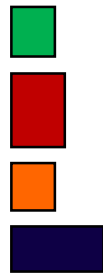
## Maybe


If there is not mutual agreement, it is definitely sexual assault (unless the age difference in you and the person fits the legal definition of statutory rape). Rape is “the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.” ([Department of Justice](#)). So if your hand enters their sexual body part then it is rape. Regardless, without consent, that is just wrong.



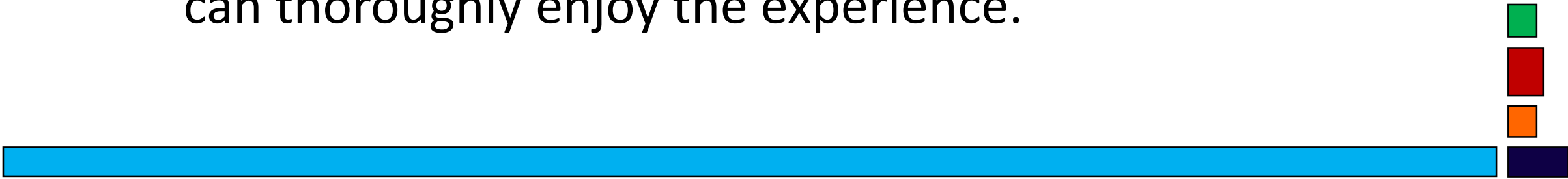



When is it too late to change  
your mind once you have  
agreed to so something sexual  
with someone else?





**It is never too late.** You can change your mind about doing something sexual at any time, including after you have actually started to have sexual intercourse. It does not matter if the other person will be frustrated that you have changed your mind. If they get angry because you change your mind about sex, then it is a sign there is something wrong with them! You should only engage in sex when both partners are willing and comfortable and can thoroughly enjoy the experience.





Can you be charged with rape  
even when the person agreed  
at the time to have sex?

Yes


No





✓ **Yep**

First, you can be charged with a crime at any time even if nothing has happened. The question is whether you can be convicted of the crime. If your sexual partner has consumed any substance that alters their perception in any way then they can legally (and legitimately) claim they were not able to give consent because their judgement was impaired. That can be after only one drink, using marijuana, being stumbling, blind drunk or messed up on prescription or illicit drugs; from the smallest amount to being seriously incapacitated.





Is it still rape when someone  
didn't say "stop" or "no?"

Yes

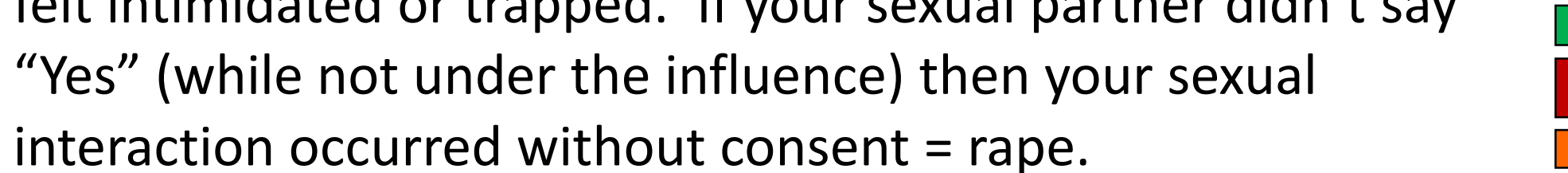
No





# ✓ Yes.

You can be successfully prosecuted for rape even if someone didn't say "stop" or "no". Some people can end up feeling like they were raped even when they agreed to do something sexual and didn't state clearly they wanted to stop when they changed their mind. Some people have trouble speaking up for themselves even when their partner is perfectly willing to stop and would be fine not having sex. They may worry what their partner will think. They may think they have to continue because they wanted to start in the first place. They may have felt intimidated or trapped. If your sexual partner didn't say "Yes" (while not under the influence) then your sexual interaction occurred without consent = rape.







It can't be rape if your sexual partner wants to do it, right?





✓ **Wrong**

Sexual partners can change their mind. Someone can initially want to have sex but change their mind. Sex can become physically uncomfortable for someone making them want to stop. Someone can become uncomfortable with what their partner is asking them to do sexually even though they were initially interested in sex. Someone might begin to have disturbing memories surface once they begin to have sex even though they thought it was not going to be a problem. If a sexual partner doesn't stop when someone wants them to stop, it is rape or sexual assault. Sex is something intimate shared between people. Partners should continually pay close attention to the other's comfort, asking and telling what is and isn't pleasurable. You won't go wrong if you keep checking and keep asking.







## Note to Reader:

This exercise is meant to help parents and their kids grapple with the complications of modern sexual intimacy that occurs during adolescence and young adulthood. It was developed as a resource to accompany my blog on talking to your teen about the issues related to sexual assault (<http://drjameswellborn.com/thirteen-things-talk-teen-13-reasons-parents-guide-episode-9-side-5a-part-2-sexual-assault/>). It does not constitute legal or professional advice. As you can see, many of the sexual behaviors that are illegal are also typical parts of teenage playful and insensitive behavior as they learn to deal with their newly awakened sexual urges and desires and as they struggle to become more skilled at flirting and seduction. Recognizing that teens typically engage in these undesirable behaviors does not excuse them from responsibility for rape and sexual assault. It does mean they will cross lines that should immediately get an adult prosecuted (e.g., the mild but persistent forms of harassment and low-level sexual assault based on impulsive touching) but for which prosecuting teens would be an over reaction. The examples provided in this exercise represent only a few of the sexual issues that need to be addressed between parent and teen. I hope that it will prompt a discussion between you and your kid that leads to a deeper examination of consent, sexual decision making and sexual pleasure as your teen enters into sexually intimate relationships.

Good luck! (You're going to need it.)





# Resources

Here is some additional information on these topics.

## Sexual Assault

- Here is a link to my blog post on talking to your teen about sexual assault (<http://drjameswellborn.com/thirteen-things-talk-teen-13-reasons-parents-guide-episode-9-side-5a-part-2-sexual-assault/>)

## Consent:

- Check out this great site from Teach Consent ([www.teachconsent.org](http://www.teachconsent.org)). Be sure to go to the parent guide.
- Here something I wrote on talking to your kid about consent (<http://drjameswellborn.com/thirteen-things-talk-teen-13-reasons-parents-guide-episode-6-boredom-consent/>)

## Rape

- Here's the legal definition (<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-eric-holder-announces-revisions-uniform-crime-report-s-definition-rape>)

## Statutory Rape

- Here's Tennessee law, see especially 39-3703 to 05:  
(<https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tbi/attachments/Definitions%20of%20Tennessee%20Sexual%20Offenses%20and%20Violent%20Sexual%20Offenses.pdf>)

