



Strand 3 | Relationships and Sexuality

Learning Outcome 3.8:	Students should be able to appreciate the importance of seeking, giving and receiving consent in sexual relationships, from the perspective of building caring relationships and from a legal perspective.
Pre-learning:	Before addressing Learning Outcome 3.8, students need to have engaged with related learning outcomes, such as learning about the signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships (3.3) , gender equity and stereotypes (1.5) , communicating in a respectful and effective manner (1.7) and the importance of empathy (1.8) .

What is the important learning?

The purpose of Learning Outcome 3.8 is to open up conversations with young people about consent as a core part of all healthy relationships, which involves recognising and respecting one's own boundaries and the boundaries of others, always checking whenever one is unsure, and being able to show empathy. This conversation starts with friendships before moving onto romantic/intimate relationships.

It's important that young people discuss why consent matters, beyond a legal lens. In other words, through the lens of respectful and caring relationships.

In teaching about consent, the complexity of factors that influence a young person's capacity to exercise consent need to be discussed. These include self-awareness, self-esteem, capacity to communicate assertively, the influence of alcohol/substances, peer pressure, pop culture and social norms. Discussion of sexual consent also relates to an understanding of harmful gender norms and stereotypes.

Possible questions to explore through this learning outcome:

- What does a healthy relationship look like?
- Is consent an important aspect of how we relate to people both online and in-person? Why/not?
- What is happening when a person gives consent in everyday situations? What are they saying, what are they doing (i.e., verbal and non-verbal)? What does not giving consent look like?
- How might it feel if someone else doesn't give consent to something that you want to do? How might you manage these emotions, while affirming the other person's right to say no?
- What are the key messages about consent online and in the media, for example in music videos, games? How might these messages affect attitudes?
- What might impact on/affect a person's ability to (1) ask for consent, (2) give consent, (3) withhold consent? (prompts: age, confidence, skills, use of alcohol/substances, balance of power in the relationship, peer pressure, social norms, pop culture)
- What are the implications of breaking the law around consent in sexual relationships? What are the other, non-legal, impacts?
- In the context of consent in sexual relationships, what are the available supports and services? How can people access these supports and services?

Possible follow-on learning outcomes:

The risks and consequences of sharing sexual imagery online (2.9)
and/or the **influence of pornography on sexual expression (3.10)**

**Go to the 2023
SPHE Toolkit for
teaching resources
linked to LO 3.8**