COMPANION WORKSHEETS FOR PARENTS OR CARERS

Welcome!

We're so glad that you're here! Thank you for buying the book and for being a Consent Culture creator! We hope that this reading guide will be a helpful companion while you read the book.

We feel that consent basics such as hearing and saying "no," what to do when you are a "maybe," and knowing what you want and asking for it clearly, are all skills that need to be learned in an embodied way and practiced by youth before they are in high-risk situations.

As you go through the book and learn the fun and engaging exercises which accomplish this, you'll also have opportunities to reflect on your own lived experience and to consider how to best share these skills.

We hope that these companion worksheets aid you in those reflections.

Introduction and Chapter 1

Consent

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the authors each tell their stories and their individual journeys to writing this book. Let's start this guide with a look at your present ideas and concerns around consent.

What does consent mean to you? What words or ideas come to mind when you think of the word consent?

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We talk about 5 factors that affect our ideas around consent: socialization, poor modeling, communication, trauma, and systemic inequity. Which of these did you most relate to as having affected your consent education? Why?

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Which of these factors most affects your children? Why?

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Chapter 2

What Is Consent Culture?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discusses how consent is an ongoing, adaptable agreement, and not just about giving permission. It also explores how the dominant culture is currently a culture of coercion and what that looks like. We conclude with a discussion of culture, shifting culture, and what a culture of consent could look like. When we talk about "consent culture" we imagine a different kind of world. One in which every person's autonomy and dignity are respected equally.

What do you imagine when you hear the words "consent culture"?

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How is a culture of consent different from the one we live in now?

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Chapter 3

Laying the Groundwork

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter includes tips and strategies for being prepared to facilitate the interactive exercises which teach the skills of consent. For parents and carers we encourage you to consider how to model consent and be prepared for disclosures and conversations that may be uncomfortable.

How will you model a consent-based approach when you talk with your children?

Are you prepared to stay calm and supportive if a conversation with your children about consent leads to them disclosing information that may be difficult for you to hear? Do you have a plan for what to say or do if this happens?

Chapter 4

Creating the Container

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Guidance on how to create a safe and welcoming environment for young people to explore these concepts and skills is provided. For parents and carers it's important to share information about consent, and to be a good listener.

There are ways to create a space that can help make your children feel safe and secure to explore, discuss, and practice consent skills. Things like actively listening, providing all the information they need, and starting with low-risk scenarios can all help.

What will you do to create a better container for your children to learn about consent?

Chapter 5

“No” Is a Complete Sentence

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter describes exercises to help people practice saying No confidently and hearing No graciously. Before you lead young people through these exercises, try them out yourself.

Saying and hearing “no” is challenging for most people, for a variety of reasons. When was the last time that you struggled to say no?

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When was the last time you felt poorly when hearing someone else say “no”?

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Practice the "no" exercises with a friend or relative. Was it hard to say no the first time? How did it feel when you were thanked for saying "no"? How did it feel to thank someone when they said "no"?

Try thanking someone in real life the next time they say "no" to you. What was their reaction?

Chapter 6

But it's Hard to Say No!

CHAPTER SUMMARY

A sample of what manipulation, coercion, and predatory behavior can look like is included in this chapter. The many reasons that most people have a hard time saying no, such as cultural values, power differentials, the fawn response, and manipulation are considered. Let's look at your experience of these issues.

Did you grow up in a culture that values community over individualism, or vice versa? How has this impacted your ability to say "no"?

Print out a copy of the power/privilege wheel (you can find it here: https://www.creatingconsentculture.com/shop). Mark where you reside in each of the pie slices and draw a line connecting the points together so that you have a circle that represents your position in proximity to power. How do you feel as you look at your circle? What are your thoughts?

Many of us have to engage in "please and appease" behaviors just to get through the day as we move through situations created by systemic inequity. When was the last time you had to do this? How did it make you feel?

How will you model and explain what manipulation looks like to your children? Do you have someone to help you demonstrate what it looks like?

Chapter 7

What if I'm a Maybe?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, we look at best practices around what to do when we are a Maybe, and why sometimes people say Maybe when we actually mean No. We address the issue of not being able to tell what is true for us, and how to check in with ourselves and notice what we want and don't want. The "habitual yes" and the differences between wanting, willing, and tolerating are reviewed. Let's look at your experience of these issues.

Have you ever said "maybe" when you really wanted to say "no"? Think of an example and discuss it.

Do you suffer from "habitual yes"? Or do you know someone who does? What have you noticed about it?

Do you sometimes struggle to know what you want? Or do you know someone who does? What do you think has led to that?

Do you sometimes confuse being wholeheartedly willing with tolerating? What is the difference between the two? If you are tolerating things that you don't want, what is the reason?

How will you share what you've learned about yourself and others through this reflection with your children?

Chapter 8

Changing Your Mind

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the importance of being able to change your mind at any time is emphasized along with how beginning to interact with someone is not like signing a contract. Consent is something given from moment to moment. Boundaries, how they can shift, and different strategies for creating safety for ourselves with our boundaries are discussed. We include more exercises to practice feeling the difference between being a Yes and a No and how it feels in our bodies when we don't express this authentically. Let's look at your experience of these issues.

When you were growing up, did you learn that there was a certain point in sexual interaction that was the point of no return, beyond which you couldn't change your mind? How do you think you absorbed that concept?

Have you ever had sexual interactions that went further than you wanted them to because you felt obligated to continue? Or do you know others who have? Do you think that young people still have these feelings? Why or why not?

When was the last time you realized that your boundaries around a person or activity were changing? Was it hard to communicate that shift?

What have you learned about yourself during this reflection exercise? How will this help you to talk about consent with your children?

Chapter 9

Consent Is Collaboration

CHAPTER SUMMARY

How do cultures and individuals communicate differently and make meaning differently and how can curiosity help us bridge these gaps? We provide exercises to explore different communication styles and to help participants become more familiar with their own comfort levels around different ways to communicate.

We move consent beyond the gatekeeper model to one of collaboration between people whose needs and wants are equally valued. Even in the most loving relationships conflict arises when we attempt to collaborate, but we ascribe different meanings to the same words. Even when people grow up within the same culture and speak the same language, they can have serious miscommunications. Let's look at your experience with miscommunication.

When was the last time you had a miscommunication with someone? What led to it?

What are some things you can do to avoid miscommunications with others?

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What have you learned about yourself and your own communication style while reading this chapter? How will this help you to talk about consent with your children?

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Chapter 10

Asking for What You Want Is Hard

CHAPTER SUMMARY

How and why is it hard to ask for what we want, and how does this impact our ability to collaborate for consent? In this chapter, we introduce desire smuggling, and how to create safety for asking in yourself and others. We include an exercise to practice asking, and encouraging others to ask for what they want. Let's look at your experiences with asking for what you want.

When was the last time you had a hard time asking for what you want? Why was it hard?

When was the last time you engaged in "desire smuggling"? Or someone "desire smuggled" you? What would have happened if the ask was made directly and clearly?

Have you ever thought about how it's easier for some people to ask for what they want? How some people are celebrated for asking for what they want while others are called "demanding" or "ungrateful" for asking for what they need? What are your thoughts about this?

What has this reflection process taught you about yourself? How will this affect the way you talk with your children about asking for what they want?

Chapter 11

Like a Deer in the Headlights

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, we consider the "freeze response," or tonic immobility, what it looks like, and how common it is. We review how it plays into a victim self-blaming or being blamed and shamed by others, and how that contributes to very low rates of report for sexual assault. This is another very important reason to set the bar at enthusiastic consent. We conclude with a group exercise for expressing enthusiastic consent.

After reading this chapter, do you have a better understanding of the freeze response? Has this made you revisit any memories or stories that you have heard in the past?

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What are some things we can do to help shift from a victim-blaming culture to one of supporting victims?

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2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How has reflecting on the freeze response changed how you will talk about consent with your children?

Chapter 12

Backup, Not Backlash

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter looks at the differences between a punitive and a restorative justice system, and how "canceling" people doesn't lead to accountability. We look at ways to be an upstander rather than a bystander and what to do when we're the one who has messed up and how to give a meaningful apology.

Have you experienced or witnessed an example of backlash for speaking up or speaking the truth? What do you think would have happened instead if the principles of restorative justice had been followed?

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What are some reasons that the large majority of people don't report sexual assaults?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the main differences between a punitive and a restorative justice system?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

This conversation brings up memories for people. Memories of times when we had our boundaries violated, and memories of times we violated the boundaries of others. It's important to have compassion for our past selves who did not understand as much as we do now. What can you do to find peace with consent violations in your past?

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What are some things that you can teach your children to do in order to be upstanders rather than bystanders?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

We all make mistakes. What are the four essential components of a meaningful apology?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

What are some ways that you can provide backup and support for your children as they learn to speak up for what is and is not okay with them?

Chapter 13

Taking it Online

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reviews the unique challenges of creating Consent Culture online. We discuss how it's easy to feel less empathy and have more misunderstandings in digital interactions, and provide some tools for ways to counteract this. The evolving ethical questions about sharing images online, both innocently and with bad intent, and the temptation to give unsolicited advice online are considered.

Basically, it can be brutal online. What are some things we can do to make virtual space a better place?

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2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Can you think of a time when you were given unwanted advice, or when you gave advice that was not well received? What would you do differently now?

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What are some ways that we can support people who have had their photos shared without consent?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What are some guidelines or agreements you want to create with your children about how they engage with others on the internet?

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Chapter 14

When Is the Hug Over?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Here we look at how to consensually end an interaction. A few exercises to practice reading body language and communicating when the interaction is over are included.

Ending an interaction is different from beginning one. When is a consensual interaction over?

Do you remember a time when you were caught in a hug or a handshake longer than you would like? What would you do differently now?

How has this reflection affected how you will talk to your kids about consent?

Chapter 15

Practice, Practice, Practice

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter looks at the need to keep practicing the tools we have learned, and how to have compassion for ourselves and others if we don't get it right away. We also look at what to do when people don't seek our consent.

We hope that by now you agree with us that the basic skills for consent need to be practiced, and practiced often, before young people find themselves in high stakes situations. How will you build practicing these skills into your family life moving forward?

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How will you remember to practice these skills and model them in your own life?

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2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How will you remember to have compassion for yourself and others when you don't get it right every time?

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Now that we've gone through the whole book, let's talk about consent again. What does consent mean to you? What words or ideas come to mind when you think of the word consent? When you're done, compare this to what you wrote at the beginning of this reading guide. What has changed?

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2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Thank You for Being a Consent Culture Creator!

We hope that you will look at the resources in the back of our book and continue your journey with further studies. There are quite a few great books on consent now, and we especially encourage you to study how to be as anti-racist, inclusive, and trauma-informed as possible.