Culturally Competent Sex Communication

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Presenters

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Recent Consent History

● “No Means Yes, Yes Mean Anal” – Yale 2010

● 2011-2014 Task Force, Surveys, and Federal Recommendations

● State Legislation – CA 2014

● Affirmative Consent – “Yes Means Yes”
“...no amount of consent education would have prevented me from getting raped.”
On Aug. 16, Twitter user Nafisa Ahmed wrote a nine-tweet thread using the example of borrowing $5 to explain consent to men. And literally everybody should take note.
Study 1: Demographics

“Exploring Sexual Consent and Hostile Masculine Norms Using the Theory of Planned Behavior”
2017, Psychology of Men and Masculinity Journal

- Small private Northeastern university
- Quantitative survey about attitudes and behaviors related to sexual consent
- 331 undergraduate students
- 43.5 % male and 55.6 % female
- 78.2 % White
- 89.1 % heterosexual
Study 1: Findings

- Students are giving and getting verbal consent
- Athletes, Fraternity/Sorority students, and men had less positive attitudes about consent
- No consent required for kissing
- Consent is assumed in relationships
- Students advance and look for reaction
- Confusion about non-verbal consent
Study 2: Demographics

“Sex Communication: The New Consent Education”

- Follow up questions based on study 1
- 4 focus groups conducted in spring 2017
  - 1-hour duration
  - Qualitative content analysis

1. Men & women’s group
   - 2 men, 1 woman
   - All sophomores
2. Women’s group
   - 4 women
   - 2 Seniors, 2 Juniors
3. Athlete group
   - 3 men, 1 woman
   - 2 seniors, 2 sophomores
4. Fraternity & Sorority group
   - 2 men, 2 women
   - All seniors
Study 2: Findings

- Consent in relationships versus consent in hookup situations
- Lack of clarity and discomfort with defining romantic relationships
  - Influence of alcohol on consent
  - Fraternity/Sorority culture and the social hierarchy
  - Verbal consent is awkward but they are still doing it
  - Waiting for reciprocation or no
- No education on sex or consent until college
- Campus involvement makes a difference
- Kissing versus other intimate behaviors
  - Gender norming
  - Coded language
  - Sexualizing of nudity
  - The value of consent
“I think there’s less of it [consent] with alcohol. There’s more gray areas and you perceive things differently obviously when your perception differs from alcohol so you don’t always ask and you don’t always pick up on the signals, so it’s a lot more blurry.” –Senior female sorority member

“I think society also places emphasis on girls consenting rather than guys consenting because it feels like the guys have nothing to lose.” –Female sophomore in mixed gender focus group

“I think it’s just a lot less awkward if you’re focusing your verbal on like if they’re comfortable or not as opposed to saying like “hey am I allowed to stick my penis inside of you now” that’s just super weird and no one says that.” –Male sophomore athlete

“At least in my experiences my partner will usually assume sometimes that I’m ok moving a step further so they’ll be like make certain movements or do certain things like non-verbally which I’ve been fine with, and so more so just kind of goes for it and then like if I don’t like it I can say no.” –Senior woman sorority member
“Many students have absorbed the knowledge about the legal standard of affirmative consent, but this knowledge may not affect their behavior. Their words suggest a kind of cognitive dissonance, as they describe their own consent practices, which they know to be suboptimal. Heterosexual students overwhelmingly operate within an implicit framework in which men are the ones who move the sexual ball down to the field, and women are the blockers.”

“Researchers Found What Consent Looks Like Isn't Always Straightforward on College Campuses”
Culturally Competent Sex Communication

Awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills that work towards optimal interactions during sex through effective communication and the ability to understand and know the person(s) with whom you are going to have sex. Specifically the framework highlights:

● Awareness of your sexuality including desires, boundaries, sexual scripts, attitudes about gender, and sexual values.
● Awareness of your sexological worldview.
● Awareness of your cultural and familial values related to sex, sexuality, and gender.
● Developing positive attitudes towards consent, positive attitudes towards active ongoing communication during sex, and positive attitudes and respect for sexual partners.
● Gaining knowledge of sexual partners’ sexuality, desires, boundaries, and non-verbal cues.
● Knowledge of sex and gender norms.
● Awareness of your sex and gender biases and prejudices, as well as, the willingness to challenge sex and gender assumptions and stereotypes.
● Interpersonal awareness.
● Skills to effectively communicate verbally and nonverbally with sexual partners.
Culturally Humble Sex Communication

Culturally competent sex communication is a lifelong process because competence with one sex partner does not mean competence with another. Individuals can continue this process through:

- Engaging in self-reflection and learning about their own sexuality.
- Interacting with and learning about sex and gender from various people and diverse groups.
- Gaining knowledge about different cultural sex practice and different sexological worldviews.
- Attending gender and sexuality trainings and events.
Sex Communication Workshop Series

4 60 minute workshops

• Workshop 1: Attitudes and Beliefs about Sexuality
• Workshop 2: Sexual Self Exploration
• Workshop 3: Sex Learnings
• Workshop 4: Sexual Communication
Workshop 1

Sexuality Is....

● What did I learn about sex from my home and community:
● Sights, sounds, smells associated with sex:
● Special occasions associated with sex:
● Messages about sex heard repeatedly while growing up:
● Challenges and experiences that shaped my sexuality:
● Intimate partners from my past that shaped my sexuality:

Adapted from “I Am From” by Beverly Tatum and The Rookwood Institute
### Your Personal Extragenital Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of Touch</th>
<th>Touching by Hand</th>
<th>Touching by Mouth</th>
<th>Touching with other parts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where on My Body</strong></td>
<td>Stroking</td>
<td>Patting</td>
<td>Rubbing</td>
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<td>Head and Face</td>
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<td>Hair</td>
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<td>Lips</td>
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<td>Tongue</td>
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<td>Ears</td>
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<td>Behind Ears</td>
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<td>Earlobes</td>
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<td>Shoulders</td>
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<td>Breasts</td>
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<td>Upper Back</td>
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<td>Buttocks</td>
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<td>Arms and Hands</td>
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<td>Fingers</td>
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<td>Toes</td>
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<td>Full Body</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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*from: Whipple, B & Olsen, G. Sex Encounters: How Women Can Say Yes To Pleasure and No To Unsafe Sex. New York: Pocket Books, 1988*
Workshop 3

Muffing (Trans Woman Penetration)
Workshop 4

- Telling my partner what to do to stimulate me during intercourse would be:
- Showing my partner what to do to stimulate me during intercourse would be:
- Asking my partner to stimulate me to orgasm when I have intercourse with my partner would be:
- When having sex with a partner, how often do you tell your partner what feels good?
- When having sex with a partner, how often do you show your partner what feels good?
- During the past six months, how many times have you and your sex partner(s) discussed:
  - How to prevent pregnancy
  - How to use condoms
  - How to prevent HIV/AIDS
  - How to prevent STIs
  - Sex history
- Asking my partner if they are having sex with other people would be:
- Telling a partner a certain sexual activity hurts you would be:
- Telling a partner a certain sexual activity make you uncomfortable would be:
- Telling a partner a certain sexual activity is not making you feel good would be:
- Suggesting a new sexual activity would be:
- Telling a partner you do not want to have sex would be:
- Telling a partner a certain sexual activity feels good would be:
- Telling a partner that you want to have sex would be:
- Telling a partner that you like a specific sexual activity would be:
- Initiating sex would be:
Discussion and Questions

CONSENT IS...

- It sounds enthusiastic, affirmative, positive, specific, sexy
- It looks like a head nod, a smile, a gesture, a wink, a thumbs up
- It smells like pheromones, sweat, lotion, eau de toilette, skin
- It tastes like mouth-watering, chocolate, guacamole, spicy, pizza
- It feels like you’re sober, safe, butterflies in your stomach, a cozy sweater, complete

Δ(\(x_1 \pm y_1 \pm \lambda\)) = Consent
Thank you