

# Explaining the Whys of the Undressing Consent Curriculum February 2022

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## **TL;DR?**

**Check out this 1minute video on why talking about rejection=sexual violence prevention**  
[Rejection - YouTube](#)

**Check out this 1min video on why talking about porn=sexual violence prevention**  
[Why we talk about porn - YouTube](#)

**Check out this 1min video on why talking about pleasure/desire=sexual violence prevention**

[What does talking about sex positivity and pleasure have to do with preventing sexual violence? - YouTube](#)

## **Want more? Read on.**

### Why Cover Nonverbal/Indirect and Grey Areas of Consent

#### **What we are Trying to Achieve:**

- Thinking through context, intent, and impact
- Navigating ethically grey areas around alcohol and capacity
- Understanding both verbal and nonverbal sexual communication
- Understanding the difference between coercion vs convincing

#### **What the Research Says:**

- Lack of comprehension of consent is strongly associated with sexual aggression among undergraduate heterosexual men (Warren et al 2015)
- Use of affirmative sexual consent (i.e., ongoing, continuous, and clear communication about sexual acts) among the youth is very inconsistent because it requires information, motivation, and behavioral skills and is not included in the widespread sexual script (Jozkowsk 2015). Undergraduates identified some of these aspects in a qualitative study as: consent should be natural and free-flowing, as well as verbal, clear and ongoing. Affirmative consent is awkward and ascertaining it indirectly can be more comfortable, and various social and personal factors can influence explicit discussions of consent (Shumlich and Fischer 2020).
- Alcohol is a significant risk factor, because men who are intoxicated are (Abbey 2011)
  - Aroused by deterrents
  - Angered with refusal

- More likely to use force

## Why Focus on Porn and Sexual Scripts

### What We Are Trying to Achieve:

- Consider where we learn about sexual values
- Reflect on how sexual scripts impact our behaviour and assumptions
- Recognize the gendered expectations around pleasure politics, lack of verbal navigating of consent and sexual initiation that porn and other sexual scripting sets up

### What the Research Says:

- Rates of porn exposure are relatively high amongst youth, with majority of youth encountering some form of pornography prior to their first sexual encounter (see Sun et al., 2014). Moreover, porn tends to be a fairly common source of sex education for youth (Rideout, 2001), especially men (Sun et al., 2014).
- However, majority of mainstream (or popular) pornography tends to center around gendered sexual scripts, involving a male and female actor, that accept, and even encourage, male dominance over women, female degradation, and violence towards women (Bridges et al., 2010). For example, in their content analysis of most popular pornographic videos, Bridges and colleagues (2010) found that 88.2% of the scenes analyzed included at least one act of violence against the female actor, with the female actor displayed pleasure or responding neutrally to these acts. Mainstream pornographic content also often only focuses on male pleasure, as exhibited by centering of sexual acts that favor men's pleasure (e.g., oral performed on a man is more common than oral performed on a female) and by porn often ending when the male actor (visibly) ejaculates on the female actress (Bridges, 2010; Schauer, 2005). This commonality of visible ejaculation on the female, especially on their face, can also be seen as a form of male dominance and female denigration (Bridges, 2010; Schauer, 2005). These mainstream videos also do not include components of sexual intimacy (e.g., kissing, cuddling, emotional conversations (Bridges, 2010).
- Based on past literature, Sun and colleagues (2018) proposed that for a lot of youth, pornography provides a gendered cognitive "sexual script" that tells youth how they themselves, and those around them, should be acting during sexual encounters.
- In their sample of undergraduate men, Sun and colleagues (2018) found that the more frequent men's porn use was, the more likely they were to try to replicate these acts in sexual encounters, request these acts from their partners, and have concerns over own sexual performance and body image. These findings remained significantly when controlling for age and were not mitigated by the participant's relationship status (Sun et al., 2018).

## Why Focus on Rejection

### What We are Trying to Achieve:

- Normalizing and de-personalizing rejection
- Thinking about what rejection feels like, and why it can be so hard
- Identifying healthy ways to handle rejection, both in the moment and in the aftermath

## What the Research Says:

- Men's negative responses to romantic rejection can range from extreme forms of violence against women (e.g., stabbing, sexual assault, or murder) to more common, less extreme, forms of aggression such as name calling (e.g., "slut" or "bitch") and verbal threats of violence (Stratmoen et al., 2018; Woerner et al., 2018). Moreover, these aggressive responses can arise as a result of rejection from romantic partners, friends, acquaintances, or even strangers (Stratmoen et al., 2018; Woerner et al., 2018).

## Why Focus on Pleasure

### What We Are Trying to Achieve

- Increasing personal awareness of one's own sexual desires. This supports more quickly being able to identify when we don't like something that is happening in a sexual encounter, and increases our ability to get out of the situation. Importantly- it is never our fault if we don't recognize when it is something we do not want and/or cannot get out of the situation.
- Rewriting sexual scripts by considering our personal desires
- Normalizing the vast spectrum of sexualities and sexual preferences

## What the Research Says

- Positive sex education, centering on the desires of women, is also critical in challenging these gendered sexual scripts that teach women to be more submissive during sex (Radke et al., 2020). By reinforcing women's right to pleasure, this form of education empowers them to play an active role within their sexual activities (Radke et al., 2020).

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