

Talking to young Karen people about important sexual consent laws

This booklet helps you use the video to talk about healthy relationships.



HARMONY • RESPECT • TRADITION



CENTRE AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT
CENTRAL VICTORIA

Acknowledgment Of Country

We acknowledge that the **Centre Against Sexual Assault Victoria** is on **Dja Dja Wurrung Country**; with **CASACV** delivering services across Central Victoria on lands belonging to the **Traditional Owners of Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Yorta Yorta and Wurundjeri peoples**.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture, and the hopes of all. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal people, their strong living culture, and the unique role they play in the life of this region. We are sorry for the ongoing impact of colonisation, and support self-determination and justice. We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual, and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Sovereignty has never been ceded. We remember that upon the land on which we stand, this was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Acknowledgement of Victim/Survivors

We acknowledge all survivors of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse, relational violence, and violence at the hands of partners, family members, trusted people and people unknown to them. We acknowledge those who have lost their lives through sexual assault and family violence. We also acknowledge the ongoing resilience, strength, and determination to not be defined by their experiences.

We extend our respect and gratitude to all the people who walk through our doors and trust us with the privilege of bearing witness to their healing and recovery.

Inclusion statement

CASACV is committed to supporting inclusion and diversity. We celebrate different abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, ethnicity, and faith. Everyone is welcome and supported at **CASACV**



This resource has been produced by **Centre Against Sexual Assault Central Victoria**,
with the support of the **Victorian Government**.

CASACV acknowledges the support of the Project Advisory Committee, which included members from
Bendigo Community Health Services, Foundation House and Kangaroo Flat Community House.



A note for the facilitator

The information in this booklet helps you talk about the video. You can read this information to the young people before they watch the video with you.

>>> [Start reading here](#)

About this video

This video is to help you understand important sexual consent laws in Victoria - so you can stay safe and avoid harm.

It has been developed by **Centre Against Sexual Assault Central Victoria**, which is the local agency here to support you or your family if you have experienced sexual assault.

Talking about sexual consent can be hard for many reasons. It might be that you're feeling shame. You might not know how to start, or if it's a good time to talk. You are not alone and support is here for you.

This video will...

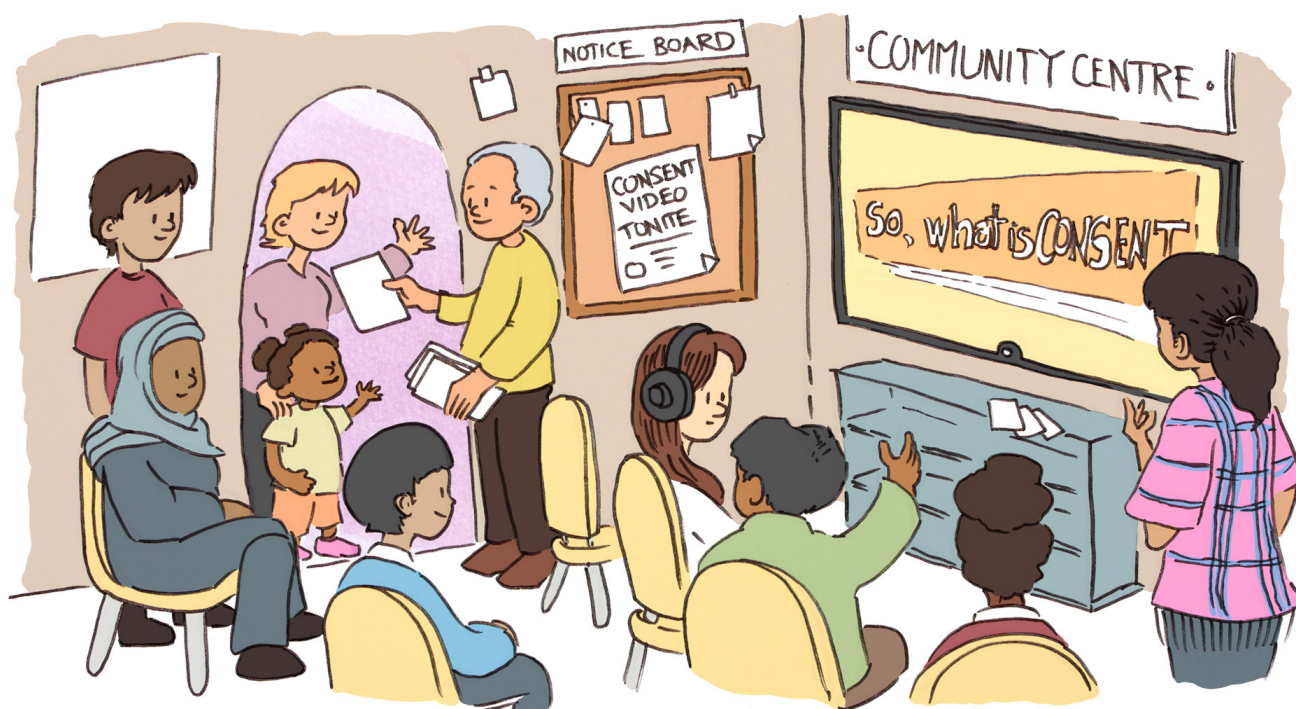
- **Explain what consent means** (like asking permission before doing something).
- **Teach the law** - that consent must be clear, freely given, and can be taken back at any time.
- **Explain boundaries and rules**, like the legal age of consent and when someone cannot legally give consent (for example, if pressured, underage, or in a power imbalance).
- **Help to protect you** by making sure you understand your rights and when something is not okay.
- **Encourage open conversations**, even in cultures where talking about relationships or sex might feel uncomfortable.
- **Reduce harm and abuse** by helping you recognise unsafe situations and feel more confident saying no or seeking help.

This video will also help you understand what sexual assault is.



Before we start, we are going to talk about feeling comfortable today. There are some important things we can do to make sure everyone feels safe to talk about affirmative consent and relationships.

- **Confidentiality.** Everything we talk about is confidential and won't be shared with anyone else. But if we do hear something that means someone is unsafe, there are some laws that say we need to share that information with people who can help them.
- **Feeling safe and comfortable.** You can leave at any time if you are uncomfortable.



What is sexual assault?

We are now going to talk about what sexual assault is.

Sexual assault means any sexual activity that happens without a person's clear and free permission (consent).

It can include things like unwanted touching of private body parts, forcing someone to do sexual acts, or having sex with someone who did not agree. If a person is scared, pressured, asleep, unconscious, or affected by alcohol or drugs, they cannot give proper consent.

If someone does something sexual to you and you did not clearly say yes, or you did not feel free to say no, that is sexual assault.

Sexual assault is a serious crime, and it is never okay.

If it happens, it is important to know that help and support are available. We can talk about that after we watch the video together.

A note for the facilitator

Talking about consent can be hard. You might like to use this short story to help explain consent before watching the video.

Affirmative consent is like planting together on shared soil: you must both prepare the land, agree on what to plant, and tend it with mutual care, attention, and respect.

Shared process: Planting together requires agreement, ongoing communication, and consent - just like relationships.

Timing and readiness: You cannot plant in dry soil or force a seed to grow before it's ready - just as consent must be given freely and without pressure.

Ongoing care: Just as crops need tending over time, affirmative consent is ongoing - not one-time.

Respecting boundaries: Just as one doesn't walk through someone else's field without permission, entering someone's emotional or physical space requires explicit invitation.

Watching the video...

We are now going to watch the video about affirmative consent.

>>> Play video



After watching the video

>>> Start reading here

We hope that you now understand that consent means clearly giving permission, especially in sexual situations. In Victoria, the law requires 'affirmative consent,' which means a person must actively and freely say yes every time, and they can change their mind at any point.

Silence, pressure, fear, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol means there is no clear consent. Both people must feel safe, understand what's happening, and be legally old enough.

Some important information

There are some important things to know about the age of sexual consent.

Under 12 years old

- You cannot do anything sexual with someone under 12 years old. Even if the young person says yes, the laws says it is not allowed.

12 to 15 years old

There is an important 24-month rule for this age group.

- People aged between 12 and 15 years who are more than 24 months' (two years) different in age, cannot have sex or do sexual acts, even if they both want to.

For example, if someone is 13 years and three months and their boyfriend is 15 years and six months, this breaks the 24-month rule. The 15-year-old would be breaking the law.

- It's important to remember that you can never do anything sexual with someone under 12 years.

16 to 17 years old

- At 16, a person can legally consent to have sex with anyone the same age or older.
- But, the 24-month rule still applies if they have sex with anyone younger.

Important note: people aged 16 to 17 cannot legally consent to sex with someone older than them who is in a position of care or responsibility for them – like a sports coach, religious leaders or a teacher.

Sometimes, even if someone doesn't want to consent to sex, they might feel they that are not able to say no because the other person has too much control or power over them. **This is called a power imbalance.**

For example, someone can have more power and control over you because of:

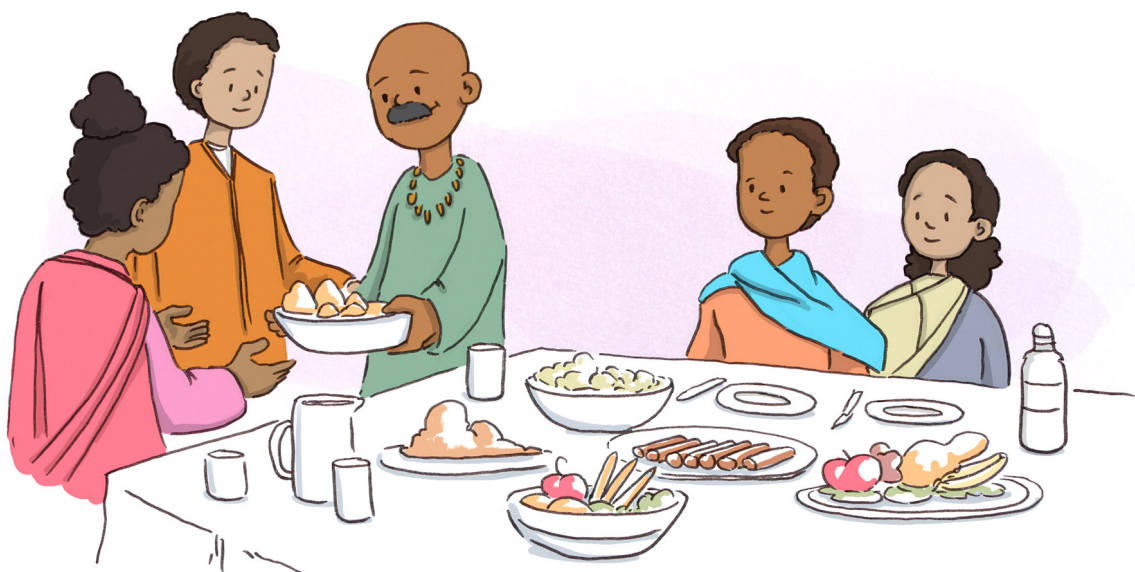
- their age
- their relationship to you
- you not understanding what is being asked of you
- control over who you see, what you wear, your money etc

Because of power and control imbalances, there are rules about who cannot have sexual contact with young people who are over the age of consent.

The rules include:

- **Your family members**
- **Anyone caring for young people** – for example, carers, coaches, teachers, teacher's aides, religious leaders
- **Medical professionals** – for example, doctors, nurses, health workers, counsellors
- **Legal professionals or law enforcement** – for example, lawyers or police officers

The video encourages everyone to talk about consent, even when it might feel uncomfortable - because having the right information helps you make safe choices and speak up if something is wrong.



Support is available

If you or someone you know has experienced unwanted sexual contact, or someone has acted in a sexual way that makes you scared or uncomfortable, help is available.

Asking for help can be difficult and takes courage.

Centre Against Sexual Assault Central Victoria (CASACV) can support you.

The service offers free and confidential counselling and support for children, young people, men and women who have ever experienced sexual abuse.

It doesn't matter whether that abuse was recent, or a long time ago.

You can choose:

- what support you want
- what you want to talk about
- when and how you get support

The service can also talk to you if:

- You're not sure if what has happened to you was sexual assault
- Someone you know has been sexually assaulted and you don't know what to do
- You're worried about a young person who is showing some unwanted sexual behaviours

You can phone **CASACV** between **9am and 5pm Monday to Friday**, on **03 5441 0430** or visit **www.casacv.org.au**

For after hours and weekend support,
the Sexual Assault Crisis Line can help you.
Their phone number is **1800 806 292**

You don't need to tell the police what happened, and
you don't need a letter from a doctor.

When showing this video, you might be asked some questions. Here are some answers that might help.

Frequently asked questions

- **Why is it important to talk about sexual consent, even if it feels uncomfortable?**

Talking about sexual consent helps you to be prepared when you're ready for sex. It's about learning to have good, safe, and respectful relationships without anyone being mean, violent or controlling. It helps you to be the boss of your body.

It also means you understand what the law says and what might happen if there isn't consent.

- **How do you know if someone has clearly said yes to sexual activity?**

You know someone has clearly said yes when they feel safe to tell you or show you with their body language that they want to continue. They can change their mind at any time.

It's important to know that just because someone doesn't speak up, say "no", or push you away, it doesn't mean they're okay with having sex. If they are quiet or not stopping you, it doesn't mean you have their permission. They could be unsure or worried about what will happen if they don't say yes. You should always ask them if they are okay.

- **Can someone change their mind after saying yes to sexual activity?**

Yes, they can.

Agreeing to one sexual act doesn't mean agreeing to other kinds of sexual acts, and just because you have said yes before doesn't mean you are saying yes every time.

People can change their mind or take away consent (permission) at any time, and stop whenever they want.

- **What happens if someone has sex without consent?**

Having sex without consent is sexual assault or rape, which is a crime.

What to do if someone shares their experience of sexual assault

While watching this video and having this talk, some people might share their own experiences of sexual assault. While someone may feel safe to speak up in this group setting, it might not be safe over time, especially when sharing in front of others in their community. It can also be upsetting for others in the group.

What to do in a group setting

- Explain to the group that this is a place for learning and sharing ideas, not counselling or therapy. Encourage people to only share personal information they feel safe and comfortable sharing.
- If someone shares something very personal or upsetting, thank them for sharing and respond with care. For example: “Thank you for sharing that with us” or “That sounds very hard.” You can also suggest talking more privately during a break.
- Check in with the person later when you can. Offer support and connect them with helpful services if needed.

What to do if someone tells you about their experience

- Listen without interrupting, giving them time to share.
- Believe what they are saying and take their worries seriously.
- Tell them they did the right thing by telling you; for children and young people, tell them they are brave and it took courage to tell you.
- Let them know they are not to blame for their experience.
- Be clear about confidentiality limits, including any laws about when you must share information if there is immediate risk of harm.
- Explain what you will do in response and reassure them of your ongoing support.
- Provide information about support services (including web and phone).

What not to do

- Do not share your own story of violence or stop the person telling their story.
- Avoid asking a lot of questions or trying to get too many details - let them decide what they will tell you.
- Do not judge, shame them, or suggest they could have stopped it happening.
- Do not promise confidentiality if you are legally required to report.
- Avoid anger, frustration, or negative comments about the person who harmed them.
- Do not try to fix the problem or tell them what to do.

CASACV provides free specialist sexual assault support services across the Loddon region.

Phone: 5441 0430

Email: intake@casacv.org.au

Website: casacv.org.au

If you are in immediate danger,
call **000**

For 24/7 crisis support, contact the
Sexual Assault Crisis Line
on **1800 806 292**



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