

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT SEX AND CONSENT

Consent is an agreement between people to engage in sex (this includes everything from holding hands and kissing to penetrative sex). Sex without consent is rape!

TALK TO THEM ABOUT ...

BEING IN CHARGE OF THEIR OWN BODIES

Children need to learn that everyone has **the right to their own body** and to feel **comfortable** with how they use it. Both **boys and girls have the right to say stop** when they feel uncomfortable. Explain to them that they need to **respect** when other people say 'no' or 'stop'. Consent does not only apply to sex. It applies to all kinds of touching, playing and kissing.



THE DIFFICULT AND UNCOMFORTABLE STUFF

When we refuse to talk about or answer children's questions about their bodies and sex we send them messages that these topics are **forbidden**. This can lead to **confusion and shame**. If you don't talk to your children about these things **they will learn about it somewhere else** and they may not get **safe and correct information**.



WHAT CONSENT LOOKS LIKE

Explain that consent is about **communication** and that it should happen **every time**. Explain that consent means that either person can **change their mind at any time**. Teach them **if someone doesn't say no it doesn't mean they are saying yes**. Ask your child questions such as 'how do you know if your partner is ready to kiss you?' Explain that they should always ask their partner if they are **okay with what is happening**.



TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT NON-VIOLENCE

Boys often learn that fighting and violence is a way to show that they are men. Girls often learn that it is okay for boys or men to use violence against them. We need to explain to children that **violence is not the answer**.

TALK TO THEM ABOUT ...

GENDER IS NOT AN EXCUSE FOR BEHAVIOUR

Saying things like "boys like to fight" sends **dangerous messages** to children. You need to help your children understand that their **gender does not** give them permission to **hurt other people** or give other people permission to **hurt them**. Girls do not have to let boys touch them if they don't want. Boys shouldn't hurt other boys or girls to get what they want.



HOW THEIR BEHAVIOUR AFFECTS OTHERS

Explain to children that the things they do and say can **hurt other people**. For example ask your child if they would like someone to hurt them or touch them in a way that makes them uncomfortable. Ask them how they would feel if someone did something like that to one of their friends or someone in their family.



TALK TO THEM ABOUT DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Explain to children that **physical violence** (such as hitting or kicking someone) is only one kind of violence. **Touching someone** when they don't want you to is also a kind of violence. **Teasing someone or calling them names** is also violent.



END VIOLENCE!

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY



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WE ALL KNOW THAT VIOLENCE IS A PROBLEM IN OUR SOCIETY

Kelvin is 16 . He was arrested for murder. He explains why he became a gangster:

"I wanted to feel like a man. I thought that girls would like me more if I walked in the street with a gun. That way I could prove to them that I'm not a bangetjie".

Aliyah is 14. She was raped by her boyfriend. She explains what happened:

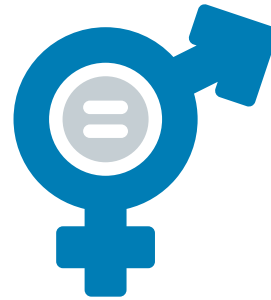
"I told him I didn't want to have sex with him. But he said that I have to because he is a man and he needs sex. He said I am a woman and so I must give him what he wants. I cried and said no but he did it anyway".

Kate is 18. She was raped by a boy she knows at a party. She described what happened:

"I wasn't ready. It was a friend's party. I liked him. We had something to drink. But I didn't want to have sex with him. He took me to a room inside. He had sex with me. I closed my eyes and waited for it to be over."

What we show and tell our children about what it means to be a boy or a girl is important! We can teach and allow them to be violent or we can end violence by teaching them that boys and girls are equal and that it is not okay to hurt anyone.

WE CAN END VIOLENCE BY TALKING TO OUR CHILDREN ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY, NON-VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL CONSENT



WHAT IS GENDER EQUALITY?

Gender defines and differentiates what women and men, and girls and boys, are **expected to be and do** (their roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations).

Gender often **determines who does what, who has what, who makes decisions and who has power**. In many communities men have more power than women and they can use this power to abuse women (physically, sexually and emotionally).

Gender equality means that **men and women have equal power, equal responsibilities and equal rights**.

Gender equality means that girls can play soccer and boys can cry. It means that men can cook and take care of children and women can go to work. It means that no one uses their power to hurt anyone else.

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY

We need to talk to children about gender equality from a young age. We need to have these talks often. We need to teach both boys and girls about respect for themselves and for others.

TALK TO THEM ABOUT ...

GENDER STEREOTYPES

Explain to children that **being tough and violent does not make a 'real boy' or a 'real man'**. **Being obedient and sexually desirable to men does not make a 'real girl' or a 'real woman'**. We need to teach both boys and girls to be **sensitive and kind** and also to speak up (nonviolently) when they disagree with something.

WHAT THEY SEE AND HEAR

Children learn about gender **at school, from friends and the media**. Talk to them about what they see on TV or what they hear at school. Explain to them that **they don't have to go along** with these things. For example explain to girls that they **don't have to look like women in magazines**. Explain to boys that **they don't have to be tough and violent like men in movies**.

WHAT GENDER EQUALITY LOOKS LIKE

Point out and talk to them about **examples of gender equality** in your community or in the media - men who are non-violent, women who are leaders. Show them that men and women are equal by **sharing tasks at home**. For example, show them that men can do the cooking and women can fix things around the house.

