

consent

is...

mutual **active**
respecting boundaries
comfortable
retractable
checking
willingly
given



Workshop Guide

I ♥ CONSENT

nus *women*

Welcome to the I Heart Consent workshop guide

Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of the **I Heart Consent** Workshop Guide, created by the NUS Women's campaign, with the aim of support the creation of positive, informative and inclusive conversations about sexual consent in universities and colleges across the UK. The I Heart Consent Campaign aims to:

- Educate students about consent in order to help create educational and social environments which are happier, safer and more inclusive.
- Combat rape culture and victim blaming by tackling myths, rectifying problematic perspectives of consent and helping students understand that sexual activity without consent is a crime where only the perpetrator can be blamed.
- Empower students to create a positive consent culture by taking part in advocating for access to inclusive sex and relationship education in universities, colleges and in schools.

This guide has been created to enable activists to deliver workshops on campus and empower students to take action towards creating a positive culture of sexual consent. As well as an easy-to-follow workshop outline, which can be altered to suit different institutions, audiences and timescales, this guide also includes campaign ideas that you can use to extend the message throughout the year.

Susuana Amoah
NUS Women's Officer

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1. Consent 101

What is Sexual Consent?

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England & Wales) and The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, says that a person consents if they agree *"by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice."* In the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, consent is defined as *"free agreement"*. Therefore, sexual consent can be defined as - the agreement to engage in sexual activity with the freedom and capacity to do so.

How does the law define rape and sexual assault?

- Rape: the penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with a penis without consent
- Assault by penetration: the penetration of the vagina or anus of another person with a part of their body or anything else without consent
- Sexual assault: sexually touching another person without their consent

Why is consent education important?

Consent is necessary in all sexual activity. Teaching people to acknowledge and respect other people's personal boundaries can help create a society where no one feels ashamed to willingly engage in, or to reject, sexual activity. Consent education is also important in building healthy and respectful relationships, good sexual health and protecting potentially vulnerable people from harm.

Learning about consent is also vital to combating 'rape culture' (defined below) and supporting survivors of sexual assault, by helping people to understand that sexual activity without consent is a crime, where only the perpetrator can be blamed.

What is Rape Culture?

Rape culture is a term used to define a culture in which sexual abuse is condoned and normalised through societal attitudes, images and practices. Common examples include casual references to rape or attempted rape in song lyrics, 'jokes' and 'banter' about rape, and 'victim blaming'.

What is Victim Blaming?

Victim blaming occurs when responsibility and blame is placed on the victim instead of the perpetrator. These attitudes and myths can be seen in views such as "women provoke sexual assault by the way they dress and act" and "if the victim didn't scream, it wasn't rape." This can have a negative impact on victims who want to seek help, due to fears of being judged and blamed for what has happened to them.

Sexual Consent - not always enthusiastic

When discussing consent we must take into consideration the fact that people have different feelings and emotions towards sex. There are many people who for various reasons consent to sexual acts, even though they might not necessarily enjoy the activity, or show typical signs of enthusiasm. For example, an asexual person (someone who does not experience sexual attraction) who is in a sexual relationship with an allosexual person (someone who does experience sexual attraction); or a sex worker who is with a client; or people who are purely having sexual intercourse because they really want a baby.

There are many people who for various reasons consent to sexual acts, even though they might not necessarily enjoy the activity, or show typical signs of enthusiasm.

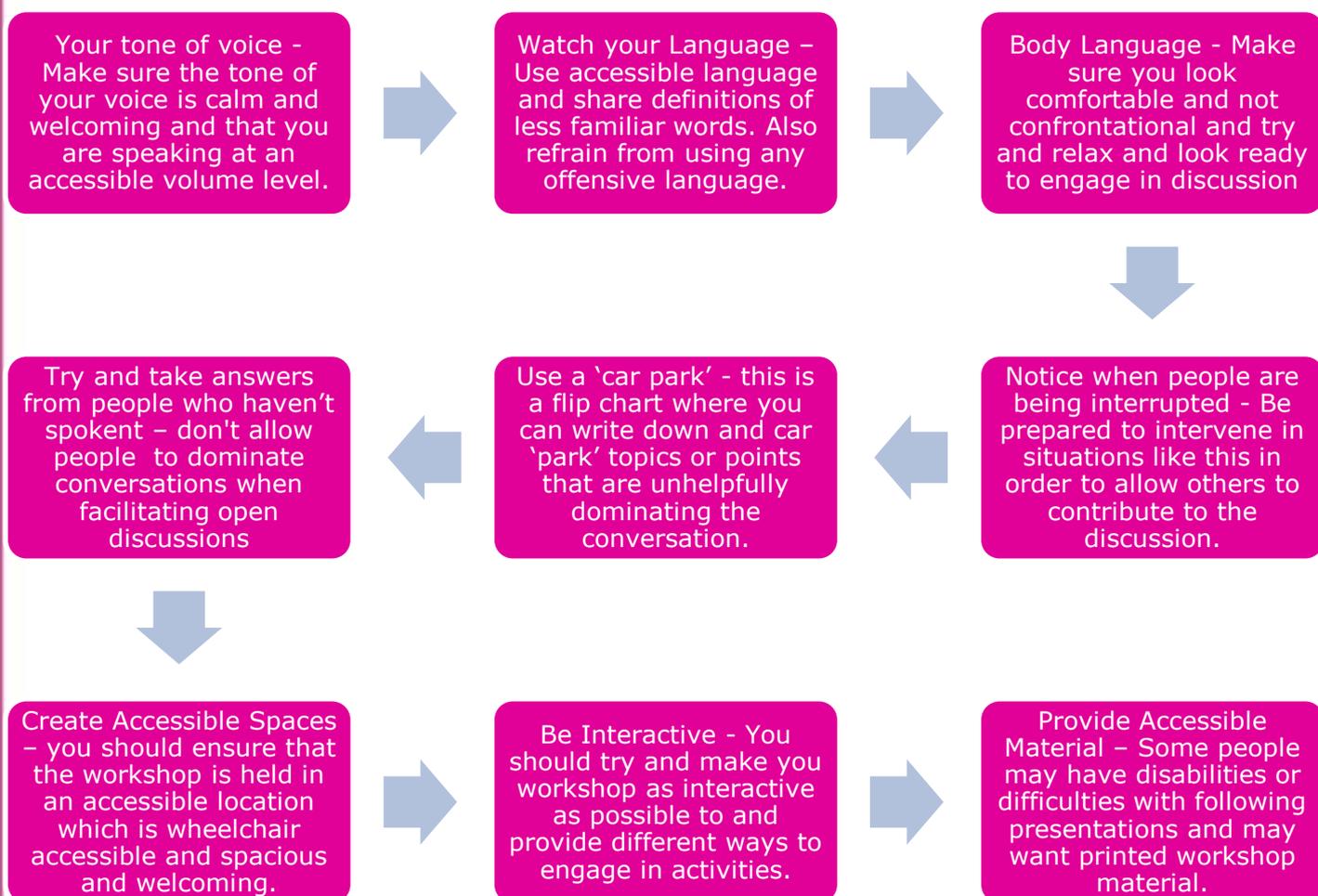
Also, some people who have specific learning and processing related disabilities may find communicating consent a more complex task and may not be physically able to display enthusiasm.

Not everyone has the privilege to feel enthusiastic about sexual consent but that doesn't necessarily mean that they lack the freedom and capacity to make that choice, it just means that wider conversations may need to be had about how to communicate consent to make sure everyone involved is clear and comfortable about the situation. Once people start insisting that enthusiasm is a necessary factor of consent, we begin to remove autonomy and invalidate the choices of these people.

2. Five Top Tips for Facilitating Learning Spaces

1. Be Accessible

Your behaviour as a facilitator is very important to the space and the discussions within it. Things that you should consider are:



2. Be Inclusive

It's important to remember that everyone has varying experiences of sex and sex-education. Taking the following things into consideration when you are facilitating will help you create a more inclusive environment. Things to remember:

- Not everyone has had sex
- Not everyone is heterosexual
- Some people are asexual (someone who does not experience sexual attraction)
- Not everyone has had sex-education

3. Be Challenging

One of the aims of the programme is to rectify problematic perspectives of consent and in order to do this we need to be prepared to challenge common myths about consent and rape culture.

It's important to talk about and challenge misconceptions, not only to make sure myths aren't reinforced, but also because discussions enable people to unlearn problematic concepts and form more healthy ideas of consent.

Here are some ways that you can challenge perceptions:

- Say again? - Ask open questions (e.g. Why do you say that? What does that mean to you?) to allow the person to fully explain their opinion and why they hold that view.
- Inform - You can counter problematic perceptions by providing factual information
- Open the discussion - you can deconstruct myths by exploring the problematic views of one person with the group as a whole by asking questions such as "How does everyone feel about x belief?"
- Confrontation - it might be necessary in some occasions to confront individuals outside during the break to talk to them personally about their views.

4. Use Trigger Warnings

Trigger warnings are used to inform people about potentially upsetting content, such as: sexual violence, self-harm, rape, etc.

If you are aware that something that you are about to discuss is potentially triggering, you should give a trigger warning before talking about the subject then allow a considerable amount of time for participants who want to leave momentarily to do so.

Example of how to give a trigger warning:

"Trigger Warning for the next section of this workshop where we will be talking about rape myths for 20 minutes. If right now or at any time you feel triggered by the discussion please feel free to momentarily leave the space"

You should explain this at the beginning of the workshop and also explain what trigger warnings are and how they will be used. It's also sensible to avoid talking about bad personal experiences or role playing bad experiences to prevent triggering members of the audience.

5. Use Ground Rules

Having ground rules or safer spaces policy is useful for making sure the discussions are as accessible as possible.

- Create ground rules with your workshop participants. This gives people the opportunity to also say what they might find triggering or inaccessible.
- Highlight the importance of respecting the rules that you've created as a group.
- After this is done, make sure you write these ground rules in a place where everyone can see (such as a poster on a wall).
- Make sure you stick to the ground rules and explain the consequences of breaking the rules.

If someone is really disrupting the space, unapologetically upsetting people and/or showing a complete disregard for the ground rules you should be prepared to ask them to leave the space in order for the rest of the workshop to take place in a safer environment.

It's possible someone will want to debate certain issues and challenge particular points. Whilst group discussion and reflection is important and helpful, you should ensure no one person dominates the session or prevents you from moving on to other aspects of the workshop.

Example ground rules:

- This is a safe space - don't be afraid to ask questions
- Don't assume other people genders and use and respect and use people's pronouns
- No offensive language
- Use trigger warnings
- Raise your hand when you want to talk
- Don't judge people on their opinions
- Don't make assumptions about other people's' past experiences
- Don't discuss bad personal experiences or role play bad experiences

3. Consent Workshop Outline

Below is an agenda for a two hour consent Workshop.

Feel free to edit sessions and time scales to what you think will work best for the group that you are working with.

Agenda

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
2. Icebreaker (10 minutes)
3. Ground rules (5 minutes)
4. What is consent? (15 minutes)
5. Rape culture & Victim blaming (10 minutes)
6. Slut shaming and Prude Shaming (10 minutes)
7. Respecting Sexuality (20 minutes)
8. MythBusters (20 minutes)
9. Take action (20 minutes)
10. Wrap up & Questions (5 minutes)

Materials:

- Facilitator workshop slideshow
- Consent Workshop guides
- Workshop Feedback forms
- A flipchart and a marker pen
- Post-it notes
- Blu-Tack
- Large sheets of paper
- Pens

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Introduce yourself and your pronoun
- Explain the aims of the workshop
- Read out the workshop agenda
- Explain what trigger warnings are and how they will be used

2. Ice-breaker (10 minutes)

Start off by asking people to say their name and their pronoun, and maybe throw in an interesting question like one of the example below:

- Who is your favourite superhero and why?
- If you were being banished to a desert island which album would you take with you and why?
- What was your sex education like at school?

Tip: Bear in mind the size of the group when choosing an ice-breaker activity and remember that some people may have specific learning difficulties which might make some ice-breaker activities more difficult for them to engage in.

3. Ground Rules (5 minutes)

Create a list of ground rules for the workshop with the class. Write all of the rules on a large sheet of paper and display them in a visible space in the room.

Extra tips:

Print out workshop agendas

Prepare materials for activities in advance

Make sure that the room is suitable for an interactive workshop – i.e. enough space to move around, swap chairs etc.

Make sure that there is clarity about what will happen if someone breaches a rule.

Example ground rules:

- This is a safe space - don't be afraid to ask questions
- Don't assume other people genders and use and respect and use people's pronouns
- No offensive language
- Use trigger warnings
- Raise your hand when you want to talk
- Don't judge people on their opinions
- Don't make assumptions about other people's' past experiences
- Don't discuss bad personal experiences or role play bad experiences

4. What is Consent? (15 minutes)

Defining consent

- Give everyone two pieces of paper/post-it notes.
- On one post-it note, ask them to write their definition or an example of 'consent is' and on the other post-it note, ask them to write their definition or an example 'consent is not'.
- Draw up a table with the two headings "Consent is" and "Consent is not" and ask the students to stick their post-it notes on underneath the two headings.

Example:

| "Consent is" | "Consent is not" |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comfortable• Active• On-going conversation• Respecting choices/boundaries• Retractable• Agreement by choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under the influence• Pressured• Assumed• Being in a relationship• Previous consent• Being single |

Spend 5 minutes discussing what people have written. Make sure you address and challenge problematic comments.

B) Consent and the law

- Ask group if they know how consent, rape and sexual assault is defined in the law?
- Read out the definition of consent in your country & the definitions of rape and sexual assault.

England, Wales & Northern Ireland -The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England & Wales) and The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, says that a person consents if they agree *"by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice."*

Scotland - In the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, consent is defined as *"free agreement"*

Definitions:

Rape: the penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with a penis without consent

Assault by penetration: the penetration the vagina or anus of another person with a part of their body or anything else without consent

Sexual assault: sexually touches another person without their consent

Ask the group what they think about these definitions.

5. Rape Culture and Victim-blaming (10 minutes)

Split the students into four groups - read out the definition of rape culture:

Rape culture is a term used to define a culture which sexual abuse is condoned and normalised through societal attitudes, images and practices. Rape Culture can also lead to victim blaming, which is when responsibility and blame is placed on the victim of rape instead of the perpetrator.

Ask each group to focus on one of the following questions for 3 minutes:

1. What things contribute to rape culture?

Examples: "jokes" and "banter" about rape / casual references to rape or attempted rape in song lyrics / Victim blaming / Slut Shaming

2. What are the implications of rape culture?

Examples: Sexual abuse becomes something which is normalised, glorified and acceptable rather than something that should be challenged and condemned / Victim blaming

3. What things contribute to victim-blaming?

Examples: Comments about people's clothing / blaming someone for being at the "wrong place at the wrong time".

4. What are the implications of victim-blaming?

Examples: Survivors of rape or sexual assault blame themselves / Survivors are less likely to come forward / It has a negative impact on victims who want to seek help, due to the fear of being judged and blamed for the crime committed against them.

Go around the groups in order of the questions and asks them to share what they discussed.

6. Slut-Shaming and Prude-Shaming (10 minutes)

As well as making your own choices, consent is about respecting other people's personal choices. Whether they choose to have lots of sex or no sex at all.

The word "slut" refers to a person who has many casual sexual partners / It is a sexist slur and it often used to degrade people who have had many sexual partners or dress "promiscuously". But slut is also a gendered insult which is often aimed towards women more than men. The fact that this phrase is used as an attack on women outlines the double standard sexist attitudes towards the ideas of women's sexual freedom to agree to consensual sexual activity. On the other hand, the word "prude" refers to someone concerned with being modest and "proper". It is often used to describe someone who chooses not to engage in sexual activity.

a) Give each group one of the questions below and give them 3 minutes to discuss and write down ideas.

1. Give examples of slut shaming.

Example answers: making comments about people's clothing or sexual past

2. What is the negative impact of slut shaming?

Example answers: It can lead to victim blaming and police people's sexuality

3. Give examples prude shaming.

Example answers: making fun out of people who do not want to engage in sexual intercourse

4. What is the negative impact prude shaming?

Example answers: people may make people feel pressured to engage in sexual activity when they don't want to.

b) Go around the groups and ask them about what they have discussed

c) Summarise the differences and similarities between Slut-shaming and Prude-Shaming

Example: Both slut shaming and prude shaming are used to police people sexual or and used as a way to insult to get back at someone who has rejected or sexual advances, whether previous statements are true or not.

7. Respecting Sexuality (20 minutes)

Sexual orientation is to do with **who** like and sexuality is to do what kind of sex you like. Understanding consent is also about not making assumptions about people's choices and respecting everyone's boundaries. This also includes avoiding making assumptions about people's sexual orientation and making assumptions about people's sexuality because of their sexual orientation.

a) Split group up into six groups and hand out a slip of paper with one of the following sentences on.

- **Jo is homosexual.** This means that they are attracted to people of the same gender as them.
- **Anita is bisexual.** This means that they are attracted to two or more genders.
- **Robin is asexual.** This means that they are a person who has little to no sexual attraction.
- **Sammy is abstinent.** This means that they choose not to have sex for a certain period of time.
- **Tanya is celibate.** This means that they have chosen to refrain from ever having sex.
- **Mya is a sex worker.** This means that they are someone who engages in consensual sexual services in exchange for money

b) Ask the class to discuss in their groups -

- What assumptions would people make about the sexuality of the character that they've been given?
- In what ways may other people disrespect your character's sexuality or boundaries?
- What negative impact may this behaviour have on your character?

8. Myth Busters (20 minutes)

In this activity, we are going to discuss myths about sexual assault and rape.

Before you begin this section of the workshop you should:

- Give a trigger warning that you are going to talk about rape myths
- Say that these myths are from the Crown Prosecution Service website and Survivors UK website,
- Say that some of the myths are gendered because of the contexts of the situations – but that rape myths are damaging to all victims of sexual assault and rape.
- Split the class into 6 groups and give them 2 myths each and 5 minutes to discuss the implications of people believing in that myth.
- Go around the groups and ask them to read out their myth and tell the rest of the class about what they thought the implications were. After each group talks about the implications read out the relevant fact.

There are many ways you can discuss the rape myths depending on how many people are in your workshop and the amount of time you've allocated for this section. You could discuss all these myths or select a few to concentrate on.

Myths:

Myth 1: Rape only occurs between strangers in dark alleys.

Facts: The majority of rapes are committed by those known to the victim. Date or acquaintance rape is very common. Victims are often raped in their homes.

Myth 2: Women provoke sexual assault by the way they dress or act.

Facts: People may dress attractively and flirt, this may be for attention and/or admiration, this is not an invitation for rape. Rape can happen to anyone, regardless of what they are wearing. Only the rapist is responsible for the rape.

Myth 3: Only gay men and boys are sexually abused.

Facts: Heterosexual, gay and bisexual men are equally likely to be sexually abused. Being sexually abused has nothing to do with your current or future sexual orientation. Your sexuality has no more to do with being abused than being robbed.

Myth 4: Rape is a Crime of Passion

Research and evidence from rapists themselves suggests that most rapes are premeditated and planned. Interviews with rapists reveal that they rape to feel powerful and in control, not for sexual pleasure. Many rapists are involved in sexually satisfying relationships with their partners at the time of the rape.

Myth 5: If the victim didn't complain immediately, it wasn't rape.

Facts: The trauma of rape can cause feelings of shame and guilt which might inhibit a victim from making a complaint. A late complaint does not necessarily mean that it's a false complaint.

Myth 6: Sex Workers cannot be raped.

Facts: Sex workers have the same rights with regards to consent as anyone else. The transactions they negotiate with clients are for consensual activities, not rape.

Myth 7: People who drink alcohol or use drugs are asking to be sexually assaulted.

Facts: Being vulnerable does not imply consent. If a person is unable to give consent because she is drunk, drugged or unconscious - it's still rape. Only the rapist is responsible for the rape.

Myth 8: Only gay men sexually assault other men.

Facts: Most men who sexually assault other men identify themselves as heterosexual. This fact helps to highlight another reality — that sexual assault is about violence, anger, power and control over another person, not lust, desire or sexual attraction.

Myth 9: If the victim didn't scream, fight or get injured, it wasn't rape.

Facts: Victims in rape situations are often legitimately afraid of being killed or seriously injured and so co-operate with the rapist to save their lives. The victim's perception of threat influences their behaviour. Rapists use many manipulative techniques to intimidate and coerce their victims. Victims in a rape situations often become physically paralysed with terror or shock and are unable to move or fight. Rape doesn't always leave visible signs on the body or the genitals.

Myth 10: Women cry rape when they regret having sex or want revenge.

Facts: Between January 2011 and May 2012, the Director of Public Prosecutions required Crown Prosecution Service areas to refer to him all cases involving an allegedly false allegation of rape and/or domestic violence. During that time, there were 5,651 prosecutions for rape but only 35 for making false allegations of rape. That is 0.01%

Myth 11: Men cannot be sexually assaulted

Facts: Any man or boy can be sexually assaulted regardless of size, strength, appearance or sexual orientation.

Myth 12: People cannot be sexually abused by women.

Facts: Although the majority of perpetrators are men, people can also be sexually abused (though not legally raped) by women*.

*women with vaginas

9. Take Action (20 Minutes)

- Split the class into four groups and give them large sheets of paper and pens. Ask to the groups spend 2 minutes brainstorming about what the thing consent culture is.
- Go around and ask the groups to tell the rest of the class a couple of things that they have written.
- Ask to group to spend 5 minutes coming up with a idea for an activity or 'stunt' that could be used to challenge misconceptions of consent and encourage positive healthier views of consent on campus and within society. They then have 2 minutes to present back

OPTIONAL: You could assign groups challenges – such as having only £10 to spend or having only 2 volunteers.

Examples of activities they could work on are:

- Pledge Making - You could also use this time to work with students to write up consent pledge either individually or in groups.
- Photo shoot – Students could pose with their pledges or other signs.
- Poster Ideas – Students could note why they think consent education is important for a future poster campaign.

10. Wrap up and Questions (5 minutes)

This is a good time to try answer any questions anyone may have give out any information of material about survivor support groups and sexual health in general.

End the workshop by thanking everyone for attending and by giving out feedback forms.

4. Campus action

The aim of I Heart Consent involves encouraging positive discussions and behaviour. In order to do this, we also need to think about what happens after the workshop and encourage students to think about how they going to challenge misconceptions of consent on campus and in wider society. The focus for the last part of your workshop should be on what students are going take away from the experience. Here are some example post-workshop commitments and activities:

Pledges

Students could create and sign personal or group pledges. They could keep these to themselves or display them somewhere on campus or in student media. For example:

"I promise to respect the choices people make about their bodies and not shame them."

"I pledge to tell more people that clothing is not linked to consent."

"I promise to call out victim blaming whenever I can."

Activities and events

There are plenty of things you can do on campus to spread the message. Here are just a few:

Get sports teams and societies on campus involved with campaigns on consent.

Perform a piece about consent.

Get students' union officers and staff involved in a poster campaign that raises awareness around sexual consent.

Start producing material to advertise the campaign, why not make T-shirt.

- Organise a Reclaim the Night march.
- Strengthen links with your SU's feminist society, women's group or external groups with an interest in the issue to conduct joint activities or reinforce core messages.
- Photo campaigns: You can get students and student officers involved with a photo campaign about consent, perhaps focusing on why they heart consent or displaying their consent culture pledge. The photos could be used on posters or shared online.

Lots of ideas may have come up during your workshops - displaying things that you have talked about around campus is a great way to show team effort.

5. Useful links:

Asexual Visibility and Education Network - www.asexuality.org

AVA Project - www.avaproject.org.uk

Broken Rainbow - www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

Brook - www.brook.org.uk

Crown Prosecution Service - Rape and Sexual Offences: Chapter 21: Societal Myths
-www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p_to_r/rape_and_sexual_offences/societal_myths/

End Violence Against Women Coalition - www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk

Rape Crisis - www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Sexpression UK - www.sexpression.org.uk

Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England & Wales) -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>

Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2008/1769/contents>

Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 -
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/9/contents>

Survivors UK - www.survivorsuk.org

The Havens - www.thehavens.org.uk

This is abuse -www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk

For more info on I Heart Consent visit:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/iheartconsent

Twitter: www.twitter.com/IHeartConsent

Tumblr: www.iheartconsent.tumblr.com