

# Temporary Cruising Zone: Consent and Negotiation Advice

(An audio version is available here: <https://drive.proton.me/urls/94385KH7SC#QGO3CJ6IYdfb>)

## Consent must be Authentic, Informed, and Explicit

There are many different definitions and models of consent, but **Affirmative Consent** is the one we prefer.

**Affirmative Consent** is defined as “**An informed, authentic and explicit agreement, freely given between two legal adults in a non-altered state of mind to allow a specific set of activities to happen during a specific time frame.**”

Every word in that definition is important.

- **Informed** – You must know what you are agreeing to and the possible risks and implications you are exposing yourself to. Education on and an understanding of the activity being negotiated are critical to being able to give informed consent. If you don't understand the potential risks and implications of an activity, how can you authentically state that you accept those risks? Whether you are the giver or receiver in an activity, it is your responsibility to inform yourself and ask for specificity. Without knowledge, you are not informed.
- **Authentic** – This means you are actively interested and wanting to participate in the activities proposed. Some people like to use the phrase “enthusiastic consent” because when someone is into something, that is often expressed with enthusiasm. However, we prefer the term “authentic” because not everyone displays enthusiasm, due to introversion and neurodivergence. Conversely, enthusiasm is sometimes a masking technique or a PTSD reaction and isn't what the person really wants to express. To be authentic, an agreement must be informed, explicit and freely given.
- **Explicit** – All people involved have a clear understanding of all the activities being proposed and all clearly state that they agree to take part in those activities. No assumptions. No implications. No innuendos.
- **Freely Given** – Consent is only valid if it is freely given and with no coercion; be it physical, emotional, social, psychological, or chemical (drugs or alcohol). These things also impact a person's ability to be authentic as authentic consent means pressure free and non-coerced.
- **Legal Adult** – Any person who is not a legal adult in the jurisdiction in which an activity is taking place cannot legally consent to any sexual activity or activity related to sex.
- **Non-Altered State of Mind** – A person under the influence of any mind-altering influence or substance cannot consent to anything, even if they agreed to it. A person who is asleep, or under the influence of drugs or

alcohol cannot consent. This also includes the altered states of subspace or hypnosis - consent must happen before we start activities that lead to those mind altering states. In addition, some people find that being in a space such as a sex club or dungeon to be mind-altering and so it is advisable to negotiate before arriving.

- **Specific Set of Activities** – Be specific as to what activities the negotiated scene will include. Consent to one type of sexual contact does not mean consent has been given for any other type of sexual contact. Do not include any activity that you did not specifically and clearly include in the negotiation before the scene.
- **Time Specific** – Just because someone consented to something yesterday does not mean you get to do that same thing again today or ever. Consent is not ongoing and is retractable and revocable at any time. Any wish to 'do that again' needs further negotiation.

It is also useful to consider the following as **good practices**:

- ❖ Remember that **consent and negotiation isn't just applicable to sexual encounters; it is important in our everyday lives** and can make a difference to all of our encounters. Asking what food someone would prefer to eat or asking permission before joining a conversation or before hugging someone are all types of negotiation and consent!
- ❖ **Any activity agreed on must receive Explicit Prior Permission verbally** rather than through implied consent, gestures, body language or past behaviour.
- ❖ **Informed consent requires a discussion of any risks.** These should include risks due to fluid exchange, potential injury or because of health conditions. If practicing kink or BDSM play you should also discuss your experience, technique and proficiency.
- ❖ **Everyone should fully understand both the desires and the boundaries of the other participants** in order for everyone to consent to them. What parts of the body are off limits? What is the desired outcome for the scene? Who will be involved?
- ❖ **Everyone is free to withdraw their negotiated consent at any time** during the activity without any need for explanation or justification. No is a complete sentence.
- ❖ **Everyone should have an agreed safeword or signal** and you should check in regularly with your partner(s) throughout a negotiated scene. The TCZ house system is the Traffic Light System of Red, Yellow and Green. Be aware that solely relying on safewords can be problematic – people may lose the ability to speak due to endorphins, over or under stimulation or because they're wearing a gag. Having an agreed body or eye movement in addition to

the safeword is recommended. Body language and eyes can also tell you a lot about someone's capacity to continue.

- ❖ **Be honest.** Informed consent includes being aware of limitations and barriers to the ability to consent to the planned activities. You should always disclose your experience level, age, medical conditions, potential triggers, energy levels and use of drugs or alcohol prior to play.
- ❖ You are free to reject any activities that were previously agreed to during play or a scene. **Changing your mind at any time is completely acceptable.**
- ❖ **Serious lasting bodily injury cannot legally be consented to** and the implications of this would not just harm the bottom or sub, it could also have repercussions for the Top or Dominant if this was to be discovered, even if you haven't reported them.
- ❖ Sexual Assault is defined as anything that was not specifically given informed consent.

There are other models of consent that are useful to look at, especially in the context of kink and BDSM play which is popular at TCZ. Different people may have varying reasons for preferring one safety protocol over the other. It's important to understand why your potential partner prefers one model over another or why one aspect of consent is particularly important to them. Here are some other commonly used BDSM models of consent:

- **The 4 C's: Caring, Communication, Consent, and Caution**
  - Caring: Being attentive, responsible, responsive and committed to the safety and wellbeing of yourself and others
  - Communication: Being clear and open about your needs, wants, desires and limits
  - Consent: Discussing your needs and wants
  - Caution: Being aware of risk, possibility of danger, and proceeding carefully
- **RACK: Risk-Aware Consensual Kink**
  - Are we aware of the risks inherent in our kink?
  - Is it consensual?
- **PRICK: Personal Responsibility, Informed, Consensual Kink**
  - Does each person understand their personal responsibility in the scene?
  - Is each individual informed about what is about to happen?
  - Does everyone consent?

**Engaging in kinky activities necessitates good communication.** Make sure that you and your partners understand what role the 4 C's, RACK, and PRICK play in your kink life.