

So, You're Interested in Getting Involved in the Consent is Positive Project?

What you need to know

This project has an overall aim of promoting a better understanding of what positive sexual consent looks, sounds and feels like so we can spread the word and improve education.

It is important that you know that it is also a research project that I (Holly Barnes-Bennetts) am completing as part of my PhD through the University of Worcester. I believe there's not nearly enough research about how we all go about saying 'yes' when it comes to sex and I'd like to find out more about it because there's a lot of good we could do with that better understanding. I also just want to get people talking about it because I think it helps to share what good sex is like.

What I am doing is asking people who have or do share sexual consent to sit down and have a conversation about it and share that with my research. I'm hoping lots of you will be willing so that I can hear from a huge range of people about how they 'do' consent.

Everyone is welcome! There are no bars on participation with the exception that you must be 18 or above. I'd love to hear from all kinds of people in all kinds of relationships whether there's two of you or even more... It can be a casual thing, and occasional thing, a regular thing or a relationship you've been in for years...

I really hope this research is very accessible but if you have a disability or sensory impairment which means participating in the research as it is set up is difficult then I can adapt it to work for you, just let me know.

Who should you do it with?

The most important factor here is trust and respect. You should only do this with a person/people you trust and feel comfortable with. You should also respect others; don't try and persuade someone to do this with you if they aren't comfortable with it.

Most likely the best person or people to do this with would be those you are currently sexually involved with. You could participate with a former partner/s, but this needs extra consideration. How you feel about an ex can be complicated and its possible a past partner might not be wanting to do this for all the right reasons. Because of this, participating with a past partner could mean you end up having a conversation that might make you upset or uncomfortable. Past partners are still welcome to participate in the project it's just something you need to give your full consideration.

What you need to think about

Once you've thought about the 'who' there are some other important considerations. If you are a survivor of sexual violence or have experienced any form of non-consensual sex then there's a possibility talking about this could be triggering for you. I don't want to discourage people, if that's you then it's just as important that your voice is heard about how the positive side of sexual consent works. However, you do need to think about what is best for your wellbeing so give that some thought.

You'll also need to think about things you would and wouldn't want to talk about but there's more guidance on that if you decide to go ahead and participate.

What you'll be asked to do

The main part of participating in the research will involve having a conversation with the person (or people) you've chosen to participate with. It's up to you exactly what you talk about because I want it to be about what's important or meaningful for all of you but areas you might want to talk about things like.... How you first became sexually intimate and how you communicated about that. Whether you talk about things or communicate in other ways. Whether things have changed since the first time. How you think you communicate and what cues you get from your partner/s

The conversation will happen on MS Teams. You'll connect up with me (Holly Barnes-Bennetts) and we'll just have a little chat to make sure everyone is comfortable then I'll leave the conversation, but leave it recording so you can focus on chatting to each other. When you're finished you can just leave the Teams meeting. You can talk as much or as little as you like.

What to do next

If you think you'd like to get involved and you've got a person or people to do it with the next step is to read through or watch the Participant Information which you can find on the website. That bit tells you all the important stuff like how I'll maintain your confidentiality, what I'll do with my findings and what you can do if you change your mind. You also need to read or watch the Guidance for Participants (also on the website). That bit tells you how to get ready for participating, what to talk about with the people you've chosen to speak to and how to agree what is and isn't ok to talk about.

Once you've done both of those things (and you're still happy to go ahead) everyone can complete the consent form and submit it (you can do this digitally on the website or download the form and e-mail it to me)

If you've got any questions now or later you can e-mail me or you can use the comments section on the website to ask them anonymously.