

How to Avoid Being Accused of Sexual Misconduct

Title IX Training

If you find yourself in the position of being the initiator of sexual behavior, you owe sexual respect to your potential partner. These suggestions may help you to reduce your risk for being accused of sexual misconduct:

- Clearly communicate your intentions to your sexual partner and give him or her a chance to clearly relate their intentions to you.
- Understand and respect personal boundaries.
- DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS about consent; about someone's sexual availability; about whether they are attracted to you; about how far you can go or about whether they are physically and/or mentally able to consent. Your partner's consent should be affirmative and continuous. If there are any questions or ambiguity, then you DO NOT have consent.
- Receiving mixed messages from your partner is a clear indication that you should stop, defuse any sexual tension and communicate better. You may be misreading them. He or she may not have figured out how far they want to go with you yet. You must respect the timeline for sexual behaviors with which your partner is comfortable.
- Don't take advantage of someone's drunkenness or altered state, even if he or she willingly consumed alcohol or substances. Realize that your potential partner could feel intimidated or coerced by you. You may have a power advantage simply because of your gender or physical presence. Don't abuse that power.
- Do not share intimate content, pictures, images and videos that are shared with you.
- Understand that consent to some form of sexual behavior does not automatically imply consent to any other forms of sexual behavior.
- Silence, passivity, or non-responsiveness cannot be interpreted as an indication of consent. Read your potential partner carefully, paying attention to verbal and non-verbal communication and body language.