

Consent? At the Start, You Do Not Even Think About It. Coercive Discourse in the Awakening of Affective– Sexual Relationships in Young Women

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Abstract

Extensive scientific evidence suggests that peer interactions influence sexual and affective relationships. Coercive discourse in some peer interactions has also been shown to adversely affect consent in those relationships. However, more research is needed to understand how consent (or the lack of it) is internalized during life trajectories, specifically in the awakening of sexual relationships in young women. In the research project CONSENT framework, 36 women between 18 and 25 years of age participated in interviews and communicative groups. This article presents results related to the role of consent in their life trajectories,

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indicating that consent is undermined by coercive discourse, significantly impacting their life trajectories, especially in the awakening of sexual relationships. The article discusses how coercive discourse is present at times when learning to decide freely is crucial and decreases consent in relationships.

Keywords

Consent, coercion, coercive discourse, affective–sexual relationships, young women

Introduction

Peer influence on sexual and affective relationships is evidenced in many studies, mainly in relationships between teenagers and young people, and can contribute to violent or unwanted relationships (Ciranka & van den Bos, 2019; Collins et al., 2009; Elboj-Saso et al., 2020; Gonzalez-Mendez et al., 2021; Jacques-Tiura et al., 2015; Kimmel, 2000; López de Aguilera et al., 2020; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021). *Dominant coercive discourse* (Puigvert et al., 2019) has also been demonstrated in some peer interactions that exert pressure to maintain unwanted relationships, promoting toxic and violent relationships (Collins et al., 2009; Giordano et al., 2006; Gonzalez-Mendez et al., 2021; O’Sullivan & Meyer-Bahlburg, 2003; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020). Coercive discourse in peer interactions fosters attraction to violence (Puigvert et al., 2019; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020; Torras-Gómez et al., 2019), promoting relationships with dominant masculine models (Duque et al., 2022; Flecha et al., 2013; Puigvert et al., 2019; Rodrigues-Mello et al., 2021; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020). These violent relationships can have consequences on health and work, among other elements, as identified in previous studies (Duque et al., 2020; Hawks et al., 2019; López de Aguilera, 2021; Miller, 2017; Puigvert-Mallar et al., 2022). Coercive discourse also generates a lack of consent in the affective–sexual relationships of young women (Beres et al., 2014; Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Flecha et al., 2020, Hawks et al., 2019; Shumlich & Fisher, 2018). Consent has been researched extensively; some studies insist that it is necessary to analyse verbal communication (Vidu & Tomás, 2019; Flecha et al., 2020; Fox-Penner et al., 2014) and communicative acts (Soler-Gallart, 2017). Communicative acts include both verbal and nonverbal communication (gestures, tones, facial expressions) and consider the context, the intention and the effects of communication.

Because a person’s first sexual and affective relationships significantly influence their future relationships, the consequences of coercive discourse have immediate effects on both the current and future affective and sexual relationships of women. Thus, more research is needed to understand how consent (or the lack of it) is acquired during life trajectories, specifically in the awakening of sexual relationships in young women. The ongoing project *CONSENT From speech acts to communicative acts* (Puigvert, 2020–2023) analyses the communicative acts that promote consent or coercion in sexual and affective relationships. This article draws on the *CONSENT* project and presents relevant data on the role of consent in the life trajectories of young women.

Coercive Discourses Influencing the Lack of Consent

Coercive discourse can come from different social agents influencing many girls' and women's socialization into linking attractiveness to people with violent attitudes and behaviours. Coercive discourse socially portrays people with violent attitudes and behaviours as attractive and exciting (Puigvert, 2019) and can come from peers, relatives (Braksmajer, 2017) or sexual partners (Fahs & Swank, 2021; Gutzmer et al., 2016; Katz et al., 2019; Thompson, 2018). Coercive discourse can also be influenced by social dynamics in different contexts (Carter et al., 2021; Duque et al., 2020; Villarejo et al., 2020). Coercive discourse significantly influences the lack of consent in sexual relationships (Flecha et al., 2020; Shumlich & Fisher, 2018). Fahs and Swank (2021) explained that some women are pressured to engage in sexual practices that they do not want and that do not give them any pleasure, such as oral and anal sex, and they accept the belief that they have to comply. This study also found that women felt unable to refuse due to cultural, social, or sexual expectations. Braksmajer (2017) also revealed social pressure from peers and relatives on women to have sex even if it causes pain. In this study, women's beliefs that they must fulfil their perceived sexual obligations was found to impact their gender identity and contribute to their ambivalence regarding the meaning of consent. Beres et al. (2014) described episodes in which boys try to convince women to have sex and persist in their attempts to have sex. Some girls reported becoming tired of resisting, feeling that it is easier to comply, and fearing that the situation will become more complex. A fear of helping others or avoiding uncomfortable situations has also been demonstrated (Melgar et al., 2021; Vidu et al., 2021).

When analysing different types of relationships, Willis and colleagues reported that people in stable relationships feel less of a need to communicate consent to sex (Willis et al., 2019). Beres (2014) also explained that consent—understood as an explicit request for sex—was not required once people were in a relationship. There is some evidence that consent can be taken for granted in stable relationships. Nevertheless, there is also evidence of a lack of consent in casual relationships. Shumlich and Fisher (2018) analysed consent in stable and casual relationships among university students, highlighting a lack of consent in the latter. Participants reported that sex 'just happened, even going so far as to say that there is no dialogue either before or after'. In this sense, they found that consent was infrequently discussed directly. Instead, it was often addressed indirectly by veiled and coded behaviours that required the inference of sexual consent or non-consent. Based on published evidence, women who experience coercive discourse and the pressure to maintain unwanted relationships do not always recognize these factors. Burkett and Hamilton (2012) studied the perceptions and experiences of young women between 18 and 24 years of age regarding everyday negotiations of consent and found that some women justify a lack of consent, suggesting that men might not have understood a nonverbally communicated 'no'. However, they also argue that a girl must know that agreeing to go to someone's house means consenting to subsequent sexual activity. Moreover, the article explains that some women interviewed defended their sexual freedom. Then, they faced a situation where they did not want to have sex and felt that it would be uncomfortable 'to say no' because they thought they were the ones who initiated the situation. Related to this, the authors describe how the same girls who criticize the more traditional position of women who submit to sex only because

it is their duty to give pleasure end up doing the same thing by having sex without wanting it but considering it a feminist achievement. Another research group (Jozkowski, 2015) studied 20 college students between 18 and 23 years of age, most of whom were female and heterosexual. The students listened to an audio recording accompanied by a text script about a sexual assault between two college students at a party. Some of the participants blamed the victim, suggesting that the victim was responsible for being assaulted because she agreed to go with the perpetrator when it was obvious what would happen when she decided to go with him. More recent research on rape in cinema affirms a lack of awareness about the treatment of rape in Spanish cinema and its rejection by young audiences (Guarinos & Sánchez-Labela Martín, 2021).

As stated, coercive discourse is prominent in young people's peer interactions and significantly influences consent or coercion in sexual and affective relationships. Socialization in consent or coercive relationships from the very beginning can promote or prevent gender violence in future relationships, and this preventive socialization can come from families, educational centres and peer interactions (Rios-González et al., 2018; Rios-Gonzalez et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Oramas et al., 2020; Torras-Gómez et al., 2019; Ugalde et al., 2022). Therefore, this article presents and discusses the role of consent in these first relationships.

Methods

This article presents specific results related to the life trajectories of young women in the research project (Puigvert, 2020–2023) funded by the Spanish Government's Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities. The main objective of this project was to explore which communicative acts in both stable and casual sexual relationships among young people are coercive and which are consent. To this end, a qualitative study with 56 men and women from 18 to 25 years of age was implemented.

The research was conducted following communicative methodology (Gómez, 2021; Redondo-Sama et al., 2020; Soler & Gómez, 2020; Sordé Martí et al., 2020), which is especially relevant in research on gender issues and gender violence (Melgar Alcantud et al., 2021). Previous research has been conducted successfully with this methodology, for example, studies on gender violence at universities (Valls et al., 2016), women's sexual relationship preferences (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020), and the consequences of disdainful hookups (toxic relationships or hookups in which women suffered different types of violence, domination, abuse or contempt) in relation to subsequent relationships (López de Aguilera et al., 2021). This methodology establishes an egalitarian dialogue between researchers and participants, allowing in-depth discussion of sensitive issues, such as gender violence, in a secure environment (Valls-Carol, 2014). This egalitarian dialogue requires that the researcher includes scientific evidence from previous studies about consent for discussion to evaluate the experiences and reflections of the participants, enabling social impact and cocreation (Flecha, 2020–2023; Roca et al., 2022; Soler-Gallart & Flecha, 2022). The previous successful research using this methodology for particularly sensitive issues makes it the ideal method for studying consent in depth.

Participant Selection, Data Collection and Analysis

The broader project involved two qualitative techniques, communicative daily life stories and communicative focus groups. The qualitative study implemented 49 communicative daily life stories and 7 communicative focus groups, including 20 men and 36 women. The participants were between 18 and 25 years of age and lived in Spain. They were distributed in different regions: Andalusia, Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, Madrid, and Valencia. Most (53) defined themselves as students; 46 were university students. The fieldwork focused on exploring the sexual relationships experienced by youth and the communicative acts involved in those relationships. To develop this article, we analysed the fieldwork conducted with the 36 young women and selected the results related to the role of consent (or lack of it) in their life trajectories.

The researchers who conducted the fieldwork have diverse profiles in terms of age, academic background, gender, leisure styles, family profiles, language and city, which favoured the geographical diversity of participants in the project. This diversity favoured both the development of the research techniques and the relationships with the participants and enriched the analysis. Those who conducted the fieldwork had both diverse profiles and previous experience researching sensitive issues, such as gender violence. Likewise, they also had experience in conducting research with young people; thus, they knew how to create an atmosphere of trust and closeness to investigate sexual consent. Before initiating data collection, the researchers explained the purpose of the research, and the participants signed informed consent documentation. Researchers used a semi-structured script for the communicative daily life stories and the communicative focus groups that included different questions related to various issues. The main points were (a) previous ideas of consent and dialogues before establishing a relationship, and which interactions contributed to the idea of consent; (b) consent or coercion during the relationship, the role of the sexual partner, peers and the context; and (c) conversations with friends and personal reflections after the relationship. An excerpt from the script used is provided at the end of this article. The different questions consider casual and stable relationships and suggestions for prevention. Questions were raised about when the participants were young and started to have relationships, their memories of these first relationships and whether consent was present. The order of the presentation of issues and questions was established in the fieldwork guidelines. Nevertheless, the researcher could present the questions in any order depending on the development of communicative daily life stories and communicative groups.

Most of the research techniques were conducted in Spanish and some cases, in Catalan and Basque, thus adapting to the mother tongue and preference of the young participants. On average, the interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 and a half hours. Most of them were conducted online. Following the communicative methodology, the data were analysed through two main dimensions—exclusionary and transformative (Redondo-Sama et al., 2020)—and several categories. Exclusionary and transformative analysis dimensions in the communicative methodology allowed us to identify the factors, dimensions, interactions and behaviours that either complicated and perpetuated the issue studied or contributed to overcoming it. This article presents the exclusionary dimension corresponding to the elements promoting coercion and undermining consent.

Ethics

The research project was designed according to the ethical standards required for approval by the *Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities of the Spanish Government* and developed in the framework of the University of Barcelona. Prior to data collection, participants were informed of the purpose of the project and the use and purposes of the information obtained. All the participants signed informed consent documentation and were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. All of the participants were of legal age and were over 18. This specific article was approved by the research centre ethical committee (Reference: 20211215).

Results

This section presents the results obtained regarding the specific questions related to the participants' life trajectories; specifically, when they started to have relationships and the role of consent in their awakening of sexual relationships. We present results including how participants' affirmed consent was undermined in their first relationships and the role of social and peer pressure in their decisions related to sexual relationships. Likewise, we discuss the importance of meeting the expectations of others (peers and the person with whom they have sex) over whether or not they wanted to have these affective–sexual relationships and how the existent coercive discourse influenced this lack of consent.

First, the results showed that consent was undermined during the first relationships of most of the participating women. For example, in the following quotation, a 25-year-old girl participating in a discussion group explains that her friends generally did not remember their first sexual relationship as a consensual and pleasurable one but as a procedure to be fulfilled.

In other words, something that we talk about a lot between us is that I think that almost none of us remember our first sexual relationship as something.... That is, most of us do not remember it as something pleasant for us, it was like a procedure to go through, and it happens at that moment as it could have happened in another moment and with another person.... Well, that is a process that we enjoy rather 0 or even negative as it has been for most of us. So we don't have a good memory at all.

Another young woman (23 years old) explained her first sexual relationship and explained that she was not thinking about what she wanted or not. She had the idea to say 'yes' to everything or saying 'no' initially and then later doing something she did not want to do.

So it was my first sexual experience, and I said yes to everything. And to everything for ... because I don't know why it happens that when you are a virgin, and you sleep with someone for the first time ...

"ah, well.... Yes to everything ... and it doesn't matter what I want ... and whatever he wants.... Okay, Okay come on". And as of right now, it's like: No. But it's true that I used to be very submissive in that sense. (...) And he would tell me: 'Do you want to try anal sex?' and I said: NO. And in the end up doing it!

The following testimony of an 18-year-old woman affirms that younger individuals have a tendency to want to prove themselves, and the idea of consent or lack of consent is not present in their decisions: 'No, but let's see, when you are young, you go on an adventure, I think. You didn't care what happened. You didn't think: if this happens..., and if the other thing happens.... No, no, whatever happens'. Another two participating women (21 and 20 years of age) link being younger and having minimal consent with increased pressure or being more influenceable.

[Y]es, cases of friends, cases of girls younger than me who are somewhat under pressure, right? Or they feel less for not doing it, and then they end up giving in and doing things they didn't want to do.

Let's see, I think that at the beginning, when we were younger..., you are more susceptible and if a person comes to you and insists on you a little..., you do not have this strong personality that I mentioned before.

These findings indicate that the lack of consent in sexual relationships is influenced by the coercive discourse present in society and extended by social interactions. One of the main situations identified is peer pressure from friends. Many women interviewed explained that they felt pressed by their friends to have relationships they did not want to have. As a result, consent was absent in these relationships. For example, in the following quotation, another 20-year-old woman explains how her friends pressured her for weeks. As a result, she was labelled as a person who could not have a relationship, and she did not want people to think this about her. For this reason, she decided to have a relationship despite not wanting one.

I know that it is a situation that is difficult to understand why you have done it..., if then you did not want to. Well, for many issues such as the prejudices that can be created about you that at that time for you is the most important thing in the world at 17, 18 years old, the prejudices that are being created about you and ... I know, maybe in my case, it was continuously picking on me for three weeks or a month. You are this, you are that, you are such a.... Until I said, well, I'm going to remove this label that has been put on me.... Although I know what I'm going to do I don't want to do it but, well, that's it. I take off the label.

In the following, an 18-year-old woman explains that she ended her first sexual relationship. She also describes how her friends encouraged her to have sexual relationships because it was the right time, regardless of her desire or freedom to choose. This participant also commented that the simple fact that 'others have done' something becomes a pressure to do it.

Yes, myself. I think I don't know, maybe with a boy. I remember that he was the one I slept with for the first time. Of course, I had it clear in my head: we would get involved and little else. And of course, how the relationship ended up happening in the end.

(...)

I remember that it was how all my friends started: like, I slept with this one for the first time..., me too.... The thing about losing my virginity. Well, there I go too, and I can already tell. So it was because of that nonsense, I think. Well, nonsense, which is like the peer pressure that everyone is in: come on, let's see when your moment is going to be.... And you say, come on, okay.

Coercive discourse also influences affective and sexual socialization, and one young woman felt that she had to behave to get men to like her at the beginning of a relationship. Some women interviewed highlighted that they believed they had to do anything regardless of whether they wanted to 'to please the person they have the relationship with'. This 24-year-old woman explained that she did not think of consent when she was younger, only of doing anything to keep boys' attention.

[...] when I was little, I didn't think I would give or take consent because I had a lot of pressure to make boys like me. So it was a bit indiscriminate: pay attention to me, and that's it. And a little in-quotes slutty to the max. Yes..., then, as there was no NO consent ... here ... let's see if anyone will listen to me.

This same woman claims she even preferred to suffer physical pain to gain the approval of the person she had sex with.

Yes ... Not now, but when I was younger, it was, come on ... I had to be a porn actress on demand with the boy I was hooking up. And I also felt very validated about that, and I even preferred to feel a lot of physical pain just to please the other person, and I did not consider that.... So I was more compensated by the approval of the other person, being sexy ... being liked ... than my physical and emotional well-being. So I see it a lot in my self-esteem with respect to now ... despite many things, it is better. But in those moments when you have the lowest self-esteem, it depends a lot on that..., it is like the drug you need. And you go through the hoop many times without realizing it.

Finally, the participants highlighted general social pressure to have sexual relationships when they were younger, regardless of consent. For example, in the following quotation, a 25-year-old woman explains that putting limits on a sexual relationship is considered uncool.

I remember when I was younger and I was beginning to put limits on my sexual relationships. I had many fears but I also wanted to be the coolest. So I didn't set limits because it was cooler when not setting limits, and I could also "surprise" myself and learn a lot and have fun and such.

In the subsequent quotation, another 25-year-old woman explains that she felt anxious about having her first sexual relationship, describing herself as the 'greatest loser' in secondary school.

And also, regarding losing one's virginity..., there is an anxiety ... I mean, I lost my virginity when I was almost 18 years old, and I had an anxiety ... to say: my goodness, I am the greatest loser in the institute ... well ... they do not even touch me with a stick.... To say, I do not know what is happening. And to say, like: I have 2 weeks before I turn 18, it has to be now! In other words, invite a boy because I am not going to reach 28 being a virgin ... are we crazy?

Discussion and Conclusions

The main contribution of this article is the evidence that the women participating affirmed that consent was undermined due to coercive discourse (Racionero-Plaza

et al., 2022), which impacted the awakening of sexual relationships. Previous research has demonstrated that coercive discourse is widely prevalent in society; it is publicly displayed in the media (Duque et al., 2022; Rodrigues-Mello et al., 2021; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2022; Willing, 2022), in schools, and in peer interactions (Torras-Gómez et al., 2020; Valls et al., 2008). These previously developed themes emerged in this research, and we present them here since the interviewees mentioned this pressure in terms of awakening sexual relationships.

The quotes we presented in the results show the lack of consent and that the participants were pressured to have and engage in specific sexual practices. The participants also yielded to this pressure regardless of whether they wanted to have the relationship or whether it gave them pressure. Thus, acting according to peer expectations and sexual partner requirements and the belief that they will be more valued within their social group has more weight in their decision than their freedom.

Socialization throughout life via different interactions, such as peer interactions, has a significant effect on young people's life choices and trajectories (Ciranka & van den Bos, 2019; Collins et al., 2009; Destiny Apuke & Omar, 2020; Elboj-Saso et al., 2020; Giddens & Sutton, 2006; Gonzalez-Mendez et al., 2021; Jacques-Tiura et al., 2015; Kimmel, 2000; López de Aguilera et al., 2020; Mead, 1934). Furthermore, peer interactions (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021) are crucial to socialization in attraction and the choice of affective–sexual relationships. This previous evidence is again reflected in this research since the interviewees highlighted the influence of their friend group.

All interactions influence socialization; however, first relationships have more influence on subsequent relationships than other interactions. According to various studies (Gómez, 2015; Smith et al., 2003), the first relationships leave the most profound mark affecting subsequent relationships. Here, the results presented highlight that consent is less present or appears less important in first relationships. Although socialization starts at birth, and it is necessary to prevent violence throughout life (Mayes & Cohen, 2002; Oliver, 2014; Rios-Gonzalez et al., 2019), it is in the awakening of sexual relationships when youth incorporate and internalize learning about affective–sexual relationships to a greater extent (Gómez, 2015; Smith et al., 2003). Adolescence and youth are critical moments in the socialization and learning of affective–sexual relationships, whether to normalize violent behaviour, whether to give in to pressure and whether to make free decisions. In this study, we see that it was in this critical period when the participants were immersed in nonconsensual relationships.

When discussing their trajectories, all the interviewed women mentioned adolescence as a critical period. Scientific evidence also shows that adolescence is when people create identity (Branje et al., 2021; Lawford et al., 2020); adolescents intensely demand the freedom to make their own decisions and reject impositions. However, in regard to affective–sexual relationships, this study contributes to the literature in demonstrating that adolescence is also when coercive discourse is at its worst, and most adolescents give in to it. Research has also shown us that sometimes this yielding is not identified in the given moment. Moreover, some women (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Torras-Gómez et al., 2019) consider themselves to be acting out of sexual freedom when subjecting themselves to power relations, pressure, or violence that leads them to unwanted relationships.

There is a need for sexuality education on consent beyond ‘no is no’ and ‘yes is yes’. (Vidu & Tomás, 2019; Flecha et al., 2020; Fox-Penner et al., 2014). On the one hand, there is evidence that accepting a relationship or not does not always involve verbal communication. On the other hand, there is evidence that consenting to a relationship is not synonymous with free choice, as, on numerous occasions, the existing coercive discourse influences these decisions (Drouin & Tobin, 2014; Kern & Peterson, 2021; O’Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998). In this sense, education on consent requires incorporating new elements that support women throughout their affective–sexual socialization, mainly in awakening affective–sexual relationships. For example, existing research sheds light on overcoming coercive discourse through peer interactions and community involvement (Elboj-Saso et al., 2020; Puigvert-Mallart et al., 2022).

This article has some limitations. Consent itself is a problematic issue. More in-depth social and legal advances regarding nonverbal consent and identifying and analysing social pressure towards coercive relationships are needed. Other limitations can be addressed in further research, including incorporating diversity profiles in the sample related to cultural and religious background, geographical diversity, age groups and sexual orientation. Another limitation is that this article only presents the exclusionary dimension. It does not analyse how peer interactions promote consent and overcome coercive relationships. Finally, these results suggest new avenues of research to explore. This article shows that women identified more with coercive discourse in their first relationships, but little data were obtained on subsequent relationships. Thus, it is necessary to investigate which elements diminish coercive discourse towards women. If coercive discourse does not decrease, it is necessary to study the factors that cause it to have a more negligible effect on women or what causes women to be less accepting of the pressures exerted on them. All these questions are based on the participants’ assertions that they were under more pressure and yielded to coercive discourse in their first affective–sexual relationships. We can also ask if there is less pressure or less yielding as women age or experience more sexual relationships or if coercive discourse becomes more internalized and normalized and, thus, pressures are no longer as prevalent.

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Data Availability Statement

Anonymized data are available from the Zenodo open access database.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Excerpt from the Script for Communicative Life Stories and Communicative Groups

General Objectives

Explanation of the Project

General Guidelines

- The inquiry should not concern itself with the relationship unless it is relevant. Rather, the inquiry should focus on communicative acts beyond speech acts.
- One should inquire about the actions of the individual in question, as well as those of other individuals (without identifying them).
- Situate temporally and separate when discussing about his or her trajectory or those of other people from 14 to 18 years old and when talking about 18 to 25 years old.

Introductory Questions

For example,

What do you know about consent in relationships? Where have you learned or heard about it? Do you believe that it is important to discuss this? With whom and in what way do you discuss it?

Does this idea of consent relate to any experiences that you know of, have been told about, or have lived through? Does it work in practice as it is described? How does it work? Can you provide an example that has happened to you or that you have been told about?

Communicative Acts, Beyond Speech Acts

Some examples:

From the conversations that you have had, did you discuss whether you or the other person enjoyed the experience, if either of you wanted to stop but didn't feel able to, etc.? Did this influence the use of strategies for obtaining consent in subsequent relationships? How did you decide, or used to decide, what your boundaries were? Did you make this decision on your own or after conversations with friends? (What type of things did you talk about or consider?) Did you define boundaries for every situation or only for certain ones? Do you believe that your boundaries changed or expanded as you had more experiences or spoke with friends?

When you or someone you know has had casual relationships, were you more or less demanding with consent than in stable relationships that you had? In which relationships did you establish clearer steps and sexual escalation? Why? Can you provide an example?

(Continued)

(Continued)

Coerced Consent

Are you aware of any situations where someone gave a coerced consent, meaning they did it even though they did not want to, or where you saw that they were acting under duress? How did you or others respond to this?

In your own experiences or in situations that someone has told you about, can you recall any situation where, in retrospect and taking into account the importance of consent, you would have acted differently because even though you gave consent, you did not want to? For example, to avoid coming across as uncool, to be able to brag later, to learn, or because it was part of the game?

Relationship Also with Institutional Power:

Can you recall any situations where you witnessed complicity among several people to get someone to hook up with someone else, at a bar, at work, at a party, etc.? How did consent work in these situations? Was it discussed? Was there a pre-consent and the possibility of stopping the situation was not even considered? Did your friends assume that something was going to happen (maybe you had been talking about it for a while), but you felt afraid/insecure/doubtful?

Models of Masculinity/Womanhood (and Also Sexual Scripts/Stereotypes):

What were the people like that you hooked up with and felt that consent was working well or that there was no coercion? What were the people like with whom consent did not work?

Have you ever laughed at someone who did not hook up because they were respectful and did not insist? What did you say to them? What kind of reputation do these people have in your social circle or what do you remember about them?

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