Understanding Consent*

Effective communication plays a vital role in healthy, mutually respectful relationships. Mutual understanding serves as evidence of effective communication.

Georgia law does not define “Consent,” but for purposes of Title IX and Student Code of Conduct investigations *Mercer does*. Consent is...

- clear, knowing and voluntary
- mutually understandable
- active, not passive
- invalidated by coercion, force, and threats

Consent can be...

- withdrawn at any time
- given by words or actions

Consent cannot be...

- interpreted from silence alone
- given by a person in a state incapable of making rational, reasonable decisions\(^1\) (alcohol/drugs, unconsciousness, blacked out, mental disability, sleep, involuntary physical restraint)

Consent does not automatically extend...

- from one form of sexual activity to another
- from one point in time to another

\(^1\)Sexual activity with someone incapacitated constitutes a violation of Mercer’s policy.

For more information on Mercer University's definitions for sexual misconduct and relationship violence, contact the Title IX Coordinator or Dean of Students, or see document entitled Statements, Definitions & Compliance Support.

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Contact canon_ab@mercer.edu for brochure updates/corrections

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Engaged Bears

See

Say

Do

Something

to Eliminate, Prevent, and Address Violence and Stalking

Sleuths

Against

Violence Through Engagement

Awareness and Prevention Resource for Atlanta Area Graduate, Professional and Undergraduate Programs

http://atlstuaffairs.mercer.edu/mercersave.cfm
Engaged Bears say or do something when they sense that something isn’t right and can safely reduce risk of violence or stalking.

**STRATEGIES**

**Stand Up** for prevention and risk reduction

Q: What do you call a group of Mercer Bears committed to eliminating violence?

Become conversant in Mercer’s **Consent** policy. Does it differ from your expectations?

What invalidates consent? What challenges do you foresee putting this into practice?

Examine your relationship communication. How can you enhance your communication skills to help ensure mutual understanding?

Assess how Tabachnick’s **continuum of behaviors** can help you identify abusive behavior, and avoid harm or guide intervention opportunities.

Recognize your own attitudes around gender inequality and gender identification and how bystanders’ responses vary by gender.

Promote risk reduction strategies for yourself, family, friends, community (socio-ecological).

Acknowledge your role as a professional to help eliminate, prevent and address intimate partner violence (IPV) and gender inequality.

Work to develop bystander intervention skills - assessing, enlisting, deciding, acting/confronting - to support indirect, direct, and distraction plans.

Share solutions and stories that enhance success and build capacity to effect change.

**INTERVENTIONS**

**Stand Tall** during moments that matter most

As: Seriously? What do you think I am, a sleuth?

Stay Tuned: **Assess Risks in the Environment** (STARE)

- You’ve had a lot to drink; can I get you a safe ride home?
- ___ plans to ’score’ tonight; let’s keep a close eye on ___.

Lend Your Support / Be Attentive to Identified Needs

- I’m concerned about that bruise; are you alright?
- You said you’re drinking to forget . . . Let’s talk about it.

Encourage Safe, Positive Options / Available Resources

- You’re so stressed; did you call the counselor/resource ctr?

Utilize Others’ Help / Alert Them to Your Intentions

- ___ is hitting on ___; will you help me create a distraction?

Take Action / Indirect, Direct, Distraction, Combination

- Have you considered that comment might be offensive?
- _’s showing you a lot of unwelcome attention; need help?
- Excuse me, I’m going to have to ask you to leave ___ alone.

Help! Escalate to Authority, as Indicated

- Hey, bartender/bouncer, something needs to happen here!
- I don’t like where this is headed: 9-1-1 EMERGENCY.

**Confidential Support on Campus**

**Mercer Counseling Services** in Atlanta can help you handle the disruption and disorganization that can result from a traumatic event. If you or someone you know has experienced a personal violation such as a sexual assault and seek confidential support to cope with and manage what has happened, Mercer Counseling is the designated campus resource offering a level of **confidentiality protected by law** for our clients through what is known as privileged communication.

*Our support may be all that you need;* however, we also can assist you with finding more services and resources whenever those could be helpful, too. *You don’t have to do this alone.*

**215 Sheffield Student Center**

(678) 547-6060