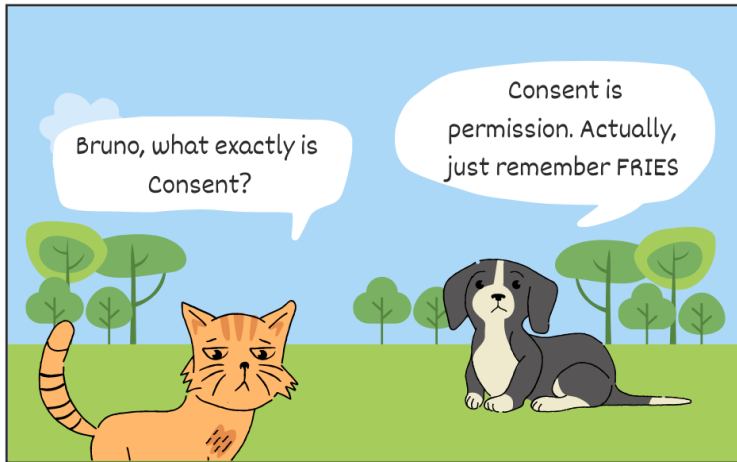


Unlearn with FSI

CONSENT AND BOUNDARIES



TW: Coerced consent, violation of boundaries



WHAT IS CONSENT?

Consent is permission for something to happen or an agreement to do something. It is freely and voluntarily given. Coerced or forced permission is not consent and consent once given can also be withdrawn.

Physical Consent

Physical consent refers to the permission required before a physical action takes place. This action could be any type of physical touch including a hug, an arm around the shoulder, etc. Although physical consent with family and friends is often overlooked, you are entitled to say no to any physical touch you're uncomfortable with.

Emotional Consent

Emotional consent refers to the permission required before having emotionally heavy or potentially triggering discussions with someone. Asking for emotional consent involves checking if the person at the receiving end of the conversation is okay with the topic about to be discussed. Self-expression is inherent to us as human beings but it is also important to make sure that the way a person expresses their feelings isn't overwhelming to you and the way you express your feelings isn't overwhelming the person you're talking to.

UNDERSTANDING BOUNDARIES

A boundary is a limit you set for yourself and the people around you according to your personal needs and wants. These can be mutual agreements between two or more people that ensure the comfort and safety of everyone involved.

PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

This involves establishing what kind of touch you're comfortable or uncomfortable with and communicating what your needs for personal space are. They also include not compromising on your physical needs like eating food, drinking water, and resting. Physical boundaries are violated when someone touches you without your consent, invades your personal space or when your basic physical needs are denied.

EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES

These are all about respecting and honoring feelings and energy. Setting emotional boundaries means recognizing how much emotional energy you are capable of taking in, knowing when to share and when not to share, and limiting emotional sharing with people who respond poorly. It is also respecting the other person's ability to take in emotional information.

SETTING BOUNDARIES & GETTING CONSENT LOOKS LIKE:

"I'm not comfortable being here, can we leave?"

"I don't feel like hugging, I prefer handshakes."

"I'm not comfortable with you going through my bag without asking me."

"Sure, the party sounds great but I'll think about it before confirming."

"I'm feeling overwhelmed with studies. Are you in the space to listen right now?"

"Is it alright if I post this picture of you on my Instagram?"

LET'S UNLEARN THINGS WE SAY

"You're so sensitive"

"You're being overdramatic"

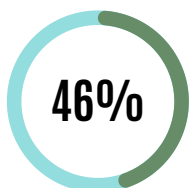
"There are no boundaries with family and friends"

"It's just a joke"

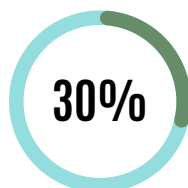
"You are being stupid"

"You are never happy"

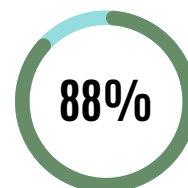
Our responses



Have felt uncomfortable in a friendly setting but did not set a boundary



Have felt guilty for setting boundaries with family & friends



Agree that consent is not limited to physical space being shared

OUR JOURNEY WITH CONSENT AND BOUNDARIES

Consent and boundaries have been considered taboo concepts for as long as we can remember. As we grew up, we realized that we weren't the only ones struggling to express our feelings about this concept. Most of us did not have a proper understanding of what consent and boundaries meant to us.

One of the most common misconceptions we had was that boundaries were only physical. It's only in the last couple of years that we realised emotional boundaries are equally important. We can't count the amount of times we participated in conversations that were triggering or draining for us because we felt saying "no" was not an option. In retrospect, we realize we've been guilty of subjecting people close to us with heavy conversations too without understanding their headspace.

Adding to this, the times expressing our boundaries resulted in a dismissive response only cemented the idea that setting them was "rude" and "disrespectful". Moreover, we were called "*too sensitive or dramatic*" for setting clear boundaries which discouraged us from doing so. It also conditioned us to believe that being sensitive was a negative trait. However, unlearning this idea has made us realize that being sensitive was, in fact, an extremely positive and important quality. It has enabled us to be empathetic and understanding towards those around us.

As we evolve as individuals and discover more about ourselves, our boundaries are bound to evolve with us. They may even look very different from our friends' and we may not understand them but it is our responsibility to respect them.

Our journey with consent and boundaries hasn't come to an end and won't any time soon; we're still learning and unlearning as we go and we hope all of you do too!

- Class XI FSI members

**FOR CONTRIBUTIONS & SUGGESTIONS, WRITE TO US AT
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