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Exploring the Nuances of Sexual Consent Communication & Interpretation

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Though many different tactics have been used to ascribe a definition to consensual sexual behavior, the definitions that have been used tend to provide a unidimensional, rote systematic concept of what sexual consent is and how it *should* be practiced. This study aims to deconstruct the formalized notion of consensual behavior and attempts to attain an understanding of how nuanced the communication of sexual consent can be in “real-world” settings. Using a grounded theory qualitative methods approach, participants were presented original vignettes that depict sexual activities where the component of consent is ambiguous. Later, participants were interviewed and asked to explain in a fair amount of detail a recent sexual encounter and elaborate on how they interpreted and signaled signs of consent. Participants were given an oral example of how to do the read-aloud session, and then asked to highlight whether the scenario depicted consent, and if so, how/where/in what ways. Gender/sexual orientation data will be collected with demographic data and any differences in interpretation of consent for different groups will be analyzed along with thematic elements of interview responses.