LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS
University is a time for learning and discovery. You will meet new people, have new experiences, and form new relationships. We want you to have an enjoyable and safe time at Sussex. That’s why we want to have a conversation about relationships, sex and consent.

At Sussex, we are working as a community to promote our REDS values: Respect, Equality, Diversity and Safety.

For more information visit: www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/reds
Consent is about saying “yes” to sex and about respecting other people’s right to say “no” – whether they are communicating this verbally or non-verbally, at any stage of having sex or physical contact, and at any point in a relationship. If someone is communicating consent they show that they are comfortable, in agreement and keen to continue.

Talking openly about sex can be embarrassing and difficult, but it’s important to be able to communicate what you want and when and how you want it. Don’t pressure anyone into having sex or make them feel uncomfortable. Equally, don’t let yourself be pressured or made to feel uncomfortable. Sex should be about pleasure, and communication is key.

In the law, consent has three components and all three must be present for there to be consent:

**CHOICE**
- a person wants and chooses to have sex, each way, each time;

**FREEDOM**
- a person makes this choice freely and does not feel forced into having sex due to their circumstances;

**CAPACITY**
- a person must be capable of choosing to have sex and is not too drunk or ‘out of it’ or merely asleep so that they don’t know what they are doing.

Consent is about each person agreeing to any sexual contact. Not just yes to having penetrative sex, but to any sexual contact at all – this includes kissing or touching any part of someone’s body.

If somebody:
- comes into your flat or study bedroom
- dances with you in a club or party
- agrees to be alone with you or studies alone with you
- kisses you

It doesn’t necessarily mean they want to have sex with you! Always ask and always accept that no means no – don’t repeatedly message them or follow them to make them change their minds.

SEX WITHOUT CONSENT

SEXUAL ACTIVITY WITHOUT CONSENT IS AGAINST THE LAW – IT IS CLASSED AS RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT.

IF SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING TO YOU THAT YOU DON’T WANT, WHEN YOU’VE SAID ‘NO’ (OR YOU WERE UNABLE TO SAY ‘NO’), THAT IS NON-CONSENSUAL SEX.
YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY A STRANGER IN A DARK ALLEY
REALITY: FALSE
The vast majority of reported cases involve someone known to them.

YOU CAN PROVOKE RAPE THROUGH WEARING REVEALING CLOTHING OR BY FLIRTING
REALITY: FALSE
Provocative clothing does not mean a ‘yes’. There is never an excuse for making unwanted sexual advances towards someone because of what they wear. No one is asking to be sexually assaulted or raped.

IF YOU TAKE DRUGS OR DRINK ALCOHOL, YOU SHOULD EXPECT UNWANTED SEXUAL ADVANCES
REALITY: FALSE
If someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol they’re vulnerable. This does not mean they are consenting to sex or able to give consent. You can’t consent to sex if you are unconscious and you can’t make an informed choice when you are drunk.

YOU CAN’T BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY SOMEONE YOU’RE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH OR HAVE HAD SEX WITH BEFORE
REALITY: FALSE
People can be sexually assaulted or raped by someone they’re in a relationship with, including a long-term partner. It doesn’t matter whether you’ve had sex with a person before or not, you still have to agree to sex next time.

SOME PEOPLE REGRET HAVING SEX SO THEY PRETEND THEY’VE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED
REALITY: FALSE
There is no evidence that more than a tiny percentage of people lie about being sexually assaulted. However, there is evidence that most people do not report being sexually assaulted because they feel ashamed or fear that they will not be believed.

YOU CAN ONLY BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY A MAN WITH A PENIS
REALITY: FALSE
Women, men and people with other gender identities can be sexually assaulted by someone of the same or a different gender. Although our legal definition of rape only involves a penis, sexual assault by penetration can involve any other part of the body or any object. Other forms of sexual assault do not necessarily involve any penetration at all.
SO, IT’S REALLY IMPORTANT TO CHECK WHETHER WHOEVER WE’RE KISSING OR TOUCHING ACTUALLY WANTS TO HAVE SEX WITH US! HERE ARE SOME WAYS THAT YOU CAN CHECK WHETHER SOMEONE IS CONSENTING:

ASKING FOR CONSENT

**ASKING FOR CONSENT**

You and/or your partner have the right to say ‘no’ to anything that you don’t want to happen or aren’t comfortable with, and can say ‘no’ at any time. It could be saying ‘not tonight’, ‘not there’, ‘no, sorry’, ‘please stop’ or something else – it all means no.

If they haven’t actually said ‘no’ but they just don’t seem that into it then you should double check – communication can be non-verbal too.

If you’re a first year student, you’ll learn more about consent through one of our interactive workshops.
Sometimes abuse isn’t easy to recognise, especially in an intimate relationship (one with partners or family-members). It can feel as though there’s a fine line between being either caring and romantic, or being overbearing and controlling. So, what’s the difference between romance (which is ok!) and other behaviours which are not?

In an abusive relationship there is a pattern of controlling behaviour, which can have a significant negative effect on your feelings, emotions and health. However, it’s important to recognise that if a relationship is unhappy, it doesn’t mean that it’s abusive. For more information on coercive control and other forms of domestic abuse see www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/domesticabuse

An important part of having consensual sex is taking joint responsibility for sexual health and contraception. It might not seem that fun or sexy, but getting it sorted will help you to relax and be able to enjoy yourselves better!

Before things get hot and heavy, make sure that everyone involved has talked about how you will make sure you’re protected from pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and that you’re happy with the decision you’ve jointly made.

Remember that even if you know and trust someone it’s important that each of you has a full sexual health check-up and gets the “all clear” before you stop using barrier methods of contraception (which help to prevent the spread of STIs) such as condoms and dams.

COULD BE PART OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

▸ They want to spend time with you.
▸ They compliment you when you look nice.
▸ They text you to say they miss you.
▸ They send you some flowers.
▸ They like to post photos of you together on social media.

INDICATIONS OF CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

▸ They want you to spend all your time with them, and they try to stop you from spending time with other people.
▸ They tell you what you should and shouldn’t wear, or how you should look.
▸ They’re constantly checking up on you all day, asking where you are and who you’re with.
▸ They keep sending you gifts and messages, even when you’ve asked them not to contact you.
▸ They monitor or control your social media accounts.

www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/sexualhealth
A 2015 SURVEY OF UK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, COMMISSIONED BY THE TELEGRAPH FOUND THAT:

1 IN 3 FEMALE STUDENTS reported having experienced sexual violence, harassment or abuse.

1 IN 8 MALE STUDENTS reported having been subjected to groping or unwanted sexual advances.

1% OF ALL STUDENTS had been raped at university.

A 2016 UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX STUDENTS' UNION (USSU) SURVEY FOUND THAT AMONGST THE 370 RESPONDENTS:

A MAJORITY (52%) OF STUDENTS perceive levels of sexual harassment in Brighton nightlife to be either fairly or very high.

OVER A QUARTER OF STUDENTS (28%) have seen someone sexually assaulted or harassed whilst on a night out.

LESS THAN A FIFTH OF STUDENTS would definitely report incidents of sexual harassment or assault to the police.
BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

Being part of a caring, respectful community at Sussex means taking notice and speaking out when we see things that don’t look right.

► If you see someone who looks like they’re in trouble, ask them if they’re ok.

► If you witness street harassment you could distract the harasser e.g. by asking them for directions or the time.

► If you witness an incident but don’t feel able to intervene, you can call our security team or the police for help.

► Don’t let a friend who is not in control leave without you. Look out for each other.

► If you witness a friend behaving badly towards other people, gently explain to them how this makes you feel and that you want them to stop. Concentrate on your feelings rather than being critical and never be antagonistic or violent.

BUT NEVER PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER – CALL FOR HELP!

HELPING A FRIEND

If a friend tells you that they have experienced sexual violence there are a few things you can do to be supportive and help them:

► Be prepared to believe them – don’t question their judgement.

► The most important thing is to listen and not to ask lots of questions.

► Don’t ask them how much they’ve had to drink or question their behaviour.

► Respect boundaries – they may not want a hug at this time. Always ask them first.

► Help your friend find expert support. Talk to your friend about the services in the back of this booklet and support them to contact them if this is what they want.

► Go with them if they want you to, but always be prepared to leave when appropriate.

► Always ask. It’s up to them to decide what to do next.

WHAT ACTION THEY TAKE MUST BE THEIR CHOICE ALONE – DO NOT ACT WITHOUT CONSENT
Sexual violence is a broad term which can include any kind of unwanted, non-consensual sexual touching or harassment. This could include rape, sexual assault or any kind of verbal, emotional or physical abuse of a sexual nature.

Sexual misconduct is the name we give to these behaviours in our university discipline system.

Stalking, cyber abuse and “revenge porn” are all forms of harassment which can be a criminal offence. Examples of such behaviour are following someone, watching them, spying on them, monitoring them electronically or pretending to be someone else online etc. All these behaviours are unwanted, intrusive and can cause serious alarm or distress.

**REVENGE PORN**

REVENGE PORN **REFERS TO THE DISCLOSURE OF PRIVATE SEXUAL PHOTOGRAPHS OR VIDEOS WITH THE INTENT TO CAUSE DISTRESS. IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE.**
FINDING IMMEDIATE HELP AND SUPPORT FOR RECENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

If you’re in danger or need immediate medical help, phone the emergency services on 999 (off campus) or through Security (on campus) on 01273 873333.

GET SUPPORT AND FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS BY TALKING TO A SPECIALLY TRAINED MEMBER OF STAFF AT ANY TIME

WHAT YOU DO NEXT IS COMPLETELY UP TO YOU

IF YOU ARE ON CAMPUS OR IN UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION AT NIGHT OR AT THE WEEKEND

You can get help from the Campus and Residential Support team, who will come to you. This team is on 24-hour alert and can be contacted out-of-hours through your residential advisor, porter or the Security team. Call 01273 873333 (or 3333 on an internal phone). Alternatively you can go in person to York House (open 24 hours).

They will support you, whatever you decide to do, whether you choose to report direct to the police, self-refer to the Saturn Centre (Sexual Assault Referral Centre SARC) or choose not to report at all.

REMEMBER, TAKE YOUR TIME, IT’S UP TO YOU

If you would prefer to contact the police or the SARC independently, details are on page 20.

For more information and advice see www.sussex.ac.uk/wellbeing/sexualassault

IF YOU ARE OFF CAMPUS AT NIGHT OR AT THE WEEKEND

You can also ask to speak to the Campus and Residential Support team for advice by calling Security on 01273 873333. Or call JAM, our out-of-hours call-back service, on 02089 383873 and ask for the duty Residential Community Coordinator to return your call.

DURING WEEKDAYS 9AM-5PM

You can get help from the Student Life Centre, which is located in the ground floor of Bramber House. Call 01273 876767 and ask for a priority appointment or email studentlifecentre@sussex.ac.uk

REPORTING TO DISCIPLINE

If you don’t want to report to the police, you are still able to report any incident to our Discipline team who may be able to take action against an accused student or staff member. www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/student-discipline
The current legal definition of rape is intentional penetration of another person's body (vagina, anus or mouth) with a penis, where the person being penetrated does not consent to the penetration and the suspect does not reasonably believe that the person consents. The law also criminalises other forms of unwanted sexual touching and refers to this as sexual assault. Touching covers all physical contact, whether using a part of the body of another object, including through clothing.

If you haven’t consented to sexual activity you have a legal right to take action and you can go to the police and report your rape or sexual assault as a crime, if you want to do so.
COUNSELLING SERVICE
Health Centre Building
01273 678156
www.sussex.ac.uk/counselling
reception@sussex.ac.uk
Available 9am–5pm and some evenings, Monday to Friday during and outside term-time.
Specialist and professional counselling support for students who have experienced either historical or more recent sexual violence and harassment (though not recommended immediately after an assault).

STUDENTS' UNION SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY TEAM
First Floor Falmer House
01273 877038
www.sussexstudent.com/support
advice@sussexstudent.com

GOOD NIGHT OWLS
Sussex Students’ Union run a scheme called Good Night Owls. GNO volunteers work in night clubs on Wednesday evenings, offering support to students who may be vulnerable or distressed.

GOOD NIGHT OUT
Sussex Students’ Union venue staff have undergone Good Night Out training to ensure that their venues offer a safe environment which is free from sexual harassment, and that a culture of belief and practical support exists among staff.

COMMUNITY SPECIALIST SUPPORT

THE PORTAL
Freephone: 0300 3239985
www.theportal.org.uk
info@theportal.org.uk
The Portal is a one-stop shop for survivors of sexual and domestic abuse in Brighton and Hove and East Sussex. It is run in partnership by RISE, Survivors Network and CGL.
The Portal offers specialist help to self-identifying women, LGBTQ+ people, self-identifying heterosexual men, and members of the BME community.

THE SATURN CENTRE (SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRE)
Crawley Hospital, West Green Drive, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 7DH
www.saturncentre.org.uk
sc-tr.saturncentre@nhs.net
Available 24 hours.
9am–5pm Monday to Friday call 01293 600469 for an appointment.
Out-of-hours call 0800 0337797 for advice from the on-call team for crisis and medical support following recent sexual violence.
Can store forensic evidence so that reporting to the police can be delayed.

SURVIVORS’ NETWORK
6a Pavilion Buildings, Brighton, BN1 1EE
www.survivorsnetwork.org.uk
Support services for all genders between 4–18 years.
Support services for self-identifying women survivors of sexual abuse aged over 18 years.

HELPLINE: 7–9pm Wednesdays, call 01273 720110, text 07717 999989 or email help@survivorsnetwork.org.uk
Drop-ins: 7–9pm Mondays and Thursdays: call 01273 203380 or email dropin@survivorsnetwork.org.uk
Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA): call 01273 203380 x105 or email referrals@survivorsnetwork.org.uk
Counselling: call 01273 203380 or email info@survivorsnetwork.org.uk

TRANS SURVIVORS’ SWITCHBOARD
Sunday 3–5pm, 01273 20450
www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/helpline
UK helpline for trans and non-binary survivors of sexual violence and abuse.

MANKIND
1 Brunswick Road, Hove, BN3 1DG
01273 911680
www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
admin@mankindcounselling.org.uk
Support for self-identifying men (aged 18+) who are survivors of sexual abuse.

RESPECT
www.respect.uk.net
Run support services and programmes for people of all genders who inflict violence within relationships and for self-identifying men survivors of domestic abuse.
Advice line for perpetrators of domestic abuse:
0808 802 4040 Mon–Fri 9am–5pm
info@respectphoneline.org.uk
Advice line for men survivors of domestic abuse:
0808 801 0327 Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm
info@mensadviceline.org.uk

RISE
01273 622828 Mon–Fri 9am–5pm
www.rise.org.uk
If you need immediate help and support call the freephone National Domestic Violence 24hr Helpline on 0808 2000 247.
Wednesday 10am–12pm weekly drop-in at Hove Town Hall.
Crisis accommodation in refuge for women and children escaping domestic abuse.
Self-refer to therapeutic and counselling services: 01273 622828.

SAFE SPACE
St Paul’s Church, West Street, Brighton
www.pavilions.org.uk/services/safe-space
Every Friday and Saturday (11pm–3.30am), supporting residents and tourists of all ages.
During your night out in Brighton, you might become unwell, upset, distressed or injured. Maybe you lose your friends or are unable to get home.
Trained first aid professionals offer medical support, and experienced, non-judgemental staff provide emotional and practical support. They will make sure you are OK, reconnect you with your mates, and continue your night or get home safely.