



Consent

Consent is the foundation of everything we do at Off The Traxx. It is **not a checkbox** at the start of a scene — it is a continuous, multi-layered agreement that runs from the first time you exchange messages with someone, through every moment of play, and into the days that follow.

This lesson covers what consent is, the frameworks the community uses to think about it, the different shapes it takes in practice, when it cannot be given, when it breaks, and how to handle it when something has gone wrong.

What you'll be able to do

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to...

- **Define** consent as a continuous, multi-layered agreement — and **spot** the four things it isn't.
- **Apply** the FRIES test, and **choose** between SSC, RACK, and PRICK for a given scene.
- **Identify** which of the six shapes of consent you're operating under — and the catch in each.
- **Run** the before-during-after rhythm, reading non-verbal cues and softer-than-safeword signals.
- **Recognise** when consent isn't valid, and **respond** cleanly when a line gets crossed.

Almost everything else you learn here — negotiation, safewords, the Yes/No/Maybe list, aftercare, how to read a scene heading sideways — is consent wearing different clothes. Treat this lesson as the spine the rest of the curriculum hangs from: once you can see consent as a living agreement rather than a one-time permission, the later classes stop being a list of rules to memorise and become variations on a single idea you already hold.

We'll move from the abstract to the concrete and back. First we clear out what consent *isn't* and name the floor it has to clear; then we map the frameworks and the shapes it takes in practice; then we follow it through an actual scene and the moments where it quietly fails; and finally we look at the harder ground — consent outside the playspace, the myths that get people hurt, CNC, and what to do when a line is crossed. By the end the abstract definition and the lived practice should be the same thing.

In this lesson: what consent is and isn't, and the floor it has to clear (§ I–III) · the frameworks and the shapes it takes (§ IV–VI) · consent through a scene — before, during, after, altered states, and where it fails (§ VII–IX) · when it breaks: beyond the scene, the myths, CNC, violations, and repair (§ X–XV).

I. Why “Yes” Isn’t Enough

Vanilla intimacy can lean on assumed comfort zones. BDSM can't afford the assumption.

The activities involved — bondage, impact, breath play, power exchange — carry physical and emotional risk that demands a higher standard of communication than ordinary intimacy. You can't coast on “they'd say something if they minded.”

That higher standard is also what makes BDSM relationships, when done well, some of the most *intentionally communicative* partnerships out there. The kink community has spent decades building frameworks, practices, and cultural norms that center consent at every stage. None of it is optional.

II. Four Things Consent *Isn't*

Clear out the impostors first — this is where people get hurt.

Not a checkbox

“We negotiated, so I have consent for the next two hours” treats negotiation as a permission slip. It isn't. It's the starting position for an agreement you both keep building as the scene unfolds.

Not the absence of “no”

“She didn't say no” is one of the most dangerous sentences in kink. People fail to refuse for dozens of reasons — freeze, pressure, wanting to please, fear of being “difficult,” dissociation, intoxication.

Not silence

Sitting quietly while a group does something you disagree with reads as agreement. So does staying silent when you see someone else's boundaries crossed. Silence and consent are not the same thing.

Not a legal shield

Consent in the play space isn't a contract that holds up in court. If you catch yourself thinking “I had consent, so I'm covered,” you're protecting *yourself* — not your partner.

THE ONE TO TATTOO ON THE INSIDE OF YOUR EYELIDS

“She didn't say no” is not a yes. The absence of refusal is not consent. If you are reading silence as permission, stop and ask.

III. The FRIES Floor

Borrowed from sex-ed outside the scene. Real consent is Freely given, Reversible,

Informed, Enthusiastic, and Specific. Miss one and what you have isn't consent.

Freely given

No coercion, pressure, manipulation, or guilt. A yes given to avoid an argument is not a yes.

Reversible

Always, at any moment, for any reason or none. A consent that can't be withdrawn isn't consent — it's compliance.

Informed

They know what they're agreeing to: the activity, the risks, what's at stake. Hide an STI and the consent you get isn't informed — so it isn't consent.

Enthusiastic

Not "I guess." Not "fine, whatever." An actual yes, in their body, that you can recognise.

Specific

Yes to a flogger isn't yes to a cane. Yes to you isn't yes to your friend. Yes today isn't yes next month. Each new thing, asked and answered freshly.

TRY THIS

Run your most recent "yes" — kink or vanilla — through FRIES. Was it **F**reely given, **R**eversible, **I**nformed, **E**nthusiastic, and **S**pecific? Notice which letter is easiest to let slide when you're eager — that's your personal blind spot to watch for.

IV. Three Frameworks: SSC, RACK, PRICK

The community doesn't run on one rulebook. Three frameworks emerged over four decades, each adding what the last one missed.

FRAMEWORK	THE CORE QUESTION	BEST FOR
SSC Safe, Sane, Consensual	Is this physically safe, is everyone clear-headed, did everyone clearly agree?	A floor and a shared language. Low-risk scenes between established partners; newer practitioners finding their feet.
RACK Risk-Aware Consensual Kink	Do we both understand the <i>specific</i> risks, and consent to them with that understanding?	Anything where “safe” would be a lie — rope, impact, edge play. The honest shift from “is this safe?” to “what could go wrong, and are we both willing?”
PRICK Personal Responsibility, Informed Consensual Kink	Have I personally done the homework to understand this risk in detail?	The highest ethical floor. Each person does their own research instead of nodding when a partner mentions risk. Most experienced players default here.

“Safe” implies risk can be eliminated, which isn’t honest for much of what people actually do; “sane” carries ableist weight. So SSC works best as a starting floor. RACK puts the duty of being informed on *you* — if you don’t know a thing’s risks, you can’t get RACK consent to do it; you’d be asking your partner to consent to your ignorance. PRICK goes one step further and distributes the homework: the top owns competence with their tools, the bottom owns communicating limits, health, and honest comfort. Neither role is excused from the work.

THE FRAMEWORK IS NOT THE PROTECTION

Predators love quoting frameworks. The acronym alone protects no one — the *negotiation behind it* does. What matters is the substance: are both people informed, genuinely willing, and have they talked through the specifics.

V. Three Qualities That Have to Be Present

Whatever framework you're under, consent has to be all three of these at once.

Informed

Everyone understands the activities, risks, and intensity — including the health disclosure that gets skipped most: STI status, recent injuries, conditions that change what's safe.

Explicit

Clearly and verbally agreed. Consent to one activity doesn't imply consent to others. Each new activity gets its own explicit yes.

Ongoing

Not a one-time gift — a continuous process. Anyone can withdraw at any time, for any reason. Safewords and check-ins exist *because* consent is ongoing.

VI. Six Shapes Consent Takes

Beyond "yes or no." Knowing which kind you're operating under, in any given moment,

is how you avoid the mismatches where harm hides.

TYPE	WHAT IT IS	USE IT FOR — AND THE CATCH
Direct	An explicit verbal/written yes or no. “Yes please.” “No, that’s a hard limit.”	Default to it for anything new. The premium on being explicit rises as stakes rise.
Tacit	Prior authorisation for the top to act when the bottom can’t actively consent in the moment (non-verbal in deep scene, blanket consent for a window).	Earned through long, careful negotiation — never assumed. Heavy responsibility on the top to know the limits cold. Watch body language: stillness or flipped cues = pause.
Implied	Read from non-verbal cues alone, no explicit exchange. Long-term partners, familiar activities.	The riskiest form — the gap between what one reads and the other intends is where misunderstanding lives. Note: your <i>silence</i> in a group also reads as implied consent.
Assent (opt-in)	Participation with the explicit right to withdraw — a class, an event, a discussion.	Good for new explorations the bottom wants to try without committing. You can leave whenever.
Micro	Granular consent for small steps. “If you do X, I’ll do Y.” Each step its own opt-in.	Builds trust incrementally and tracks who actually said yes to what — instead of stretching one sweeping agreement.

TYPE	WHAT IT IS	USE IT FOR — AND THE CATCH
Macro	The largest surrender — extended or total power exchange, 24/7, ritualised permission structures.	Can deepen a dynamic — or unravel without warning if it isn't built on direct consent, regular check-ins, and the absolute right to withdraw. Don't go macro before you've gone deep on direct and micro.

VII. Before · During · After

Consent lives in three time zones, each with its own work.

Before — negotiation builds the foundation

Both partners discuss exactly what's on the table, what's off it, what safewords or signals you'll use, and what aftercare each person needs. **If you haven't discussed it, you don't have consent for it.** Your toolkit:

- ☐ **Yes/No/Maybe list.** Sort the activities — and give the “maybes” the most conversation about context, intensity, and conditions.
- ☐ **Safewords.** Clear, easy to say, agreed beforehand. Traffic lights (green / yellow / red) beat a binary.
- ☐ **Hand signals or taps.** For when verbal will be hard (gagged, deep state). Negotiate the alternative *before* the scene needs it.
- ☐ **Disclosure.** STI status, recent injuries, substances in the last few hours, triggers. None of it is oversharing — all of it is input your partner needs.
- ☐ **Sober negotiation.** The foundational limits conversation happens clear-headed, even if the pre-scene check-in is brief.

During — the scene shows you the territory

Negotiation gave you the map. Now read body language as the constant background signal — breathing, tension, response speed, eye contact — and check in verbally as appropriate. A dominant who only waits for a safeword and ignores every other signal is not practising good consent.

SOFTER-THAN-SAFEWORD SIGNALS MATTER

“Wait, slower.” “Let me catch my breath.” These are *modification requests*, not safewords. Treat them as full stops and you train your partner not to speak up; treat them as continuation cues and you train them that you don’t listen. The right move: slow, briefly ask what would feel right, adjust. And “just a little more” is vague enough to be dangerous — five seconds of clarification turns it into a clear new agreement.

After — aftercare is a consent practice

Not just a comfort one. Check in, discuss what worked and what didn’t, adjust agreements for next time. Aftercare runs on three timescales: the **immediate** (warmth, water, letting them come back at their own pace), the **next day or two** (a drop check-in — “how are you today?”), and the **longer** (reflection in a calm context to refine future negotiations). If something crossed a line they didn’t anticipate, aftercare is where it surfaces — let it reshape the next negotiation, don’t dismiss it.

TOPS NEED AFTERCARE TOO

Drop hits tops as hard as bottoms — sometimes harder, because tops feel less entitled to ask for it. Don’t skip your own.

TRY THIS

Write, in your own words, the three things you’d actually say to check in mid-scene (something like “colour?”, “more or less?”, “stay with me a second”). Saying them once on paper makes them sayable in the moment — and decide your soft “yellow” signal for *slow down* now, before you ever need it.

VIII. Subspace & Altered States

An endorphin-driven state some bottoms enter during intense play — euphoric, floaty, dissociative. Pain threshold rises, critical thinking drops, and risk assessment drops with it.

NEW CONSENT CANNOT COME FROM SUBSPACE

A bottom in that state might agree to things they'd never agree to sober, or fail to register pain that signals injury. **Do not introduce new activities or escalate intensity once a bottom is in subspace.** Everything that happens stays inside what you negotiated beforehand. Want to add something? Wait until the scene is fully over and you've both come back to baseline.

From the outside, deep subspace, dissociation, and acute distress can look nearly identical: steady breathing, eyes distant, little movement, no words. When verbal response disappears, the honest move is to *pause and assess* — not stop the scene completely, just shift to attentive presence. A hand on the shoulder, a quiet “I’m with you,” and watch how they respond. What you don’t do is continue because breathing is steady. Breathing alone is not enough information.

IX. When Consent Isn't Valid

Independent of framework or type, consent fails when any one of these is true.

ANY ONE OF THESE AND WHAT YOU HAVE ISN'T CONSENT

- The person is intoxicated or impaired by substances.
- They're under emotional pressure, guilt, or coercion to agree.
- They don't actually understand what they're agreeing to.
- They're in subspace or another altered state.
- They've been isolated from their support systems and the community.
- A one-time yes is being treated as permanent and irrevocable.

When one of these is true, what you have is somewhere between a misunderstanding and a violation — depending on how willing you are to be honest about it.

X. Consent Doesn't Stop at the Scene

It applies to every intimacy-related behaviour, however mild — and the kinky partner can be the one who violates it.

A real example. Oliver is married; his wife isn't kinky. After years of asking, she grudgingly agreed he could dress in women's clothing when she wasn't home. One day he “helpfully” reorganised her underwear drawer. She was furious — and he didn't understand why. He had her consent to *dress*, after all.

He did not have her consent to touch her things. Dressing on his own wasn't permission to access her belongings — **one yes isn't a blanket yes for adjacent activities**. Worse, he privately admitted to “borrowing” her underwear: “I always washed them after.” “She never knew” is not a consent defence. Secrecy and consent are opposites.

THE PATTERN UNDER THE STORY

Consent to play with you isn't consent to access your partner's belongings, talk about you to others, follow you online, or treat the kink side as overriding the rest of the relationship. Treating a vanilla partner's limits as *less legitimate* than your kink desires is a common, real consent failure.

TRY THIS

Name two everyday, non-scene moments where you might be *assuming* consent instead of asking for it — borrowing something, sharing a detail about a partner, a touch in passing. Pick one and actually ask next time.

XI. Common Misconceptions

The myths that get people hurt — on both sides of a dynamic.

From newer bottoms

- “The top has more experience, so they’ll protect me.” Experience doesn’t reliably correlate with care. Protection comes from negotiation and observation.
- “The Dom will know what I need.” Tops aren’t mind-readers. Don’t say it and they’re guessing.
- “I read it in fiction and the sub loved it.” Erotica is fantasy. Treating it as a how-to is exactly how new players get hurt.

From clueless dominants

- “Once they consented to serve, anything is permitted.” No. Each new activity needs its own consent.
- “Subs should have no voice in how they’re used.” No. A bottom is a partner, not a prop — a bottom with no voice is a bottom being abused.
- “All subs are the same.” No. Forcing a partner into a template is coercion dressed up as identity policing.

XII. CNC & the Consent Paradox

Consensual Non-Consent — the most misunderstood corner of kink. How can something be consensual and non-consensual at once?

It's *meta-consent*. Both partners negotiate extensively beforehand — what can happen, what can't, and what signal stops everything immediately. The “non-consent” is a roleplay element *inside* a carefully built framework of actual consent. Real CNC requires **more** structure than a standard scene, not less: triggers and hard limits, soft limits, physical and emotional boundaries discussed in detail, a safeword both treat as absolute, and the maturity to debrief honestly afterward. It sits at the far edge of the spectrum and demands skills that come from sustained practice with the same partner.

A KNOWN PREDATOR'S COVER

If anyone tells you CNC means “no limits,” walk away. Real CNC has the *most* boundaries, not the fewest.

XIII. Violations Run in Every Direction

Top-violating-bottom is the most-discussed pattern — it is not the only one.

DIRECTION	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Top → bottom	The textbook version: ignoring a safeword, exceeding agreed limits, ignoring non-verbal cues, pressuring or coercing.
Bottom → top	Less discussed, equally real: refusing to safeword when they should, escalating past what was agreed, disregarding the top's limits, emotionally manipulating the top.
Third party	From outside the scene: interrupting a scene without permission, using pet-names (Daddy, babygirl) toward someone you have no dynamic with, an organiser failing to uphold safety protocols.
“Accidental”	Miscommunication, misread cues, lapses. The impact is real regardless of intent — and repeated “accidents” stop being accidents. A top who consistently “accidentally” exceeds limits is showing you who they are.

BYSTANDER RESPONSIBILITY — TELL A DM, NOT THE PLAYERS

Witness a scene heading sideways? Your silence isn't neutral — but going in yourself can wreck a scene that's actually fine or escalate one the players were handling. Tell a DM or host. They can read it from a calmer distance and act without making it personal. If it's nothing, they'll say so. Either way you've done your part.

XIV. When a Line Gets Crossed

Independent of who crossed it and whether it was intentional, the immediate response is

the same.

☐ **Stop immediately.** Don't "play it off," don't continue and hope they don't notice.

☐ **Create space.** Physical and emotional separation — the bottom may need distance, the top may need to step out.

☐ **Notify the DM** if one is present. They can mediate and keep everyone safe.

☐ **Acknowledge it.** Whoever crossed the line names what happened — no excuses, no minimising.

☐ **Listen and validate.** The person whose boundary was crossed gets heard, even if it was unintentional.

☐ **Talk it through** once both are ready — what happened, why, how to prevent a repeat — and re-evaluate the agreements. Some violations are severe enough to end the dynamic. Sometimes that's the right call.

IF YOU ARE THE ONE WHO CROSSED IT

The part most people get wrong. **Stop the moment you realise.** Apologise without excuses — "I'm sorry, I went past what we agreed, I should have stopped at yellow," not "I'm sorry *if* you felt hurt." Listen without defending. Prioritise their needs over your guilt — your guilt is yours to manage; their experience is theirs to report. Then seek understanding (what led here?) and accept the consequences, whatever they decide.

XV. Repair & Rebuilding Trust

Recovery takes time — the repair runs longer than the violation, often by orders of magnitude.

Recognise the impact (even unintentional violations cause real harm — validation isn't optional). Allow processing time at the pace of the person who was hurt. Rebuild trust gradually, through *demonstrated changed behaviour*, not promises — increased transparency, more frequent check-ins. Renegotiate the boundaries, possibly substantially. And for serious violations, consider a BDSM-aware therapist: it isn't a luxury, it's the responsible move.

XVI. Accountability, Not Punishment

After a line gets crossed, the goal is to make it safe again — not to make someone pay.

When a violation happens, the first instinct — yours, the community's, sometimes the hurt person's — can be *punishment*: shame them, freeze them out, make them suffer in proportion to the harm. That instinct is human, and it is not what we are after. **Accountability** is something different, and it is the thing that actually protects people. It is the forward-looking version of everything the last two sections asked of the person who caused harm — but where punishment asks *who deserves to hurt*, accountability asks *what keeps this from happening again*.

The two can end up looking similar from outside — both can mean someone leaves a dynamic, or leaves the community. For a severe or repeated violation, removing someone is the accountable outcome: protecting members is the point, and for that kind of harm no amount of repair buys back the right to keep going. The difference is the orientation underneath. We act to keep the next person safe, not to settle a score. That orientation is also why pile-ons, public shaming, and rumour campaigns are not accountability — they feel like justice and they reliably make real reporting *less* safe for everyone.

“BUT PUNISHMENT IS PART OF OUR DYNAMIC”

Plenty of people negotiate discipline or punishment *play* — a consensual dynamic where breaking a rule earns a spanking, a corner, a writing assignment. That is a scene like any other: freely agreed in advance, bounded by limits, and reversible by a safeword. **A real consent violation is never “just discipline.”** Ignoring a safeword, going past agreed limits, or coercion does not become acceptable because a punishment dynamic exists — “it’s part of how we play” is not a defence, it is a red flag when it is used to explain away a crossed line. The test is the same one as everywhere else in this lesson: was it freely given, informed, specific, and revocable in the moment? Negotiated punishment passes that test. A violation fails it, whatever it is dressed up as.

XVII. Reporting It — What to Expect from OTT

You do not have to handle it alone, and you do not have to be certain it “counts.”

In the moment, you tell a DM or a host. Afterward — or if something only sits wrong with you days later — you can bring it to OTT through our incident process. You do **not** have to confront the other person to report. You do **not** have to have proof, witnesses, or the “right” words. And you do **not** have to be sure it “counts” — if it sat wrong with you, that is enough to raise it. There is a reporting form on the OTT site, and the incident-reporting policy page lays out exactly what happens after you send it.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU REPORT

A few things are true of every report, by design: **the reporter is not on trial** — we start by taking what you tell us at face value, and “credible” is a far lower bar than “proven beyond doubt.” Every report we can reach you about is **acknowledged** — the commitment is within 24 hours — and you are told what happens next. **You choose how much to share** and how much contact you want. Anyone on the response side with a personal stake recuses themselves. None of this requires you to have handled the moment perfectly — freezing, leaving quietly, or only naming it later are all normal, and none of them count against you.

Reporting is not betrayal, and naming a real concern is not “starting drama” — it is the opposite. The person most helped by a report is usually not you — it is the next person, the one who never finds out how close they came because a pattern got named in time. Bringing a concern forward is one of the most generous, protective things you can do here, and it is exactly what the process exists to receive.

KEY TAKEAWAY

If you remember one thing: **consent is a conversation, not a checkbox.** Freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, specific — renewed before, during, and after every scene. The absence of “no” is never a yes; when you’re unsure, you stop and ask. Everything else in this lesson is detail hanging off that one rule.

Habits That Keep Consent Alive

Remember where we started: consent is the *continuous, multi-layered agreement* underneath everything we do here — not a checkbox. That agreement lives in small habits, sustained over time, that turn it from a rule into a way of being with each other. None is hard alone — the work is doing them every time.

- **Brief touch-bases at transitions.** Before a new intensity, tool, or position: one sentence of check-in.
- **Name what you saw, not what they should feel.** “I noticed you flinched when I shifted my grip — what’s going on?” beats “did that hurt the wrong way?”
- **Make stopping cheap.** Tell your partner, explicitly, that pausing has no cost — then prove it the first few times.
- **Check in outside of scenes.** No one in role, just “what’s working, what isn’t.” People change; limits shift; the dynamic isn’t static.
- **Normalise “no.”** If declining carries consequences — punishment, withdrawal, the silent treatment — that’s coercion. Healthy dynamics make declining feel as natural as accepting.
- **Accept that mistakes happen.** Get good at prevention *and* repair. Both matter.

OFF THE TRAXX · FOUNDATIONS

*Consent isn't the rule you check before play. It's the conversation that never quite stops — before, during, after,
and in every part of the relationship play touches.*

Foundations curriculum · take your time, and come back to this one.