

GROWING A SAFER GARDEN STATE



Affirming Relationships (*Consensualia connectus*)

Our physical and emotional space is important. Feeling valued and supported helps us be successful members of our community. A child who is told they matter feels the world is filled with opportunity. A teenager who is empowered to take control of their sexuality is more likely to make informed and values-based decisions.

We can promote these feelings by practicing **consensual and affirming relationships**. Consensual relationships **can sprout anywhere and at any time, but thrive where people take the time to care about the boundaries and comfort of others**. A person who honors boundaries makes it a habit to check in with others and create an environment where folks feels safe.

“Is this OK?” - “How are you feeling?” - “What would work best for you?”

Special Instructions

- Start early! Discuss greetings and “good-byes” with children before family or group get-togethers. Empower a child to show affection or appreciation in a way that works for them, like a “high-five.”
- Too often, consensual relationships aren’t the norm – even in social situations or everyday interactions. Changes in our perspective take time – be patient and keep practicing.

Optimal Conditions

Communities and groups who believe every person – no matter age – deserve control over their body

Considerations

Offer folks lots of time to practice new words or move past possible awkwardness

Signs of Growth

Affirming interactions lead to increased feelings of safety and confidence. People feel comfortable being themselves.