

DEFINITIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, SEXUAL CONSENT, AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICIES AT YALE

Yale University is committed to maintaining and strengthening educational, working, and living environments founded on civility and mutual respect in which students, faculty, and staff are connected by strong bonds of intellectual dependence and trust. Sexual misconduct is antithetical to the standards and ideals of our community and will not be tolerated.

Yale aims to eradicate sexual misconduct through education, training, clear policies, and serious consequences for violations of these policies. The University's Title IX Coordinator has responsibility for ensuring compliance with Yale's policies regarding sexual misconduct. The University-Wide Committee on Sexual Misconduct (UWC) and the Title IX coordinators address allegations of sexual misconduct.

These policies apply to all members of the Yale community as well as to conduct by third parties (i.e., individuals who are neither students nor employees, including but not limited to guests and consultants) directed toward, University students, faculty, or staff members. Conduct that occurs in the process of application for admission to a program or selection for employment is covered by these policies.

Many forms of sexual misconduct are prohibited by federal law, including Title IX of the education amendments of 1972, and by Connecticut statutes, and could result in criminal prosecution or civil liability.

B. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Sexual misconduct incorporates a range of behaviors including sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, stalking, voyeurism, and any other conduct of a sexual nature that is nonconsensual, or has the purpose or effect of threatening, intimidating, or coercing a person.

Much sexual misconduct includes nonconsensual sexual contact, but this is not a necessary component. For example, threatening speech that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to constitute sexual harassment will constitute sexual misconduct. Making photographs, video, or other visual or auditory recordings of a sexual nature of another person without consent constitutes sexual misconduct, even if the activity documented was consensual. Similarly, sharing such recordings or other sexually harassing electronic communications without consent is a form of sexual misconduct.

Violations of Yale's Policy on Teacher-Student Consensual Relations and its policy on Relationships between Staff Members are a form of sexual misconduct.

Yale's policies and definitions apply to all members of the Yale community, regardless of their sex or gender.

C. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature on or off campus, when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a condition of an individual's employment or academic standing; or (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions or for academic evaluation, grades, or advancement; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating or hostile academic or work environment. Sexual harassment may be found in a single episode, as well as in persistent behavior.

D. SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is any kind of nonconsensual sexual contact, including rape, groping, and any other nonconsensual sexual touching.

E. SEXUAL CONSENT

Sexual activity requires consent, which is defined as positive, unambiguous, and voluntary agreement to engage in specific sexual activity throughout a sexual encounter. Consent cannot be inferred from the absence of a "no"; a clear "yes," verbal or otherwise, is necessary. Consent to some sexual acts does not constitute consent to others, nor does past consent to a given act constitute present or future consent. Consent must be ongoing throughout a sexual encounter and can be revoked at any time.

Consent cannot be obtained by threat, coercion, or force. Agreement under such circumstances does not constitute consent.

Consent cannot be obtained from someone who is asleep or otherwise mentally or physically incapacitated, whether due to alcohol, drugs, or some other condition. A person is mentally or physically incapacitated when that person lacks the ability to make or act on considered decisions to engage in sexual activity. Engaging in sexual activity with a person whom you know – or reasonably should know – to be incapacitated constitutes sexual misconduct.

F. GUIDANCE REGARDING SEXUAL CONSENT

Consent can only be accurately gauged through direct communication about the decision to engage in sexual activity. Presumptions based upon contextual factors (such as clothing, alcohol consumption, or dancing) are unwarranted, and should not be considered as evidence for consent.

Although consent does not need to be verbal, verbal communication is the most reliable form of asking for and gauging consent. Talking with sexual partners about desires and limits may seem awkward, but serves as the basis for positive sexual experiences shaped by mutual willingness and respect.

G. INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs when a current or former intimate partner uses or threatens physical or sexual violence. IPV also may take the form of a pattern of behavior that seeks to establish power and control by causing fear of physical or sexual violence. Stalking may also constitute IPV.

H. STALKING

Stalking is repeated or obsessive unwanted attention directed toward an individual or group that is likely to cause alarm, fear, or substantial emotional distress. Stalking may take many forms, including following, lying in wait, monitoring, and pursuing contact. Stalking may occur in person or through a medium of communication, such as letters, e-mail, text messages, or telephone calls. In some circumstances, two instances of such behavior may be sufficient to constitute stalking.