



Teaching Age of Consent Laws

Sex Ed & the Law

When teaching about age of consent laws:

- **State that you are not a lawyer (unless you are!)** Be clear that you cannot offer legal advice to anyone.
- **Present the law in written form and read it aloud.**
 - Include the limits of the jurisdiction and name other places where different laws apply
 - be clear that it is law
 - and identify exceptions
- **Identify who is guilty for breaking the law.**
 - If a person under the age of consent is having sex with someone over the age of consent, they are not guilty and not at fault.
 - If they are both under the age of consent, they may each be both victim and perpetrator, depending on the specifics of the local law.
- **Engage in a discussion.** What the discussion is about will vary depending on whether the students are: a. closely connected to the age of consent or even straddle it within the classroom or b. are somewhat more removed from the age of consent. Some example questions include:
 - Is anything about this law confusing?
 - Can you imagine a scenario in which a friend might have sex in ways that violate this law?
 - How would you react if you heard them talking about it?
 - Would you react differently if they were the person above or below the legal age of consent?
 - Does this law seem just to you? Why or why not?
- **Discuss scenarios.** Be sure to include scenarios that are challenging for interpreting the law.