

The Consent Iceberg

Personal & Social Impacts of Power

Hey, wanna
make out?

Yeah, I'm
into that.

Consent is
most often thought of as
a negotiation between
two or more individuals

The tip of
the iceberg
is just a small
part of something
much bigger

Personal/
Interpersonal
Level

but, consent is impacted by systems of power.
An unequal balance of power influences
the negotiation - making it difficult
to know if consent is freely given.

Societal Level

Below the
surface are the
power dynamics
at play

EXAMPLES

Gender norms teach that
men should be sexually
aggressive and that women
should be passive and
always ready for sex.

A person with a
disability propositioned
by a support person
may fear that saying no
will mean losing
essential assistance.

Sexual harassment in
the workplace: the
victim/survivor may not
be able to do or say
something for fear of
losing their job.