

Consent Activity

'Stop, Pause, Play'

Verbal & Non-verbal cues

15 minutes: Ask the group to split into small groups and give each group a set of cards and a Pause, Play, Stop sheet (**See appendix 1**). The cards list examples of verbal and non-verbal responses that may occur during sexual contact. The groups' task is to place each card beside the 'play, pause or stop' signs. Encourage them to discuss each one and to decide as a group.

Explain to the group that:

'Play' means if you see/hear this, the person is consenting

'Pause' means if you see/hear this, it is not clear so pause and check it out

'Stop' means if you see/hear this, they do not consent so you have to stop what you're doing

Give them **10- 15 minutes** to do this part.

Once the groups have placed all the cards bring them back together as a whole group and ask some of the following questions. (**5 minutes**)

- How easy or hard did you find this activity?
- Were there any cards that took more discussion?
- Can they think of anything that might change where they placed a particular card? For example, tone of voice, mismatch of words and body language etc...
- Things that might complicate what's being communicated (e.g. desire to please the other person, cautiously interested, nervous, negative feelings about self)?

The message here is around checking in, pausing and ensuring enthusiastic consent.

Next... hand out a pile of pause & stop cards (see appendix 2) and ask the groups to go through each pause card and identify ways they would check out if this was a pause situation.

For example, for '**Ouch**' you might say, "Are you okay?", "Do you want to stop?", "Shall we pause?" "Shall we use some lubricant?" – This might apply if the sexual contact was penetrative.

When doing this activity with young people encourage them to use their own words and language that they would realistically use in the situation.

Next .. go through the Stop cards and discuss how you might respond, for example, for '**Looking scared**', you might.. Stop and say, "Shall we talk?", "Do you want to stop?", "Shall we slow things down?", "Do you want to go home?"

This part of the activity is designed to give young people the **actual tools, skills and practice** to safely negotiate these situations. Encourage them to think about which situations they might find more challenging and how they might overcome these.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

Most of these responses are **context specific**.

For example, '**mmm**' could be used to communicate very different feelings by using different tones of voice (pleasure, 'almost but not quite', unsure about something, unhappy).

Laughing might indicate pleasure or nerves. **If in doubt, pause/ask.**

Being lubricated or erect does not necessarily equal consent. It's usually a good sign, i.e. the body is sexually aroused. However, sometimes the body prepares for sexual contact even when it is unwanted. **Survivors of sexual assault and rape** can often feel confused and ashamed when their body has responded in this way.

Reminder of the '**freeze**' response to **trauma** (the 'I just froze' campaign gives good examples) - if a person is frightened/has a trauma response, they may find themselves unable to think clearly, speak or move.

Some of these reactions may be responses to first or new sexual encounters and not necessarily a 'red flag' - but if someone seems to be experiencing pain, looking rigid etc. **it's important to pause**, communicate/check in with them.

Communicating what you're enjoying or not is important and healthy (and you're allowed to change your mind about what's enjoyable).

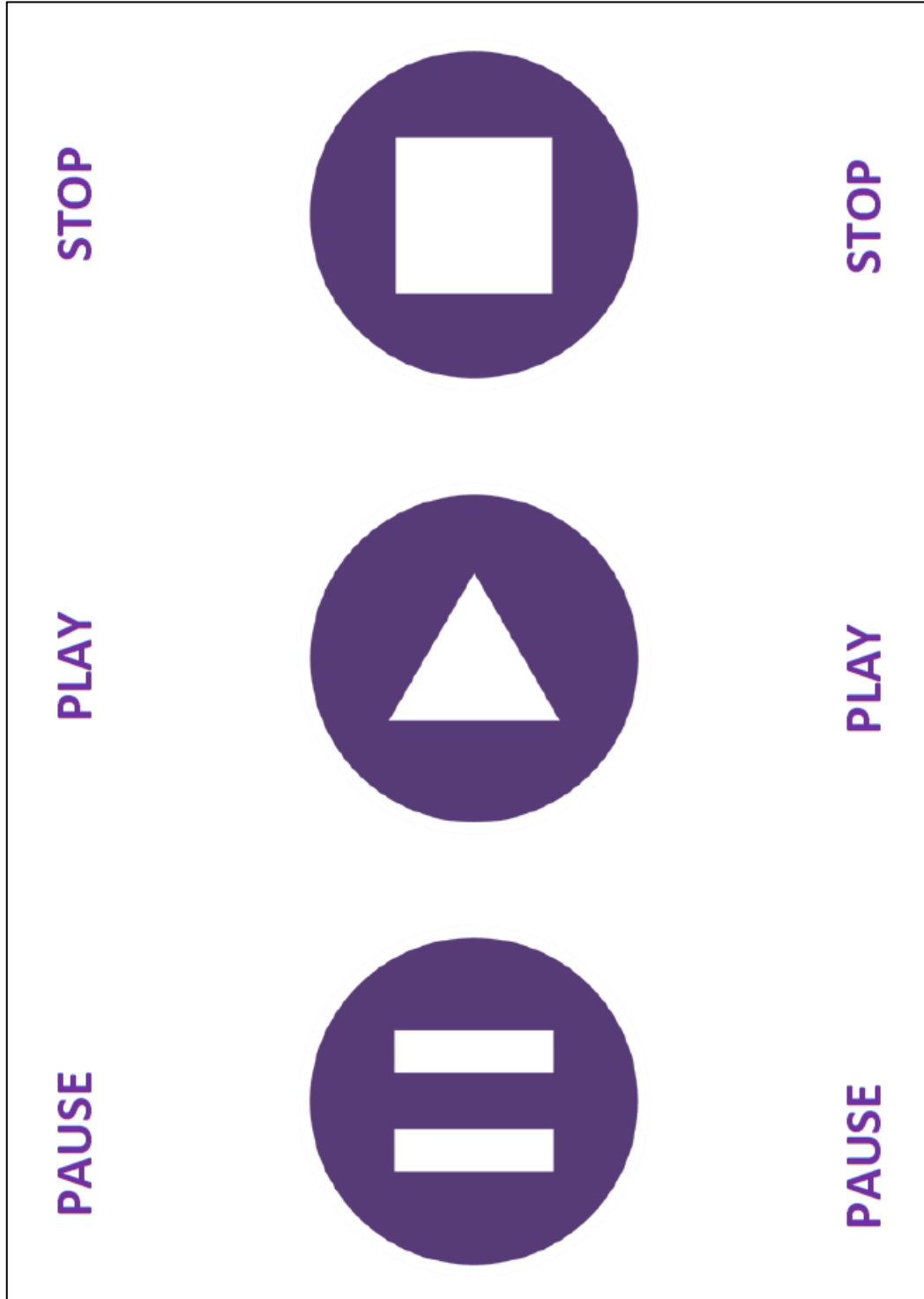
KEY MESSAGE:

IF IN DOUBT, PAUSE, CHECK-IN, COMMUNICATE BEFORE YOU CONTINUE THE SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Appendix 1

Photocopy cards and do enough sets for each small group.

“OUCH!”	MOANING
LOOKING RELAXED	BITING THEIR LIP
PULLING SOMEONE CLOSER	LAUGHING
LOOKING SCARED	RIGID BODY LANGUAGE
BEING SILENT	KISSING
BEING LUBRICATED	BEING AGGRESSIVE/DOMINANT
“COULD YOU MOVE THIS WAY A BIT?”	“STOP IT”
“DON’T STOP”	“NOT LIKE THAT”
“MMMMMM...”	GETTING UNDRESSED



'Pause' ideas for checking in whether my partner is giving consent

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'Stop' ideas for responses

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