

# THE CONSENT PROJECT

## Consenting to Unwanted Sex

Reccomendations for Treatment





## Break The Silence

Many women carry guilt, shame, and self-loathing about the sex they consented to but did not want. Speak about unwanted consensual sex to your female clients. You will give them the opportunity to name a silent trauma.

+ **01**

**Ask**

Focus on the details

+ **02**

**Educate**

Contextualize the experience

+ **03**

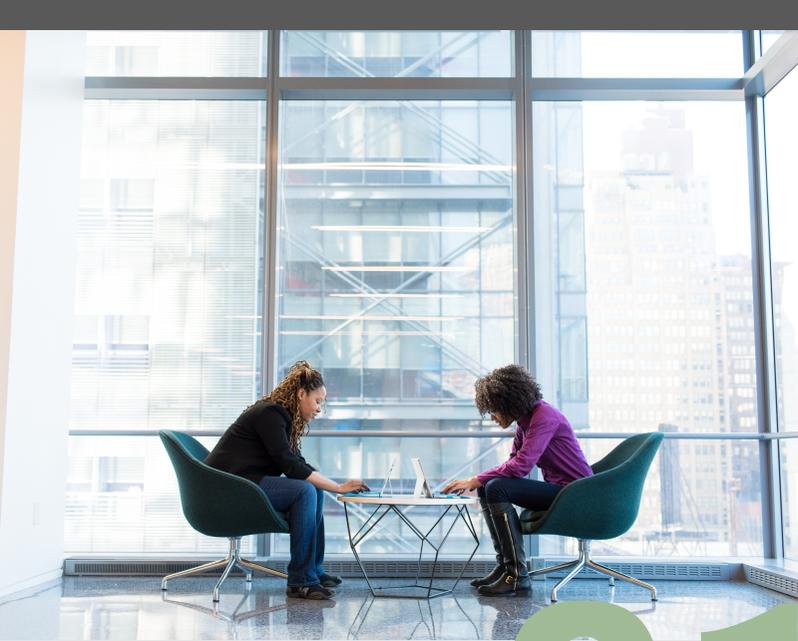
**Transform**

Change the behavior



## Create a Safe Space

Agreeing to have sex that is unwanted can be a very confusing experience. There is so much blame aimed at girls and women for not just saying no. This leaves two options: pretend you wanted it or suffer in silence. Therapy can be the safe space to unpack this complicated experience.



The Devil is in the Details

# 01

## Ask Hard Questions

It is difficult to talk to our clients about sex. It is awkward to probe into someone's most intimate life, especially when they would rather avoid the topic. As therapists, we need to get comfortable asking open-ended questions about the physical, emotional, and political details of our clients' sex lives.

### Sample Questions

- Describe how sex works in your relationship.
- Who wants sex more often?
- What happens if you don't want to have sex?
- What happens if you say no?
- Describe a time when you had sex you didn't want.
- Describe something you did sexually that you knew you didn't want.
- What are the reasons you are having sex?
- What are you hoping will happen if you have sex?
- Describe a time you used sex to avoid something.
- Describe a time when you had sex to get a boy/ man to like you.

# Provide an Education

Unwanted consensual sex is the grey area of sex where women give in to societal, relational, or sexual pressure. There are many damaging emotional and psychological consequences for giving in to unwanted sex.

Women can:

- Blame themselves because they feel they should have made a different choice.
- Feel angry and disconnected from themselves because they let themselves down.
- Feel angry and disconnected from their partner.
- Feel afraid to say they were violated because they didn't say no.
- Say they were violated and get dismissed because they didn't say no.

We need to let our female clients know that they were raised in an environment that groomed them to put men's needs above theirs. We need to help them see they were programmed to make decisions that could compromise their own well being.



# 02

## Share the Facts

## Provide New Tools

# 03

### Build a New Internal Dialogue



Women consent to have unwanted sex for many reasons but what they usually have in common is that they give away their power and care more about the man's thoughts and feelings than their own.

To shift this, we must provide our female clients with the tools to create an internal plan to guide them when they are making decisions related to sex and relationships.

For some women, this will be a very difficult task, as they may have never prioritized themselves.

- Understand where they place themselves in relationship to men.
- Help them articulate what they really want from a sexual relationship.
- Remove the negative beliefs and self-defeating habits that prevent them from getting what they want.
- Create a clear set of expectations and a list of self-guiding rules.
- Roleplay potential scenarios ahead of time.

They must also understand that if they are using sex for anything other than physical pleasure, they are entering unwanted sex territory.



## Empower Women

Helping women understand the complex relational, social, and political reasons that they consent to have sex they don't want is a step toward freeing women from the toxic shame and self-blame that keeps them from living free and empowered lives.