

5 PROBLEMATIC ASSUMPTIONS YOU MIGHT BE MAKING ABOUT HOW YOU SHOW UP IN THE WORLD

1

“...but I understand consent and would never violate someone else’s!”

While we might understand and apply consent in our sexual interactions, it’s also great to practice consent in our everyday interactions. We might assume that because we know that only yes means yes, we don’t really have to give other consent practices much thought. But demonstrating an understanding of and care for consent in all of our practices can make for better human interactions no matter what the context.

It can be helpful to think of consent as something that is best done with ongoing practice in many situations, as **there’s always room to explore how we can be more receptive and attentive to those around us.**

*We build consent culture by attending to the ways in which we demonstrate care for consent in all we do. Check out **7 practices you might not have considered** that contribute to building a consent culture (on pages 13 and 14 of this great guide.)*

2

“...but I have great intentions!”

You may have the best of great intentions and mean well in everything you do, but that doesn’t mean you can’t still inadvertently cause harm. Many of us say or do things that can hurt others, even when we don’t intend to. While intention matters, it is often impact that matters more.

It may be helpful to remember that we tend to judge others by their impact, but ourselves by our intent. (**We’ve heard what’s been said about the road to hell!**) When someone lets you know how you’ve impacted them, it’s important to acknowledge what it took for them to tell you and work towards repair, even if your intentions were good.

*Take a peek at this great article demonstrating **How Good Intentions Can Go Awry**, that walks through a great example of just this.*

3

“...but people are always safe with me!”

Maybe you’re someone who has a pride flag on your door, a feminist slogan bumper sticker on your car, or a “this is a safe space” sign in your office. If you do, this is a reminder to **ensure that your actions are in alignment with these signifiers.** While visibility is important and can go a long way to help promote safety in an interaction, what matters most will always be our actions. What actions do you take to live your values?

*Check out this brief read about **“IDEAL Spaces,”** an acronym with a sort of embedded list of considerations to be actioning.*

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CONTINUED...

4 “...but I already know lots about sexual and gender-based harm!”

Learning is a journey. We might have already learned a lot—maybe we’ve attended learning opportunities, read the articles sent our way, had meaningful and exploratory conversations with the people in our lives, and even engaged in activism. This is all important and should continue to be ongoing. **In this ever-changing world, perhaps especially now, it is clear that learning is never done.** There’s never a need to stop engaging in values-based learning. There are always new ways to engage with issues that matter to us and that allow us to continue to deepen and enrich our learning!

For example, read *These 7 Assumptions About Non-Binary Folks May Be Hindering Your Trans Allyship*, a great piece that helps us mitigate our blindspots as we continue learning.

5 “...but it’s not my job to call other people out!”

While it may or may not be part of your official role to intervene when someone is being harmed by someone else, whenever possible, naming and addressing harm is integral to creating and protecting spaces of inclusion and belonging. Asking people to consider how their harmful words and actions land—especially if they do not mean to be harmful—are often small gestures that can have important and sizeable impacts over time.

Explore Harvard’s Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging *Calling In and Calling Out Guide* that offers definitions, reasons, and contexts for both, as well as examples of how to do both, and considerations to bear in mind.