

# The Socioemotions of Sexual Consent

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One of the most important sexual rights is the **right to choose** when, how, and with whom an individual will engage in sex.

How does one *know* when one wants to have sex?

Main question:  
How do **emotions** inform consent  
in sexual interactions?

The study:  
**Narrative analysis of 14 interviews with BDSM practitioners**

- Four story categories:
- ✦ **Positive and consensual**
  - ✦ **Negative and consensual**
    - ✦ **Ambiguous**
    - ✦ **Crossed boundary**

# Finding #1

**Some stories reflected other stories in the same category:**

Ex: Positive/consensual story #1 = Positive/consensual story #2

**Additionally, some stories had similarities across categories:**

Ex: Positive/consensual story #3 = Ambiguous story #4

# Finding #1

The emotional meaning of an experience, and how those emotions informed the level of consent in the interaction, are **wholly determined by the individual.**

Sexual rights laws should **focus on the experience of the person** who has shared that their rights were not respected or violated.

# Finding #2

In a negative encounter, **trust can transform** a failed experience to a successful experience and thereby be considered consensual.

Crossing a boundary can be consensual if the **trespasser respects and supports** the consent space of their partner.

## Finding #2

The emotion work done by the trespasser is **a skill** that can be taught.

Sexual rights education can teach both the **skill** of knowing and expressing one's consent as well as the **skill** of respecting another's consent.

# Finding #3

To transform a crossed boundary experience:  
Individuals seek others to receive **validation**  
and hold assailants **accountable**.



## Finding #3

There is a need for **alternative paths** to hold accountable those who trespass boundaries **without doing the emotion work of consent.**

# Recap

Finding #1: The emotional meaning of an experience is **determined by the individual.**

Finding #2: Trespassers can do **emotion work** to transform a negative experience.

Finding #3: There is a need for **alternative paths** of accountability and justice.

# Questions?

For additional questions, please email:

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