

# Lesson 3

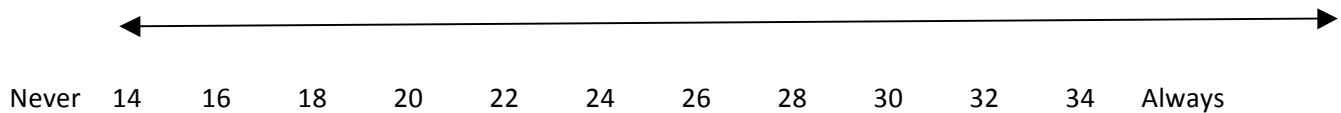
## Consent

### Activity 7

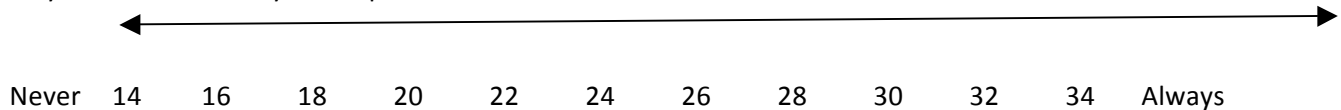
#### Exercise: Age of Consent Vignettes

1. Most people who believe that premarital sex is not unethical would think that it is okay that Spears and Aldridge had sexual intercourse. But let's examine these issues closer. Would you have the same response if Aldridge was 25 years old?

At what age is it not okay to have sex with a 16 year old? Indicate your response on the below line.

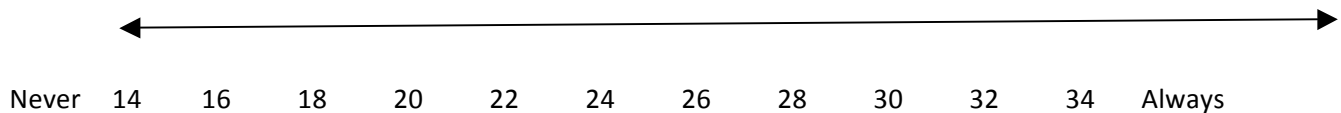


2. What if he were her manager? In this circumstance, at what age is it not okay to have sex with a 16 year old? Indicate your response on the below line.



In some states, such as Connecticut and Maryland, when a person of authority engages in sexual relations with a younger individual, they raise the age of consent to 18 rather than 16. Do you agree with this? Why or why not? Do you think other states should adopt this principle?

3. What if Spears' mother and father gave consent for Spears to have sex with Aldridge. In this circumstance, at what age is it not okay to have sex with a 16 year old? Indicate your response on the below line.



Why do you think these laws exist?

Do these laws protect minors or limit their autonomy? What needs to be protected? Why?

### VIGNETTE

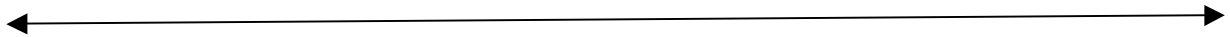
Jordan is 15 years old and has been dating Pat, a 20 year old, for several months when they have sex for the first time. Jordan is very shy and this is the first time Jordan has been in a relationship and has had a sexual experience.

- Is it wrong for the 15 year old to have sex with the 20 year old?
- What things should Jordan and Pat consider when making this decision? What's the risk for each of them?
- Imagine that Jordan has had sex before. Does that mean that Pat should not worry as much about whether or not Jordan is mature enough to consent?
- The names of the persons in this vignette were chosen because they can apply to males or females. Does gender matter?

### VIGNETTE

Dante is 21 years old and is at a college party where he meets Ann. He assumes that she is in college, but never asks. They hang out throughout the night and later go back to his apartment where they have sex. He doesn't know that Ann is actually 16 years old and is a sophomore in high school.

- Should Ann have told him her age?
- How responsible was Dante, on a scale from 1 to 10, for asking for Ann's age?



1 (not at all)    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10 (completely)

### VIGNETTE

Carol is 15 years old and Matt is 22 years old. Carol has been going out with Matt behind her parents' backs for three months. She tells her parents that she is sleeping over her girlfriend's house in order to spend the night and have sexual intercourse with Matt. Putting away Carol's laundry one day, Carol's mother finds her birth control pills. Carol's mother is extremely upset, especially when she discovers that Matt is 22 years old. She confronts Carol and demands that Carol stop seeing Matt. Carol does not deny her involvement with Matt and refuses to stop seeing him because "I love him and he loves me."

- Does Carol's mother have the right to prevent Carol from seeing Matt?

- Some states have lower ages of consent when parents give consent for their child to have sex. In addition, in the majority of cases, it is parents that report illegal sex with someone under the age of consent. What does this say about adolescent's autonomy?

### **VIGNETTE**

Alyssa is 15 years old and Marshall is 21 years old. They have been dating for 2 years. Although Alyssa's age is under the age of consent in her state, she decides that she is ready to have sex and talks to her mother about it. Her mother gives approval and takes her to the health clinic to acquire protection against pregnancy and STDs and Alyssa and Marshall have sex.

- Is it unethical that Alyssa and Marshall have sex?
- Does it matter how long they have been in a relationship?
- Does it make it less unethical that Alyssa's mother has given her approval?

### **VIGNETTE**

Jeremy is 15 years old and identifies as gay. He has recently started attending a support group for coming out. This group has attendees that are diverse in age. One of the older men flirts with Jeremy and asks him on a date.

- Is it wrong to pick up someone at a support group?
- Would it matter if the man who picks up Jeremy was 18 years old? How about 25?

### **VIGNETTE**

After seriously dating Woody Allen for more than a decade, in 1992, Mia Farrow found nude photos of her adopted daughter, Soon-Yi Previn, in Woody Allen's apartment. At that time Soon-Yi was 21 years old and Woody Allen was 56. Farrow freaked out. This was obviously a betrayal to their relationship, but was it sexual abuse? Allen and Previn continued to date and later married. In response to the morality of dating and then marrying his ex-lover's daughter, Woody said "the heart wants what the heart wants. There's no logic to these things. You meet someone and you fall in love and that's that."

- Can you control who you love?
- Are you responsible to do so?
- Did Woody Allen do something wrong?
- Does it make a difference that Soon-Yi Previn was over the age of consent?