



Respectful Relationships & Consent

Essential training for student accommodation communities

△ CRITICAL ISSUE

Why This Matters in Student Accommodation

The Reality

Over 1 in 5 students experience some form of gender-based violence during university life.

The Impact

Safe, respectful relationships are fundamental to student wellbeing, mental health, and academic success

Your Community

Student accommodation creates unique shared spaces where respect and consent must be actively upheld by everyone





FOUNDATION

What Is Consent?

Understanding consent is the cornerstone of all respectful relationships and interactions.

Free & Voluntary Agreement

Consent is a clear, informed agreement to engage in any sexual activity, given without pressure, manipulation, or coercion

Enthusiastic & Mutual

"Yes means yes" — consent must be enthusiastic, ongoing, and actively given by all parties involved

Can Be Withdrawn

Consent can be withdrawn at any time, for any reason. Silence, lack of resistance, or previous agreement is NOT consent

Recognising Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships

Healthy Relationships

- Mutual respect and trust
- Open, honest communication
- Equality and shared decision-making
- Support for personal growth
- Healthy boundaries



Unhealthy Relationships

- Coercion and manipulation
- Control and possessiveness
- Disrespect and contempt
- Power imbalances
- Intimidation and threats



Gender socialisation and societal power dynamics often influence relationship behaviours and expectations. Awareness is the first step to change.

Power Imbalances & Professional Boundaries



The Risk

Relationships involving unequal power (such as staff-student or senior-junior roles) create significant risks of abuse, exploitation, and bias



Policy

Universities and Student Accommodation providers strongly discourage and often prohibit intimate relationships where power differentials exist to protect vulnerable individuals



Protection Measures

Robust policies safeguard students from conflicts of interest, favouritism, exploitation, and abuse of authority

Communication Skills: Asking for and Giving Consent

Clear, respectful communication is essential in all intimate interactions and relationships.

01

Use Clear Language

Ask directly and specifically: "Are you comfortable with this?" or "Is this okay with you?" Avoid ambiguity or assumptions

02

Read All Cues

Pay close attention to both verbal responses and non-verbal body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice

03

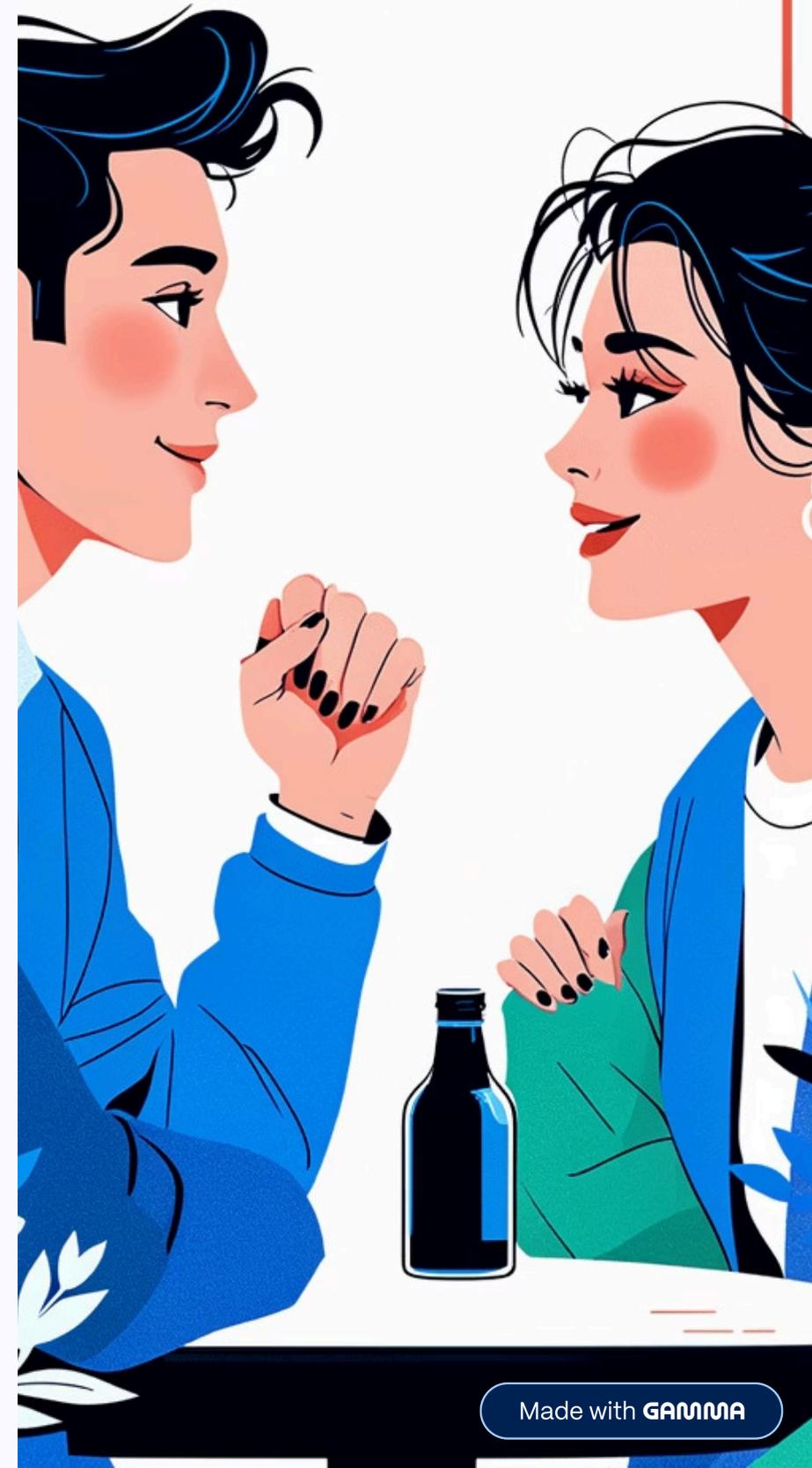
Respect Boundaries

Accept answers without pressure, persuasion, or judgement. A "no" or hesitation requires immediate respect

04

Keep Communicating

Consent is an ongoing conversation throughout any interaction, not a single checkbox at the beginning



Bystander Intervention: Everyone's Role

Creating safe communities requires active participation from all residents. You have the power to make a difference.



Recognise the Signs

Learn to identify situations where someone appears uncomfortable, non-consenting, or experiencing disrespect or harassment



Support Survivors

Offer empathy, believe their experience, maintain confidentiality, and connect them with appropriate support services



Safely Intervene

Step in directly when safe, create distractions, or seek help from staff when witnessing harmful or concerning behaviour



Empower Yourself

Universities provide comprehensive bystander training and resources to build your confidence and skills for positive action

Policies & Support Services



Clear Policies

Comprehensive policies explicitly prohibit harassment, sexual misconduct, abuse of power, and all forms of gender-based violence



Safe Reporting

Multiple confidential reporting mechanisms ensure fair processes whilst protecting the privacy and wellbeing of all involved



Comprehensive Support

Access professional counselling, 24/7 emergency contacts, wellbeing teams, and specialist support services whenever needed



Mandatory Training

All residents must complete consent and respectful relationships training to ensure everyone understands expectations and responsibilities

 **Remember:** Support services are confidential, accessible, and designed to help you navigate any concerns or experiences.

Digital Consent & Respect Online



Images & Content

Consent applies equally to sharing photographs, videos, and intimate content. Always ask permission before sharing or posting



Legal Consequences

Sharing intimate content without consent is a serious violation, often illegal under law, and can result in criminal charges



Respect Requests

If someone asks you to remove content, delete it immediately. Respect their privacy and digital boundaries without question



Awareness Campaigns

Take part in digital consent awareness campaigns and training sessions to stay informed about online safety and respect





Building a Culture of Respect

Your role starts here, today

- Personal Commitment**
Practise respectful communication and active consent in all your relationships and interactions, every single day
- Stay Informed**
Engage with university resources, training programmes, and support services to continuously learn and grow
- Be an Active Ally**
Take responsibility as a bystander and ally within your accommodation community – your actions matter
- Create Safe Spaces**
Together, we build inclusive, respectful environments free from gender-based violence where everyone can thrive

Remember: Respect, consent, and safety are everyone's responsibility. You have the power to make a positive difference.