



Chantelle Otten
Sexologist and Relationship Expert

Chantelle Otten works with individuals and couples to improve their relationships and intimacy.

Consent forms the foundation of her work, but she believes there is a lot of work to be done to increase public awareness about the topic

What does your work involve?

A sex and relationship therapist is a broad title for a role where basically I help individuals, couples, groups, anyone and everyone who wants to talk about intimacy or relationships. I help them to have pain-free, shame-free, consensual, pleasurable, intimate, and relational lives.

Is consent just about sex?

When we talk about consent, we have to look at it from a broad perspective. That might be asking someone if it's okay to give them a hug or understanding someone's emotional needs, or even when it's okay to share private information, consent is all-encompassing and I think quite a layered topic.

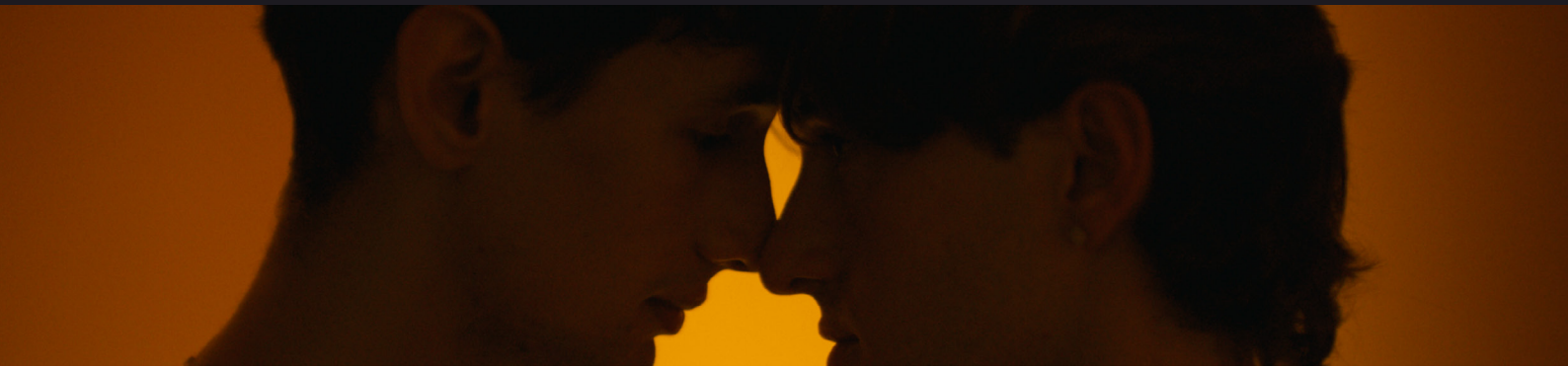
How important is consent in your role?

Consent comes up a lot in my work. I think it's a foundation of a healthy, fulfilling life. Whether that be talking about consent from an emotional perspective or interpersonal or physical perspective or even financial. It's a topic that I discuss across multiple domains of an individual's life.

What have you noticed culturally or socially around the topic of consent?

I think the topic of consent has evolved, especially in the past few years, but it's definitely been a tricky topic for people to get around to, especially because the older generations, were never taught about consent and we were never given sex education or relationship education.

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What is the impact of that lack of education?

It has led to assumptions and limited understanding of what consent is and how to give and receive consent. In the past few years, it's come a long way but we still have a while to go.

Why is it important to shed light on these conversations?

It's really important to shed light on these conversations, because we want to equip the next generation with the tools necessary to be able to discuss openly how they're feeling or ask any questions without fear of judgment or bias. So they feel confident in going out into the world, being their true authentic selves.

What are the benefits of open communication about consent?

Talking about these topics can feel uncomfortable and it can feel a little bit awkward, but the benefits outweigh the discomfort. The more that we talk about topics that might feel uncomfortable, the more we feel comfortable with them. And that helps reduce stigma, but also create healthier relationships where everyone can feel seen, heard, respected and understood.

Why is it important for adults to develop a shared understanding of consent?

It's really important for adults to develop a shared understanding of consent so they are delivering concise, accurate information about how to foster healthy relationships, but also have a great understanding of what consent actually means for them before they pass it down to the next generation.

How can we develop a better understanding?

You can start by practicing consent in your everyday life, but also giving yourself the tools to be able to talk about this topic with confidence. Maybe that's reading a book or listening to a podcast or following consent or sex-positive advocates online. If you have a good, solid foundation of understanding yourself, you'll feel more confident in passing that on to the next generation.

There are so many great resources that are available out there that help give you the tools to be able to navigate these conversations with confidence with your children or the next generation.

What is one thing you want Australian people to know about consent.

One thing that I want Australian people to know about consent is that it's an ongoing conversation, not a one time chat. It's really about giving the next generation the tools to be able to navigate healthy, respectful relationships with themselves and with others.

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