



PRESS RELEASE

FOR: IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FROM: Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services
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SUBJECT: Missoula Sexual Violence Prevention Team Launches Affirmative Consent Campaign

Sexual Violence Prevention Team Launches Affirmative Consent Campaign

“The following message is extremely explicit,” the radio advertisement begins in a serious tone. The warning is followed by playful dialogue between two people negotiating a sexual encounter, humorously interspersed with bleeped words. This advertisement is part of the “Make Consent Explicit” campaign and will be launched this week by Make Your Move!, a local coalition of victim service agencies.

“We’ve been doing sexual violence prevention work in Missoula for the past five years,” Rebecca Pettit, a founding member of Make Your Move!, said. “We kept hearing over and over from young people and adults that the idea of actually talking about sexual consent prior to sexual activity seemed like a very unsexy legal contract and would ‘kill the mood.’”

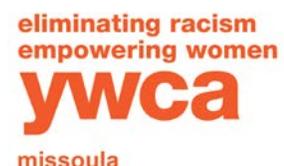
The newly developed campaign is designed to focus on normalizing conversations about sexual consent. The Make Your Move! spent a year working with a local marketing agency to develop the “Make Consent Explicit” campaign.

“We did marketing research, reviewed existing sexual violence prevention campaigns and the academic literature on consent and sexual assault,” Brenna Merrill, prevention specialist with Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services said. “We also worked with campuses across Montana to conduct multiple focus groups. The group overhauled the marketing messages several times to ensure they resonated with audiences.”

The campaign uses a light-hearted approach, considering it is designed to prevent sexual violence. Research shows that people are more likely to engage in tough topics when there is humor and when these topics promote healthy behaviors. Marketing is most effective when messages appeal to an audience’s personal interests. The campaign identifies that most people have a personal interest in having great sex. One cinema advertisement, two radio advertisements and seven posters share messaging with audiences. The campaign will be launched Wednesday, Nov. 15 on Make Your Move’s social media accounts ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#)) and [website](#). In the coming months, locals will see and hear these advertisements throughout Missoula.

The campaign is well-timed. In October, a new state law went into effect to amend the definition of “consent” in Montana’s laws regarding sexual assault and rape ([MCA 45-5-501](#)). Consent is now defined as “words or overt actions indicating a freely given agreement to have sexual intercourse or sexual contact.” The statute goes on to state that “an expression of lack of consent through words or conduct means there is no consent or that consent has withdrawn.”

Robin Turner, public policy and legal director at Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCASDV), remarked, “A consent definition that does not solely rely upon the use of physical force is a crucial step in recognizing the reality of sexual violence and in our justice system responding appropriately.”



“We think this campaign will help make our community healthier and safer,” Shantelle Gaynor, department manager at Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services said. “When verbally asking for consent becomes a normal part of sexual intimacy, we think we’ll see a corresponding reduction in sexual violence.”

Make Your Move! previously released a nationally acclaimed marketing campaign promoting bystander intervention. That campaign was reproduced in more than 26 cities across the nation in Spain, Sri Lanka and Canada.

Established in 2012, Make Your Move! is a campaign that promotes sexual violence prevention through positive social marketing and workshops. Partner agencies include Missoula City-County Relationship Violence Services, YWCA Missoula, the University of Montana Student Advocacy Resource Center, and the Missoula Forum for Children and Youth.

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