



Sexual Consent Laws In Iowa

CONTACT LAW ENFORCEMENT IMMEDIATELY IF YOU BELIEVE SOMEONE IS IN DANGER.

Examples:

- A 13-year-old tells a 16-year-old friend that they can have sex, so they do. The 16-year-old has committed criminal sexual abuse. This is reportable to the Department of Human Services. (DHS)
- A 15-year-old and a 20-year-old friend have sexual contact that the 15-year-old requests. The 20-year-old has committed criminal sexual abuse. Again, this is reportable to the DHS.
- Two 13-year-olds have sexual contact. Neither is old enough to consent to sexual contact. Either or both have sexually abused the other and can be charged.

Points to Consider:

- 12- and 13-year-old minors are unable to legally give consent for (say yes) sexual activity.
- If a 14- or 15-year-old minor has a partner who is less than 4 years older, s/he can give legal consent for sexual activity as long as s/he is not being coerced (pressured).
- As long as a 16- or 17-year-old minor is not being coerced, (forced or made to) s/he is of legal age to consent to sexual activity according to the Iowa Criminal Code.

Questions to Consider When Deciding Whether Sexual Contact is Safe & Consensual:

- Was one of the people pressuring the other? Were both truly free to give consent? Were both sober, unaffected by alcohol and/or drugs? Were both of similar mental abilities?
- What is the age difference between them? What is the difference in maturity levels and sexual experience? Is one preying on another?
- How is one or both of them feeling about the sexual contact?
- Does one hold a position of authority over the other? Is authority used to gain sexual contact (e.g. a coach, teacher or boss)?
- What would the legal consequences be for them if a report was filed and law enforcement became involved?
- How would the families involved react? Would the parents withdraw their support?
- Is help needed, such as counseling, information on pregnancy prevention and STI testing, prevention and treatment and other life skills?

Black Hawk County, Iowa area, call:

BLACK HAWK COUNTY Dept. of Human Services (319) 291-2441

WAYPOINT Domestic Violence Victim Services (319) 365-1458

RIVERVIEW Sexual Assault Victims 1 (888) 557-0310

State-Wide, call:

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES: 1(800) 362-2178

IOWA SEXUAL ABUSE HOTLINE: 1(800) 284-7821

This publication was developed by a coalition of service providers who work with teens. After months of comparing notes and swapping stories, the Iowa Code was researched to better understand the laws and how they pertain to mandatory reporting. This brochure is not a substitute for legal counsel or your own agency's policies regarding mandatory reporting. Thank you!

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