

FRIES: A Simple, Memorable Consent Standard

SEO Title Tag: *FRIES Consent Model Explained | Love Psychotherapy*

Meta Description: *FRIES stands for Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, Specific — a simple consent standard useful in both vanilla and kink contexts.*

Suggested URL Slug: */blog/fries-consent-model-explained*

Target Keyword: *FRIES consent model*

Quick Takeaways

- FRIES stands for Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, and Specific consent.
- 'Freely given' rules out consent obtained through guilt, pressure, or making refusal emotionally costly.
- 'Reversible' means anyone can change their mind mid-activity, even after previously enthusiastic agreement.
- 'Enthusiastic' raises the bar from 'no objection' to a genuine, visible yes.
- FRIES works well as a baseline gut-check, layered with a more kink-specific framework for higher-risk activities.

FRIES started as a mainstream sex-education tool — originally developed by Planned Parenthood — and has since become a common shorthand inside kink communities too, precisely because it compresses a lot of nuance into five memorable words: consent should be Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, and Specific.

Freely Given

Consent given under pressure, manipulation, guilt, or coercion isn't really consent, regardless of what words were technically said. This covers obvious coercion — threats, ultimatums — but also subtler versions: agreeing because saying no feels like it will damage the relationship, or because a partner has made refusing more emotionally costly than agreeing. "Freely" means the option to say no had to be genuinely, practically available, not just theoretically available.

Reversible

Anyone can change their mind, at any point, even mid-activity, even after previously agreeing enthusiastically, even if they've done the exact same thing many times before without issue. Reversibility is often the piece people struggle with most in kink specifically, because negotiation happens in advance and it can feel like backing out mid-scene "breaks" the agreement. It doesn't — the agreement always included the right to stop.

Informed

Real consent requires knowing what you're actually agreeing to — the likely experience, realistic risks, and what to expect. This is why negotiation includes discussing intensity, aftercare needs, and honest risk information, rather than just naming an activity by its label. Someone who says yes to "impact play" without knowing whether that means a light spanking or something far more intense hasn't been fully informed, even if they technically agreed to the category.

Enthusiastic

The bar isn't the absence of a no — it's the presence of a genuine yes. Silence, passivity, or simply not objecting doesn't equal enthusiasm. This piece pushes back specifically against the old, lower bar of "they didn't say stop," replacing it with a standard that requires actual, visible willingness.

Specific

Agreeing to one activity isn't agreeing to all activities, and agreeing on one occasion isn't standing agreement for every future occasion. Consent to a scene doesn't transfer to a different scene; consent with one partner doesn't transfer to another; consent to kissing doesn't imply consent to anything further. Specificity is what keeps consent from quietly expanding beyond what was actually agreed.

Using FRIES in Kink Negotiation

FRIES works well as a gut-check after negotiating, layered on top of a more detailed framework like CABINS or a written checklist:

- Freely: was there real, practical room to say no here?
- Reversible: does everyone know they can stop this at any point, without penalty?
- Informed: does everyone actually understand what this involves and what the risks are?
- Enthusiastic: is there a genuine yes here, or just an absence of objection?
- Specific: does this agreement cover exactly what's about to happen, or is it being stretched to cover more?

Where FRIES Falls Short on Its Own

FRIES is a strong baseline standard, but it wasn't built with kink's higher-risk or intensity-based activities specifically in mind — it doesn't, by itself, address risk-awareness the way RACK does, or the structural nuance of CNC, blanket consent, or Total Power Exchange. Most experienced kinksters use FRIES as a floor — the minimum every interaction should meet — layered with a more kink-specific framework for anything higher-risk or more structurally complex.

Want support with this in your own relationship or practice?

Love Psychotherapy, LLC offers LGBTQ+-affirming, sex-positive, neurodivergent-owned clinical care and life coaching, with telehealth available across thirteen states and in-person sessions in Madison, Wisconsin. Reach out to schedule a consultation.

Well wishes. 🙏

Mx. Love C. Dialogos, LMFT

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist | Buddhist Chaplain

Pronouns: They/Them

This article is educational and general in nature. It isn't a substitute for individualized clinical guidance about your relationship.

Explore Topics: [#FRIES](#) [#ConsentEducation](#) [#ConsentCulture](#) [#SexPositive](#) [#BDSM](#) [#KinkEducation](#)