



Checklist and guiding questions for flags
and criteria of the Sensoa Flag System

SENSOA



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Guiding questions per criterion

These guiding questions will help you assess the 6 criteria of the Sensoa Flag System.

TIP: print or download this overview when you go through the criteria step by step in sexual behaviour.

Mutual consent	
Observation of behaviour	Guiding questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can they feel boundaries and set limits? • Can they communicate? Do they see or hear each other sufficiently? • Do they understand each other sufficiently? • Is there sufficient safety? • Do their ideas about sex undermine mutual consent? • Is there potential for panic reactions? • Is there a tendency to avoid sexuality? • How do they usually deal with other people's boundaries? • Do they send signals that might indicate consent or not? • Do they react indifferently, angrily or with unease? • Do they send signals of discomfort, fear or disgust? • Do they ask if it's okay? Do they give the other person time? • Do those involved look relaxed and happy? • Is there joy? • Is there sufficient respite? • Can you observe positive or negative emotions in those involved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel good about this? • Do you want this to happen? • Did you know beforehand what would happen? • Were you prepared or was this a surprise? • Were you able to indicate that you thought it was okay? How did you do that? • Were you able to respond? • Do you think it's important for the other person to agree? • What would you do or feel if the other person refused? • Do you do what you agreed or do you deviate from it? • Did you hear or see the other person's approval? From what can you infer this? • Did you ask if it was okay? • When did you check? At the beginning or again later? • Did you see that it was pleasant or not? Did the other person send a signal? What signal?

Voluntary engagement	
Observation of behaviour	Guiding questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do any of the people involved display clingy behaviour? • Was there manipulation, coercion or physical violence (pushing, pulling, shouting) previously? • Is one of the people involved seeking attention? • Do you know of previous forms of coercion, blackmail or threats? • Is one of those involved easily enticed with a tangible reward or money? • Has there been verbal pressure or violence? • Has there been manipulation, blackmail or deception? • Was physical force used (pushing, pulling, shouting)? • Was a weapon used? • Do you have sufficient insight into the real situation (those involved may give socially desirable answers for fear of retaliation from the environment)? • Are they acting differently than usual? • Do those involved look relaxed and happy? • Is there any form of resistance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you feel? • Are you happy? Are you afraid? • Would anything happen if you refused? • Did you feel you could refuse? • What would happen if you refused? If the other person refused? • Was it fun or not? What was fun or not? • Did you have a choice? • What does the other person feel? • Do you feel it is okay to do or allow this? • Do you feel that applying a little pressure is okay? • Did you scare the other person or did the other person scare you? • Did you push or did the other person push? How? • Did you promise or get a reward?

Equality	
Observation of behaviour	Guiding questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a big age difference? What age difference do you find acceptable? • Is there a big cognitive difference between the people involved? Are you aware of any factors at play between those involved? • Is there abuse of the weak position or situation of any of the people involved? • Is there a big difference in position within the group? • Has inequality been created (dependence, guilt, isolation, duty to keep silent)? • Is there a striking inequality in physical strength, biological development, maturity or intelligence? • Is there a striking inequality in sexual experience? • Is there an imbalance in position, status, popularity or power? • Are they unequal in number? • Is there a superiority due to circumstances? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel you can stand up to the other person? • Are you dependent on the other person? • What did you do to help each other? • Who took the initiative? • Do you understand what the other person means? Do you think the same way about it? • Is there a relationship of authority? • Was one of you drunk, under the influence of drugs, in a weaker position? • Was one of you in charge? Or do all of you have equal say in this matter? • Should the other person listen to you?

Appropriate for development or functioning

Observation of behaviour	Guiding questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is behaviour still being displayed that fits younger age groups? • What has the person learned about sexual behaviour? • Is there previous experience of sexually transgressive behaviour or abuse? • Is there avoidance or aversion towards sexuality? Is there masturbation? Does masturbation happen privately? • Is there sexualisation? Is there an early onset? • What examples and messages has the person received? • Can the person cope with this behaviour? Is there sufficient ability, competence, self-regulation? • How are the interactions with others? • What is the sense of norms like? • How autonomously can the person act? • What is the person's judgement? • Is there sufficient core stability? • Are there sufficient learning experiences? • Are expectations realistic? • Is there enough self-control or opportunities for reflection? • Has appropriate help or information been offered? • Can the behaviour be understood from the person's developmental level? • Does the person's disability (cognitive, emotional, physical, social) affect what they can cope with? • Are there concerns related to the condition (addiction, other issues)? • Are there concerns about personality (aggression, repetitive behaviour)? • Are there concerns about vulnerability (victim, level, resilience, autonomy)? • Has the person respected the prevailing social rules (code of conduct, competence profile)? • Do those involved demonstrate an understanding of social norms and values? • Are there clear rules about what behaviour is possible in the family, work or group context? • Are those involved able to consent (is there drunkenness)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What experiences do you have yourself and with whom? • What have you seen others do? How do you feel about that? • What keeps you preoccupied in terms of sexuality? • Is there anything you'd like to ask or know? • Are you afraid of anything? • Can you foresee possible risks? • Do you have any idea how you could reduce risks? • What expectations, desires and wishes do you have? • How do you think you are going to make these happen? • How far are you willing to go? Where is the boundary for you? How will you monitor that boundary? • Do you know what behaviour can be expected from someone in your position? • Do you know what agreements there are about behaviour in this organisation? • Do you know the rules about what is and is not allowed here and in other situations?

Context appropriate	
Observation of behaviour	Guiding questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there overprotection? • Is privacy possible? • Is sexual experimentation inhibited or encouraged? • Is the context risky for those involved? • Is there individual attention and information for those involved? • Is there support from the home environment? • Is there a context in which they can have experiences in complete privacy? • Is there carelessness or imprudence? • Is there no supervision? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel you are adequately supported and protected? • Do you know where to go with your questions about sexuality? Do you feel you are supported at home? • Can you foresee possible risks in this context? • Are you allowed to have a girlfriend or boyfriend? • Have you shut yourself off so that others could not see you? • Have you provided adequate safety? How? • Did you ensure that you could not be disturbed? How? • Do you know the rules about what is and is not allowed here and in other situations? Are there places where you are allowed to do this?

Impact	
Observation of behaviour	Guiding questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there negative feelings or consequences? • Is the person being bullied or isolated on account of his behaviour? • Is there confusion, panic or fear? • Is there a health hazard? Is there a social disadvantage or benefit? Is the person hurt, scared or quiet? • Is the person angry, frustrated or aggressive? Is there gain or harm from the behaviour? • Is there a risk of breach of trust? Is there perhaps other danger? • Are there signs of trauma? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have positive or negative feelings about it? Do you feel regret, shame, guilt or sadness? • Are you in pain or worried about the consequences? Are you happy? Do you feel good about this? • Are you happy about what happened? • Do you feel safe and have a sense of control over the situation? • Are you comfortable about the consequences and effects? • Are there any possible negative consequences for others? • How often do you come across this? • How intimate was the touching? How many people were involved?

Checklist for flags and criteria

This checklist gives you an overview of the **characteristics per criterion and per flag**.
TIP: print or download this overview when you go through the criteria step by step in sexual behaviour.

	Green	Yellow	Red	Black
Consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clear and legitimate mutual consent; • The behaviour is not imposed by surprise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no clear consent; • No consent has been sought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no consent; • There is clear rejection; • Rejection is ignored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is repeated clear rejection; • Repeated rejection is ignored.
Voluntary engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coercion or threat has been used; • No deception has been used; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little coercion or threat has been used; • Those involved can easily walk away from the situation; • No secrecy is enforced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion, force, blackmail, deception or pressure is clearly used; • Those involved cannot walk away from the situation; • Secrecy is enforced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe coercion, threat, force is used.
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those involved are equal; • There is no abuse of power. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are complaints or suspicions of tension due to inequality between those involved; • There is a relationship of authority or dependency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are complaints or suspicions of problems due to inequality between those involved; • There is a major relationship of authority or dependency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are complaints or suspicions of major problems due to inequality between those involved; • There is a major relationship of authority or dependency.
Developmental and functional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those involved are sufficiently competent and accountable for their behaviour. • The behaviour is very problematic at the developmental or functional level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is slight doubt about the competence of those involved; • There are concerns about the level of development or functioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is considerable doubt about the competence of those involved; • The behaviour is problematic at the developmental or functional level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those involved are insufficiently competent; • There are serious problems with self-regulation and accountability. • The behaviour is very problematic at the developmental or functional level.
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour is not offensive to those involved; • There is sufficient privacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour does not quite fit the context; • There is a small risk to privacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour does not fit the context; • There is insufficient or no privacy; • There are onlookers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour does not fit the context; • There is no privacy.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour has no harmful impact (psychological, physical, social) on anyone involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-off unwanted verbal or mildly sexual touching or contact; • The behaviour is annoying but there is no fear; • The range is limited (e.g. only a few people are involved); • Support is present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an existing risk of harm to those involved; • There are repeated unwanted mildly sexual touches and or contacts; • There are one-off, invasive and intimate unwanted sexual contacts; • The range is wide; • There is little support; • There is fear or secrecy is enforced; • The perpetrator is aware of the harm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The danger is great, the consequences can be serious; • There is repeated serious sexually transgressive behaviour; • There are repeated significant and intimate unwanted sexual touches or contacts; • The range is wide; • There is no support; • There is fear or secrecy is enforced; • There is trauma; • The perpetrator is aware of the harm.

Useful links

[What is the Sensoa Flag System?](#)

[What are the 4 flags in the Sensoa Flag System?](#)

[What are the 6 criteria of the Flag System?](#)

[How to respond to sexually transgressive behaviour?](#)