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 **RAPE: IMPORTANCE OF CONSENT**

 Rape is one of the biggest threats to the well-being of women and children in the society.

**What is rape?**

Rape according to WebMD is when sexual intercourse is non-consensual, or a person forces another person to have sex against their will. Rape is the non-consensual penetration into the vagina, anus, or mouth.

**What is consent?**

Consent according to Wikipedia is when a person voluntarily agrees to a proposal, or desire of another. Consent is unforced agreement between two or more people.

Age of consent is the minimum age which a person is considered legally competent to consent to sexual acts. In Nigeria, the age of consent is 18.

As a result, if someone older engages in sexual acts with a minor under the age of consent, this act will be considered as statutory rape. This is because, the person younger than the age of consent cannot legally say the act was consensual.

 Capacity to consent implies that the individual has the capacity to make decisions on their own. Factors that contribute to capacity to consent are:

**Developmental Disability**: Does the person have a development disorder? Such as brain trauma

**Intoxication**: Was the person intoxicated? Voluntarily or Involuntarily?

**Physical disability**: Is the person disabled or handicapped or have any form of helplessness?

**Relationship with the perpetrator:** Is the person in a position of authority or a close relative?

**Unconsciousness:** Was the person asleep, sedated or suffering from trauma?

 The above determine a person’s capacity to consent.

 **Importance of Consent**

Communication, honesty and respect make the society a better place. Asking for and obtaining consent shows respect for yourself and the individuals involved. It eliminates the form of entitlement an individual may have towards another. Consent is also irreversible. If a person says ‘’yes’’ and changes their mind to say no, the individual must learn to accept the decision.

 In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Rape poses as an obstacle to our peace and security in the country. It hinders the women from participating in activities in the society. Rape is a social vice that must be curbed and every individual found guilty of crime must be punished according to the law.