



NCSF Statement on Power Exchange Relationships

The National Coalition for Sexual Freedom supports the rights of adults to enter into power exchange relationships including: Master/slave, Total Power Exchange (TPE), 24/7 and Owner/property. NCSF provides education about both the ethical and legal concepts of consent in regards to power exchange relationships.

Ethical Consent

NCSF believes that ethical power exchange relationships are based on the principle of informed consent, so there is a responsibility to reach agreement based on an understanding of the desires and limits of those involved.

Consent is usually given at the beginning of a power exchange relationship for the types of behavior, responsibilities and BDSM practices (if any) that will take place during the relationship. There may be significant responsibilities according to the obligations agreed on at the beginning of and throughout the relationship.

NCSF believes a power exchange relationship is intended to nurture the physical and emotional needs of everyone involved. There is a difference between hurt and harm: harm causes lasting damage (whether physical, mental or spiritual) that impairs the ability to function and enjoy life, while any hurt that is inflicted should ultimately bring fulfillment to those involved.

Legal Consent

According to the decisions made by U.S. courts: consent must be given at the time an act is done, and consent can be withdrawn at any time. A written power exchange contract is not legally binding, yet it may be useful in a legal setting to show the state of mind of the participants and the types of behaviors, responsibilities and BDSM practices that were agreed on. However, any contract that denies the right to withdraw consent may be problematic for the top in a legal setting because people can't legally surrender their right to withdraw consent.

NCSF encourages people in power exchange relationships to talk about consent in case their relationship is ever called into question in a legal setting. For example, withdrawal of consent may result in a request for release, or a time-out for the relationship in order to determine if there should be a reaffirmation of the power dynamic, or it may require renegotiation of the terms by removing or modifying the objectionable activity or behavior.

Some power exchange relationships are based on the concept of personal responsibility, which supersedes the agreement of a relationship whenever a question of danger, harm or non-negotiated activity enters the picture. The belief that everyone involved must be protected supports the concept of personal responsibility while maintaining the integrity of the power exchange relationship.

From Jack McGeorge, the first Chairman of NCSF, NCSF has benefited from the involvement of many volunteers who identify as M/s, TPE, 24/7 and Owner/property. NCSF has directly helped thousands of people including those in power exchange relationships with job discrimination, child custody battles, criminal courts, victim services and media crisis intervention.