This chapter examines non-fatal offences that range from a trivial tap on the shoulder to levels of harm threatening life itself. While the relevant offences are archaic in their definition and lacking in any coherent structure, they are extremely important because they are frequently prosecuted and they also give rise to interesting questions on issues central to the criminal law, such as how the autonomy of the individual should be respected. The chapter considers whether psychiatric illness can amount to an offence against the person; what level of harm constitutes ‘actual’ bodily harm as opposed to ‘grievous’ bodily harm; and whether actual bodily harm must be ‘inflicted’ or merely caused. Finally, the chapter examines the criminalization of disease transmission. This also chapter examines the controversial question of whether and, if so, when a sane adult should be permitted to consent to harm to himself or to the risk of harm to himself. It considers the threshold of harm—should V be permitted to consent to any level of harm or only to minor harms; whether a person should be permitted to consent to different levels of harm in certain activities: surgery, boxing, horseplay, etc; whether the
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transmission or risk of transmission of diseases or infections can be consented to; and what constitutes ‘true’ consent.

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