

Conservatory | DePaul University

Process for Rehearsing and Performing Intimate Contact

At The Theatre School, we train actors to be bold, to live moment-to-moment in the given circumstances of the material, while being equally vigilant in ensuring their partner's safety and boundaries. We encourage actors to take risks in scene work, but an atmosphere of absolute trust is necessary in order to truly take risks.

Clear boundaries must therefore be established and agreed upon among the artists involved, both in rehearsals and performance, particularly in scenes depicting violence, sex acts, intimate contact, abuse, or gestures of intimacy.

The Theatre School's [ON PROFESSIONALISM](#) document outlines this with our expectation of Respect, Discipline, Responsibility, Collaboration, Communication, Maturity, and Honor.

The following guidelines should be referenced when rehearsing or staging scenes of the nature described above. This includes scenes for classes, auditions, or productions, both inside and outside of class, with or without a director.

1. Scene partners (and the director*) must agree to the boundaries of the scene (e.g., kiss, slap, etc.), whether explicit or implicit in the text. The actors (and the director*) must set down and agree on those boundaries before the work starts. The actors are responsible for staying within those agreed-upon boundaries.

*when a director is involved in the project or rehearsal

There are two general kinds of boundaries that scene partners can set:

- a. A realm of contact that is acceptable to rehearse.
- b. Specifically choreographed contact. [stage violence is always choreographed but may also include non-"contact."]

Scene partners should have a verbal check-in before any rehearsal in which intimate contact is being rehearsed, to determine if/how that contact will be rehearsed in that rehearsal.

The boundaries may change over the rehearsal process. The boundaries may narrow, or they may broaden. But any change to the boundaries must be discussed and agreed upon before the rehearsal.

2. Partners must agree to be listening for each other's safety. The energy and direction of any action needs to be in proportion to the partner's energy, within the relationship and given circumstances.

3. Maintain the integrity of the agreed-upon structure of intimate contact once a show is in production. All agreements are to be kept.
4. If you're uncomfortable with the material or the process, or these criteria are not being met:
 - a. In class/ rehearsal outside of class/scene rehearsal: rehearsal/exercise should stop. Boundaries must be re-established before moving forward.
 - b. In performance: The actors should report any variations from the agreed-upon boundaries or actions to stage management.

An individual may also, at any time, discuss an incident with a faculty advisor, their academic advisor, or another trusted faculty/staff member if they wish. The actor should be aware that the faculty/staff member may have reporting obligations and may not be able to guarantee confidentiality. An individual may also always make a report directly to the Title IX Coordinator or may also choose to discuss incidents in a confidential space. Contact information for the Title IX Coordinator, as well as a list of confidential resources, are detailed in the links below.

The above document is about professionalism in the theatre at The Theatre School.

DePaul University resources include:

Sexual & Relationship Violence and Response Policy

<http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=320>

Public Safety Website: Title IX and Sexual and Relationship Violence Information

<https://publicsafety.depaul.edu/relationshipviolence/index.asp>

Health Promotion and Wellness Website

<http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/health-wellness/Pages/sexual-health-violence.aspx>

Confidential Resources at DePaul:

Office of Health Promotion and Wellness: mhpw@depaul.edu

University Counseling Services: Lincoln Park, (773) 325-7779, Loop (312) 362-6923

<http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/ucs.aspx>

In addition, DePaul has established an email alias that goes directly to the Title IX Coordinator:

titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu

**THE THEATRE SCHOOL
AT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY**

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