



Guide for Groups

Groups and events involved in BDSM-Leather-Fetish, swinging, and polyamory lifestyles are ethically responsible for creating a group culture that values consent. According to the NCSF Consent Counts survey, 1 in 3 of the kinky people responding said they had their pre-negotiated limits and/or safeword/safesign ignored by their partner. Groups and businesses have a responsibility to ensure that education about consent takes place regularly to prevent consent violations from happening at their events, and that there are clearly marked delegates of the group available to assist the attendees.

Consent Policy

Establish a consent policy for events and parties that includes the following rules:

1. No touching people or personal property without permission.
2. Treat everyone as an equal, and only engage in verbal role-play if you have permission. For example, don't call someone as "Mistress" or "slave" or any other role-play word unless you've asked if it's okay.
3. Negotiate the scope of your scene prior to the activities. Before the scene begins, it must be clear that the bottom has given consent to the proposed acts.
4. Each participant is responsible to make sure everyone involved has the mental and emotional ability to give informed and voluntary consent during their negotiation for the scene.
5. Anyone can withdraw consent, make a nonverbal safesign or use the universal safeword "Red" at any time. Once consent is withdrawn, the activity must stop immediately. Partners need to share what safewords or safesigns are being used to prevent consent violations.
6. The top is legally responsible for stopping the activities at any suggestion that the bottom has withdrawn consent. The bottom is ethically responsible for being clear and unequivocal when withdrawing consent.
7. Depending on all participants' state of mind, we recommend that you don't renegotiate in the middle of your scene. When a person is in subspace or otherwise not in a clear state of mind, you may not have informed consent even though they agree in the heat of the moment.
8. If your consent is violated, verbally tell a play monitor or clearly marked delegate of the event organizer immediately. Violation of the consent policy may result in expulsion from the event or group. No one is exempt from the rules.
9. Disclaimer: Every reasonable effort will be made to enforce this policy, but this organization makes no representations or guarantees about its ability to do so, and all participants/attendees retain full, sole responsibility for their safety and the safety of others with whom they interact.

Consent Violations

Deal with any alleged consent violations that take place at the event on a case-by-case basis:

1. Record the legal names and contact information for anyone involved in an alleged consent violation at an event. If there is a criminal investigation later, law enforcement will contact the group and ask for the

names of those involved and any witnesses. Having the names will remove the need for the court to subpoena the group for the names of those in attendance to find alleged witnesses or the alleged perpetrator. At that time, you can also provide them with the group's consent policy and state what actions the group took when the consent violation was reported.

2. If there is an injury that requires medical care, a staff member should take the victim to the hospital or call 911 if it's an emergency. No one should discourage the victim from reporting the incident to the police. If the victim wants to immediately report the assault to the police, both a staff member and a friend of the victim should go with them. The staff member should not express their views on whether or not a crime has occurred and should not discuss the incident, except to (a) respond to medical questions about the person's injury and (b) to answer—factually and truthfully—police questions.

3. When talking to everyone involved, keep in mind that limits can be violated deliberately, or through poor communication, misunderstanding, technical accidents, lack of knowledge, and/or lack of experience. Separate the people involved and any witnesses, and keeping in mind the sensitivity of the situation, ask:

What did you negotiate?

What were the limits?

Did the bottom safeword or withdraw consent?

Is there anything that might negate consent such as impaired thinking or a mental health issue?

What is the history of interaction between the participants?

How much experience do they each have with the BDSM activities that were done?

Was there an injury done that exceeded the negotiated limits?

4. In regards to the alleged offender, if the leaders of the group/event believe a consent violation has occurred, depending on the severity of the offense, they can issue a warning or eject the member. For example, the group may decide that anyone who touches another person without permission will be ejected, or the group may decide to give a warning, with repeated violations resulting in ejection. If a member must be ejected or removed from membership, follow the guidelines in Right of Refusal below.

Right of Refusal

A group or private event can refuse attendance or membership to anyone for any reason or no reason, and ban anyone for any behavior that violates the consent policy established by the group.

1. State on your membership application or entry form that your group or event reserves the right to refuse anyone's membership for any reason.

2. For liability reasons, don't give a reason why someone is refused membership because then the group might be brought into court to prove it. The only thing to say is, "We're sorry, but you can't belong to our group."

3. A public event such as a munch or bar night can request that someone be removed from its meeting area; however, the owner may allow that person to stay elsewhere on the premises.

4. For liability reasons, groups shouldn't advertise that they are checking Registered Sex Offender lists and/or preventing registered sex offenders from attending. A sex offender may lie on the application, be registered in another jurisdiction, using a fake ID, and/or human error could result in a sex offender attending an event regardless of the policy and committing a consent violation.