



SAMPLE - Consent Policy and Procedures for Kink Groups

Introduction and Purpose

We strive to create an environment where like-minded individuals of all backgrounds and orientations can share their interests and exploration of kink and consensual non-monogamy. It is paramount to our group's health that all activities between individuals are done with enthusiastic and ongoing consent.

We endeavor to create a safer community and event space. However, much like safer sex practices are not without risk, we acknowledge that no play or activity is without physical, mental, or emotional risks.

This document outlines how to make a report for consent incidents both inside and outside our group. We recognize that every consent incident is unique. While this policy sets the standards for our process for handling such incidents, there may be times where circumstances of a consent incident require a deviation from this standard. We will update this policy as we continue to evolve to better serve our community's interests.

Consent Policy

"Consent" means a person's willingness and ability to engage in a specific act. It is important to note that consent is the mutual creation of an agreement: aim for "YES!" not just the absence of "No."

1. Do not touch anyone without their permission, and don't base consent on what you've seen someone do with other people.
2. All activities must receive prior consent explicitly by verbal or written agreement rather than through gestures, body language, or past behavior.
3. Informed consent requires discussing the risks involved in the activity and the steps needed to reduce those risks, including study, training, technique, and safety measures.
4. Don't re-negotiate in the middle of your scene unless it is to reject activities that were previously agreed to. A person who is in an altered state of mind of any kind, including play-induced headspace, may not be able to give informed consent.
5. The universal safewords are "RED" and "SAFWORD." Everyone is free to withdraw consent at any time during the activity. At the use of either of those words, the activity must end immediately.

6. Do not attempt to participate in an ongoing scene unless invited explicitly by all current participants.
7. If you plan to engage in play that may have the appearance of being non-consensual, inform the staff before the beginning of the scene.
8. Each person should understand everyone's limitations or barriers to their ability to consent to the planned activities, such as age, diminished mental capacity, or use of drugs or alcohol. If any participant in a scene appears intoxicated or impaired, the staff will stop the scene.
9. Do not pressure, force, coerce, or manipulate someone into consenting to anything.
10. Do not do anything likely to result in serious bodily injury or go beyond a participant's expectations, even where the participant gave consent.
11. Don't "out" anyone as kinky, non-monogamous, or any form of alt-sex to their family, friends, co-workers, or anyone outside of the alt community. Don't use someone's first/last name in person or online with others unless they give you specific permission to do so. Don't share anyone's Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in any form or format without their consent.
12. If you would like someone to cease contact with you, please tell them either verbally or by direct message: "Please don't contact me anymore." At least one of our Board Members must be able to contact you about group business.

Reporting a Consent Incident

We only take first-person reports and cannot act on hearsay or third-party reports. We don't take anonymous reports.

To ensure a timely response, please use the following methods to report:

1. At events, you can ask any event volunteer to connect you to the designated staff or Board Member who can take reports.
2. Outside of events, you can contact our Consent Incident Reporting email. You will receive an acknowledgment within 72 hours. Please send your email here:

While this is not an exhaustive list, the following details should be included in a report:

- How would you prefer us to contact you?
- What name and pronouns do you prefer we use?
- What would you like to tell us about this consent incident?
- Do you remember what you discussed before the incident about what you wanted to do and your limits?
- What do you recall saying or doing when this incident happened?
- Were there any injuries?
- Was there re-negotiation to add kink or sexual activities during a scene?
- Was your safeword used and ignored?
- Has this person done anything like this to you before or violated your consent?
- Can you tell me about any people who might have seen what happened?
- What would you like to happen next?

Please include any documents related to the incident or conversations in written form, screenshots, or images of the injury.

Reporting Process

1. If the reporter is in crisis, we may refer them to a kink-aware crisis hotline or advocacy organization for immediate care. At an event, if an attendee needs to call 911 or an ambulance, we will encourage them to do so and will wait until help arrives.
2. We will assign a Board Member to act as an Inquirer to gather the information to bring to the Board. The Inquirer will remain neutral throughout the process, until the Board vote on a decision. The Inquirer will be unaffiliated with those involved, and the reporter may request that a Board Member recuse themselves due to a close relationship (such as partner, ex-partner, metamour) with themselves or the reported person.
3. We only talk to the reporter, the reported person, and anyone who witnessed the consent incident. If the reporter would like a friend/partner present while giving a report, they are there for support purposes only.
4. We don't bring the reporter and reported person together to discuss the incident or attempt to perform a mediation or facilitate an apology.
5. We will reach out to those involved to individually hear their experience. We may request additional materials and have additional questions as we collect information.
6. We don't give the report to the person who has been reported. If the reporter has been threatened with a defamation lawsuit or fears for their safety, we will maintain their confidentiality with the reported person. However, this means that it may be more difficult to gather information about the consent incident and make a decision.
7. We will take into consideration what the reporter would like to happen, without making any guarantees due to the need to protect our group and our members.

Temporary Steps During Information Gathering

Depending on the nature of the initial report, individuals may be temporarily asked to refrain from attending in-person or online while the information gathering process takes place. We recognize that this situation may be undesirable to those involved with a consent incident, but may need to take this measure until a final decision can be reached.

What We Deal With

After the information has been gathered, the Board will review it. We make decisions about:

- Violations of our rules and Consent Policy at our events and online entities
- Behaviors outside of the group that could be in violation of criminal law (see below)
- Outing or threats of outing ([Click here](#) for NCSF's outing policy and procedures)
- Reports of sanctions or bans by other groups with a similar consent culture

Reports that could be in violation of criminal law include:

- **Physical assault** - Causing physical harm or unwanted physical contact upon another person (especially when the other party is injured).

- **Sexual assault** – Intentionally touching another person’s breasts, genitals or buttocks without their consent, or coercing or physically forcing someone to engage in a sexual act.
- **Blackmail** – Demanding payment or another benefit from someone in return for not revealing compromising or damaging information about them.
- **Revenge Porn** – Digital distribution of nude or sexually explicit photos and/or videos of a person without their consent, often in retaliation.
- **Stealthing** – Removing a condom during a sexual act. While stealthing itself is not illegal, passing on an STI is illegal in many states.
- **Stalking** – Following someone to their home or workplace without permission.
- **Harassment** – Harassment is repeatedly attempting to communicate with someone after they’ve asked for no contact, or threatening someone or their family or friends.

Interpersonal disputes are typically not within the scope of our group; however, we do have a rule to enable members to request no-contact. If members under no-contact are present together at our events, we ask you to not approach each other. We can refer people to professional mediation, community support services, and trauma or kink-aware counseling for issues such as:

- Emotional abuse
- Gaslighting
- Verbal abuse
- Humiliation
- Talking about bad experiences they had with someone
- Unpopular speech on social media
- Arguments about ideology or ideas

Evaluating Consent Incidents

While consent incidents are unique and varied, there is a common set of factors that we consistently take into account in every case when determining the most appropriate response. While this is not a complete list, it covers many important considerations:

- The **severity** of the nonconsensual activity (unwanted hug vs. sexual assault, assault with injury)
- The **nature** of the consent incident (accident, ignorance vs. manipulation, coercion)
- The **response** of the individual who crossed a boundary (accepting responsibility for their behavior, showing empathy for the reporter, desire to apologize vs. denial, deflection)
- **Power differentials** between involved individuals (leadership position, presenters, performers, owners vs. newbies, people who are traditionally marginalized)
- **Multiple reports** of consent incidents from unrelated people reporting the same person (indicating a pattern of bad behavior)
- **Serial reports** by one person against multiple people (indicating the consent reporting process may be being misused)
- **Public documents** like orders of protection, police reports, and sex offender registry
- **Admissions** of wrong-doing by the reported person
- **Reports of sanctions or bans** by other groups with a similar consent culture
- **Willingness** of the reported person to defer to the needs and wishes of the reporter

Sanctions

The Board will decide on an outcome through a majority vote. One or more of the following actions may be taken. (An individual who knowingly and intentionally creates a false report may also be subject to these actions.)

- **Warnings** – Some people can violate consent or boundaries through inexperience, poor communication skills, or a misunderstanding of expectations. We will provide education about our Consent Policy and refer the individual to educational materials about consent. We expect members of our community who receive formal warnings to take them seriously and adjust their behavior moving forward.
- **Attendance Restrictions** – If you violate any of our rules or Consent Policy or have repeated warnings, we may request that you refrain from attending our events or a subset of our events for a set amount of time.
- **Bans** – We reserve the right to ban anyone who is not a good fit for our group. If an individual is barred from attending our events, they will also not be permitted to participate in our online groups and discussions, and vice versa.

Consent Incidents Involving Volunteers

We hold our volunteers, presenters, and organizers to a higher standard of conduct, so we encourage you to feel comfortable reporting any problematic behavior. In addition to the above, issues involving those in positions of trust may require additional immediate steps:

- **Volunteers** involved in a consent incident may be removed from their role at events or barred from further volunteering until a decision is made.
- **Presenters** and other educators involved in a consent incident may have their classes canceled or postponed until a decision is made.
- **Board Members** involved in a consent incident will be temporarily suspended while the reports are taken and until such time as the consent incident can be evaluated by the rest of the Board and a decision is made.

Notification of a Decision

When the organizers have reached a decision in response to a consent incident report, the designated Board Member who took the reports will notify those involved about the decision in the following order:

1. The Reporter. If they would like to engage further with the person they reported to get mediation or an apology, they will be referred to a professional to assist them.
2. The Reported person. They will be instructed to not reach out to the reporter or initiate contact at events or online (unless otherwise specified by the reporter), or additional sanctions may be applied. It's up to the reporter to initiate any contact.
 - If it is a Warning or Restricted Attendance, and the reported person has demonstrated a willingness to change problematic behavior, we will state in general what changes that need to be made in order to attend our events.
 - If the person is Banned, they are told they are not a good fit for the group. We will provide no other information in order to protect the reporter, the group, and the membership from retaliation and liability.

3. Witnesses. We will request that witnesses maintain confidentiality about the consent incident, unless the Reporter permits them to speak about what they witnessed.
4. If an individual is banned, we may privately communicate our decision to organizers in our area. We will limit the disclosure to the general nature of the consent incident, and we will not disclose the identity of the reporter (unless the reporter requests it).
5. In the event of a widely-discussed or witnessed consent incident that results in a ban, we may acknowledge the ban and say this person is not a good fit for the group. If the person is a volunteer or Board Member, a brief statement about them stepping back from their volunteer responsibilities may be made.
6. We will not discuss our decision with partners, friends, metamours, or other parties uninvolved with the consent incident. We don't allow public discussions that name names or the specifics of consent incidents at our events or online entities due to the risk of additional harm and liability to the group, reporter, and any witnesses. Confidentiality is abiding for Board members even after their term of service is over.

Closing and Summary

In publishing this Consent Policy and Procedures, we hope that everyone involved with our group understands what happens when someone reports a consent incident to us. We strive to foster the improvement of consent education with the goal of making instances where this policy must be relied upon few and far between, and we take consent incidents seriously in order to serve our goal of creating a safer community for everyone.

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