

Protocols For a Theatre Company and/or Training Program

(Name of School), Department of Theatre Arts Definition and Protocols for Moments of Intimacy and Sexual Violence in Production

(Insert title of company/institutions) _____
considers stage action in which the given circumstances of the production require physical and/or imaginative touch, or sexual violence between actors as a moment of “intimate contact.” These moments are not limited to but may include the following:

- Kissing
- Intimate touch
- Imaginative intimate moments, (moments where the actors are asked to portray moments of romantic chemistry between characters even when physical touch is not needed)
- Violent touch that is interpreted as an abusive physical, sexual and/or mental act
- Imaginative violent moments without touch (moments where violent mentally abusive behavior is portrayed but physical touch may not occur)
- Exposure of any performer’s breast, buttocks, pelvic/genital area.

In the interest of making the rehearsal and performance processes demonstrative of best pedagogical and professional practices for all concerned, *(Insert company/institution name)* _____ requests its directors employ the following protocols:

- Secure an Intimacy Choreographer, Intimacy Director, or Intimacy Designer for the production should the scale of intimate moments in the production deem it necessary. This decision will be made in collaboration with the artistic team.
- Provide information on all possible intimate or sexually violent moments in the production at the time of auditions and encourage students to document any personal boundaries. A suggested form is provided.
- In both auditions and in rehearsal have a boundary establishment system for the actors. Should an actor state an area of the body is off-limits to touch, that boundary is to be respected during the staging process and in performance.

- Limit attendance in early rehearsals to director, actors, stage management and the intimacy choreographer when intimate moments are being staged or rehearsed should the actors request this.
- Stage management is to record all blocking as choreography.
- Once staging has been set, ask the actors to independently document what they understand is the agreed-upon choreography for each intimate or violent moment. A suggested form is available.
- Employ a self-care cue for the production. This is a word or phrase that anyone can say to “hold” a rehearsal while a moment of physical or mental stress is addressed. We suggest using the best practice of, “Button.”
- Permit the actors to use a placeholder (for example a high five) in place of kissing up until the kiss has been appropriately staged. Actors should never be directed to go “figure it out” with out guidance from the director or intimacy specialist.
- If nudity is being staged. Actors must have consented to staging this before casting. Allow actors to determine the degree of exposure/nudity they are comfortable with throughout the rehearsal process up until dress rehearsals.
- Encourage the production team to use anatomical language when referring to body parts and refer to scenes by act and scene number rather than terms such as “the sex scene” or “the rape scene.” Team members should offer comments or opinions on the staging of these moments to the director only.
- Educate everyone in the production as to how, when, and where to report an issue should one arise. Have a communication ladder printed with names, and contact information that is given to the actors at the first rehearsal and posted on the callboard.
- Allow time during pre-show set up to incorporate an intimacy call before each performance if needed. This is for actors can rehearse moments and address any concerns with stage management before the house is opened.