

## **Process for Rehearsing & Performing Intimate Touch/Contact/Stage Violence**

At TAPS/UT, we rigorously engage with ideas and text, embodying the theatrical moment, while being equally vigilant in ensuring artist safety and boundaries. We encourage actors and directors to take risks in scene work, but an atmosphere of personal responsibility combined with absolute trust is necessary in order to truly take risks.

It is essential to keep in mind that self-care is the responsibility of each artist for themselves. We cannot presume to know what is best for others or apply a one-size-fits-all model to a creative process. In committing to a course or a production, it is each artist's responsibility to familiarize oneself with content and to decide if the engagement with the material makes sense at that point in time.

Drama investigates conflict, and art frequently seeks to reflect some of our harder truths. 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, or gestures of intimacy or body exposure.

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.

The following guidelines should be referenced when rehearsing or staging scenes of the nature described above, either in rehearsal for class or for production work.

1. Scene partners (and the director and/or fight choreographer) must verbally agree to the staging boundaries of the scene (i.e. 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 as well as the given contexts for rehearsal (i.e. how many people are in the room). The actors are responsible for staying within those agreed-upon boundaries (i.e. not extending a physical interaction beyond agreed upon staging).
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 touch/contact/stage violence 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, it is your right and your responsibility to speak to your instructor, director, staff member and/or program director.

If the safety of a partner is compromised:

- a) in 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 actor may also speak to the faculty advisor, their academic advisor, or another trusted faculty/staff member if they wish.

**Contact Numbers:**

TAPS undergraduate program: Heidi Coleman 312-607-7487

Student Counseling Service (SCS):773.702.9800

SCS Staff-Member-on-Call:773.702.3625

**Additional Resources**

To raise concerns or to file a complaint under our policy on discrimination and sexual misconduct or Title IX: Belinda Cortez Vazquez: 773.834.9710