

# INTRO TO INTIMACY DIRECTION

What is an intimacy director?

Things to know about the work

Pillars of Safe Intimacy

Intimacy Vocabulary

Best Practices



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# WHAT IS AN INTIMACY DIRECTOR?

Intimacy Directors are responsible for the consensual crafting and staging of stories of sex, race, disability, or age, with appropriate cultural context and competency.

They are more than choreographers; they are advocates for the ensemble as a whole and individual actors.

They take responsibility for the emotional safety of the actors.

We are curators of space for consent.



# THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE WORK

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## THE WORK IS NOT CENTERED IN LIMITATIONS

The Pillars of Safe Intimacy are not tools of limitations, but resources for liberation to be free to do the work. Empower the room, and artists will be willing to dive in and explore, because they feel safe.

## FEELING SAFE VS. FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE

The difference between the two is when a boundary is broken. The space for creating and building intimacy should feel safe. Boundaries are always subject to change, and there is always an exit.

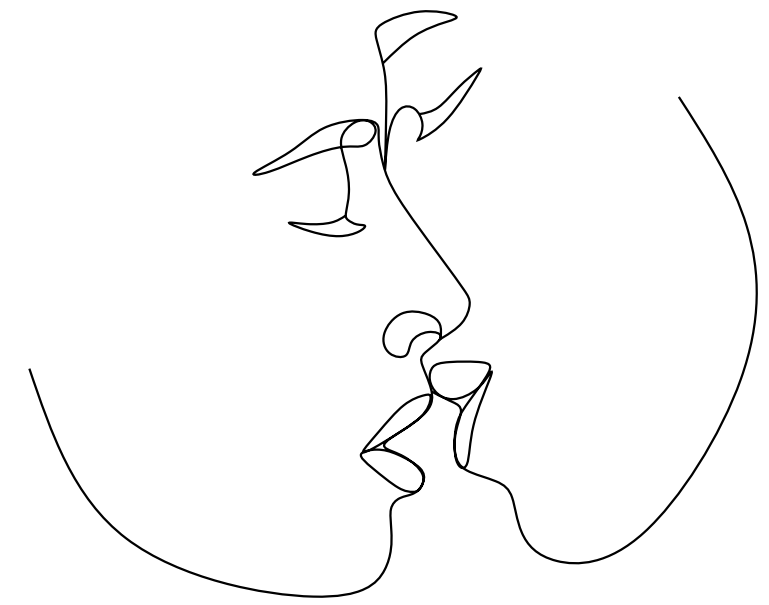
## OPEN / CLOSED REHEARSALS

Remember to check in with the actors before opening up rehearsals where they will engage in intimacy.



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# PILLARS OF SAFE INTIMACY



## CONTEXT

What is the story? What is the reason for intimacy in the scene? Use the dynamics of the scene to create truth and authenticity within the story.



## COMMUNICATION

Make the implicit, explicit. Open communication must be employed between the director, ID, stage manager and the actors, including check-ins and avenues for reporting.



## CONSENT

Know the difference between permission and consent - consent can only be given by the person directly affected and in relationship of the situation. Always remember FRIES, and that consent lives within the context.



## CHOREOGRAPHY

Not unlike staged violence, scenes of intimacy must be choreographed. There should never be surprises.



## CLOSURE

At the end of a rehearsal or scene of intimacy, actors should develop a closing moment to signify the end of the work and to "clock out."

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# C O N T E X T

All parties must first be aware of how the scene of intimacy meets the needs of the story, and understand the story within the intimacy itself. This creates a sense of safety, and eliminates the unexpected and ensures that the intimacy always serves the story. Once you establish the playwright and director's vision for the intimacy within the context of the story, you can create truth and authenticity within the scene using the intimacy. Consent lives within the context - the story is used to specify where and why consent is given.

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# COMMUNICATION

There should be open and continuous communication between the director, ID, stage management and the actors. This can include discussion of the scene, the choreography, and frequent check-ins (with boundaries, reporting, and Intimacy Call.)

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# C O N S E N T

Yes is meaningless without space for "no" - they need to have equal weight. No is not an indictment. While permission can be given by the director, script, or choreographer, consent can only be given from the person receiving the action. Actors have the agency to remove consent at any time.

With consent, remember **FRIES**:

**F - Freely Given** - without coercion or influence

**R - Reversible** - consent can be withdrawn

**I- Informed** - context and situation known explicitly

**E - Enthusiastic** - present vs. presence

**S - Specific** - context fully disclosed w/ all information

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# CHOREOGRAPHY

Choreography in the context of intimacy removes the pressure of relying on anyone's perceived experience, and removes loaded terms and language.

Once an intimate scene is choreographed, that choreography should be adhered to for the entirety of the production. Any changes should be approved by the Intimacy Director. It is the job of the stage manager to ensure that the choreography is performed as intended, address any discrepancies, and enforce an Intimacy Call before every performance.

**Anchoring moments of choreography are:**

- **who initiates**
  - **point of connection**
  - **duration**
  - **who leads**
  - **where hands are**
  - **scale of intensity**
  - **who breaks contact**
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# CLOSURE

This practice is used to help actors safely exit the space. Closure can serve as a moment to leave our characters, relationships, and actions from the work behind, and back to reality. Examples are grounding exercises or Stepping Out.

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# BOUNDARIES

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## Boundaries can be:

- **Physical**
- **Professional**
- **Personal**
- **Cultural**

Boundaries should be set at the beginning of the intimacy process, as organic moments and impulses can occur within the boundaries and the context of the scene. Boundaries do not need to be justified, and are subject to change. Boundary check-ins should happen daily.

# BOUNDARY VOCABULARY

## - **Fences and Gates**

- Fences - off limits no matter what
- Gates - can be placed on parts of the body that allow relaxed boundaries.

## - **Neutral/Anatomical/De-Loaded language**

- **Safe Care Cue** (as opposed to a "safe word" which has sexual connotations)

- "Button" or double clap (when language or words can't be expressed)



# INSTRUCTIONAL TOUCH

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1. **State what part of the body you want to touch with.**
2. **Where you would like to touch.**
3. **What the purpose of the touch is.**
4. **Open ended questions (not "is that ok?")**

For demonstration, you may incorporate hand over hand, hovering, or Show/Guide/Tell. You always want to engage in Instructional Touch in the rehearsal spac



# BEST PRACTICES

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1. **Always engage in consent-based practice, even when not choreographing an intimate scene.**
2. **Establish and respect boundaries.**
3. **De-loaded process**
4. **Choreograph it**
5. **Document it**



Prepared for Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park by Torie Wiggins, Intimacy Director

## **Resources:**

Pillars of Safe Intimacy - Intimacy Directors International (now IDC - Intimacy Directors and Coordinators);

Best Practices in Intimacy Education - TIE (Theatrical Intimacy Education)

Intimacy Captain Certification Training - ICOC (Intimacy Coordinators of Color)