



INTIMACY  
FOR STAGE & SCREEN

GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING  
INTIMACY DIRECTORS  
FOR LIVE PERFORMANCE



# A NOTE ON THE GUIDELINES

The following document is predominantly focused on intimacy work for theatre. However, we have decided to mark it as “Live Performance” since all the specifics outlined below are transferable and adaptable for Dance, Opera and various other forms of live performance.

This is a living document and will be updated regularly as intimacy practice evolves, changes and recreates itself. Thus, we ask that you keep checking our website to find the most updated version.

If you wish to share the link to this document do not share the link of the document itself, instead we ask that you share the link to the website page where you can click on the button that directs you to the most updated version.

If you wish to reference information from this document, use it in your research, articles, books etc we ask that you credit *Intimacy For Stage & Screen* and all the document’s contributors fully (their names mentioned below).

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### THANKS

A huge thank you to Equity UK and Equity Women's Committee, Kelly Burke and Jennifer Greenwood for their continuous support in bringing safe intimacy practices to the foreground of UK's entertainment industry.

Thank you *Intimacy Directors & Coordinators (IDC)* for introducing Intimacy Direction into 21st Century theatre practice and actor safety.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTIMACY DIRECTION

Strategies for rehearsing and performing intimacy have been around for many years and implemented by Directors, Dance Choreographers, Fight Directors, Movement Directors, Stage Managers, Company Managers and Performers.

In 2004 Tonia Sina coined the phrase “Intimacy Choreographer” in her ongoing research and thesis “Intimate Encounters; Staging Intimacy and Sensuality” (Virginia Commonwealth University). Subsequently, further practitioners worldwide have created their own research into the topic and as such, it is constantly evolving. In 2016 Tonia Sina, Alicia Rodis and Siobhan Richardson founded *Intimacy Directors International (IDI)*, the first company to offer training for Intimacy Choreographers/Directors and then a listing for Certified Intimacy Directors.

In March 2016, Lizzy Talbot brought “Intimacy Direction” from the USA to the UK and founded *Theatrical Intimacy*.

In 2017 Equity UK included Intimacy Direction in their *Agenda For Change*.

In 2019, the “Intimacy Director” role was first credited on the West End’s *Death of A Salesman* (Intimacy Director - Yarit Dor) and Broadway’s *Frankie & Johnny* (Intimacy Director - Claire Warden).

In 2020 Stage Directors UK was the first trade organisation to collaborate with IDI-UK to include Intimacy Direction guidelines in their booklet for Directors.

### **Development of the organisation *Intimacy For Stage & Screen***

In late 2016 Claire Warden and Yarit Dor joined *Theatrical Intimacy* as co-founders and in 2017 *Theatrical Intimacy* became *Intimacy Directors International UK*, a branch of IDI.

In 2020 it was rebranded as *Intimacy for Stage and Screen* to include their ongoing work with the recorded media industry as well.

## 2.0

# CONSENT IN LIVE PERFORMANCE

Consent is given by the Performer performing the action. Consent can only be freely given if the Performer has full knowledge of the action required beforehand. Any form of coercion negates the Performer's consent.

### Legal Definition in the UK

Section 74 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in the UK states that: "a person consents if he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice."  
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>).

### Consent is freely given

The individual has a right to their body and therefore consent is retractable. If for whatever reason the individual feels unsafe emotionally and/or physically they have the right to retract their consent at any point (and also during performances) without penalty. While the consent is retracted, the intimacy choreography can no longer be performed and the Intimacy Director, Director/Dance Choreographer and the Company Manager should negotiate alterations.

### Consent is the privilege of all parties

This includes Performers, Understudies, Stage Management Team, Creative Team, Technical Team, etc. Consent should not be assumed even if they know the play/piece or have worked together in the past. Consent should be acquired at all stages in the process even if intimate moments or actions were agreed upon during auditions, interview, contracting stages, pre-rehearsal meetings, rehearsals and during the run of the show.

If a show has an Understudy Performer, they should be involved in the intimacy sessions. They have the right to consent or withdraw consent and therefore if they are present, their own boundaries should be taken into account when creating the intimacy choreography. If they cannot be present, a separate session should be booked for them to ensure the performers feel safe and to make alterations. Intimacy Choreography should not be assumed for any performer.

### Consent can only be given if the individual is fully informed

Never assume that if a play has stage directions that include intimacy then those applying to participate/audition have fully taken that into account. As an employer you must inform your potential employee what the job/role entails and then check their level of consent and agreement. In the performing arts sometimes new things come up in rehearsals and that is part of a creative process however consent should be obtained and checked at all stages.

### Consent and the Intimacy Director

The Intimacy Director is a specialist hired to facilitate intimacy choreography in a safe process while overseeing consent.

For more general information on consent: <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/>

## 3.0

# WHAT IS AN INTIMACY DIRECTOR?

## Intimacy Director

An intimacy-movement specialist trained to oversee consent and to facilitate safe intimacy choreography for the stage. Their role involves advocacy, liaison, choreography and safety.

Their role involves:

### Advocacy

The Intimacy Director serves as an advocate for the Performers and Stage Management Team during intimacy scenes. They also help to oversee intimacy related safety along with the Company Manager and/or SM. The Intimacy Director:

- is a Mental Health First Aider<sup>1</sup> in rehearsals when present and can be a point of contact for the performer (see note below);
- can consult the production on ways for performers to deal with cyber/physical bullying (especially if a show has nudity and simulated sex);
- can be involved in conversations with Front of House and the ushers on ways to approach audience members that may be triggered;
- may contribute to “audience’s packs” or notices about the content of the show;
- can assist with conflict resolution; and
- can consult on ways to reduce potential of sexual harassment and
- inappropriate behaviour in backstage & quick change areas.

### Liaison

The Intimacy Director liaises with departments to ensure that the Performers are provided with what they require for intimacy choreography.

### Collaboration and Intimacy Choreography

The Intimacy Director collaborates with the Performers, Director/Choreographer and Stage Management Team to create intimacy choreography rooted in the storytelling.

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<sup>1</sup> [Mental Health First Aider](#) The Intimacy Director should be a Mental Health First Aider which can provide immediate support and aid in a sensitive situation (see section 5.0). They are not a trained therapist. If a Performer or crew member is triggered or suffers a mental health crisis they need to be directed to a trained therapist that is not part of the production and the session should be off-site as much as possible



## Important:

1. Double Billing/Crediting

Due to power dynamics we highly recommend that a Director (or Dance Choreographer) does not also work as an Intimacy Director **on their own show/project**. (See Appendix 1 for “power dynamics”).

Double Billing may occur for a **Creative hired to support the show** such as “Fight & Intimacy Director” or “Movement & Intimacy Director” only if they have been engaged as an Intimacy Director to do the role in its entirety.

2. Disclosure:

Performers and/or Stage Management Team may voluntarily disclose personal intimacy/trauma related history to the Intimacy Director. The Intimacy Director (as a Mental Health First Aider) is not required to share such personal information with the Director or Dance Choreographer or Company Manager etc unless they feel this endangers the performer, other company members, crew, creative team, theatre staff etc or unless required by law.





## 4.0

# WHEN SHOULD I HIRE AN INTIMACY DIRECTOR?

In order to keep Performers safe, we recommend an Intimacy Director be brought in to facilitate the following scenes:

### An Intimacy Director is essential for scenes including:

- Simulated Sex
- Nudity
- Semi-Nudity
- Undressing to a state of nudity/semi-nudity
- Non-consensual action<sup>2</sup> such as Simulated Sexual Assault, Simulated Sexual Violence, Simulated Sexual Manipulation.
- Kissing on the body
- Non-contact kiss
- Intense mouth-to-mouth kissing
- Groping or Making Out
- Portrayal of contact with chest or genitals
- Presence of Child Actors, Young Adult Actors or Vulnerable Artists in a scene containing intimacy (please see terminology Appendix 1)<sup>3</sup>
- Use of prosthetic genitalia or prosthetic breasts.

### An Intimacy Director is recommended for scenes including:

- Insinuation of sexual actions
- Mouth-to-mouth Kissing
- Any instances in which a performer requests an Intimacy Director

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<sup>2</sup> Any intimacy involving violence also requires the presence of a Fight Director

<sup>3</sup> The Intimacy Director should work closely with the Stage Management Team and the Chaperone to oversee the child's protection. Involving minors in intimacy scenes is problematic so please get further advice from Equity and your hired Accredited Chaperone.



## 5.0 WHAT TRAINING SHOULD AN INTIMACY DIRECTOR HAVE?

Practitioners enter this profession in different ways and from a variety of backgrounds. The below is a recommended process incorporating valuable information which can help engagers ascertain the level of expertise and training of a candidate.

### 5.1 Recommended Hiring Process:

- Ask for a CV of their Intimacy Direction credits and related training.  
*Please note*, credits should be of “intimacy director” billing to show that they were hired for that particular role in full.
- Double Billing may occur for a Creative such as “Fight & Intimacy Director” or “Movement & Intimacy Director” but it should be clearly mentioned so you know they did that role in its entirety. An engager should be familiar with the Intimacy Direction specific training providers available worldwide and their reputation. There is a difference between introductory and extensive training - an “Intimacy Coordinator” is not the same role as an Intimacy Director (see Appendix 1).
- Interview the Intimacy Director.
- Obtain a recommendation from a Director, Producer, Stage Manager or Performer that has worked with them.

### 5.2 Expertise & Training:

Level of expertise currently used by *Intimacy For Stage & Screen*:

Intimacy Director - trained professional  
Trainee Intimacy Director - currently in training

An Intimacy Director should have all of the following:

#### Professional Experience

CV containing the following:

- “Intimacy Director” credits.
- Professional experience working directly with Performers and Directors.
- Previous experience working in live performance.
- Professional experience in movement instruction for actors. This should include teaching movement based disciplines which require knowledge of anatomy, basic biomechanics and movement pedagogy tools for actors/dancers (depending on which performers are used in the production).



## Intimacy Direction Specific Training

We recommend that the candidate should be a fully Certified Intimacy Director. ISS recommends they should have attained a minimum of **130 hours of student-teacher contact time** in their training (**prior** to mentorship). This training should be led and assessed by an experienced Intimacy Director or an established training body focused on Intimacy Direction.

Certification programme should incorporate the following and more:

- Advocacy
- Consent, Boundaries and Power Dynamics
- Body in Performance & Art
- Intimacy Direction History and Development
- Intimacy Rehearsal Methods
- Intimacy Choreography, Dramaturgy and Styles
- Safety & Masking Techniques
- Intimacy Director's Kit
- Industry, Contracts and Documentation
- Wellbeing and De-Roling

## Health and Safety Training

We recommend the candidate have the following Health & Safety training (this should not be included in the 130 hours of student-teacher contact time).

- Adult Mental Health First Aid
- Sexual Harassment & Bullying Awareness
- LGBTQIA+ Awareness
- Diversity & Equality Awareness
- Bystander Intervention Training
- Conflict Resolution Training
- Creative Industries Safety Passport
- Emergency First Aid



If a show involves children, additional training of:

- Safeguarding of Children in the Entertainment Industry
- Youth Mental Health First Aid

### **Criminal Record Check**

- Demonstrating no sexual, violent and/or safeguarding offences (DBS or equivalent).



## 6.0 STANDARDS FOR BEST PRACTICE

The below is a list of helpful considerations for Directors, Dance Choreographers, Producers and Stage Management.

If you wish to bring an Intimacy Director onto the production we recommend you do so at the pre-production stage in order to achieve a safer, more effective process. Your Intimacy Director should be able to offer suggestions on how to navigate scenes of an intimate nature and will explain their process and requirements.

### 6.1 Pre-Production

- Contact Agent or request a CV and ask for a recommendation.
- Interview the Intimacy Director.
- Negotiate the Agreement with their Agent or directly with them.
- Schedule a meeting and discuss their process in full.
- Introduce the Intimacy Director to the other creatives and departments.
- Ensure a Mental Health First Aider is available when the Intimacy Director is not around.
- Ensure that a visible Safe Space Policy is available to all Performers, Creatives, Stage Management Team and the Technical Team.
- Ensure that a Sexual Harassment & Bullying Policy is available to all Performers, Creatives, Stage Management Team and Technical Team.
- Ensure you have contact details for a therapist that can assist in case of an emergency if anything is triggering during rehearsals and/or run of the show.

### 6.2 Rehearsal Considerations

- **Be the example in the room**  
Contemporary Intimacy Practice is about respecting the voice, boundaries and consent of the people you work with. Set the example by checking-in before contact is made and ensure open communication and empathetic listening.
- **Schedule Intimacy Sessions Early**  
Book intimate sessions early on even if the intimate action is at the end of the show. This will allow the Performers to check for triggers or sensations sooner since these may arise a couple of days or weeks after the session.
- **Communicate in Advance**  
A minimum of 24 hours notice should be sent to Performers before an intimacy session so they can contact the Stage Management Team or the Intimacy Director with any concerns or questions. Performers need this time in order to prepare any hygiene requirements before the day.
- **Wait for the Intimacy Director**



Try not to block the intimacy choreography without the Intimacy Director present. Their absence can create a negative power dynamic in the space and inconsistencies in rehearsal practice. We recommend that you use placeholders (see terminology in Appendix 1) for those moments so Performers can walk through the scene/dance routine from start to finish. Later in the intimacy sessions, the Intimacy Director will collaborate with the performers and director/dance choreographer to facilitate intimacy choreography.

- **Improvising Intimacy in Rehearsals**

It is our recommendation that intimate moments should not be improvised. Improvisation can restrict the performer's ability to consent and in order to consent they need to be informed beforehand. If you'd like to explore improvisation/devising style rehearsal processes your Intimacy Director should be able to help facilitate a framework with an agreed set of parameters whilst overseeing consent in the room.

- **Intimacy Session - an example of things to prepare**

1. Arrange Closed Rehearsal for an SM Team member, Director/Dance Choreographer, Performers involved and Intimacy Director. Eliminate or cover windows where on-lookers can view. Place a sign on the door forbidding entry without checking first with a SM team member.
2. Allow open door policy if requested by a Performer.
3. Ensure availability of hygienic products
4. We recommend that all props, specific costume requirements, music for intimacy choreography should be available for all intimacy rehearsals. The space should be appropriate for intimacy work with regard to temperature, floor, cleanliness etc. Any beddings or temporary/mock-up set should be present so the Intimacy Director can consider masking techniques within the intimacy choreography.
5. Consult with the Intimacy Director as to what the Performers should wear for such rehearsals depending on the play, style and costume requirements.
6. Separate intimacy sessions should be provided for Understudies so their boundaries are taken into account when intimacy choreography is negotiated and facilitated. (See section 2.0).
7. For notes on nudity in Rehearsal/Studio Run see separate section below.

- **Practicing the Intimacy Choreography**

After the intimacy choreography has been facilitated with the Intimacy Director, Performers may want to practice the scene/dance routine or run it. A third person should always be present, ideally a member of the Stage Management Team.

- **Hygiene Reminders**

In their Rehearsal Call a day beforehand performers should be reminded politely of the need for hygiene (no smoking before the session, avoid strong smelling foods, brushing teeth, shower, deodorant, mouthwash, nails cut etc). This is especially important if a Performer is allergic to a certain food, perfume or body lotion ingredient.

- **Transferable Health Conditions**

These can be passed through kissing and via physical touch. We recommend that Performers are asked to inform the Intimacy Director and/or Stage Management Team if they have a transferable health condition (such as a cold sore). A certified Intimacy Director will be able to advise how choreography involving touch/kissing can still be staged using alternative techniques.

- **Incorporate Closure/De-Rolling**

Advocate for Performers to practice "Closure" at the end of an action/session/day. (See terminology Appendix 1). The Intimacy Director can help facilitate.



- **Scenes Containing Intimacy & Violence**

For intimacy scenes containing violence book a session/sessions in which both Fight Director and Intimacy Director are present. Performers should have time within the session to do some Closure exercises with the Intimacy Director.

- **Intimacy Rehearsal Log**

This is a log to keep track of the intimacy choreography agreed to in rehearsals by each Performer. This will be filled by the Intimacy Director and a member of the Stage Management Team. This log has sensitive information and can be distributed only to certain individuals in the theatre building or creative team. Performers will be notified and consent obtained before any distributing.

- **Costume Fittings Include Modesty Garments**

1. Performers will have fittings of their modesty garments.
2. The Intimacy Director can be a third party present during those fittings for the comfort of the Wardrobe and Costume team or the Performer.
3. The Costume Department should communicate their requirements and fitting etiquette/protocols to the Performers in advance of the fitting appointment.
4. No photos of performers in modesty garments will be taken without their consent.

### 6.3 Studio Run Considerations

- Rehearsal Call - all creative team members and technical team coming to watch a run in the rehearsal space must be notified of the intimate content in order to maintain their emotional safety. Avoid assuming the comfort level of your team.
- Before a Run - ensure you schedule an **Intimacy Call** (see terminology Appendix 1).
- For nudity-specific notes, see below.

### 6.4 Nudity Considerations

- When nudity is an integral part of a scene, a plan should be drafted in advance with your Intimacy Director and Performers to determine nudity protocols. Keep open communication and be ready to adjust to the Performer's needs and requests.
- Stress the concept that the Performer is putting on the "costume of nudity".
- Some Performers will only want the nudity practised in Technical Rehearsals whilst others will request to try it out in the studio first. This is the right of the Performer to decide and not everyone will agree to the same process when it comes to nudity. The Intimacy Director is there to discuss such matters and to create a "Nudity Plan".
- Keep the full company informed so any Performer can raise concerns, questions and requests.
- If a rehearsal or studio run will include nudity the rehearsal calls should reflect this information. Cast, Creatives and the Costume Department should know how to manage the studio (robes, modesty garments, shoes, skin tone underwear available etc). "Backstage" space and changing areas should be created and toilets available in close proximity.



- An alternative plan for the Nudity sections should be created and practiced.
- The Stage Management Team should give a minimum of 48 hours notice to the Performer as a reminder that nudity will be practiced as agreed. This allows the Performer time to bring forward any concerns, withdraw their decision, make new requests, ask questions and tend to any hygiene specifics they may need (such as booking a waxing appointment).
- Directors, Creatives and Stage Management Team should give notes to Performers only once they are fully covered. Do not leave Performers in vulnerable positions whilst giving them notes.

## 6.5 Technical Rehearsals Considerations

We recommend that before the beginning of the Tech all cast and crew do a guided tour around the set and backstage areas. It is helpful to have a clear explanation of the backstage etiquette relating to quick changes and intimacy/nudity moments.

### Quick Change Areas

- Designated backstage quick change areas should be closed off and fully covered.
- No backstage seating around quick change areas.
- Curtains should be fully closed when someone is changing to avoid exposure and/or potential allegations.
- A notice system should be implemented if someone is inside getting changed to prevent walk-ins.

**Please note:** If Performers do not need to quick change they should not be changing outside of their dressing rooms as this can put stage management and technical crew in a vulnerable position as well as the Performer.

### Teching scenes with Nudity and/or Simulated Sex:

- The Intimacy Director should be present in those Technical Rehearsal Sessions.
- Closed Tech Session - Performers and Creatives who are not needed should wait in the green room. Only Technical and Stage Management crew who are required should be present.
- Clear signage should be placed outside the doors of the theatre so privacy is secured.
- Any alternative nudity/intimacy choreography plans should also be teched.
- Performers should not be nude when setting lighting and sound design. Correct skin tone underwear should be available for the Performers to use until all design aspects are finished.
- Nudity should be practiced when running the scene with all the technical cues if consented to by the Performer. Consent should not be assumed.
- Set appropriate temperature on the stage space during a nude or semi-nude scene.
- Robes and slippers/shoes should be at hand in the wings or hidden behind pieces of set.
- Ensure the pathways in and out of the stage are managed correctly so a nude Performer does not accidentally walk towards or brush against another Performer/ SM Team or Technician.





## 6.6 Dress and Show Run Considerations

- Intimacy Director, Stage Management and Company Manager should agree on a procedure in which Performers complete an “Intimacy Call” and should specify how to check-in with them.
- “Intimacy Call & Show Report” - separate intimacy notes into this intimacy report so they are not in the overall Show Report and distribute it to the Intimacy Director, Producers, Director/Dance Choreographer, SM team and Company Manager.
- Theatre personnel and ushers should be notified if nudity, simulation and/or non-consensual intimacy takes place in the show.
- All theatre personnel and ushers should be briefed on ways to assess the audience or to control extreme reactions and how to take action if issues in the auditorium arise due to the level of intimacy.
- If a Performer is replaced, the Intimacy Director will need to be brought in to create new intimacy choreography that is facilitated for the replacement Performer.

## 6.7 Revival, Show Transfer and Replica

Intimacy choreography is a design facilitated by an Intimacy Director. As such the copyright will belong to them and lent to the production. Any further use of it will require their engagement and further contracting discussions as well as royalties.

## 6.8 Alterations to Intimacy Choreography

- In general all alterations to the Intimacy Choreography must go through the Intimacy Director. An alteration clause will be added to their contract detailing terms.
- Please note that especially in cases of any alterations to levels of nudity and/or simulated sex actions or contact with chest or genitalia, the Intimacy Director **must** be called in or if unavailable recommend a colleague.



## 7.0

# RATES & CONTRACTING CONSIDERATIONS

### Rates

Intimacy Directors work as freelancers or Limited Companies and may have an agent. Rates will vary due to their expertise levels and depending whether it is a session based fee or an overall project fee. Currently, many Intimacy Directors follow the minimum rates for Choreographers and/or Fight Directors. These will include further pay for Replica production, Transfer and royalties for additional use of the intimacy design.

### Agreements

The Intimacy Director role requires engagement in work that can be extremely sensitive and have added liabilities. The Intimacy Director or their agent will negotiate additional clauses to their creative contract or they may wish to use their own contract. Please note that a one Creative Contract for all creatives may not be possible when it comes down to hiring an Intimacy Director.

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## APPENDIX 1:

# INTIMACY FOR STAGE AND SCREEN'S INTIMACY TERMINOLOGY FOR LIVE PERFORMANCE

### Advocate

A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.  
A person who puts a case on someone else's behalf.

### Boundary

A physical parameter a Performer has put in place to guard themselves from physical and/or emotional and/or trauma.

### Check-In

An update between the Intimacy Director and Performer or between the Performers and / or between Stage Management and Performers (physical or verbal) to ensure intimacy protocols are maintained.

### Child Actor and Young Adult Actor

In England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Intimacy scenes where minors are present require safeguarding practices in place. The Intimacy Director will work closely with the Stage Management Team and the Chaperone to oversee the child's protection. To understand more about what level of involvement can a Child Actor or Young Adult Actor have in the scenes, please seek advice from Equity UK.

### Closure / De-roling

A ritual / action / exercise that aids the Performer to de-role (come out of character) and acknowledge that the intimate situation performed on stage was not real.

### Consent

Section 74 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in the UK states that: "a person consents if he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice."

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>).

Consent on stage is given by the Performer performing the action. Consent can only be freely given if the Performer has full knowledge of the action required beforehand. Any form of coercion negates the Performer's consent.

### Descriptive Language

The wording in the Nudity & Simulated Sex Clause found in a Performer's contract detailing the extent of nudity and type of simulated sex actions the Performer agrees to perform per scene.



## External Barriers

Props and/or padding placed between Performers to reduce or eliminate groin-to-groin contact, stimulation and/or help to anchor body parts in order to perform intimacy choreography techniques.

## Garment Barriers

Padding inserted into modesty garments to reduce or eliminate groin-to-groin contact and stimulation. These are made or bought by the costume department with guidance from the Intimacy Director.

## Intimacy

A broad term and affected by the context of the characters within the scene. Depending on states of emotions, level of familiarity or intensity of the relationship, it can include non-contact based intimacy such as: portrayal of sexual tension and chemistry where no touch occurs. It can also include: intimacy between parents and children, friends, strangers, and include physical intimacy where contact occurs (see Physical Intimacy definition).

## Intimacy Call

Any show which has moments of Physical Intimacy (especially simulated sex) should run an Intimacy Call prior to the show. It is a designated time for the Performers to check-in with each other and with the Stage Manager as well as walk through any inconsistent moments or raise concerns.

## Intimacy Call & Show Report

A report filled out by a member of the Stage Management Team outlining details from the Intimacy Call and intimacy choreography performed during the show. This form will be given to them by the Intimacy Director.

## Intimacy Captain

Depending on the decision of the Intimacy Director and the style of intimacy in the show, an Intimacy Captain can be assigned. However, in general, we do not recommend this practice due to the power dynamics it creates between performers in the company.

Intimacy material can be extremely sensitive and encompasses emotional safety. This should not be in the hands of another performer which may create power play within the company. We advise that the Stage Manager should be the only person to run the Intimacy Calls when the Intimacy Director is not present.

## Intimacy Choreography

The choreographed moves of intimacy which the performers perform.

## Intimacy Choreography Notation Document

A document in which the Intimacy Director writes the agreed Intimacy Choreography agreed and any safeties, notes and requests made by the Performer.

## Intimacy Coordinator

An intimacy-movement specialist trained to oversee and facilitate scenes involving nudity, simulated sex and/or overseeing consent on a film / TV set.



## Intimacy Director

An intimacy-movement specialist trained to oversee consent and to facilitate safe intimacy choreography for the stage. Their role involves advocacy, liaison, choreography and safety.

## Intimacy Rehearsal Log

A log filled out both by a member of the Stage Management Team and the Intimacy Director outlining notes from the Intimacy Session. This form will be given to them by the Intimacy Director.

## Intimacy Risk Assessment

A report which outlines a systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in the shooting of an intimacy scene.

## Intimate Scenes

This term is complex because a Performer can see any scene as intimate for their character. However, when regarding scenes that may need an Intimacy Director, we recommend considering “Intimate Scenes” as scenes which may involve situations which are mentioned in the “Physical Intimacy” term as priority.

## Modesty Garments

With the expansion of intimacy direction and coordination practice, this now includes any garment which may cover the intergluteal cleft, nipples, breasts and genitalia. These are usually made or bought by the costume department in consultation with the Intimacy Director and the Performer.

## Nudity, Semi Nudity and Disrobe

SOLT & Equity’s Agreement for Theatre Artist states:

“Nudity”, “semi-nudity” and “disrobe” shall mean “to be in a state of undress which if in public could be regarded as indecent”.

## Nudity & Simulated Sex Clause

A clause in the Performer’s contract which is negotiated between the Performer (or their representative) and the Producer. This defines the terms of nudity and/or simulated sex agreed by both parties.

## Permission

Can be given by a third party but those asked to do something need to be able to give their consent freely. For example, a Director can give permission for an action to happen but only the Performer can give their consent.

## Physical Intimacy

We define physical intimacy as any moment which portrays physical contact and highlights the intimate nature of the characters. This may include (but is not restricted to): kissing, “making out”, physical contact leading into various states of undress, contact with chest or genitals, simulated sex, simulation of sexual violence, simulation of sexual manipulation.

## Placeholder

An agreed gesture used by the Performers in rehearsals or auditions which substitutes the intimacy action. This is extremely helpful for early rehearsals when Performers explore the scene in its entirety for it allows them to avoid improvising intimacy. Anytime they feel a need for an intimate action they can use the agreed placeholder to signal that further choreography is needed in that moment of the scene. Once intimacy sessions start with the Intimacy Director, placeholders are then removed and intimacy choreography can be



fully facilitated. Placeholders should not be intimacy actions like a kiss or hug but should be a more neutral gesture.

### Power Dynamic

Can be defined as the degree of control over material, human, financial and intellectual resources exercised by an individual or group.

Degrees of power can be sustained/constant or dynamic/distributed depending on role hierarchy, class, gender, race, age, background etc.

One example of power dynamics in live performance: the Director or Choreographer in charge of the overall vision has various types of power which can influence the behaviour and consent levels of the Performers, Stage Management Team, Creatives etc.

### Sexual Assault

Sexual or indecent assault is any physical, psychological and emotional violation in the form of a sexual act, inflicted on someone without their consent.

For more information:

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-information/what-is-sexual-violence/other-kinds-of-sexual-violence/what-is-sexual-assault/>

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes one feel distressed, intimidated or humiliated. It can take lots of different forms. It can include or be called sexualised bullying and can happen to people of any gender or sexual orientation and can be carried out by anyone of any gender identity.

For more information:

<https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment>

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-information/what-is-sexual-violence/other-kinds-of-sexual-violence/what-is-sexual-harassment/>

### Simulated Sex

SOLT & Equity's Agreement for Theatre Artist states:

"Acts of a sexual nature" and "sex acts" shall mean "any act which if performed in public would be regarded as an indecent act".

### Withdrawal of Consent

A Performer owns the right to their body and therefore they can at any time withdraw their agreement to giving or receiving an action in a physical capacity at any time.



## APPENDIX 2: CONTRACTING PERFORMERS THE NUDITY & SIMULATED SEX CLAUSE

We highly recommend that the “Nudity & Simulated Sex Clause” in Equity’s Artist Contract be included into the Performer’s Contract.

Try and be as specific as possible by adding:

- Script page numbers of the action in question
- Stage Directions describing the action
- Notes as to the level of nudity that the Performer has formally agreed to show.
- Notes on the simulated sex that the Performer has agreed to perform.
- Notes on additions/special requests by the Performer: intimacy garments, intimacy barriers, their rights regarding photos and publicity showing intimacy etc.

We recommend that the clause be negotiated with the Performer (and/or their Agent) and signed **before the rehearsals commence**. It should be as detailed as possible to avoid any miscommunications or misunderstandings as to the agreed nature of the work.

**Please note**, the Performer owns the rights to their body and can therefore retract their consent at any time. Retraction may mean termination of the contract under the terms agreed unless renegotiated and re-signed.

The Intimacy Rehearsal Logs and/or the Intimacy Choreography Notation Document will include what has been agreed throughout the rehearsals and these can form an Appendix to the Performer’s contract outlining what has been agreed during rehearsals and show. Any changes to these should be updated and added to the Appendix.



## APPENDIX 3: STAGE MANAGEMENT TEAM AND INTIMACY

When you are offering a job to an SM, DSM, ASM etc inform them of the level of intimate action included within the show. It is important to clarify their responsibilities with regards to documenting, assessing safety and maintaining consent of the intimacy alongside the Intimacy Director. If they accept the job they need to know that they will then be part of the overall duty of care of the theatre/production.

Please do not assume that all stage managers are happy to take on this additional workload as it carries risks and responsibilities. Consider that this may necessitate further fees due to the additional hours of engagement and tasks.

The Stage Management Team's responsibilities will include, but are not restricted to:

- Informing Performers 24 hours before an Intimacy Session takes place.
- Setting a meeting with the Director, Intimacy Director and Performers to discuss whether they would like to do a rehearsal or studio run with nudity, when and schedule that beforehand.
- Informing Performers 48 hours before any nudity is rehearsed.
- Filling out an Intimacy Rehearsal Log of the Intimacy Session with the Intimacy Director.
- Acting as a third party when actors are practicing the agreed intimacy choreography without the Intimacy Director's presence.
- Being present in Intimacy Sessions.
- Watching the Intimacy Scenes every show and filling out an Intimacy Call & Show Report (see terminology section Appendix 1).
- Running the Intimacy Calls.
- Regularly checking-in with performers and informing the Intimacy Director of any modifications requested by the Performers.





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## APPENDIX 4: COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

*Intimacy For Stage & Screen* have written guidelines regarding what to consider during Covid-19 however we have not published them here as of yet.

We are waiting to see SOLT's guidance after which we will update this pdf with our advice.

This document will be updated regularly so please continue to check for the latest information.



## APPENDIX 5: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Resources:

Equity's Safe Space Statement:

<https://www.equity.org.uk/getting-involved/campaigns/safe-spaces/>

Equity's Manifesto for Casting

<https://www.equity.org.uk/media/1380/manifesto-for-casting.pdf>

Equity UK's Casting LGBT+ Guidelines

[https://www.equity.org.uk/media/3465/equity\\_lgbt-casting-guide.pdf](https://www.equity.org.uk/media/3465/equity_lgbt-casting-guide.pdf)

Equity UK's Agenda For Change 2017: supported Intimacy Direction as part of their agenda.

<https://www.equity.org.uk/media/1263/agenda-for-change.pdf>

### Websites of Intimacy Direction specific training providers

The following are training providers that we know train intimacy directors similarly to what is outlined in section 5.0.

**UK:** Intimacy for Stage & Screen [www.intimacyforstageandscreen.com](http://www.intimacyforstageandscreen.com)

**USA:** Intimacy Directors & Coordinators [www.idcprofessionals.com](http://www.idcprofessionals.com)

**USA:** Theatrical Intimacy Education (USA). <https://www.theatricalintimacyed.com>

### Books:

Ewan, V. (2014) Actor Movement - pages 247-259.

Pace, C. (2020) Staging Sex, Focal Press Book, Routledge.

### Thesis:

Sina, T. (2006) Intimate Encounters; Staging Intimacy and Sensuality, Dissertation, Virginia Commonwealth University

### Articles:

Noble, Adam. (2011) Sex & Violence; practical approaches for dealing with extreme stage physicality, Fight Master Magazine.



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Rodis, A. (2017) Killing Desdemona; creating safe spaces for dangerous work, Fight Master Magazine.

Sina, T.(2014) Safe Sex: a look at the Intimacy Choreographer, Fight Master Magazine.

### **Selected Interviews:**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/15/theater/need-to-fake-an-orgasm-theres-an-intimacy-choreographer-for-that.html>

<https://www.thestage.co.uk/advice/elizabeth-talbot-professor-of-movement-own-your-body-theres-a-myth-it-belongs-to-others>

<https://www.thestage.co.uk/features/yarit-dor-i-dont-like-to-be-boxed-in--i-dont-want-to-be-just-a-fight-director>

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/broadway-intimacy-director-claire-warden-interview-68526/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/sep/15/slave-play-broadway-jeremy-o-harris>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/sex/confessions-intimacy-director-do-direct-sex-scenes-age-metoo/>



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