

Unpacking the CDSS Community Culture & Safety Toolkit

Session 1, October 28, 2025

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

CDSS Community Culture, Safety Toolkit, Affiliate Services, Emotional Safety, Community Guidelines, Family Engagement, Non-Gendered Calling, Complaint Procedures, Intergenerational Dancing, Dance Atmosphere, Inclusivity, Communication, Resource Sharing, Board Members, Cultural Norms.

SPEAKERS

Matt Reyna, Speaker 6, Speaker 3, Whitney Rowlett, Speaker 2, Speaker 5, Speaker 4, Speaker 1, Diane Silver



Whitney Rowlett 00:00

Hello, for those of you who do not know me, my name is Whitney Rowlett. I'm the new Director of Programs for CDSS. I haven't had a chance to meet all of you, but I've met, I've met quite a few of you, and it's lovely to see you. While we have a few seconds here, can I introduce Matt Reyna, who Matt, if you don't mind, I'm meeting for a second. Matt is our Affiliate Coordinator.



Matt Reyna 00:00

Hi everyone as Whitney said, my name is Matt. I am the Affiliate Coordinator. I've been in this position since March, and that's a new position dedicated for our affiliates. So I helped steward a network of over 270 groups all around the continent, and I help get brass tack things like group insurance for your dances and events. I can help groups get 501c3 status under our group exemption, we have a quarterly affiliate newsletter with news from all over the all over the continent, and resources like this. And as always, we're available for advice from the CDSS staff for issues such as things that might come up in this toolkit. When we have a pointed question. I'm always polling our staff for the best answers. So anyway, just a reminder that our affiliate services year runs from May 1 to April 30. So as we come into the new year, if you are affiliates, you will be receiving receiving a renewal notice in March and April to renew in May. So anyway, I'm here and happy to help you out. So thanks.

W**Whitney Rowlett 03:57**

Thank you. Thanks, Matt. It's great to see you. And if, if you haven't had a chance to meet Matt in person yet, I hope you will see him. He's He's amazing, and we are so lucky to have him. All right. Well, we are about three or four minutes after so we'll go ahead and get started, and hopefully everyone else can just sort of join in as they need to.

W**Whitney Rowlett 06:25**

So I'm delighted to offer this lecture series to everyone the next couple of weeks. It'll be a little bit of lecture tonight, and then also a little bit of an opportunity for us to discuss the of kind of what the toolkit does, and how it could affect all of you in your own organizations. A little bit afterwards, I was delighted to find that this resource was available on the CDSS website, and it was put together by an amazing group of our board members, and they have given it to the community to help build a safe and effective, safe, and well functioning community organization for dancers, singers and musicians, and to that end, Diane Silver, who is a former board member and one of the architects of the toolkit, is here this evening to walk us through an overview of the entire toolkit.

W**Whitney Rowlett 07:21**

Next week, we're going to be doing a deep dive into sort of how to guide conversations within your own communities in order to build out culture, and then the and then work out the best way to work out guiding principles for your organizations through communication with your members. And then the third week, we'll be working on maintaining a safe dance space so how to communicate about guidelines and boundaries, and then the unfortunate side of when we need to report some issues and how to deal with those, which, unfortunately, I believe all of us have probably dealt with that at some point in the past, but this will give you a really great opportunity to put guidelines in place for your communities. What will makes that whole process a little bit easier? So without further ado.

D**Diane Silver 08:08**

Diane, thank you so much. I am thrilled that that you were interested in in hearing about the toolkit, because we poured a lot of a lot of heart and soul into it for a number of years. And so it just is very gratifying to know that there's interest and to know that it will be used. I actually want to share my screen while I talk. Ooh, I'm sending a request, Whitney, for you to let me share my screen.

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Diane Silver 08:41

No worries. That's all right, aha, okay. And then I gotta pick the right one. I'm going to share that window, share, okay, so and then, all right, so I'm going to leave this up, and I'm going to scroll through it as I talk, and I just want to check if I change windows for myself. Can you still see the toolkit window? Whitney, yes. Okay, great. I want to make sure of that. Okay, so my plan here is that I'm going to try to give you the big picture overview in about 20 to 30 minutes, and then we'll have time for questions and discussion and such like that. So if you have questions, you could put them in the chat, but we'll save them for for the end, just so I can, like, get through it all.

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Diane Silver 09:39

Alrighty, so the a little bit of the history of, like, how this thing started in the first place, it was back in 2019 it was a priority for the board, because the context was that we were in, like, the throes of the me too movement, which started in 2017 so, you know, sexual safety. Safety and speaking up for yourself was becoming much more prevalent in our dance communities. We had what people were calling creepy dancer syndrome. We had like sleazing without a license. We had younger dancers not coming back to the to the dance. And so CDSS was getting a lot of requests for resources on how to deal with these problems, and so we formed a board task group, and we decided that a tool kit was going to be the best approach. You know, we don't like to dictate to groups. We don't like to tell anybody what they should do. We just like to offer resources and let people choose what seems most useful for your community. So that was the approach that we took. And we also didn't want to reinvent the wheel. We felt like the best service that we could provide to organizers across the country would be to try to create a clearing house of existing materials from across our constituency, to try to be like a one stop shop.

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Diane Silver 11:00

So we said, Let we'll do the work of like searching and collecting and vetting and synthesizing so that you don't have to because the problem was that there was so much out there that it's too overwhelming for organizers who start sifting through the internet at large. So that was the goal that we initially set. So it started out as the board members on the task group, and then we also invited community members to join the task group. We identified folks who had demonstrated leadership on these topics within their communities, and we asked if they wanted to be part of it. And we also did a lot of kind of consulting and asking for input from across the community, and it included a survey and a call for resources. So we did everything that we could to really put it out there, to try to try to get everything that we could find from leaders, you know, in in groups across the country, I do want to acknowledge the the core people who did, who did the work, starting at the beginning, Dorcas Hand was the chair of the committee, and then Avia Moore took over, and then I and then I took over after that, I'm going to just say a couple names really quick, because they deserve it. Juliette Webb, Susie Lorand, Marni Rachmiel, John Seto, Olivia Barry, Nikki Herbst and Chris Weiler were members of the task group. And we also had input from Katy Heine, Frannie Marr, Pam Paulson, JoLaine Jones-Pokorney, Chris Ricciotti and Darlene Underwood. And then we consulted with many more. And we also took a lot of ideas off of social media threads and posts. We tried to find everybody and ask permission and credit the posters in the various pieces of the toolkit. So I just want to say a big thank you to all of those people.

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Diane Silver 12:51

Okay, so as we got started, the first piece that we worked on actually became part three of the toolkit. At the beginning, it was, there weren't so many parts. It was just the tool kit. And we focused on first, physical safety. But then we quickly figured out that the the meat or the the depth of the issues that we were facing was all about emotional safety. We realized that, you know, people were talking about creating a safe space, or I don't feel safe in this environment, and they were talking about emotional safety. And people have very different thresholds and definitions about about what safety is, or what feels safe, and that's often the root of the problem. You know, there are different expectations. There can be a lack of clear communication and setting expectations and and we quickly realized that a huge part of solving these kinds of problems, these me too, problems, is in preventing them in the first place, and that means establishing community culture, you know, so, so how do you Do that? Well, you have guidelines, you have community guidelines. And we realized quickly that there's kind of a difference between absolutes, you know, like things that that will get you that should get you banned immediately, like if you assault someone, you're done, you're not welcome in our community. But there's this huge area of sort of gray continuum of what's acceptable and what's not acceptable and sort you know, infractions, if you will, that probably should be solved with education and awareness and second chances and things like that. And so we decided to distinguish between these absolutes, which we decide, which we called Code of Conduct, and then these guidelines and recommendations and culture things which we then called courtesy and etiquette. And then so, so as we were developing all this, we said our whole task group actually needs to be rebranded. And so we changed it to the community culture and safety task group, because it's so much about community culture.

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Diane Silver 15:08

So with all of that, I want to just show you this, this piece of the toolkit, and I just want to dive into this table of contents. Is that showing on the on the screen, sharing the Table of Contents? Yes, good. Okay, so this is the table of contents for part three, which is the courtesy and etiquette. And I just want to it just, it's a nice outline. It talks about communication. It talks about, you know, the dance atmosphere that you're creating, having stuff at the door, talking about eye contact, flirtation, respecting space, things that you can do for inclusivity. Let me move over here a little bit so you can see it. You know, health and hygiene and accessibility issues, awareness of people's physical abilities or challenges, and how to eliminating emotional barriers, you know? So just like, the table of contents just gives you a sense of the depth of what's in this section. And so part two, I believe Whitney of this series is going to be the deep dive into this piece, because it's, it's got a lot in it okay. And then I also just want to acknowledge the where we where we got stuff. What we did is we wanted, we scoured, scoured behavior documents from communities across North America. And we were, we were trying to figure out, like, what to include in this clearing house, and then a big piece was to find examples of how to say it. Lots of different communities are saying the same thing, but they're saying it in different ways. You know, we had a lot of like, Oh, wow. I like that language. Like, wow. Let's listen to the way so and so said it. And so we were collecting all these examples, and then we went through and started editing and sifting, and we were trying to find a really good balance of sort of repetition, but also nuance. And so we have, you know, two or three ways of saying the same thing where, you know one is very short and succinct and simple, and then you know another might be like a whole paragraph that talks about an idea. And so that's on purpose. And so like this is the one stop shop clearing house that we were that we were aiming for. You don't have to go out and download 10 different examples of behavior guidelines from different communities, we hope, because we tried to sort of take the best of everything and put it all into this piece. And so as we were doing all of that sifting, we were we were making choices about where to eliminate repetition while still keeping the nuances. And so in the end, these six sources are the ones that that we really took most of the stuff from. And so big shout out to the organizers and leaders in these communities, because you guys put together some really good stuff. And so thank you for all that work, and we've quoted it and referenced it in this document. I will also say that we did not quote. We did not we did not credit each specific quote, because it just got to be too much. So we've given credit here at the end, and that's kind of the way we chose to approach it. So that is that is that courtesy and etiquette piece.

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Diane Silver 18:44

And then we realized that we needed to work on I've gotten myself confused here. We realized that we were using a lot of terminology, and we probably ought to define that terminology. We were talking about safety and respect and inclusion and etiquette and like, what does all that mean? And so we said, let's put that in an introduction. And so we actually created a part zero of this toolkit. It's kind of funny, but we had to call it part zero because we already had the other parts. And so in part zero, do to do? There it is. We have these working definitions, safety, respect, inclusion, courtesy, etiquette, and the big idea is that safety is the ultimate goal, respect and inclusion are the underlying what like like, what makes people feel emotionally saved, emotionally safe, and then courtesy and etiquette are how you get there. So that was the way that we defined it, and we hope that that is helpful.

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Diane Silver 19:50

So with all of that, then we got into, well, we're giving all of these recommendations of how people should behave, how we hope people. Will behave, but when we actually get complaints, then what do you do? And so part four in the toolkit is the complaint procedures. And this actually turned out to be an easier task for us because we found a couple of really detailed documents from other communities that had put together actual complaint procedures, and they were really deep and complete, and we felt like we have no there is no work for us to do here. We do not need to reinvent the wheel in any way. We're just going to refer people to these documents like there's not 1000 of them. There's only a couple of them, and so that's what we did. We said, let's keep it short and simple. We're just going to put a couple references here, a little bit of an outline, and that's going to be what people need. So done. And shout out to those communities for creating really great resources and giving permission to share them. So as we got through all of that, then we realized this whole resource thus far, anyway, is based on some pretty big presumptions about a set of values. You know, we're talking about inclusion and equity and respect and all of these things and sort of presuming that everybody agrees that that's what we should be founded on. And we realized that if people are not bought in to these values, then like the whole thing is built on a weak foundation. So if you want this to be really useful, you got to have a set of community values. And community values are part of your guiding documents.

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Diane Silver 21:45

And so back here on the toolkit part one, we actually did three pieces, and I'm going to just show you the overview of the first one, which is that ideally you have a set of sort of founding documents for your group. You need a mission statement, a vision statement. And mission and vision are what you do, and the values of are why you do it. Why does your organization exist? And I just want to highlight that CDSS has great resources in other places about mission and vision. If you go into the Resource Portal and use the filters for organizers and for starting up, there's great there for mission. Goes with that. I'll also acknowledge that a lot of times organizations get developed and already exist without without stating their values, you probably have values, but maybe they haven't been conscious, or you haven't really articulated them. So it can be valuable to sort of go back and go ahead and do this process. And so for this piece of the toolkit, we created this piece on like, how to do that process, and then a big part of it is, okay, well, who gets to decide what the values are? And that gets into the models of governance. We talked about how there's, like the benevolent dictator model, and then there's the, you know, board governance model, and there's probably a couple of other models. So we did a little piece on just kind of articulating those to say them out loud, because that matters of who gets to be, who gets to be the decision maker. And then we had, we collected some examples of community values statements. And this is similar to in part three. We just, it's a clearing house. We just made a big collection and tried to try to show the best of the best. And so that's really worth digging in and scrolling through. It will save a lot of wordsmithing if you find examples that you like.

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Diane Silver 23:55

So that began and became part one, even though we did it after the fact, we felt like in the toolkit, it actually ought to come first. By the time we got through all of this, the code of conduct that we envisioned, the part about like, these are the absolutes where, like, if you, if you, you know, do this, you're done, you're banned. It felt like, like we had covered so much that, that that was kind of we couldn't figure out exactly, exactly what more needed to be done. And we started looking around for examples of a code of conduct, and we found a really great oops, I didn't mean to do that. We found a really great resource. And so we just referenced it and and called it good again. We asked them for permission, if we could just reference this in our in our resource. And we did. And so that's all I have to say on that.

The other the remaining parts then that we felt needed development, were actually going back to the physical space we had started this out as the. Is the safety committee, and we got so Doug into the emotional safety and the culture and etiquette. We were like, there's actually physical safety concerns as well. And so there's this part six, which is the physical venue, and it really is mostly a checklist issues of location and accessibility. I'm just going to scroll through it. Public transportation. Is there parking? Is there signage? ADA, compliance drinking water? Do people need to bring a bottle? Or is there a good water fountain? How slick is the floor? How good as the HVAC, storage, kitchen, hygiene, sanitation, before you dance, things like, Do you have insurance? How are we setting up? Is there a noise ordinance that you need to be aware of, just all of these things? And it's really just a checklist of things to think about to make sure that your that your venue and your dance environment are physically safe. Okay, I'm going super fast because I want to make sure that we have time for questions and discussions. So wow, this tool kit is getting really big. It's become a lot bigger than we thought it was going to be. All of this took a couple of years to do, and as we were getting through it, the world is continuing and things are evolving, and the me too movement is now a couple years ago, and the big hot issue at this point became the role terminology question. Lots and lots and lots of discussion out there on gender issues, gender gender length, gendered language, moving from gendered dance roles to non gender dance roles. And there was a lot out there of like communities being torn apart over this issue, and people having very, very strong emotional feelings on both sides. And so we felt this is part of making our dance communities a safe space. People are using that, that language of safe space when talking about this issue. And so we felt that that we probably ought to include it. And so we talked a lot about how to go about that. And again, CDSS is not about telling anybody what they should or shouldn't do. And so this guide is not, is not a guide of what to do. It is a guide of how to go about it, how to figure out what is going to be best for your community. And so we tried to identify all of the pros and cons. I want to go, I want to switch my my screen share here. We tried to identify all of like the pros and cons on both sides and summarize them like the arguments that were being made on on each side of this issue, and kind of summarize them all in one place so that you don't have to spend a bazillion hours reading pages and pages and pages and pages of social media posts that like go back and forth. We talked about gendered language and non gendered role language, but we didn't include positional because it wasn't kind of a thing yet at the time that we were doing this. So apologies that we didn't have, we don't have positional included here, but I will note that CDSS has been developing a lot of resources for positional calling and So taken together, you know, those can supplement and if that's what you're interested in, I think that you'll find good stuff. And so just kind of going through, oops, just kind of going through the the Table of Contents. Here, I just lost my, my bigger, bigger, bigger. There we go. I was just trying to show you the table of contents, and it skipped, why use gender terminology? Is it confusing? Some people say no. Some people say yes. And why is it difficult to learn? Is it what about tradition? And then a big piece on like how to decide what to do? Options. Does it have to be all or nothing? If, is there a way to compromise and have the have a little bit of both? And if so, what might that look like? And then like some discussion of, if we're going to use non-gendered terms, what should they be? There's a lot been a lot of a lot of suggestions out there, and then a bunch of resources for for making that change in the community, if that's what you decide to do. So we hope that that is a useful resource.

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Diane Silver 29:50

And then the last big one that we worked on is chemical sensitivities. This is an issue that was brought to our attention by a member of the task group as a as an issue that is really important to many people, and probably something that a lot of people are not aware of, if we're talking about accessibility and equity. This is, this is an aspect of it that is often overlooked. It's a hidden disability, in many people's opinion. And so we have, we did a couple of parts. The first part is a one pager that's things that you can do as an organizer. And this is what I'm showing on the screen sharing right now. You know, adopting a fragrance free policy, asking people to refrain from using scented products, providing unscented products at your events, blocking, you know, if you're at a venue and they have, you know, soap or or products that are scented, put masking tape, you know, over the dispenser, and put your own dispenser out with a non scented product, you know, things like that. So there's a whole checklist here. But then we also have two to two so that was part part A, then we had, in part B, kind of a deeper dive on this issue, and like, why it's important, because to to create any kind of policies always requires discussion. So we wanted to have, like, some talking points and little education if somebody wants to take this to your board and talk about it. We wanted to have a resource for that, a really, really deep dive on how to actually implement a policy, and then a list of actual products that you could look for if you're trying to actualize this or operationalize it?

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Diane Silver 31:43

Okay, I'm about, I'm almost done, so, phew, this is a lot of stuff. It's deep, it's deep, deep work. And to be effective, it really needs to be very inclusive in process, like, I'm just process, process, process, if any of these things, whether you're whether it's about creating your your culture, your courtesy and etiquette guidelines, trying to implement a chemical sensitivity policy, making decisions about role terminology. If it ever feels like it's being handed down in a dictatorial way, it is not gonna work. The community has to feel invested in the choices, and so having a community meeting or, you know, and and getting input and creating a space for people to feel heard becomes very important. And so we said, we're going to do one more part. So we did part eight on tips for how to organize and facilitate a good community meeting. So that's what that one is. Shoo that is the toolkit. And as Whitney said, the biggest pieces will you'll, there'll be a deeper dive in parts two and three of this series. But with that, I'm going to stop my screen sharing. Oh, it stopped. Very good. No, no, let me stop. Stop. Share. Stop. Share. That was a lot of talking. I really appreciate your patience in going through all of that. Whitney, what do you want to how do you want to do this now?

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Whitney Rowlett 33:30

Oh, my goodness, big, big question. Throw it right back in. So first off, thank you, Diane, for going through all of that with us. I can tell you, when I first came into CDSS, I had no idea that all of these resources were available, and we had just started that conversation at my dance group to figure out the best way to deal with some of those bits and pieces I would love before we go any farther into more if we want to do a structured discussion, if anyone has a question like right off the bat about how to use the toolkit, where they can find things. Go ahead and feel free to unmute yourself and ask or raise your hand. Maybe I can, I think I can see everybody's hand raises using the little hand raise option, or you can write it in the chat. Otherwise, I was going to, if you if you don't have any questions, I was going to sort of toss a good like a discussion question out to everyone, if you feel up to talking tonight, and tell us most of most, if not all, of you I know are organizers. What have what have you found has been kind of a sticky point for you in your own org is, and what have you found as organizers that has been a little bit difficult to work through? I'd be curious to hear about that, and maybe we can help direct you to some resources the the idea of. First overview is, if you can't make our other ones, you can at least have a general idea of how to use the toolkit. So I would love to hear your experiences.

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Whitney Rowlett 35:11

Do that. I'm sorry. You're welcome to unmute and call and just speak if you'd like, or raise your hand. Okay, great. Andrew stout asks, Are there specific considerations for annual multi day events versus regular local dance series? Diane, do you have thoughts on that?

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Diane Silver 35:39

I would say that all of this in the toolkit is, is applicable. It goes back to that governance model, right of like, who makes the decisions, instead of it being a recurring event where maybe we're either, there's a board of directors that that, you know, runs an organization that that puts on, that produces the event. It's either that, or it might be like the band or the caller owns that dance and they put it on, they are the decision maker, or, you know, some org, or just a benevolent dictator who said, I'm going to run a dance, I'm going to produce it. It's my dance. I make the rules. In the same vein for a dance weekend, it's that same question, who? Who is the decision maker? If it's a community that puts on the dance weekend, this is the annual dance weekend of the blah blah community, you know, so and so community, there's probably a board, there's there's probably a dance weekend committee, that are the organizers of that event, and so maybe they are the decision makers. It's harder to do that community input process if you have participants that are coming from you know, all over the place and aren't present in that community, to come to meetings during the year. If you wanted to be super inclusive, you could do that process on Zoom calls, you know, you could say, you know, hey, our you know, this event has been going on for many years. We're we're trying to be more intentional about the culture of our dance weekend and the sort of the courtesy and etiquette understandings of of the weekend. And to that end, we're having, you know, an input process. So if you're if you're a participant, if you come year after year and you want input, join us on Zoom and this day and time. So you can kind of put it out there using your registration list from previous years, and some people will take you up on it, and at least that way, you've invited people to give input, and you can hear what people have to say, and you might choose to say, ultimately, you know, we the board, or we the committee, are going to be the ultimate decision makers, but we're going to give a call for input so that we're considering what, you know, what our participants have to say, that might be a way to go about it. But then for all of these, you know that with that process, I think the the courtesy and etiquette stuff is applicable. I think the complaint procedures are applicable. I think the chemical sensitivity piece is applicable the Gen the dance, role, terminology, all of it, you know, our considerations for weekends or camps, as well as for, you know, recurring events.

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Whitney Rowlett 38:35

I have a follow up question for that Diane, unless anyone else has a question before I jump in, how many? And we may get into this in more detail next week. But how many opportunities do you think is best to put that out to the community? Because I feel like there might be an opportunity to get bogged down in asking too many questions. Do you know have, and have any of you had like a sweet spot for how many, how many opportunities to get feedback from the community you think might be best? Diane thoughts.



Diane Silver 39:11

Off the top of my head, I would say that one question is how many, and another question is what form so some people are able to or comfortable with coming in person, to like to like an in person, meeting and speaking up. And other people don't want that, but they would be happy to fill out a survey. Other people, you know, you get a survey with a link in your email, and you're like, Yeah, I'll do it later, and then it scrolls to the bottom of your inbox and you never get back to it. So it's harder to get the input that way, you know. So I think recognizing different, different preferences and comforts with how you give input, and making, you know, a range of of forms available, and then, you know, maybe for each. One, do you know? Like, I feel like three is the, you know, first, second, third, you know, for 123, you do an initial call, you do a reminder, you do a final call, and then that's that, like we gave you three chances to give input in three different ways. If you haven't taken advantage of any of them, we've done our due diligence. I mean, that's that's kind of where I come down.



Whitney Rowlett 40:25

Makes sense. That makes sense.



Matt Reyna 40:28

I'll just say something that, you know, it's easiest to get people's strongest opinion about something when they're in the experience. So if there's any way that you can bring your organizing into your weekend, just having some visibility there. So there is a place for people to give their opinion while they're having this experience that they have opinions about. That can be a good thing.



40:59

Matt, I like that.



Whitney Rowlett 41:01

Yeah, I was gonna say, Have you had any experience with that at events that you could share that you thought were done well?

M**Matt Reyna 41:09**

Well, I mean, I have first hand experience trying to get evaluations for our CDSS camps at Pinewoods, and it's very hard. You know, some people really want a paper and a pencil. Some people really want to do the online thing, and I'm never quite sure if they're actually going to do the online thing, so I think a multi modal approach is best, perfect.

W**Whitney Rowlett 41:35**

So Diane, do you if we there was one section? I know it's like asking which of your children is the most important, but for which of my children do I love the best? If there was from within the toolkit, if you have looking at the whole thing and you're a new organizer, or you're just sort of overwhelmed with everything, what do you think is this is such a hard question, because the answer is all of it. But what do you think is the most important piece to get what you're saying?

D**Diane Silver 42:06**

Yeah, I get what you're saying. I will answer it this way. I would say that part three, which is the courtesy and etiquette guidelines, is the part that is the most direct response to the inquiries that we got in the first place, that that, that people were asking for. I'm looking for resources to help me with this problem. We're getting complaints from from dancers. People come once, and they don't come back. So that's the piece, that's what initiated the project in the first place, and that's the first piece we worked on, and that's the direct response to those, to that need. The other pieces evolved as we were working on it, and we sort of identified additional needs, like, Hey, we've talked about all these values, or this is all values based. We ought to, you know, have some resources on values. This has become a new issue. We ought to do that. But that's the one piece that that was most asked for. Great.

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Whitney Rowlett 43:07

Thank you. Any other questions from from the audience, or I will just keep asking questions that I have. There we go. Melinda, I'm going to read yours out. Rod, is that okay? Creating a culture of safety topics. Something that seems to come up is that this is a multi generational community, and people at large don't seem to have a lot of common and regular experiences outside of the dance with people of all generations. Very true. There's also a missing demographic sometimes when parents drop out of the dance to intensively parent, creating the dynamic where there's a huge generational gap without middle age parental moderators and translators and kids. I've been bringing my kids to the dance despite it being late, because it's fun, because I feel that the dance is, or is or can be, a heartwarming, family friendly place. Dancing with children naturally breaks up gender dance roles into flexible dance roles. I find it to be an interesting way to disrupt cultural stuckness. I would love, I would like, information about how other communities have built family engagement and filled the gap. That is a fantastic question. I would love to open this up to our audience, if anyone has any thoughts on that, because I'm positive that some of you have worked with this before. Please feel free to unmute yourselves, or I'm just going to start calling on people.

S

Speaker 1 44:37

Ruth, yeah, I can say that the Chicago area has Meg Dedolph with an all family, all ages, barn dance that's held once a month, I believe, out in her area. So that's that's one way to do it. And then we incorporate kids as they show up.

W

Whitney Rowlett 44:58

So I love. That I would love anyone else's who's worked with family engagement issues before.

D

Diane Silver 45:06

I'll share one. I'll share this. I think a lot of communities, not a lot some you know family dances or community dances are a whole sort of genre unto themselves, and certainly CDSS has lots of great resources for dances and music and calling for family dances. But I feel like this question is, is more about how to make sort of the the Adult Dance intergenerational and family friendly? And I want to do a shout out to Belfast Maine the flying shoes. They have an amazing model. Thank you. Chrissy Fowler and her board, where they do a like at six o'clock. I think the whole of the evening starts at six o'clock. They have an open band that's led by ringers or something, and it's a community dance with, with, you know that community dance repertoire. And then that goes until 730 it's like six to 736 3730, whatever it is. Then there's a half hour for change over of the band, which is encouraged to be social hour. They don't do a beginner lesson, and then they just design then the like the Adult Dance, as it were, starts at eight o'clock, and they asked the caller to just make sure that it starts simple and ramps up. And the idea, I think, is, is that you know those families who you know, where this kids are able to dance, you know, with adults like, stay for the adult dance, come for the family dance, and stay for the Adult Dance, especially the first half. And so it becomes kind of a tiered progression of complexity, and it makes it accessible for that range of ages, and it makes it long enough for it to be worth it, for parents to bring their kids and their families, and the first half doesn't go so late, like you could bring younger kids and still stay for at least the first half of the of the eight o'clock dance. And it's not too late, it's just it's a great model. Look up flying shoes and read all about

S

Speaker 2 47:21

it. How is the calling done? Is there a designated open band call? Or do you know it's that the responsibility of the hired caller? Or what have you

D

Diane Silver 47:36

There is a designated caller for that, that open band from within the community, and they've done a lot of behind the scenes thinking and programming, discussion of what the program should be. So no, the caller for the eight to 11 is not the caller for the first part. I mean, unless, unless they specialize in, you know, calling for community dances, and the organizers particularly invite them to also do it, but it's not presumed.

W

Whitney Rowlett 48:09

Thank you, of course, thank you for asking rose asks a great question, and rose, I'm just going to read your note, in case people don't have a thing open Philadelphia is facing this exact question right now, we want to create a guideline for parents about what benchmarks to keep in mind about when their children may be ready to join our dances which are not necessarily child friendly. Do we have any resources for that? That is a good question, and I toss that to anybody in the board who's worked on that, and because I would like to go look Matt, if you happen to know as well. But if we don't, that's something that we should definitely, we should definitely think about. Does anyone have thoughts on that?

W

Whitney Rowlett 48:57

I'm going to add that to my list of things that we should, we should build, though. Ross, do you mind unmuting and telling us a little bit more about your questions so that I can start getting you good answers?

S

Speaker 3 49:09

So we're dealing with, we're starting to have younger people coming in, and we've sort of got some separate things going on. So we have a are like, sort of front of house people. We call them managers. We've got one who's trying to join us. That's 12, you know. And so we're wondering what is appropriate for this, you know, person to do or not do? What are they ready to be responsible or not? We also had, several weeks ago, a parent brought a six year old child that was just kind of clearly not really ready, wasn't quite able to follow dances or keep up. There was a safety issue at one point in the night. So we are realizing that, you know, there's a big eight. Difference between six and 12, but every six year old is not the same. Every 12 year old is not the same. So we can't just say, oh, when you're 12, you're ready for this, when you're eight, you're ready for this, because they're not all the same. So we're sort of looking for what are benchmarks to consider of are you ready to join this dance or not?

W

Whitney Rowlett 50:22

That's an excellent question. If anyone would like to hop in and say something I would I would be delighted to hear your thoughts on this.

S**Speaker 4 50:32**

I just have a quick comment at our dance weekend, we have an entire family that comes and they all do a lot of dancing in their home community, and it's a wide range of ages, but the older siblings dance with their younger siblings, and actually, they're all quite successful. So I think sometimes it's more instead of a benchmark, it's like, how much exposure to dance? How much, how much are you dancing as a family? How, how many? You know, if you're the child that sits under the table while your parents are calling the dance you're you're getting a lot of exposure. So I think it, it could be phrased really positively about here are some opportunities for your child to get some experience dancing. And so I really appreciate the model that Diane shared with you know, here's a place where we're openly inviting your your children, and as they gain experience, then they might be able to join in the adult dance as well.

W**Whitney Rowlett 51:48**

Matt, I see you're unmuted. Did you have thoughts?

M**Matt Reyna 51:50**

Oh, just, you know, unless you have a large volume of, sort of parents with children, sort of at this stage, I think that, you know, just sort of direct conversations with parents about about, you know, how their kids are interacting with the dance space can go a long way. Just sort of, like, wanting to touch base and like, actually, like talk through how it's how it's working, how it's working for everyone else, and treat it as a on a case by case basis, because, as you say, We're all so different, and children are all different at different ages, too.

S**Speaker 3 52:35**

I think also Philadelphia, we're starting to, we sort of want to prepare in advance. We don't want to end up all of a sudden there's kids, and we're not necessarily a safe space, because we don't have, you know, systems in place, so to speak. So we kind of want to get a jump on it in advance, especially because we do have people who are starting to have kids, and we'd like to, you know when to you know how to advise before those kids hit those stages, right?

S**Speaker 5 53:10**

Catherine, Brian has your hand up ahead. Oh, look at that. Thanks.

S

Speaker 6 53:17

Diane, yeah, I just had a quick response about some successful dancing that I saw with a variety of really little kids and a ton of adults at the leaf festival here in Asheville last weekend. And what I noticed was that the most successful dances seem to be when those little kids were dancing with somebody who was taking really good care of them, even if it wasn't their direct parent. There was like, you know, 567, year olds, sometimes they're so dizzy they don't have any idea what's going on. But if you have an adult who is making it their responsibility to make that sure that human is safe, the whole time they kept up just fine, and it didn't impact the rest of the dance. So I agree that it's kind of a case by case basis where you could talk to the parents and make sure that every time that child is going to dance, they're dancing with a safe adult, rather than like two six year olds together, which is, can be a disaster.

D

Diane Silver 54:23

Thank you. Yeah, good point. Um, I really appreciate you speaking, you sharing that, that that's, that's a really excellent technique. Organizationally, I wanted to suggest to rose the shared weight list, sir, Google Groups, whatever they are now, you know, are a really great forum for putting out a question to the to the larger community, you know, across the country, so that you know, maybe, as you're working on this, you know, among your your board or. Organizers in Philadelphia, you could, you know, maybe say we're gonna, we'll put this question out and allow a month for people to respond on the list, and then we're going to consider it closed, and we're going to take all the recommendations that we got and sift through them, and then that can be input for what we might do. I mean, you might get some good ideas from, you know, from other communities, and

W

Whitney Rowlett 55:22

yeah, I have a question as well, asking for there is a prominent leader in a community who is repeatedly disagreed with non gender calling and announces this option frequently via microphone. This occurs at Camp sometimes, so participants are subject to this and kind of stuck with this behavior when you're in away from home in a new place, this can feel like a big undertaking to implement. Is there any guidance around bringing up the toolkit without putting it, pulling putting anyone out? As much as I disagree with this behavior and thinks it's exclusionary. So is there any part of the toolkit that could help bring that question to people. When you have someone who's being argumentative from the mic about gendered calling,

D

Diane Silver 56:11

um, I would well, there's, there's, No, there's not a piece of the toolkit that is specifically about that. But I would say that the piece on gender, on role terminology, gendered versus non gendered, you know, has a lot of good stuff in it for how to make this decision. Like what it feels like is that this, this, that a decision got made in that community of we're going to use non gendered terminology, and this person doesn't agree with it. And so I guess my question is, how was that decision made in the first place? And maybe it was, you know, a really great open process with a lot of input. And in the end, the decision was this, and they just aren't happy. So so that's so, that's question one. If it was made without a lot of input, you know, it's possible that this person feels unheard, and they are using the mic and using their, you know, their opportunity as a caller to put this out, because they tried to go to the organizers and they didn't get their way. That feels a little passive aggressive in in one sense, but I'm just, you know, just trying to understand where it might be coming from. So, so one thing might just be a deep conversation, and then either way, it's, it's, it's an intentional conversation, whether it's letting them be heard or it's approaching them in more of a problem solving kind of way. So I would say the other piece would be the complaint procedures document part four, because it walks through with excruciating detail. Or if you look at some of the examples that document itself doesn't doesn't say much, it refers you to about five examples of really good complaint procedures. So go look at some of those examples. I'm with the in Asheville, and the old farmers ball has one that full disclosure I helped work on, and it goes through an excruciating detail, kind of a flow chart of problem solving with somebody who is behaving contrary to the guidelines of the community. So, you know, starting with an initial conversation, this has been brought to our attention. It is a problem. We want to talk with you about it in a, you know, designated time, like you don't pull someone off the dance floor and say, Hey, can we talk? Because that's not a good time to have that conversation, you know, but a problem solving process with them. Of We respect your opinion and we want you to be heard at the same time, it is not okay to sabotage our cultural choice by saying this on the mic, and we need this to stop so, but giving them the opportunity to talk about why they do it, and maybe there's a better solution to help them achieve their goal than making an announcement from the mic that undermines the choice that that has been, that has been decided, you know, so, I mean, that's the best I can give you in the in the short time that we have, that's

W

Whitney Rowlett 59:27

it's a tricky question, and I'm going to make a note of it. And for the person who asked that question, if you are along, when we get into the reporting procedures, I think that's a great time for us to do a little bit more of a dig into that, because I do know that it can be really intimidating if you have someone who's known, who's at the mic, like pushing back against someone like that can sometimes be a lot to deal with, and it's a difficult thing, and you feel like you don't have a voice to do so, and you're always welcome to reach out. To us. We can, we can help as best we can. And this gives us an opportunity to go see if we can help dig up some resources in addition for that particular problem, which is something that's facing a lot of organization, dance organizations right now. And it's, it's a requires a lot of discussion. And I'm Diane. Thank you for the thoughts on the framework on how to frame that discussion so and it's difficult, we are about out of time. Oh, look at that. Thank you, Matt. I just also wanted to point out, Kathy, thank you so much for linking that article that Max Newman wrote about the safety policy coming out of the vision and mission statement. That is a great read. And thank you for pulling that up that was on my list of things to share, and you got to it first. Thank you. Appreciate that. I am delighted to see so many faces here tonight. I am delighted for the questions. I hope as we spend more time together, you feel more empowered to send questions, either anonymously, privately in the chat or unmuting yourself. I know that Matt and I both feel very great, very strongly that we want to build a network of affiliates so that you all feel as though you can reach out to each other and and work together to kind of further the goals of Just Dance everywhere. So this is a great first step to have everybody see each other and start to feel comfortable asking questions and sharing resources. So Diane, thank you so very much for all of your time this evening, and thank you to all of the board members and the community members that put this tool kit together in the first place. It's been having an amazing amount of help to me and to everyone else who's used it. So I hope to see you all next week. Keeping up, we'll resend the link for you, and if you have any questions you'd like to be addressed in the next two meetings, please feel free to email me. This is my I just misspelled my own last name. I was going to give you my my email, and one day I will learn to spell. So please feel free to reach out to me anytime, and we'd be happy to add that question to our list going forward. Thank you so very much. Matt, thank you for being here this evening. Diane, Thank you Sandy as well for help all of your helpful organizing, it was a delight to see you, and I hope to see you all next week. So thank you very much everyone. Thanks Good night. Thank you.