



**Part  
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## **Introduction**

The CDSS Community Culture and Safety Task Group (CCSTG) aims to support local communities in their efforts to provide a safe environment for music, song, and dance events. This toolkit is an effort to provide advice and resources that will help organizers develop the policies, procedures, and supporting documents needed to understand and facilitate safety in their communities.

CDSS is not prescriptive in regard to what your community “should be doing.” We recognize and value the range of living traditions practiced by our communities.

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### **Structure of this Toolkit**

Building a safe and welcoming event space includes providing for everyone’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being, especially sexual safety. This can include addressing a range of problems, from feelings of discomfort to perceived discrimination to actual bodily harm. Organizers can develop procedures to handle problems along this spectrum.

Communities should consider having the following set of documents to facilitate safety in its many nuances. We hope these tools will help you develop your own set of safety documents. This toolkit is intended for you to pull out and adapt the language and policies that work for your community.

#### ***Part 1: Statement of Community Values***

This is where you describe the environment you strive to create.

*Your values are the justification for policies and actions that uphold them. This is in addition to mission and vision statements, as part of your organizing documents.*

- **Part 1A:** [Creating a statement of community values](#)
- **Part 1B:** [Possible governance models and processes](#)
- **Part 1C:** [Examples of community values statements](#)

## **Part 2: Code of Conduct**

A code of conduct codifies behavioral expectations, specifies what behavior will not be tolerated, and outlines what the consequences will be for infractions.

*This is a policy document (not by-laws), based on community values.*

- **Part 2:** [Brief overview, with links to a comprehensive guide from an outside consulting firm, and links to examples from a few dance communities](#)
- Check the [CDSS Resource Portal](#) for more resources.

## **Part 3: Courtesy and Etiquette Guidelines (a.k.a. Shaping Culture)**

This section offers advice for how to create tips and guidance (preferably in “do” rather than “don’t” language) that help prevent offenses from occurring.

- **Part 3:** [Courtesy and Etiquette Guidelines \(a.k.a. Shaping Culture\)](#)
- Check the [CDSS Resource Portal](#) for more ideas.

## **Part 4: Complaint Procedures**

These outline the ways and means of handling complaints and infractions.

*Whom to complain to; who follows up; how complaints are handled; timeliness of response; confidentiality; due process; documentation; legal concerns; levels of severity; pathways for improvement and pathways for ultimate removal.*

- The best guide we have found on this topic is [How to Respond to Code of Conduct Reports](#), by Valerie Aurora and Mary Gardiner, available for free from Frame Shift Consulting. Just download the PDF! This guide covers what to include and what to leave out, as well as guidance for how to respond to infractions.
- In addition, the following examples provide sample language you can use, in the dance context. Local organizers can adopt these procedures for their own policies, or adapt them as needed. An additional writing template would be duplicative, so we simply encourage you to review these examples and cite them as a source as you craft your own complaint procedures:
  - [BIDA “How We Can Help”](#)
  - [Old Farmer’s Ball Complaint Procedures](#)
  - [Conradance Umbrella \(Montpelier, VT\) Policy for Dealing with Complaints of Inappropriate Behavior](#)

- [Taking a Safety Report, by Jeff Kaufman](#)
- [Philadelphia Area Traditional Music and Dance Policy and Procedures for Dealing With Complaints of Inappropriate Behavior](#)

## **Part 5: Safety in the Physical Space: the Venue**

This serves as a checklist of things to consider and manage, such as trip hazards, first aid, emergency medical procedures, ADA accessibility, decibel levels, etc.

- [Part 5: Safety in the Physical Space: The Venue](#)

## **Part 6: Resources for Considering the Use of Non-Gendered Terminology**

This section discusses the arguments for and against non-gendered dance terminology, and offers examples of alternative terms.

- [Part 6: Resources for Considering the Use of Non-Gendered Terminology](#)

## **Part 7: Managing chemical sensitivities**

This guide contains four parts:

- [Part 7A: Making dance and music spaces accessible to participants with chemical sensitivities—a brief summary](#)
- [Part 7B: Scents and Access in Dance Spaces: An Introduction](#)—an effort to educate local dance organizers about what chemical sensitivities are and how they are a barrier to participating in music, dance, and song events for otherwise eager participants.
- [Part 7C: Resources for Implementing a Fragrance-Free Policy](#) contains suggestions for educating the community about this issue and tips for minimizing chemical stimulants that can be a health hazard for those with sensitivities.
- [Part 7D: Fragrance-Free Products](#) gives tips for how to interpret product labels to identify scented vs. unscented products, as well as a list of fragrance-free products that were recommended by dancers who have sensitivities, and where to find them.

## Part 8: How to organize and/or facilitate a community meeting that will leave everyone smiling

- [Part 8: How to organize and/or facilitate a community meeting that will leave everyone smiling](#) provides tips for facilitating a community meeting to gather input, discuss ideas, and/or make final decisions related to controversial topics. It also includes guidance for how to find a qualified outside facilitator, if that is your preference, so that group leaders can be equal participants in the conversation.

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## Working Definitions

As we worked, we realized that we needed some working definitions for the concepts we were grappling with.

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<b>Safety</b>	Freedom from physical, mental, emotional, or sexual harm or fear of such harm in one's immediate environment
<b>Respect</b>	Due regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, needs, boundaries, or traditions of others.
<b>Inclusion</b>	Welcoming all individuals regardless of any personal characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, body shape, financial means, education, or tpolitical views.
<b>Courtesy</b>	Behavior and manners that demonstrate consideration and respect for others, such as saying “please,” “excuse me,” asking for consent, etc.  Courtesy includes sensitivity to and accommodation of individual and cultural differences. It is a (hoped for) constant in general society, as in the Platinum Rule.
<b>Etiquette</b>	The set of rules and behavioral expectations specific to a particular group. These are expectations that go beyond simple courtesy, e.g., joining a line of dancers at the bottom of the set, or norms for finding a partner.

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- **Safety** is the ultimate goal.
- **Respect** and **Inclusion** are the underlying “what” that help people feel emotionally safe.
- **Courtesy** and **Etiquette** are the “how”—how to convey respect and inclusion.

# Acknowledgements

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