Community Culture & Safety TOOLKIT

Part 2 — Code of Conduct

Acknowledgements

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

We have separated **suggested** behavior guidelines (norms and culture) under the topic of courtesy and etiquette (Part 3).

We distinguish between them in terms of absolutism. Courtesy and etiquette covers the broad gray area(s) of behaviors—issues for which different individuals have different levels of tolerance and probably interpret particular behaviors differently. These are the behaviors for which education, training, awareness, and support are the recommended first steps, and banning someone from an event would only be a final resort after other interventions have been exhausted.

In contrast, a code of conduct, as presented in this toolkit, is the set of absolute requirements for which there should be no differences in personal understandings or tolerances, and which are grounds for immediate strong response, including banning someone from future participation.

Both sets of policies, code of conduct and courtesy and etiquette guidelines, are policy documents (not bylaws), based on community values.

A courtesy and etiquette guide is actually the more difficult set of policies or guidelines to craft, and covers most of the behavioral issues that dance organizers face.

Many dance communities combine code of conduct (non-negotiable behavior requirements) with courtesy and etiquette guidelines. It is your choice whether to address these in one set of policies or two.

Rather than create a tailored writing guide for crafting a code of conduct for dance or music groups, we recommend *How to Respond to Code of Conduct Reports* by Valerie Aurora and Mary Gardiner, offered by Frame Shift Consulting. This free ebook includes "what to include in a code of conduct (and what to leave out)" and is aimed at voluntary communities (as distinct from workplaces or government contexts). We felt no need to reinvent the wheel. It also includes great detail on responding to reports. We repeat our recommendation of this book in Part 4: Complaint Procedures.

Since most dance communities combine courtesy and etiquette guidelines with code of conduct policies, the only sample language we found for code of conduct policies that seem absolute in nature are from the Old Farmer's Ball (Asheville, NC) behavior guidelines from the early 2000s. Their language was adapted in turn from, and credit cited to, the Philadelphia Thursday Night contra dance at that time. Both groups have since updated their policies to be more comprehensive, and are linked under Parts 3 and 4 of this toolkit.

> Old OFB language: "while occasional brushes or accidental incidents may occur innocently, a pattern of repeated 'accidents' is unacceptable and will not be tolerated."