

## General BDSM Etiquette for ANY Fetish Play Club (a reminder)

**Will there be sex or nudity?** Some BDSM parties have strict “no sex” rules. Find out what they mean by “sex” while you’re at it. Is there a dress code? Are there rules about nudity? Some parties want to make sure you look fairly tame as your coming into the venue, but once you’re inside anything goes in terms of attire. Some parties are cool with jeans and t-shirts; some are no go on casual clothes.

**What should I bring?** Bring admission fee and photo ID (for proof of age). If arriving in street clothes, you might bring something more festive to change into. You may bring your toy bag (BDSM gear and/or sex toys) if you like, but it's optional. Don't bring alcohol, firearms, cameras, recording devices, or illegal substances. Cell phones must be off and completely put away.

**The decision of Management is final.** The Dungeon Monitors, are responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules and maintaining an enjoyable environment for all. Complaints to staff and monitors are investigated thoroughly. Dungeon Monitors will talk to the involved parties. Involved parties may be asked to leave. If you dispute the requests of a Monitor, discontinue the action in question and discuss it calmly. If you wish, you may appeal the matter to the Dungeon Master. DM decisions are final, and will be supported by Event Management.

**No means No!** Asking people to play or being asked to join in is a compliment. Continuing to ask them after you get a "No, I'm not interested." is harassment. Show good grace. Predatory behavior will not be tolerated.

**Don't touch any one without asking.** Even a hug if you don't know someone is a bad move without permission, much less anything more intimate. If you see someone you know and you have an existing relationship that includes hugging, then go ahead, otherwise keep your hands to yourself unless you get *express* permission. Touching someone in the BDSM community is a controversial subject. The best general rule of thumb is: Don't do it, then it cannot be misunderstood.

**Never touch someone's toys or equipment without permission.** If you're not sure if something is a loaner, ask. Toys are very important and quite personal items. Touching someone's toys “borrowing” toys which are “lying around” is exceptionally bad etiquette. Having your toys stolen is more than monetary. It's a case of violation of your spirit. Anyone caught stealing toys will be banned from attending any future event.

**DO NOT interrupt,** Always be quiet and respectful in scene areas. Do not speak to or touch any participants in the middle of a scene. Interrupting a scene will probably destroy any energy they have been striving to achieve. If a submissive is in bondage in the middle of the floor by him/herself, their Dominant is without a doubt nearby watching over their safety (or should be). If you are in doubt that someone is in a scene, stand back and watch and you will be able to tell.

**Be respectful of others.** Don't leer and don't comment on someone's body. Don't talk to women's chests. Don't follow someone around or stare at them all evening, making them feel uncomfortable. Nakedness and play can make people feel vulnerable. Do not masturbate while watching a scene.

**Collars have different meanings to various individuals.** Many un-owned submissives wear collars to indicate that they are submissive. Some owned submissives don't wear collars at all.

The safest assumption is that if it's got a collar, it's got a Master/Mistress.

**Most play spaces have a limited number of play areas and equipment.** Do not set or leave your toys on the play equipment. You cannot “reserve” equipment for later use. Be aware that other people may want to play and try not to monopolize the equipment.

**Respecting Space.** Observe scenes discreetly from a safe distance. The dungeon space is intended primarily for players, not spectators & inadvertently hitting bystanders who are standing too close during a scene can be distracting for a Top. Be aware of how close you are to people who are involved in a scene. Some dungeons have markings of some kind (roped off areas or tape on the floor) to make it clear how close is close enough. For your safety and others, don't be in reach of a back swing when impact play is happening. BDSM can be intimate and very intense. Besides being dangerous, if you're too close, you can be invasive and distracting, ruining the feel and experience for the people playing. Don't talk if you're close to a scene in progress. If you must talk, keep your voice as low as possible. If you have to talk at length for some reason, move away.

**Don't intervene.** You may see things going on that you feel are dangerous, disturbing, etc. "No" is not a safeword – neither is begging. A lot of people like to protest while they are playing. *Having the submissive crying, screaming or struggling is not grounds for breaking in on a scene. For some people, this is an important part of their scene.* If you intend to do play that looks non-consensual, PLEASE tell the DMs in advance. It's not fun to have the DM break in on your scene in order to ascertain your submissive's safety after concerns being expressed by onlookers. It tends to ruin your head space.

- Use common sense.....think before you act or speak...think before you offend.
- Newbies don't be shy – speak to the DMs if you are unsure at any time, If you see what you feel might be non-consensual play, dangerous play, etc. do not try to stop it yourself. Bring the matter to the attention of a Dungeon Monitor, and if they tell you it's okay, take their word for it.

**Be Tidy.** If you make a mess clean it up. Please spray down and wipe off all play equipment after use to clean up any stray sweat, saliva or other body fluids after you're done using it. If you're not sure, you might want to bring your own; sanitizing wipes and/or a hand towel. Please assist our clean-up crews, who are volunteers, by placing all waste in the containers provided. Report spills or breakage. Accidents happen, but for the safety of all, please report all spills or breakage to a staff member or DM.

**Be careful with intoxicants of any kind.** Some parties have strict “no alcohol or drugs” rules. Some are a little more relaxed as long as you don't appear to be inebriated or out of control in any way. Make sure you know the policy of the event you're attending. Keep in mind if you decide to imbibe anything, that it can affect you more strongly and much faster when you're at a party. The energy of a party can be intense and infectious, causing a feeling of being naturally high. Anything additional may hit you harder and faster than you're used to. Some people won't play with someone who's had anything at all that's mind altering. It amounts to a “hard limit” and isn't negotiable. If you want to play and you're not sure who you're going to be playing with, then it's something to consider.

**A Few Added Notes Regarding Intoxicants** *Any sort of mood altering substances can have an effect on the issue of consent.* It's important to keep that in mind. A person may agree to things they normally wouldn't and regret it later, leading to feelings of discomfort, at the very least. Also, pain tolerance can change dramatically with any kind of buzz. It's risky territory to Top someone who's high, especially if you don't know them well.

**Hard and soft limits** are points of negotiation to discuss before play begins. Soft limits are things you are unsure of but may be willing to try under the right circumstances. Hard limits are a no go zone that may not be violated and should be treated the same as a very emphatic NO.

**Confidentiality** is very important for *any* BDSM function. Many people, for a variety of reasons, cannot be open about their involvement. *What happens at parties stays at parties.* If you're talking to someone who was at the party and comparing notes on a cool scene you both witnessed and no one can overhear you, go ahead. You can also refer in very general terms to something you saw if you're talking to a friend, being careful to keep any identifying information out of your description.

If, on the other hand, you run into someone you saw at a party at the grocery store a couple days later, don't mention the party. You might simply nod knowingly over the produce and smile, if they happen to catch your eye, but don't say anything. Even if no one else is around, be careful. Some people don't like to have their "kinky self" even referenced when they're in the non-kinky world.

If you do end up greeting someone that you've met at a party and later someone asks, "So where do you know them from?" It's not ok to tell them. This is a case where having a nice little fib prepared is actually the ethical thing to do. Just say you met them when they were hanging with a friend you ran into at a coffee shop or something like that.

Conversely, if you see your co-worker at a kink party, don't go up and chat office or tell people where they work. Don't bring up work assignments over the spanking bench. Some people keep their "real world" identities separate from their kink personas and hearing their profession or family issues mentioned might spoil their mood, or worse. Some people don't want people in the community to know what they do in their daily lives.

These things may change as you get to know particular people and discover what their personal boundaries are around confidentiality, but if you don't know, just don't go there. It's getting better, but we still live in a time when there's a lot of discrimination and shame around BDSM and it's crucial to respect the needs of others when it comes to confidentiality. When in doubt, less said is better. Confidentiality can be tricky, but it's very, *very* important.