

Intimacy direction in theatre (and film) is a growing area of significance. It is helpful for students participating in theatre to understand the importance of intimacy direction and to consider how it is applied.

This document provides you with an overview and with some very useful guidelines should you find yourself working in a scene that involves intimacy. It is not however a definitive guide and if you feel some concerns (as an actor, producer, director or ANYONE working on a project) you should seek some professional guidance. The UHT office is a good place to start. All actors deserve to feel safe and supported in the course of creating work. The following are guidelines to safely approach scenes containing sexual intimacy or aggression.

1. **Identify whether a production may include scenes of intimacy, sexual content or violence as part of the initial risk assessment of work.**
 - a. Ensure appropriate wardrobe for modesty in rehearsals
 - b. Specify crew requirement for closed rehearsals
 - c. Consider/budget for an *Intimacy Consultant*
An Intimacy Director is someone who choreographs moments of staged intimacy in order to create safe, repeatable, and effective storytelling. They are concerned with performer's emotional safety and are trained in Intimacy Direction/Consultation.
2. **No auditions are to include sex scenes or nudity. If nudity or semi-nudity is required in a recall – the actor must be informed in advance and provided with the script.**
 - a. The actor must sign a written agreement that any recording of a nude or semi-nude audition will be confidential. All recorded material will be destroyed once the role is cast.
 - b. The only people present in the audition room are the Casting Director and/or Director/Producer and Reader
 - c. The actor may bring a support person to be with them throughout the shoot
3. **At the point of contract, scenes involving nudity, intimacy or simulated sex are to be discussed with the actor and representative/agent, so that agreement is made in full disclosure.**
 - a. The Standard Equity Contract allows actors to agree or disagree to performing nude and to perform simulated sex and to choose the type of nudity the actor is willing to do (e.g. Buttocks only, or full frontal)
 - b. Actors should not sign a contract for full frontal nudity and simulated sex if they are only prepared to go semi-nude
4. **Directors plainly describe and discuss with the relevant actors all scenes involving intimacy, simulated sex and nudity at the appropriate times in the creative process:**
 - a. Before signing the contract
 - b. Throughout the rehearsal process
 - c. And into the performance
5. **Consent must be given each and every time by the actor when working with intimacy, sex scenes and nudity.**
6. **Establish boundaries around areas of concern, including an agreed strategy to halt the action where necessary, in rehearsals and performances, such as 'time out'.**
7. **When creating scenes of intimacy that these guidelines are to be used as standard practice.**
 - a. Always have a third-party present
 - b. Identify the blocking of the scene
 - c. Agree to areas of physical touch
 - d. Sculpt physical action using plain words
 - e. Separately identify the emotional content of the scene
 - f. Integrate physical actions and emotional content, creating a seamless intimate scene
8. **When the rehearsal includes simulated sex-scene or nudity, ensure the set is closed.**

9. When the performance includes a sex-scene, an intimacy call will be held before each performance. Actors must continue to rehearse, so they don't become careless and ensure everyone feels secure and respected. This is an opportunity to:

- a. Check in with actors, discuss previous performance, identify any problems
- b. Agreement and consent are given for areas of physical touch before each performance and possible adaptations accommodated
- c. Physical actions described using plain words are rehearsed at least twice before show

10. Any actor who has consented to nudity needs to ensure they have a summary of agreed scenes in writing from producer/director and ensure that:

- a. There is pre-agreed times when nudity will be used
- b. It is imperative to employ a closed set as standard when working with nudity
- c. Nudity is only in performance and dress rehearsal, all other times, the actor should be covered
- d. No nudity with genitals touching. Always use patches or modesty barrier.

11. When kissing no use of tongues as standard practice. However, should the director feel it would serve the scene better to use tongues, then there must be agreement and consent from both actors.

- a. Start off with actors giving and receiving a peck when agreeing physical touch, and sculpting the physical actions using plain words
- b. Explore the quality of the kiss when identifying the emotional content of the scene, integrating physical actions and content

12. Actors should not override the guidelines independently. Any new proposal is to be discussed with other actors and the director.

A HELPFUL PROCESS FOR THE REHEARSAL ROOM

BLUE PRINTS

1. The Story

The physicality should exist within the world of the play and further the action of the scene. What storytelling is being told through the interaction of these bodies. The story should incite both actors to action.

2. The Characters

What specifically is each character after? Is it the same thing? Are they at odds?

3. The Audience

What do you want the audience to get out of this moment? What is the tone of this moment — how is it designed to affect your audience? What do you want them to feel or understand?

NO FLY ZONES/ PERMISSION AND TOUCH

Asking what is not allowed. Specifically discussing in plain language before you begin a sequence where is okay to touch and where is not. Where are your boundaries? How far are you willing to go for the scene?

DEVELOPING TRUST

It only takes one mistake, one hit that lands too hard or a moment of having lost control to lose any trust that has been established. Good partnering requires constant and mindful vigilance.

SLOW MOTION

Slowing the tempo provides more than simple body control, it gives the mind time to assimilate stimuli, evaluate courses of action, remind us of proper technique, warn of impending issues and circumvent developing problems. Slow motion is necessary to begin — “tai chi” speed — 10-25% of normal speed.

REPETITION

Real speed and undertaking actions safely is gained by simple, smooth, and well-balanced movements. The only way to acquiring these is repetition — calm repetition.