

The New England Theatre

LINE DRAWN

COMMUNITY STANDARDS

The Initiative

The Line Drawn Initiative works to prevent harassment and abuse in the New England performing arts community. By developing programs and resources specifically for the needs of the New England performing arts community, Line Drawn aims to create safer and more equitable work environments. We are committed to this initiative because preventing harassment and abuse is not optional, it is a requirement for creating theatre.

The Standards

These Community Standards are a unified set of practices developed over three years by the New England performing arts community in collaboration with IMPACT Boston. These nine standards were developed through a process that included summits, anonymous surveys, and community meetings. They are designed to be rigorous and impactful, while remaining achievable by performing arts organizations of all sizes and budgets. By adopting at least eight of the nine standards, a company can receive a Line Drawn Designation.

These standards represent minimum expectations of Line Drawn organizations and should not be used to replace organizational policies. Participating Producers will use the standards to create and implement policies and practices that fit their individual structures and resources.

Acknowledgements

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These standards were written and designed by John Meredith in collaboration with StageSource, IMPACT Boston, and the New England theatre community.

Definitions

PRODUCTION — The work being developed, either public or private. This may include, but is not limited to plays, staged readings, or workshops.

PRODUCER — The leadership of the organization developing or presenting the Production, or independent producers.

COMPANY MEMBER — Anyone working for the Production, paid or otherwise. This includes, but is not limited to staff, performers, directors, designers, stage managers, run crew, overhire, ushers, board members, interns, and volunteers.

INTIMACY / INTIMATE MOMENTS — A broad category of stage action that may include, but is not limited to physical contact, kissing, full or partial nudity, simulated sexual acts, simulated sexual violence, specialized movement such as strip teases, familial or platonic intimacy such as embraces between friends or family members, sexual tension or chemistry where no touching occurs, and interactions with a performer who cannot easily react without breaking the scene—such as a sleeping or deceased character.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS OF INTIMACY — For the purposes of this document, Significant Moments of Intimacy specifically refers to any instance of nudity, simulated sexual acts, or simulated sexual violence. As a rule of thumb, if you are questioning if something qualifies as a “moment of intimacy,” treat it like it is.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are foundational to the work of preventing harassment and abuse. Race, gender, sexuality, disability, age, and job security impact how likely a person is to experience harassment and how safe they are if they report. Producers are expected to do everything in their power to foster equitable and inclusive spaces.

1 — Clearly Communicated Policies

To ensure all organizations have sufficient structures preventing and addressing harassment that are available for everyone to access, producers must have policies in place that address all of the following:

- **HARASSMENT** — Including a reporting structure and multiple avenues of reporting.
 - These avenues must include contacts outside of Company Members, such as external harassment prevention organizations and governmental reporting structures.
 - If Producers work with union members, these avenues must include the reporting avenues provided by those unions
 - If any individuals listed on the reporting structure are Mandated Reporters under Title IX, that must be listed and must include definitions of or resources on what mandated reporting means
- **WHISTLEBLOWER & NON-RETALIATION PROTECTIONS** — Reporting abuse and harassment is part of everyone’s job and no person will be fired from a Production or denied future employment for reporting.
- **DRUGS & ALCOHOL**
- **NUDITY & TOUCH** — Including onstage, backstage, and during rehearsal
- **SAFETY FOR MINORS** — Including all interactions with minors, not just between employed minors and their supervisors
- **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION** — Including hiring practices, microaggressions, anti-racism, bias, and discrimination.

These policies must cover interactions with Producers, Company Members, and outside parties—including donors, audience members, and critics.

These policies will be publicly available through the Producer’s website or available upon request. All job listings and audition notices will list or include a link to these policies. These policies will be delivered, physically or digitally, to all Company Members to review and sign at the time of hiring.

These policies will be summarized and methods of accessing full copies will be shared at staff meetings semiannually, all first rehearsals, all first Production meetings, and to any overhire employees at least once per year.

IMPACT Boston has a library of templates and examples organizations may adapt from, which will be ready for dissemination on September 1st. Please email info@Impactboston.org for access to the policies. Organization who would like to submit their policies for use in the library should send them to info@Impactboston.org.

2 — HOLDING EVERYONE EQUALLY ACCOUNTABLE

Harassment prevention can only be effective if every individual is held to the same standards. All Company Members (as defined above) will be held to the same standards regardless of role or status. No person is exempt from them because they are leaders within the company, donate large sums of money, drive ticket sales, or otherwise significantly benefit the company. Nor is anyone exempt due to the brevity of their interaction with the Production or organization, such as guest artists or tours.

All Company Members are responsible for holding themselves and their peers accountable to these standards. Minimizing or undermining conversations on harassment can intimidate people from speaking up for their needs and safety, and reduces these standards to lip-service.

Misconduct by audience members, donors, and critics will not be tolerated, regardless of their relationship with the Producer or Production.

3 — PROMPT ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES

To ensure transparency and ensure addressing harm is an organizational priority, producers will have a timely and clearly communicated mechanism to address reports of abuse & harassment. Acknowledgement of receiving a report will be given to the reporter within 24-hours of reporting.

Confirmation that definitive steps are being taken by the Producer will be communicated to the reporter within 72-hours of reporting. Information on what those steps are will be included to the extent allowable by company policy and legal regulations. Definitive steps may include, but are not limited to, initiation of an investigation, scheduling of a meeting between Company Members and the individuals involved, mandated training, or suspension.

The Producer will provide a contact for the reporter if they would like a follow-up on the status of their report and the actions taken.

The person reporting will remain anonymous unless their approval is given or the Producer is required by organizational policy or state or federal law to reveal their identity. Instances in which reports cannot be kept confidential will be clearly communicated in organizational policies, and to the person reporting.

Producers will ensure all individuals listed in company policy as an avenue for receiving reports are made aware of this role prior to hiring, or prior to being added if already employed. Any person listed as an avenue for reporting will be trained on company policy for receiving reports.

4 — INTIMACY DIRECTION

To meet contemporary standards and expectations for handling intimacy onstage, producers will do everything in their power to hire a trained Intimacy Director for any Productions that include Intimacy, particularly if there are Significant Moments of Intimacy (as defined above). The Intimacy Director will advocate for Performer safety, guide the development and implementation of safe communication consent practices, be active in the development of all Significant Moments of Intimacy, and available to the Production when issues with choreography need to be addressed. The Intimacy Director will be hired before auditions and may be involved in the audition process if they choose.

If an Intimacy Director is hired, intimate moments will always be rehearsed with the Intimacy Director present, until they give their approval to rehearse that specific moment without them. Even if an Intimacy Director is not hired, intimate moments must still be choreographed using best available practices. All Significant Moments of Intimacy must be rehearsed before performance in front of an audience.

In all Productions that include Significant Moments of Intimacy (as defined above), or when requested by a Performer, an Intimacy Captain will be designated for the Production. The Intimacy Captain may be a Performer or ASM and will be selected as agreed upon by the cast, Intimacy Director, and Director. The Intimacy Captain cannot be the Director or Stage Manager. The role of Intimacy Captain exists in addition to, and does not replace the role of Intimacy Director.

Similar to a fight or dance captain, the Intimacy Captain is responsible for keeping an eye on intimacy choreography maintenance and advocating for Company Member safety as it pertains to intimacy practices (such as boundary check-ins, tap-ins, etc.) throughout rehearsals and performances. Performers are responsible for following the intimacy choreography and practices at all times. The Stage Manager and Intimacy Captain will run through intimacy choreography before performances as needed or requested. The Intimacy Captain will be fairly compensated for the additional workload.

The Stage Manager—with the Assistance of the Intimacy Director and Intimacy Captain if hired—will be responsible for the documentation and maintenance of any intimacy choreography and consent practices, as they would with fight or dance choreography. Producers must work alongside the production team to address any infractions of intimacy choreography or consent practices.

The Intimacy Director will be clearly listed alongside other lead design roles in the program. The specific title of “Intimacy Director” may be adjusted depending on the individual and the needs of the Production. The Intimacy Captain will be noted on the cast page of the program.

5 — CONTINUOUS CONSENT

Understanding and practicing consent is a necessary requirement for a safe environment and must be integrated into all aspects of theatrical work. In any context (on or offstage) touch (sexual or otherwise) will be preceded by consent. For moments repeated daily (such as blocking or quick changes) exact expectations of process and accepted contact will be clearly defined in advance.

Consent is not a singular event but a continuous practice. Receiving consent does not have to look like stopping a rehearsal each time one Performer wishes to have physical contact with another. Effective consent practices do not hinder the creative process—they develop trust and clear boundaries in which organic choices can be made.

Consent can involve a series of practices like establishing clear boundaries on where and how someone may be touched at the start of a rehearsal process and checking in on those boundaries at the top of each day, creating a system for individuals to easily step out of an activity if needed, actively cultivating a culture that allows individuals to say “no” without repercussion or explanation, asking open-ended questions rather than leading yes-or-no questions, and many others.

Consent must be freely and enthusiastically given by all parties involved in an action. It can be given, revoked, revised, or enhanced at any time without explanation or justification.

All possible Significant Moments of Intimacy (as defined above) will be clearly identified to the Performers involved prior to hiring. If exact Significant Moments of Intimacy are not fully defined at hiring, such as productions of new work, this will be stated and possible moments will be made clear in the casting notice or job listing.

For example: “This production is currently in development and Significant Moments of Intimacy may be added during the rehearsal process. This role may require partial nudity, this role will not be required to participate in any acts of simulated sex.”

Denial or revoking of consent for intimate moments not defined prior to hiring cannot be used as justification for termination of employment. Full denial or full revocation of consent for intimate moments required for the role as agreed upon prior to hiring may be used as justification for termination of employment. Please note that full denial or revocation are not the same as temporary revocation (ex. “I can do this scene in performance, but I can’t rehearse it today) or specific denial (ex. “I can do this scene, but please don’t put your hand here”). Denial or revocation of consent may not be used as a justification for retaliation, including the denial of future employment.

Additional Significant Moments of Intimacy may not be added without discussion, and may only be added after unanimous agreement from all performers involved in the moment, the Director, and the Intimacy Director (if there is one on the Production).

6 — CONSCIENTIOUS PRIVATE SESSIONS

Producers and Company Members will be considerate and diligent when holding private sessions, with the intention of keeping record of meetings, tracking patterns of excessive one-on-one meetings, preventing the use of one-on-one sessions as a tool for abuse, and preventing assignment of work outside of an individual's role and agreed time commitment.

No audition will take place with only two people in the room (virtual or in-person); there will always be a third party present. This third party may include Stage Managers, Producers, Performers, Assistants, or other Production and staff members. Producers will do their best not to hold in-person auditions or hiring interviews in someone's home, apartment, or personal residence. However, if a personal residence is the only option available, those attending will be notified at least 24-hours in advance that the location is a personal residence.

For any rehearsals, press interviews, fittings, or other work-related meetings with only two people in the room, a record of the session will be made either in advance or within 24-hours of the session. Both parties are responsible for making sure the session is put on record. The record will include the time, location, and purpose of this meeting. This record may look like a note in a rehearsal report, a shared calendar of events, or other document easily accessible to the company.

This can be as simple as telling the Stage Manager "Hey! Julie and I are headed to Studio A to go over some notes." and them adding it the rehearsal report. Or creating an event on the production's Google calendar.

If either participant in the meeting requests a third-party to attend, one must be provided. It is the expectation that the person requesting the one-on-one session should ask if a third-party is wanted.

This can be as simple saying "Hey! Let's go to Studio A to go over some notes. Do you want me to ask Roz to come be on book for us?"

Significant Moments of Intimacy will never be rehearsed without the presence of the Stage Manager, and either the Intimacy Director or Intimacy Captain.

7— SKILL BUILDING

An important element of creating safe workplaces is ensuring that staff have the skills to intervene in unsafe and potentially unsafe situations, to respond effectively when someone makes a report, and communicate expectations clearly even in the face of pushback. It also involves staff having the commitment to be self-reflective about internalized biases and respond gracefully when someone challenges us.

These skills can be developed through training, mentorship, coaching, peer support, and any other way. The leadership of each Line Drawn company develops and implements a comprehensive plan for ensuring that key people in the organization have these skills. The plan can include training in bystander intervention, sexual harassment, human resources, diversity, equity and inclusion, and other relevant topics. It can also include supervision, mentorship, and peer support.

8 — SAFE CHANGING SPACES

In order to create inclusive spaces and allow people full autonomy over their bodies, available changing space options will be discussed with all Performers and backstage crew at the beginning of the rehearsal process. Needs and concerns, such as gender-inclusion and accessibility, will be addressed and solutions will be presented ahead of load-in. Dressing rooms sorted on a gender-binary will not be the assumed default for a Production. Any Producers under an AEA agreement that includes a requirement for men's and women's changing spaces will be responsible for getting a concession if needed.

There will always be at least one option for a private changing space available to both the cast and crew that is not accessible to the public. This could mean a private room, adding curtains or a privacy barrier to the space, or other agreed upon accommodations.

There will be designated private changing times communicated to the company that include a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the show. During private changing times, changing spaces must be for the exclusive use of the individuals assigned to that space and those assisting them with a change (such as costume, hair, and makeup personnel). Changing spaces may not be used for storage or other purposes that require access from anyone else during private changing times. During private changing times, changing spaces may not be accessed by anyone other than those listed above—including Stage Managers and Producers. Anyone entering a private changing space not assigned to them must wait for a clear verbal "yes" before entering.

9 — SAFETY FOR MINORS

To ensure their protection and safety, all Company Members or visitors under the age of 18 (not including audience members), will have a designated supervisor while in the theatrical space. The Supervisor may be a guardian or provided by an external organization, as long as they are made aware of and follow the Line Drawn standards. It will be the Supervisor's responsibility to keep track of the minor(s) and advocate for their safety. No Supervisor will be responsible for more than ten (10) minors at any given time.

The Supervisor of a minor Company Member will be present at any rehearsals, performances, fittings, or other calls at which the minor Company Member is in attendance.

Prior to a minor Company Member's interaction with any themes of violence, intimacy, or other mature content within the production, the Producer and/or Supervisor will work alongside the minor Company Member's guardian(s) to discuss how to handle this content. This is not required for any minor Company Member that does not interact with this content (for example, any minor only assisting with a Load-In, but no rehearsals or performances), or visiting minors not working on the production.

Minors will never change base-layer clothes (such as undergarments, pants, or a top without an undershirt) with another person present, and a private changing area will be provided for any minor Company Member required to make these changes. When it is required for any person to put their hands on a minor Company Member's body with (such as fittings, measurements, assisted changes, blocking, or choreography) at least two adult Company Members must be present, and at no time shall a minor and only one individual adult go to a private space to do any of these activities.

With the exception of diaper or soiled clothing changes made by a designated individual with the permission of their guardian, minors are not allowed in any dressing rooms other than the one designated to them, with the exception a dressing room belonging to their guardian(s) and only their guardian(s). Unless staged action during a scene in which the minor Company Member is present, adults will never undress base-layer clothes or be nude in the presence of minors. A changing booth or barrier will be provided for any necessary backstage changes of base-layer clothes where minor may be present.

Photos of minors will not be taken for personal use or shared publicly without written consent from their guardians.

For more information or to join the Line Drawn Cohort:

visit <https://impactboston.org/line-drawn/> or email info@impactboston.org

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