

THE CHICAGO THEATRE STANDARDS

ADOPTED FOR **THE WHOLEHEARTED ACTOR** By Clare Lopez

This document is authored by representatives of Chicago theatre companies, artists, and administrators who volunteered their time, experience and expertise over the course of two years. It has been tested over the course of a year by 20 Chicago theatres and vetted by a variety of industry and legal professionals. It was further revised and amended by the staff of The WholeHearted Actor Acting Studios. To view the original source material in its entirety, visit <https://www.notinourhouse.org/>.



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DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

Arts environments require risk, courage, vulnerability, and investment of our physical, emotional and intellectual selves. Regional theatre has a history of authenticity and risk on our stages. We are proud of that legacy, and seek to nurture spaces with strong safety nets that support that ethos without compromising a visceral and authentic experience for artists and audiences.

When creative environments are unsafe, both the artist and the art can become compromised. Spaces that prize “raw,” “violent,” and otherwise high-risk material can veer into unsafe territory if there are no procedures for prevention, communication, and when necessary, response. Too often, artists have been afraid to respond to abusive or unsafe practices, particularly where there is a power differential between the people involved. Artists have been afraid that speaking out will ruin a show or harm their reputations, and artists subjected to extreme abuse sometimes leave the craft, cutting their careers short. We believe that even in the absence of high-risk material, having pathways for response to unsafe conditions and harassment help to maintain the integrity of the work, its participants, and the organization.

This document seeks not to define artistry, prescribe how it is created, value one kind of work over others, or stand as a legal document. It seeks rather to create awareness and systems that respect and protect the human in the art – to foster safe places to do dangerous things. It is the result of input from a large and experienced group of theatre producers and artists. It is meant to be flexible and to accommodate as many types and styles of theatre, organizations of diverse structures, budgets, and environments as possible.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination laws, but only some employees and some companies meet their definition of “workplace.” Participants in small theatres or independent film sets are often not covered by these laws. Many theatre participants are therefore not covered by the protections provided by the EEOC. Actors who work under an AEA or SAG-AFTRA contract enjoy limited protections and opportunities for registering complaints, but only if the participant is a member of the union, and only if the issue is covered in the AEA or SAG-AFTRA rulebook. Moreover, certain kinds of conduct can be harmful even though they are not technically unlawful. With this framework in mind, members of the Chicago theatre community joined forces to create a tool for self-governance. We seek to foster awareness of what artists should expect, and what companies can strive to provide in their spaces.

This document is the result of dozens of Chicago theatre participants meeting in round-table discussions for a year to produce a first draft, followed by over a year of pilot testing in 20 participating theatres. The result is the following **Chicago Theatre Standards**, which outlines simple and largely cost-free practices and tools to prevent and respond to the everyday challenges in arts environments.

The overriding tenets of this document are: **communication, safety, respect, and accountability.**

The Chicago Theatre Standards (CTS) is voluntary, cost-free, and not subject to enforcement by any outside body. In adopting this document, organizations state their intentions through procedures designed to help them live by those intentions. Participants who work with organizations that adopt the CTS endorse these intentions by reading the document and following its procedures and protocols. All involved are encouraged to call attention to situations when these intentions are not being met by using the reporting channels herein. This is a free document available online at notinourhouse.org.

HISTORY

On January 15, 2015, Chicago actor Lori Myers made a social media rallying cry “NOT IN OUR HOUSE” after hearing yet another account of sexual harassment by the same perpetrator at their long-standing theatre. Hundreds of responses revealed that the problem was well known, but no one felt safe enough to speak out. They feared reprisal both from their abuser and from the larger community. They feared they would not be believed. They feared they would not work again. People who knew felt they could not speak out because they didn’t have first-hand experience. They feared they would harm the survivor. They feared they would be labeled as a gossip or divisive in the community. While a whisper network warned many, others knew nothing and some hoped they could “handle it.” This theatre was highly regarded and offered opportunities to emerging artists, who often got noticed by the press and eager audiences. The brave survivors who spoke out changed the tide, and the Not in Our House Chicago Theatre Community was born.

By March of 2015, this document was underway. Coordinated by Chicago actor Laura T. Fisher, a small group of theatre artists and administrators crafted a draft over the course of a year. Twenty theatres agreed to pilot the document – they incorporated it into their theatre practices and met periodically to improve the document and discuss implementation strategies.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Chicago Theatre Standards is a voluntary tool for self-governance that seeks to nurture communication, safety, respect, and accountability of participants at all levels of theatrical production. Its mission is to create:

- Spaces free of harassment, whether it be sexual, or based on race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, color, or ability.
- Nurturing environments that allow us to challenge ourselves, our audiences, and our communities; that support risk of mind and body; and that establish the freedom to create theatre that represents the full range of human experience;
- A common understanding of practices for theatre environments, including written, reproducible standards available at no cost.
- Peer support through mentorship and collaboration through online communication and community outreach.

WHO IS THE CHICAGO THEATRE STANDARDS FOR?

ACTING SCHOOLS:

Whether a college, a for-profit acting school, high school theatre club or other learning environment, these standards can help emerging artists learn what is expected of them, and what they can expect from potential environments they may engage in.

PARENTS:

For parents who have children considering a career in the arts, these standards can support conversations about professional behavior, boundaries, and expectations. Too often when emerging artists find themselves in an abusive or otherwise problematic environment, they have said “I didn’t know who to talk to,” or “I just thought that’s the way things go.” One intention of this document is to educate prospective arts participants of what a safe environment can look like.

NON-UNION THEATRES:

Non-union theatre companies were the inspiration for this document. They traditionally have the fewest regulations and support services. They are also where many theatre artists develop their craft and their professional ethic.

UNION THEATRES:

Those who work in Union theatres, particularly those that do not meet the EEOC’s standard of a “work place,” are not protected by EEOC laws. The CTS is a tool for self-regulation that can allow small union theatres to assert professional expectations in their space

LARGE UNION THEATRES:

While many large, institutionalized theatres have HR departments and are covered by EEOC law, this document seeks to provide procedural preventions of unsafe conditions, industry-specific discussion of sexual harassment and other elements that are not covered in the current AEA rulebook.

DISCLAIMER

This document is a nonbinding set of principles. It reflects the current state of a continually evolving interest to establish standards in theatre spaces, particularly theatres that do not have human resource departments or other institutionalized mechanisms to prevent and respond to unsafe environments and harassment. This document is not an agreement or contractual document. It is not intended, either by its explicit language or by implication, to create any obligation or to confer any right. It is not intended to change any person's legal, employment, or contractual status or relationships. Rather, it is intended as a vehicle by which organizations can demonstrate their desire to apply standards, preventions, and resolution procedures that are identifiable, reproducible, uniform, and shared among a wider theatre community. By indicating their endorsement of the CTS, organizations publicize the intention herein to existing and potential participants, rather than entering into a legally binding commitment. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing in the CTS should be construed to prevent a theatre company or producer from affirmatively incorporating the standards set forth here into their agreements or other legal documents and thereby to imbue some or all of these standards with legal force. This document is an on-going collaboration of a growing community of organizations interested in adopting it. It will continue to develop as more experience with the document develops.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The following sections seek to define terms created for this document, provide a timeline for how the document is used, share wisdom from companies that have piloted the document, and offer suggestions for how to get off on the right foot when introducing the document on the first day of classes and/or on-going sessions.

DEFINITIONS

- ACTOR** A performer or student in a classroom or session:
- PARTICIPANTS** Someone who is engaged by a studio to participate in, administer, or support educational acting coursework. This includes actors, coaches, instructors, staff, administrators, clients, parents, applicants, & anyone involved in collaboration with the studio.
- COACH** An instructor, or person responsible for leading a workshop, class or session.
- OWNER** The head of the studio, founder, and owner & leader of the Studio.
- SESSION** A class, workshop, audition taping, or coaching space where actors work with coaches.
- STUDIO** The organization (The WholeHearted Actor) responsible for teaching/coaching actors.
- WE/OUR** This document is designed to be administered by owners. Sections of the CTS are written from the perspective of the studio. For example, “We recognize our responsibility to...,” can be read as, “We, The WholeHearted Actor Acting Studios, recognize our responsibility to....”

TERMS CREATED FOR THIS DOCUMENT

The following terms and their meanings are used within each Standard of this document.

THE GOAL: Each standard will be introduced with a goal; wherein a “creative problem” can be “solved.” Rather than creating a prescriptive action for every situation, a “goal” can be achieved in many different ways. *The overarching goal is to create a participant-friendly space that values communication, safety, respect, and accountability.*

THE STANDARD:

A general description of the collected suggestions of how to accomplish each goal. One might understand these as collected wisdom, and most are common practices.

REQUIRES DISCLOSURE:

Disclosure assists prospective participants to make informed decisions when accepting offers, registering for classes, and know what to expect before they walk into the room for the first time. Disclosure also helps the coach assemble willing, able, and informed participants. In the event that elements of the CTS are not achievable (if a session is outside without access to drinking water, for example), conditions should be **disclosed** to all participants. Some standards have a “requires disclosure” section which serves to identify known elements that, if an organization cannot provide, should be disclosed.

EXPLORE IT FURTHER:

In the interest of engaging producers and studio owners at every budget level, this document seeks to suggest cost-free solutions. Suggestions that require money or other resources (sprung flooring, for example), appear in “Explore It Further” subsections.

IMPLEMENTATION NOTES:

During the Pilot Year, successful strategies for implementation were collected and are shared in these sections. It is understood that these sections may grow with more experience with CTS in spaces where it is used.

THE PROCESS

Adopting the CTS is a process that engages every level of an acting studio, from private coaching to group classroom setting. This process requires a balance wherein the CTS is present without stifling creativity or causing participants to feel hesitant or distracted. One extreme would be filing the document away in a drawer and forgetting about it until a problem comes up. The other extreme would be a policed environment in which the document became a tool for punishment or judgment. While each organization should strive to make the CTS work in their own space.

A few things to keep in mind:

1. **The CTS should be discussed at every level of the company**, including company and board meetings. Everyone from the Owner to administrative staff to ensemble members to visiting participants and parents should be encouraged to read the document, understand the company's commitment to its adoption, and any responsibilities each participant may have.
2. **The CTS should be discussed as early in the on-boarding process.** Many problems can be avoided when safety issues are a regular part of curriculum and lesson planning discussions. If a company cannot afford a fight choreographer, then content with onstage violence might not be in the cards. The CTS is a tool for discussion to ensure that organizations choosing to adopt it work within their financial means and/or expertise.
3. **Prospective staff members should be informed that this document is being used** with enough time for them to review the document and discuss the additional procedures and responsibilities.
4. **The CTS requires a thorough discussion on the first day of classes.** This is when participants with no exposure to the CTS will first encounter it. Taking the time to discuss the CTS on the first day will increase the chances of success with the CTS. Getting off on the right foot is essential to this process and the First Day Implementation Notes is designed to help.
5. **CTS protocols throughout the process, particularly for high-risk content.**
6. **Elements of the CTS come into play during taped auditions.** Taking the time to visit safety, privacy, and other CTS elements can prevent problems before they happen.
7. **Studios should be ready to address concerns.** This document seeks to prevent some issues, but given that the document encourages those with concerns to come forward, it's recommended that studios avail themselves of conflict resolution techniques. There are many good books on the subject, and The League of Chicago Theatres offers occasional classes on the topic.

FIRST DAY IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

Creating a guide for the first days can make sure that all of the important points are covered. This script should be delivered by one or more representatives of the Studio.

Here are some of the most important things to communicate at or before the First Day of Classes/ 6 Week Private Coaching Session/ and/or or whenever new script material is being assigned to participants:

1. TELL THE STUDENTS & PARENTS WHY YOU'VE CHOSEN TO ADOPT THE CHICAGO THEATRE STANDARDS

- Create structure for accountability and support
- Build a safe space where all participants are protected from harassment, discrimination, or harm.

2. DISTRIBUTE THE CONCERN RESOLUTION PATH (CRP)

The **CRP** documents communication pathways for resolving concerns before they get out of hand, to inform participants who to talk to if issues arise, to avoid repeated unsafe practices, and to mentor those who violate boundaries. The **CRP** and **The NonEquity Deputy** are designed to provide confidential reporting channels that support and protect everyone, including the person/s that create concern. Gossiping with those outside the reporting channels, or creating an atmosphere of “heroes and villains” can result in an inability to use the document to mentor and resolve issues peacefully. There are gray areas on stage. People can get hurt physically and/or emotionally without there being a “bad guy.” In every possible situation, the **CRP** should be used to mentor participants, and nurture a positive and safe environment.

3. DISCUSS THE NON EQUITY DEPUTY (NED)

The **NED** is a confidential liaison (reporting channel) between participants, the coach, and others on the **Concern Resolution Path**. The **NED** does not decide who’s right and wrong, or even necessarily solve problems, but helps to ensure that communication paths are open. The **NED** is selected by the participants of each class by the end of the first week of classes and is, whenever possible, not an employee of the studio.

4. POINT OUT AREAS OF THE CTS THAT ARE PARTICULARLY PERTINENT TO THE SESSION

If there are high-risk elements in the script or exploration that are part of **Sensitive Content (SC)** or risky physical movement, remind participants of those sections of the document in the interest of letting them know that safety protocols have been a part of the planning process for the studio. Confirm that the participants are informed about SC and maintain on-going consent and safety for a successful session.

5. OWNER IS REQUIRED TO SHARE THE DOCUMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY.

Owners do not have to distribute the entire document as a hard copy, but they do have to share access to this document: www.thewholeheartedactor.com/chicago-theatre-standards

CONCERN RESOLUTION PATH (CRP)

THE GOAL

The goal of the **CRP** is to provide a documented communication pathway to address issues within an organization. The **CRP** seeks to inform participants what to do and who to address with serious issues, and dispel the fear of reprisal for reporting issues of safety, harassment, or other serious concerns.

THE STANDARD

This **Concern Resolution Path** should be printed and distributed to all participants and discussed on the first day of classes/ and or the on-boarding process. It should be clearly communicated that the owner seeks to resolve concerns early, before participants or the production are put at risk and before the concern escalates.

WHAT IS A CONCERN RESOLUTION PATH?

The **CRP** provides names and contact information for members of the organization who have agreed to be responsive to reported issues and work to resolve them. It consists of:

- A written, clear, and transparently shared list of procedures for addressing a concern;
- A written, clear, and transparently shared list of persons with whom the concern should be addressed;
- A commitment to give reported concerns priority and a reasonable timeline for resolution.

STRUCTURE

- **LEVEL ONE** We recognize that many concerns can be resolved through conversation with the parties involved. Whenever possible participants should be encouraged to discuss challenges and concerns with one another. Sharing and hearing concerns with openness and respect can prevent situations from escalating further.
- **LEVEL TWO** The following participants should be granted a certain level of authority and trust to determine whether a concern can be resolved at this level or if it needs to be sent to the next level. All concerns should be reported to Level Three, even if no action is required.
 - Instructor (by way of Non-equity Deputy)
 - Coach
- **LEVEL THREE** These participants should be considered the final level of the path, capable of resolving issues that have not been resolved prior to reaching this stage. They are strongly advised to consult with each other and review legal or other implications of any decision.
 - Owner - Clare Lopez (TheWholeHeartedActor@gmail.com)

COMMUNICATION

- The CRP should be verbally explained and provided in writing at the *first class* (digitally and/or in print). It should include the name, title, and contact information for every individual on the CRP.
- A copy of the CRP should be posted or otherwise available in the studio spaces.
- Participants should be encouraged to report their concerns in writing for recordkeeping purposes.

RECORDKEEPING

- The Owner should maintain personnel files, which should include reported concerns. Such files are to be kept confidential and accessible leadership staff and the individual(s) responsible for maintaining the files.

LEGAL REMEDIES

- In the event of civil or criminal misconduct or liability, the CTS is not a replacement for legal advice or action, nor does it stand instead of any local, state or federal law.
- A violation of civil rights can be reported to the Florida Attorney General: https://www.workplacefairness.org/file_FL

IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

- Coaches & Owners should complete a CRP with the names and contact information of all individuals who will serve on the path for each class session. Studios may adapt the CRP to reflect their staffing structure.
- The CRP is a tool to help create communication pathways to prevent and resolve issues, not create divisions. To that end, nothing in the CTS encourages firing or marginalizing participants for mistakes, a momentary loss of temper, an argument (whether artistic or personal), a single unintentional injury, etc. The CRP is designed to provide pathways to respond to events, behavior, and conditions that create reasonably understood unsafe conditions, not uncomfortable situations. The function and goal of the CRP should be discussed at the first rehearsal.
- All individuals listed on the CRP should understand their role in resolving concerns, the process for recording concerns, and the process for reporting those concerns to others on the path.
- Creating and using a Concern Resolution Path can assist with recordkeeping.
- The individuals listed on the CRP should be provided with resources and/or training in conflict resolution.

THE ROLE OF THE COACH REGARDING THE CTS

THE GOAL

The Coach is traditionally the primary communication conduit between participants and Owners as well as between actors, and so plays a crucial role in executing the CTS. The goal of this standard is to acknowledge that the additional responsibilities of the coach in studios that use the CTS complement the expertise and authority of the coach as a leader and advocate throughout the session.

THE STANDARD

The Coach's responsibilities with regards to the CTS are:

- Read and be familiar with the CTS.
- Know and follow the Studio's published CRP.
- Ensure that consent is discussed before scenes of *Sensitive Content*, and document applicable specifics.
- Allow for the selection of the Non-Equity Deputy (NED) during the first week of classes.
- Work with and communicate with the NED, particularly regarding any raised concern.

REQUIRES DISCLOSURE

- Coaches should be told if an organization has adopted the CTS before they commit to a class.
- Coaches should have access to the script, or known scope of material, before they agree to participate. (within the context of audition taping: this will be done to best of participants ability)

BASIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

THE GOAL

Session problems are often preventable with careful planning, and we endeavor to create spaces and processes for tapings, classes, workshops and coachings that are as physically safe as possible.

THE STANDARD

We intend to make health and safety a regular topic at staff meetings, and to maintain awareness and procedures that contribute to a safe environment at all times. We seek to prevent injuries, identify and remedy situations that might be considered unsafe or unhealthy, and respond to injuries and medical events, and seek medical attention when required.

We will strive to promote basic health and safety practices by providing the following:

- Toilets and sinks, with soap and towels;
- Access to drinking water or disclosure a lack of availability;
- A reasonable working temperature.
- Lighting suitable for the work being carried out.
- Reasonably clean and well-maintained studio space.
- Floors and traffic routes that are free from undue obstructions and tripping hazards.
- Functional, non-expired fire extinguishers.
- A suitably stocked first-aid kit.

At the first day of classes or first session with new participants to the space, a safety walk-through should include:

- Fire exit locations.
- Locations of first-aid kits.
- Emergency procedures (including contact information for local police stations and the nearest ER).
- Tripping or safety hazards in studio settings and taping spaces;
- Locations of restrooms.

REQUIRES DISCLOSURE

- If any aspect of this Standard cannot be achieved because of the nature of the class or studio space, it should be disclosed to all prospective and active participants. For example, if a space is outdoors, participants should be notified in advance so that they can wear appropriate shoes and clothing for the weather and the surface (grass, asphalt, etc.).

EXPLORE IT FURTHER

- Studio paces should comply with the City of Orlando building and fire codes.
- Fire extinguishers should be regularly inspected by a professional.

If individuals are leading participants in physical warm-ups, yoga, or other physical activities, they should have certification or professional training to do so.

SENSITIVE CONTENT & MOVEMENT

THE GOAL

Some forms of acting methodologies and styles of movement carry with them a greater risk of harm than others, and the goal of this section is to outline considerations specific to these forms of higher-risk work, including sensitive content, and physical movement. These forms share many of the same considerations, while some considerations are form-specific. The shared considerations also apply to other forms of physical theatre, including dance and other forms of choreography, and this section may serve as a guide for these forms as well.

THE STANDARD

In audition sessions and classes, offer discussions, agreements, substitute preparation in every step of the process, we intend to create a safe and respectful atmosphere for all participants. We believe that communication, safety, respect, accountability, artistic freedom, collaborative integrity, and personal discipline are the cornerstones of this atmosphere.

FACILITIES

The following should be provided in all rehearsal and performance spaces in which high-risk physical theatre takes place:

- First-aid kit, including cold packs
- Water
- Telephone for emergencies
- Adequate lighting
- Temperature control
- Ventilation
- Space for warm-ups
- Floors and surfaces that are clean, well maintained, and appropriate for the activity

CLASSES & SESSIONS

Session problems are often preventable with careful planning, and we endeavor to create spaces and processes for tapings, classes, workshops and coachings that are as physically safe as possible. A choreographer should be engaged for any session that includes weapons, hand-to hand combat, specialized movement techniques, or any high-risk activity.

- **CHECK IN:** Before the start of sessions participants should be asked to provide accurate descriptions of their physical abilities and limitations/injuries as they relate to the possible physical work.
- **WARM UP:** Adequate time should be allocated for stretching and warming up before all movement centered sessions.
- **COOL DOWN:** Adequate time should be allocated at the end of rehearsal for cooling down, asking questions, and voicing concerns.
- **OPEN COMMUNICATION:** Actors should communicate any injury, discomfort, or fatigue experienced before, during, and after rehearsals.
- **BREAKS:** A 10-minute break should be provided after every 80 minutes of physical work.
- **EXIT STRATEGIES:** In virtual sessions, this will mean that actors have permission to turn off their camera, leave and return as needed.

- **VOCABULARY:** The director/choreographer and actors should agree on a vocabulary of safety (i.e., “*bail*” could be used to abandon a movement mid-execution).
- **SAFE STUDIO SPACES:** A comfortable working temperature should be maintained in the rehearsal space. The nature of the movement should be considered when establishing this temperature.

PROP WEAPONS:

There may be instances when an instructor or actor decides that a prop weapon (*never* a real weapon, even if it is dulled, broken, out of commission, etc.) may offer an additional element to the scene. If all parties involved agree, the prop weapon may be introduced to the scene.

- **CONSENT:** Prop weapons may only be used in scene or audition taping when it is agreed upon by all parties. It should be treated like Sensitive Content.
- **INTRODUCTIONS:** The prop should be verbally and physically introduced to each of the actors involved in the scene. Never should a prop weapon appear without that consent and verbal introduction.
- **DEMONSTRATION:** The person providing the weapon should, without pointing the weapon at anyone else, demonstrate how the weapon is ineffective including:
 - Showing an empty magazine and empty barrel of the prop gun
 - Squeezing the trigger of the prop gun to show that it is not loaded
 - Pressing and/or running the blade of the prop knife against one’s own skin to show that it will not damage the skin
 - Walk-through any buttons, tools, mechanisms or other devices that operate the prop (as in a retractable knife or working trigger)
- **INDEPENDENT EXPLORATION:** Each of the actors involved in the scene should be allowed to independently handle the prop weapon and examine it in their own time.
- **VOCABULARY:** If any actor or instructor determines they are not safe with introducing this prop weapon, they may call “*hold*” at any time and the prop weapon will be removed.
- **BOUNDARIES:** Each actor involved in the scene should offer permission to the other person as to how they feel comfortable interacting with the prop weapon (“You may point it at me,” “You may physically touch me with it,” etc.). These are allowed to shift, and should rehearsals or exploration with the prop continue over the course of multiple classes/ sessions, these boundaries should be re-confirmed verbally at the start of an exploration.

SENSITIVE CONTENT

SEXUALITY, SUICIDE, VIOLENCE, ABUSE, & RACIAL TRAUMA

Telling the stories of complex human experience often includes representations of violence, racism, homophobia, abuse, and other challenging content. We seek an ethical atmosphere when engaging in this content, working with diverse groups of participants, and particularly when producing culturally sensitive work.

THE GOAL

We believe that performers should not routinely incur pain, bruises, or other injury while acting. Our intention is to prepare for and mitigate the risks of onstage violence to create a safe space in which to take artistic risks.

SENSITIVE CONTENT MAY INCLUDE:

- **Sexuality**
- **Suicide / Self-harm / (including disordered eating)**
- **Violence and/or Abuse**
- **Addiction/ Substance Abuse**
- **Racial Trauma**
- **Death / Loss / Grief**
- **Graphic Language/ Swearing**
- **Any other emotionally triggering content which might require careful consideration when prescribing script selections for actors.**

Artists in scenes with SC take great personal risk, and our goal is to allow them to take that risk in an environment that is as safe, supportive, and comfortable as possible. SC should only be included in a session when it can be done responsibly and according to the following recommendations. We seek to replicate the conditions, detail and documentation and accountability in any sensitive content areas. ***There will never be a need for nudity, disrobing, or physical simulated sexual acts with others in the Studio.***

TAPING SESSIONS & CLASSES

- Consent and boundaries will be assessed through the **ACTOR INFORMATION FORM** around what types of **Sensitive Content** actors are comfortable tackling before assigning any scripts.
- The Studio will always provide **Content Warnings** for any assigned scripts with Sensitive Content.
- Actors should have the option to decline SC elements if they discover they are no longer comfortable with submitting for the role - or no longer interested in working on a particular script. Actors will always have the right to decline, change, or adjust their scripted content without it negatively impacting their success in our coursework.
- During audition taping, Actors exploring **Sensitive Content** as part of their auditions, will confirm their comfort and consent to performing that content at the time of their session.
- Prior to rehearsing scenes with **Sensitive Content** the actors, coach, and parent (if a minor) should discuss the content and build consent and discuss boundaries before the session. **A safe word (ie “hold”) should be established.**

- **SC** rehearsals should be closed, such that only participants involved in the scene are present.
- Only participants whose presence is required should be present in taping or classroom space. Gawkers will be dispatched.

CONSENT

We believe that building consent among participants is an important part of creating an atmosphere of trust and communication. We intend to recognize the following practices when building consent among participants:

- A consent-building conversation should specify the range of contact that is acceptable within the appropriate context of the scene being explored.
- The boundaries may change during a class or coaching session, either narrowing or broadening, but any change to the boundaries should be discussed and agreed upon before the rehearsal.
- There should be an opportunity to discuss potential boundary violations at the end of each session.
- The agreed-upon structure of intimate contact should be maintained.
- Actors should inform the coach if they are sick and alternate choreography, scheduled sessions should be defined for sick days.

REQUIRES DISCLOSURE

- SC should be disclosed prior to scene/ monologue assignments.
- Coaches should have SC disclosed to them prior to starting a Taping Session.

EXPLORE IT FURTHER

- When simulated sexual scenarios are required for an audition, participants will be using nonsexual choreography to determine physical control.
- Discussions around sensitive requirements and how they will be handled will happen at the start of a taping session.
- If a script is made available to participants, language similar to the following should be included: “Please read the script closely and confirm that you are comfortable working with this material. Feel welcome to bring questions about content to the process. Your level of comfort with the content of this script will not impact your success in this class ”
- Actors, coaches, and instructors should have equal status in devising SC scenes. A time limit for rehearsing SC should be established and communicated.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

THE GOAL

We seek to understand sexual harassment as it pertains to all studio spaces, provide procedures to prevent it, and outline recourse when it occurs. We recognize the potential for harassment in audition and class sessions and workshops, and outside the studio among participants, and staff. We acknowledge learning environments can court confusion about the difference between chemistry, artistic freedom, and harassment; we believe participants can be bold and live “in the moment” of theatrical material while maintaining choreography, fellow participants’ safety, and agreed-upon boundaries.

THE STANDARD

Clear boundaries should be established and agreed upon among all participants involved, both in rehearsals and performance, particularly in scenes depicting violence, sex, intimate contact, abuse, or gestures of intimacy.

For reference, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is described as follows: [the following is amended to replace the word “sex” with “gender.”]

It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person’s gender. Harassment can include “sexual harassment” or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person’s gender. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general.

Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same gender.

Although the law doesn’t prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim’s supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

The EEOC covers “employees” only, not contractors and volunteers. For that reason, this standard seeks to provide a definition for sexual harassment in the theatrical & educational workplace for participants not covered by EEOC laws and other regulations, and to provide an understanding of and sensitivity to the nuances of a theatrical workplace.

Harassment in a broader sense includes, but is not limited to:

- Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, or innuendoes or taunting about a person's gender, gender identity, sexual identity, racial or ethnic background, color, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, creed, or ability;
- Persistent unwanted questions or comments about a participant's private life outside the boundaries of consent established in classes/ sessions;
- Posting or displaying materials, articles, graffiti, and so on, which may cause humiliation, offense, or embarrassment on prohibited grounds that are outside the parameters of the production. A production about pornography, violence, or racism may involve such images in the rehearsal space or in a dramaturgy packet, but such images are not appropriate for open display in dressing rooms, bathrooms, or other similar spaces.

Sexual Harassment in a Theatrical Workplace:

- In a theatrical context, harassment can be additionally defined as one or a series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or sexual nature outside the boundaries of consent or production content, which is known or ought reasonably be known to be unwelcome/unwanted, offensive, intimidating, hostile, or inappropriate. It is worth noting that the higher the emotional/sexual risk a production asks of its artists, the greater the diligence of each participant and studio staff is needed to foster an environment of emotional safety.
- **Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:**
 - Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes, or taunts about a person's body, attire, gender, or sexual orientation outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
 - Negative stereotyping of race, gender, gender identity, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, ability, or other status protected by law outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
 - Any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact such as touching, kissing, massaging, patting, hugging, or pinching outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
 - Unwelcome inquiries or comments about a person's sex life or sexual preference outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
 - Leering, whistling, or other suggestive or insulting sounds outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
 - Inappropriate comments about clothing, physical characteristics, or activities outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
 - Posting or displaying materials, articles, or graffiti that is sexually oriented outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
 - Requests or demands for sexual favors, especially those that include, or imply, promises of rewards for complying (e.g., job advancement opportunities) and/or threats of punishment for refusal (e.g., denial of job advancement or opportunities) outside the boundaries of consent or production content;
 - Attempting to engage in sexual behaviors offstage that are choreographed for a scene or audition;
 - Inviting an actor to rehearse sexual content outside of classroom private

- coaching setting;
- Repeated invitation/suggestion to take relationships of a sexual nature beyond the stage;
- Using the text of a production that is sexual, violent, threatening, or offensive in offstage discourse;
- Improvising sexual content without expressed consent.
- Participants have the right to be free from:
 - Sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant, or deny a benefit or advancement outside production content;
 - Reprisal or threat of reprisal for the rejection of a sexual solicitation or advance where the reprisal is made by a person in a position to grant, confer, or deny a benefit or advancement outside production content.

Any of the behaviors outlined here have the potential to create a negative environment for individuals or groups. It should be noted that a person does not have to be a direct target to be adversely affected by a negative environment. It is understood that creative atmospheres are not always “emotionally sanitary”—they can safely be bawdy, profane, vulgar, and challenging. We assert that having (a) a practice of building consent and (b) an environment that allows for response to clear boundary violations can broaden our opportunity to be challenging and fearless in our work.

Concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative environment should be reported using the concern resolution path (starting with level one wherever possible), and all concerns should be treated with the utmost respect for the safety and wellbeing of all participants.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND REPRESENTATION

THE GOAL

Drama engages the full spectrum of humanity. Telling the stories of complex human experience often includes representations of violence, racism, homophobia, abuse, and other challenging content. We seek an ethical atmosphere when engaging in this content, working with diverse groups of participants, and particularly when producing culturally sensitive work. *The Chicago Theatre Standards does not dictate content but seeks to create respectful, safe and equitable environments.*

THE STANDARD

We make the following commitments to all participants who work with us:

- When invited to teach, coach, or collaborate, prospective participants have the right to make inquiries about how their cultural personhood will be used within The Studio. Inquiries will receive a thoughtful response and will remain confidential.
- Sometimes a potential participant discovers in the course of applying that they are uncomfortable with elements as they relates to their personhood. Potential participants have the right to decline offers without fear of reprisal such as losing future opportunities. It is not the participant's responsibility to explain why they chose to decline an offer.
- Whenever possible, diversity and inclusion should be considered both in hiring staff and in outreach in course offerings. In particular, culturally specific work should seek production personnel who can speak to that cultural experience.
- During the learning/ session process, participants should voice concern if they feel uncomfortable with the use of their cultural personhood, which may include:
 - Staging & Scripted text (culturally based violence or abuse, for example), which was not disclosed or consented to at the time of enrollment.
 - Accents or dialects to underscore a cultural representation not disclosed at the time of auditions/casting;
 - Make-up that can reasonably be described as "black face," "brown face," or similar portrayal.
- When staging scenes of cultural violence, or other culturally charged narratives and language, we will follow the same practice of consent building outlined in the Sensitive Content standard. Disclosure of this type of content will be made before scene assignments are given, and the emotional risk associated will be recognized throughout the process.
- We seek to address concerns with generosity and humility through the channels of the **Concern Resolution Path** as outlined in this document.

EXPLORE IT FURTHER

Lead Staff should seek opportunities to intern, mentor, include, and professionally engage participants of color at all levels of their organization.

APPENDIX OF FORMS & SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT

SAMPLE CONCERN RESOLUTION PATH

Creating a safe and comfortable environment for all members of our team is important to this company. We take concerns seriously and seek to address issues in a sensitive and timely manner. The following individuals are available to help you resolve any concerns or issues that may arise. We encourage concerns of level 2 and above to be made in writing when possible.

LEVEL ONE

If you feel comfortable doing so, we encourage you to first directly address your concern with the individual(s) involved. This helps to foster an honest and open community and is often the fastest path to a resolution.

LEVEL TWO

If you are not comfortable directly addressing the individual(s) involved, or if no resolution can be agreed upon, your next points of contact can be any of the following:

You can always use this **CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING FORM** for any concerns you would like to share anonymously.

NAME: Clare Lopez
TITLE: INSTRUCTOR
EMAIL: TheWholeheartedActor@gmail.com
PHONE #: 916.216.6307

NAME: _____
TITLE: Non-Equity Deputy
EMAIL: _____
PHONE #: _____

LEVEL THREE

If an issue has not been resolved through Levels One and Two, or if you are an individual named in Level Two who needs assistance to resolve the issue, your next points of contact can be any of the following people. The contacts at this level may consult with each other and review any legal or other implications of any decision.

NAME: Clare Lopez
TITLE: OWNER
EMAIL: TheWholeHeartedActor@gmail.com
PHONE #: _____

A complaint may include allegations of civil or criminal misconduct or liability, and may require legal advice or action. A violation of civil rights should be reported to the Florida Attorney General:

https://www.workplacefairness.org/file_FL

In case of physical emergency or criminal activity, call 911.

SAMPLE FIRST DAY LANGUAGE

The following is adapted from the First Rehearsal Script created by Lifeline Theatre In Chicago; one of the contributors to the Chicago Theatre Standards. The following is an extension of the “First Day Implementation Notes” described earlier in this document. Pilot theatres have found these support documents particularly helpful. The following is not prescriptive or definitive, but is offered as a sample to be used or adapted.

The WholeHearted Actor has adopted The Chicago Theatre Standards, available at notinourhouse.org.

The aim of the CTS is to adopt procedures to prevent and respond to unsafe and/or abusive events, environments or individuals. If there is any sensitive content, we will maintain on-going consent and employ trauma informed practices as we navigate vulnerable or traumatic material.

An important component of the CTS is the **Concern Resolution Path**. This is a three-tiered list of people who you can contact if you feel uncomfortable or have any concerns throughout this class session. You have received a printed copy of the Concern Resolution Path with contact information for everyone on the path. This document will also be posted in the studio space. I'd like to ask everyone on the path to introduce themselves.

The Chicago Theatre Standards contains a number of pledges that we, as a studio, make to you. Among these is a welcoming environment free of harassment and discrimination.

Content in the following sections can be shared in writing, video, audio, or any other matter that will support the participants understanding while utilizing time efficiently during classes or session.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendoes or taunting about a person's racial or ethnic background, color, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, creed, or disability,
2. Unwanted questions or comments about an Artist's private life,
3. Posting or display of materials, articles, or graffiti, etc. which may cause humiliation, offense or embarrassment on prohibited grounds.
4. Sexual Harassment:
 - a. One or a series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or sexual nature that is known or ought reasonably be known to be unwelcome/unwanted, offensive, intimidating, hostile or inappropriate. Artists have the right to be free from:
 - i. Sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement,
 - ii. Reprisal or threat of reprisal for the rejection of a sexual solicitation or advance where the reprisal is made by a person in a position to grant, confer, or deny a benefit or advancement.

- b. Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:
- i. Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes or taunting about a person's body, attire, gender, or sexual orientation,
 - ii. Unwanted touching or any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact such as touching, kissing, patting, hugging or pinching,
 - iii. Unwelcome enquiries or comments about a person's sex life or sexual preference,
 - iv. Leering, whistling, or other suggestive or insulting sounds,
 - v. Inappropriate comments about clothing, physical characteristics or activities,
 - vi. Posting or display of materials, articles, or graffiti, etc. which is sexually oriented,
 - vii. Requests or demands for sexual favors which include, or strongly imply, promises of rewards for complying (e.g., job advancement opportunities, and/or threats of punishment for refusal (e.g., denial of job advancement or opportunities).

All or part of the above grounds may create a negative environment for individuals or groups. This may have the effect of "poisoning" the work environment. It should be noted that a person does not have to be a direct target to be adversely affected by a negative environment. It includes conduct or comment that creates and maintains an offensive, hostile, or intimidating climate.

Thank you. Negative comments or actions often occur accidentally – but even when that is the case -- if we don't address them in the moment it can start a slide into a less professional room. (please see following page for ***Ouch and Oops*** approach)

OUCH / OOPS

One way to handle negative comments or actions in real time We'd like to recommend a system of "Ouch" and "Oops." For instance:

Speaker A is trying too hard to be funny and makes a thoughtless remark. Speaker B says "Ouch!" This cues Speaker A to realize that the funny remark was potentially hurtful. Speaker A says "Oops" to indicate recognition and regret. Then there's a Pause.

It's up to the Ouch-caller whether this moment requires some conversation. So maybe there's a conversation – or maybe the Ouch caller says "Cool, let's move on." But the decision to move on must come from the Ouchcaller.

Please note that anyone in the room can call "Ouch." It does not have to come from the person who is the focus of the potentially hurtful remark.

Any questions or discussion? Thank you.

- Most common question is: "Sometimes I don't know there was an "ouch" until I'm trying to sleep that night. Can I bring it back later?"
- I say "Yes. If you've felt an ouch and didn't say anything, please do bring it to whoever you're comfortable with on the leadership team. We want to know and we will figure out how to address it.
- Most common comment is "If anyone is thinking this feels like overkill, let me tell you what happened to me last week at (insert bad story here). If something like this had been set up in advance, I bet it wouldn't have happened."

May I ask that we pledge to each other that we will work together to promote an environment where it feels safe to speak up -- and that we will welcome any reminder to maintain a positive and respectful room. If you so pledge, please say "I do."

Thank you. If an experience ever feels larger than an Ouch-Oops moment, please know that concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative environment may be reported through several channels.

1. For Participants:
 - a. The Instructor.
 - b. The non-equity deputy (NED) (After the first week, the class elects a member who agrees to be a channel for cast questions/ concerns to the organization).
 - c. If you do not feel comfortable reporting to either your stage manager or the NED, please report to Clare Lopez (Owner).