

BDSM Etiquette

BDSM etiquette is about respect and communication:

RESPECT: Negotiate all the limits and terms (including 'safe' words and signals) of a scene before you start to play. A 'safe' word (or signal) is used in BDSM play to stop the scene immediately. Some people use green, yellow, and red. These systems are there to protect everyone involved. Respect the limits and feelings of other players (and your own) at all times.

COMMUNICATION: Discuss interests, pleasures, perceived needs, physical limitations, past experiences, health needs, and STI status with your partner(s). If you are unsure of a sexual or BDSM activity, then hold off until someone experienced teaches you the safety aspects. Discussion builds intimacy. You and your partner(s) will have more fun!

BDSM Risk Reduction

Responsible BDSM has always been about practicing safety, so it's important to understand the risks involved in BDSM play, and how to minimize them. BDSM activities have generally been classed as low risk for HIV transmission. This means that only a small number of people are likely to have contracted HIV, or passed on HIV, while practising BDSM. HIV is not the only sexually transmitted infection (STI), and there are other possible dangers associated with some BDSM practices.

Even if it's been negotiated, **you should be prepared for a quick end of the scene**, so have good and appropriate emergency equipment nearby, such as safety scissors, bolt cutters for padlocks/chains, and first-aid.

If you need to visit an emergency department, be as honest with them as possible. This will help ensure you get the help you need. They have almost certainly heard it all before, and it's in the interests of your health to give them detailed, accurate information. Plain-language descriptions of what you were doing will do just fine, no matter how embarrassed you may feel about using it.

BDSM

SAFER KINKY SEX

If sexually explicit information about BDSM activities might offend you, then this resource is not for you.



About This Resource

This resource contains practical guidelines and advice on the prevention of, hepatitis, Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) within bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, and sadomasochism (BDSM) play. It is an introduction to safer BDSM play for men, women and transfolk.

BDSM: Safer Kinky Sex is designed to provide you with information to help reduce your risks. This edition contains updated and expanded information throughout with new information on hepatitis C, HPV, MRSA, cleaning toys, condoms, lubricants, shaving, cutting and harm reduction. We have also strived to make this resource more trans inclusive. Some transmen or people on the trans masculine spectrum call their genitals their front hole, and not a vagina. To acknowledge this important difference, we will use vagina and frontal hole. More information about BDSM resources is available in the Other Resources section.



For distribution in Toronto, emerging information and online updates, please contact:

AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT)
Safer BDSM Education Project
399 Church Street, 4th floor,
Toronto, Ontario M5B 2J6

BDSM@actontario.org
www.actontario.org
416 340 2437

For distribution in the rest of Canada, and for HIV and hepatitis C information or resources, contact:

CATIE - Canada's source for HIV and hep C info
1 800 263 1638 www.CATIE.ca Info@CATIE.ca

CATIE Ordering Centre
Catalogue Number: ATI-26131
(aussi disponible en français:
ATI-26131F).

Nationalized and reprinted with
assistance from CATIE, 2013.



Other Resources

BDSM is not a licence for abuse. BDSM/kink community organizations and social gatherings exist to help you get a feel for how BDSM relationships work and how to ensure that your consent and limits are respected. Get in touch with the organizations nearby and take the time to get to know them. You'll be able to meet people and attend workshops on techniques, as well as use their resources. To find out about ones near you, check out your local kink store, community newspapers, and the web. The oldest organizations (some over thirty years old) tend to have the best resources, on line and off.

Try not to confuse erotic sites and networking sites with the sites of BDSM community organizations. The latter will most often have good resource sections, whereas the former are less reliable. In very little time, you'll notice the references that people respect the most, since they're mentioned on almost all good sites.

Workshops are delivered by BDSM educators all over the world where there are enough kinky people to gather more than occasionally. Enquire at your local purveyor of kink or search the web to see what's coming up in your area. Even if you are straight, don't be afraid to inquire with local gay and lesbian retailers, they will be happy to help you.

If there are no BDSM organizations close to you, and you don't have internet access, there are still plenty of books that were written to help you learn safer BDSM. You may be able to find these through your local library, health centre, AIDS service organization, or online. Don't feel shy about asking.

For information on HIV, hepatitis, and other STIs, get in touch with your local community health centre, public health unit, doctors' office/clinic, community AIDS organization, local library, or CATIE, Canada's source for HIV and hepatitis C information. The web also has this kind of information, but be sure to use well-known, reputable web sites. If in doubt about health information, talk openly about these subjects with your doctor. If your doctor will not talk about these issues, you might want to consider changing doctors.

About This Booklet

This booklet is dedicated to the memory of Douglas Dale McCarthy (1931-2007), one of the founders of the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) and ACT's Safer BDSM Education Project.

We would like to thank the many players, educators, and kink community members who have contributed to the development of this resource over the past two decades.

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August, 1996; October, 1999; August, 2009; April, 2010;
October, 2010. This edition © March, 2013.

ISBN: 978-0-921918-42-4 (print)
 978-0-921918-44-8 (online)

Editors 2013: Duncan MacLachlan and Rui Pires

Photographs: © G. Elliott Simpson, 2008-2013

Design: Raymond Helkio

BDSM: Safer Kinky Sex is offered free of charge as a sexual health resource by ACT and CATIE.

We regret that CATIE and ACT cannot supply orders outside of Canada. A mobile version and pdf is available for downloading at actorontario.org/bdsm (*Disponible en français à actorontario.org/bdsm/fr*).