

## Intimacy Language & Choreography Guide

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Based on *Staging Sex: Best Tools, Practices, & Techniques for Staging Theatrical Intimacy*  
by Chelsea Pace

### Big Ideas:

- **Culture of consent**– saying no is normal. If you are uncomfortable or even just unenthusiastic about something, we can adapt it to meet your boundaries without question.
- **De-sexualize the process**- when choreographing, I will avoid using sexualized language and encourage you all to do the same.
- **Choreography**- “passion fades, choreography is forever”. Intimacy choreography is like fight choreography; even when adrenaline is running, stick to the counts, gravity, and destinations as rehearsed.
- **Hygiene**- Wear deodorant, brush your teeth, shower, preferably every day, but especially for rehearsals where there will be intimacy.

### Boundary Tools:

- **Green/Yellow/Red**- at the beginning of any rehearsals that will include physical touch, we will go around and share our boundaries for the day. Boundaries can vary from day to day, so be sure to actively listen to your scene partners during this sharing time.
  - Green= I am comfortable receiving touch here.
  - Yellow= Please check in with me before any touch here.
  - Red= Do not touch me in these areas.
    - “Today, I’m feeling green for my face and limbs, but generally yellow for my torso and hips, and red for my right shoulder because I have an injury” (you do not need to share why certain areas are yellow/red, this is just an example).
- **Button**- Falafel as a company, we will decide on our own “button”, which is a safe word or pause. Calling “button” can, but does not necessarily mean that you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, it can also be a call to pause because you are uncertain and want to ask for clarification from me or your scene partner before proceeding.
  - “Button. Where is my hand supposed to go here?”
  - “Button. I need a minute to shake it out.”
- **Placeholders**- When building choreography, we will also choreograph placeholders to be used when actors are sick, need to mark, tech runs, etc.

### Choreography Vocabulary:

- **Opening and Closing Distance**- between people and body parts. “Close distance between your left hand and their cheek”.

- **Levels of Touch-**
  - Level 1- Skin/Powder level touch- gentle, calming, soothing, creepy.
  - Level 2- Muscle/Paint- romantic, intense, controlling.
  - Level 3- Bone/Clay- desperate, overwhelmed
  - “This touch on their face can be level 1, very light and gentle”.
- **Tempo and Counts-** Similarly to dance, this specifies the length of the movement. “This touch on their face can be a slow four counts”.
- **Destination-** answers the question, “where does the touch go”? “Where is the destination of my other hand while I’m touching their face”.
- **Gravity and Weight-** shifting the center of gravity and weight with another person, similarly to weight sharing in physical theatre.

### **Notes on Kissing:**

- Standard is closed mouth.
- No kissing if actors are sick.
- Focus on motivation and storytelling that leads up to the kiss.

### **Making Mistakes:**

Unintentionally crossing boundaries can happen, and if/when it does, here are some steps to heal from that interaction-

- 1) Own your mistake and name the moment. “I realize that I grabbed your shoulder in that scene after you said that you were recovering from an injury during check in.”
- 2) Apologize. “I’m sorry that I overstepped your boundary and caused you shoulder pain. I got caught up in the action of the scene and forgot, which is totally my bad.”
- 3) Thank them “Thank you for listening.”
- 4) Figure out a way forward “In the future, I will be more focused during check in and I will be more intentional about checking in with you and my other scene partners before initiating contact onstage.”