



INTIMACY PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION

**YES  
NO  
MAYBE**

AN ACTOR'S GUIDE TO FINDING  
THEIR BOUNDARIES IN INTIMACY WORK



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# INTRODUCTION

Talking about sex and talking about one's boundaries are two of the hardest things to do in a personal context, let alone in the work context that actors encounter on a regular basis when faced with intimate material in a script. Sex is often difficult for people to talk about because of the shame that frequently accompanies it due to societal stigma, and many people are completely unfamiliar with their own boundaries because most of us are never taught that we have boundaries nor how to set them with others.

This workbook sets out to help actors explore the many different types of intimacy for the screen and reflect upon their own limits and comfort levels in a self-paced setting, so everyone can go at a pace that feels safe for them. The booklet utilizes reflection prompts along with a tool called the *Yes, No, Maybe List*. These lists originated to help people talk with their partners about sexuality and what they like, dislike, and want to maybe explore. The lists lay out a host of options of acts and activities and allow the user to check a box next to each activity about whether that thing is a yes, a no, or a maybe for them. Here we have adapted the tool for use by actors to determine their comfort level and boundaries when it comes to performing in scenes of intimacy that involve nudity, simulated sex, and other types of intimate content.



This booklet was developed to help you think about your boundaries in the context of doing intimacy work for the screen. It's useful to go through the lists when you aren't being considered for a role that has intimacy work so that you can think objectively about your boundaries.

In addition to getting you thinking about what types of intimacy work you feel comfortable performing, we have also provided you with sections about language, consent, and communication to help you think about what you need to feel safe doing intimacy work.

As you go through the lists in this booklet, think about which of the following acts and activities are hard and soft limits for you, and which ones are a yes. A **hard limit**, which would be a no, is something that you never want to do no matter what the context is, whereas a **soft limit**, which is likely to be a maybe, is something that you might do depending on the specific situation. We've provided a context column so that you can elaborate on when a soft limit might be a yes, or anything else you think is relevant.

We hope that you find the information provided in this booklet helpful as you explore and reflect upon your level of comfort with performing in intimate scenes. If you'd like to go into even more detail about performing in intimate scenes, you can take our online course *Introduction to Intimacy Work for Actors*.





## SECTION 1: LANGUAGE

Words can have a profound impact on someone depending on their relationship with a particular word. When talking about sex and body parts, these topics can be particularly charged when it comes to language, and it's important that we are respectful of what language feels affirming or is potentially triggering for others.

If you are ever unsure about what language to use to describe someone's body, we advise using anatomical language or just simply asking! The same goes for simulated sex acts; if you're unsure if others will find your terminology offensive, either default to using neutral language or ask the others in the room what kind of language they feel comfortable with.

The reflection questions in this section will help you to start thinking about your preferences and boundaries when it comes to language and intimacy work.



**WORDS I WANT USED TO DESCRIBE MY BODY:**

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**WORDS I *DON'T* WANT USED TO DESCRIBE MY BODY:**

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**WORDS I PREFER TO BE USED WHEN TALKING ABOUT GENITALS, BODY PARTS, AND SIMULATED SEX:**

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**WORDS ABOUT GENITALS, BODY PARTS, AND  
SIMULATED SEX ACTS THAT MAKE ME  
UNCOMFORTABLE:**

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**I DON'T EVER WANT TO BE CALLED:**

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## SECTION 2: CONSENT AND COMMUNICATION

The key to having a great experience while performing in scenes of intimacy is to communicate honestly and openly with your scene partner(s). Everyone feels differently about how they want to navigate consent and touch, and it's helpful to have a conversation about it before any touching begins.

There are two main consent models that are helpful to work with in the context of intimacy work, which are active consent and blanket consent. **Active consent** is when you ask for someone's consent each time before you touch them somewhere new. If you're new to working with someone, this method can be a good way to learn about each other and spend time establishing trust. **Blanket consent** is when you lay out where you don't want to be touched and what acts/activities you don't want to do and then your scene partner has permission to touch everywhere else without asking first.

Regardless of whether your preference is for active consent or blanket consent, it's important to give your scene partner feedback if they do something and you don't like it or if you need a modification to it. After you try something new together, you can always ask your scene partner a question like, "How was that for you?" to solicit feedback from them. Try to avoid using questions like, "Was that ok?" because many people are conditioned to just automatically say yes. If you instead ask them how the experience was, it's more likely to get you an honest response and feedback.

This section will help you think through important questions around consent and communication when it comes to intimacy work.

THE CONSENT MODEL I PREFER TO USE WHEN REHEARSING AND PERFORMING IN INTIMATE SCENES IS:

- ACTIVE CONSENT       BLANKET CONSENT

ELABORATE BELOW:

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I HAVE TRAUMA THAT GETS TRIGGERED WHEN:

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I WANT TO USE A SAFE WORD:

- YES       NO       MAYBE

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MY PREFERRED SAFE WORD IS \_\_\_\_\_ IF IT WORKS FOR MY PARTNER(S) AS WELL.

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IT IS IMPORTANT TO ME THAT MY PARTNER IS NOT USING SUBSTANCES (E.G. DRUGS OR ALCOHOL) BEFORE OR DURING AN INTIMATE SCENE WITH ME:

YES     NO     MAYBE

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ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME WHEN IT COMES TO CONSENT, COMMUNICATION, AND INTIMACY WORK:

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**I HAVE DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING ABOUT:**

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**I HAVE DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING WHEN:**

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**I CAN TELL I'M PAST MY PHYSICAL LIMITS WHEN:**

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I CAN TELL I'M PAST MY PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITS WHEN:

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IN ORDER TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, AFTER AN INTIMATE SCENE I NEED:

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I FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE PERFORMING IN SCENES OF INTIMACY WHEN:

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## SECTION 3: KISSING

**This section is to help get you thinking about what type of kissing you are ok with doing on camera. In the additional context box, feel free to elaborate on any exceptions, special conditions that would need to be met, etc.**

TYPE OF KISSING	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
Closed Mouth Kissing				
Open Mouth Kissing without Tongue				
Open Mouth Kissing with Tongue				
Lip Biting/Nibbling				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
Touching Tongues, No Kissing				

TYPE OF KISSING	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
Kissing on the Face or Cheek				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
Kissing on the Body (e.g. Stomach, Inner Thigh, Etc.)				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				

**Additional Notes About Kissing:**

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## SECTION 4: TOUCHING



**Everyone has different sensitivities when it comes to touch, and the only way your scene partner is going to know where you don't want to be touched is if you're aware of your no-go areas and communicate those to them. Touch boundaries can change depending on context, and that's totally normal, so we've provided you with space to provide more details on each of the listed situations.**

TYPE OF TOUCH	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
Chest/Breast Touching				
Chest/Breast Licking, Kissing, or Sucking				
Chest/Breast Biting				
Nipple/Areola Touching				
Nipple/Areola Licking, Kissing, or Sucking				
Nipple/Areola Biting				

TYPE OF TOUCH	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
Hands on Genitals (With a Barrier in Place)				
Butt Touching (Receiving)				
<i>Grabbing/Squeezing</i>				
<i>Slapping</i>				
<i>Light Touch</i>				
<i>Heavy Touch</i>				
Touching of the Face				
Touching of the Hair				
Fingers in Mouth				
Licking				
Toe Sucking				
Scratching				
Slapping				
Spanking				
Pinching				

TYPE OF TOUCH	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
Hair Pulling				
Neck Activities				
<i>Touching/Caressing Neck</i>				
<i>Static Hold on the Neck</i>				
<i>Kissing</i>				
<i>Biting</i>				
Tickling				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
Cuddling				
<i>Clothed</i>				
<i>Naked</i>				
Hugging				
Dry Humping/Clothed Body-to-Body Rubbing				

# SECTION 5: NUDITY

The following list will familiarize you with the many different types of nudity, and it will also explore situations in which a performer may be scantily clad. If you are a member of a union, your union likely has rules around how nudity must be handled from auditions through post-production, and it's a good idea to familiarize yourself with your union rights if you choose to do nudity.

TYPE OF NUDITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
Still Photos of Nudity				
Performing in Underwear/Lingerie				
<i>While Wearing a Bra/ Chest Covering</i>				
<i>While Wearing Full Coverage Bottoms</i>				
<i>While Wearing a Partial-Coverage Bottom</i>				

TYPE OF NUDITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Performing in Sheer/See-Through Undergarments</b>				
<i>While Wearing a Sheer Bra/Chest Covering</i>				
<i>While Wearing Sheer Bottoms</i>				
<b>Implied Nudity (e.g. Showing Bare Back)</b>				
<i>Using a Body Double</i>				
<b>Chest/Breast Nudity</b>				
<i>Including Nipple/Areola</i>				
<i>Excluding Nipple/Areola</i>				
<i>While Wearing Pasties</i>				
<i>Using a Body Double</i>				
<b>Frontal Below-the-Waist Nudity</b>				
<i>Including Genitals</i>				
<i>Including Pubic Hair</i>				
<i>While Wearing a Pubic Wig</i>				



TYPE OF NUILITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<i>While Wearing Prosthetic Genitalia</i>				
<i>Using a Body Double</i>				
<b>Rear Nudity</b>				
<i>While Wearing a Thong</i>				
<i>Showing Full Buttocks</i>				
<i>Including Butt Crack</i>				
<i>Excluding Butt Crack</i>				
<i>Butt Shown Only from the Side</i>				
<i>Using a Body Double</i>				
<b>Full Nudity (Completely Naked, No Modesty Wear)</b>				
<i>While Wearing Body Paint</i>				
<i>While Wearing a Pubic Wig or Prosthetic Genitalia</i>				



## SECTION 6: SIMULATED SEX

We have tried our best to put together a comprehensive list of the majority of simulated sex acts you may encounter during your career as a performer. While it's likely you may never be asked if you're willing to do some of these simulated sex acts as some of these are not frequently incorporated into stories, it never hurts to know what's possible. Please note that all sex acts must be simulated (no real sex acts are allowed) and all performers should have their genitals properly covered with modesty garments when simulating sex. We have left off the word "simulated" in front of each of these activities in order to provide more space for the context section.

TYPE OF SIMULATED SEX	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Masturbation</b>				
<i>Alone</i>				
<i>In Front of Others</i>				
<b>Vaginal Intercourse</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				

TYPE OF SIMULATED SEX	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Anal Intercourse</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Vaginal Penetration with Sex Toys</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Anal Penetration with Sex Toys</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Manual Stimulation of a Vulva/Vagina (i.e. Fingering)</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Manual Stimulation of a Penis (i.e. Hand Job)</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				

TYPE OF SIMULATED SEX	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Manual Stimulation of an Anus</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Oral Sex on a Vulva/Vagina</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Oral Sex on a Penis</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Oral Sex on an Anus</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Using a Vibrator</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				

TYPE OF SIMULATED SEX	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Tribadism (Scissoring, Rubbing Naked Genitals Together with a Partner)</b>				
<b>Face Sitting</b>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<b>Ejaculation</b>				
<i>Being Ejaculated On</i>				
<i>Ejaculating on Someone</i>				
<b>Performing a Simulated Orgasm</b>				
<b>Phone Sex</b>				
<b>Video Chat Sex</b>				
<b>Threesomes</b>				
<b>Group Sex Scenes (More Than Three People)</b>				
<b>Outdoor Sex Scenes</b>				
<b>Sex Scenes in Water (e.g. Pool, Hot Tub, Shower, Etc.)</b>				



TYPE OF SIMULATED SEX	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
Sex Scenes Involving Menstrual Blood				
Sex Scenes with Actors of the Same Gender				
Sex Scenes with Actors of a Different Gender				
Sex Scenes with Actors of the Same Sexual Orientation				
Sex Scenes with Actors of a Different Sexual Orientation				
Storylines with Sex Scenes that Deal with:				
<i>Sex Work</i>				
<i>Ethical Non-Monogamy</i>				
<i>Cheating</i>				
<i>Anonymous Sex</i>				
<i>Trafficking</i>				
<i>Slavery</i>				
<i>Sexual Abuse of Minors</i>				
<i>Sexual Assault</i>				

TYPE OF SIMULATED SEX	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<i>Intimate Partner Violence</i>				
<i>Disabilities</i>				
<i>Mental Health Crisis</i>				
<i>A Large Age Gap Between Partners</i>				
<i>Consensual Intimacy Between an Adult and a Minor</i>				
<b>Face-to-Face Sex Positions</b>				
<b>Rear Entry Sex Positions</b>				
<b>Standing Sex Positions</b>				
<b>Side-Lying Sex Positions</b>				
<b>69'ing</b>				
<b>Sex Positions in Which You Sit on Top of Your Partner</b>				
<b>Still Photos of Simulated Sex Acts</b>				



## SECTION 7: ADDITIONAL INTIMATE ACTIVITIES

When most people think of intimacy work, the first thing that comes to mind is kissing, nudity, and simulated sex. However, there are other types of intimacy work that go beyond simulating sex acts and exposing skin. In this section, we will explore types of intimacy work that are vulnerable experiences for many performers and often require extra care and attention in how they are executed.

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Erotic Dancing</b>				
<i>With Nudity</i>				
<i>Without Nudity</i>				
<i>With Touching from a Partner</i>				
<b>Stripping</b>				
<i>With Nudity</i>				
<i>Without Nudity</i>				

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Lactation/Breastfeeding/ Chestfeeding</b>				
<i>With Nudity</i>				
<i>Without Nudity</i>				
<b>Pregnancy</b>				
<i>With Nudity</i>				
<i>Without Nudity</i>				
<i>Involving Simulated Sex</i>				
<b>Childbirth Labor/Delivery</b>				
<i>With Nudity</i>				
<i>Without Nudity</i>				
<b>Medical Procedures (e.g. Gynecological Exam or Surgery)</b>				
<i>With Nudity</i>				
<i>Without Nudity</i>				
<b>Wrestling or "Play-Fighting"</b>				
<b>Role Playing</b>				

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Watching Pornography</b>				
<i>Alone</i>				
<i>With Others</i>				
<i>While Simulating Sex</i>				
<b>Being Blindfolded</b>				
<i>During Foreplay</i>				
<i>During Simulated Sex</i>				
<i>While Nude</i>				
<b>Using Food Items</b>				
<i>During Foreplay</i>				
<i>During Simulated Sex</i>				
<b>Massage</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<b>Spreader Bar</b>				
<b>Exhibitionism (Displaying Yourself for Others)</b>				

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Voyeurism (Watching Others)</b>				
<b>Dirty Talk</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<b>Spitting</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<b>Impact Play</b>				
<i>Paddling</i>				
<i>Flogging</i>				
<i>Whipping</i>				
<i>Using a Crop</i>				
<i>Caning</i>				
<b>Mouth Gags</b>				
<b>Storylines that Deal with BDSM*/Kink</b>				

**\*BDSM = Bondage/Discipline, Domination/Submission, Sadism/Masochism**

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Humiliation</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<b>Objectification</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<b>Simulated Choking</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<b>Bondage</b>				
<i>Rope Bondage</i>				
<i>Hand Cuffs</i>				
<i>Chains</i>				
<i>Light Bondage</i>				
<i>Suspension</i>				
<i>Heavy Bondage, Immobilizing Bondage</i>				

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	YES	NO	MAYBE	ADDITIONAL CONTEXT
<b>Master/Slave Dynamics</b>				
<i>Playing the Master Role</i>				
<i>Playing the Slave Role</i>				
<b>Dom(me)/Submissive Dynamics</b>				
<i>Playing the Submissive Role</i>				
<i>Playing the Dom(me) Role</i>				
<b>Torture</b>				
<i>Giving</i>				
<i>Receiving</i>				
<b>Urination</b>				
<i>Non-Sexualized</i>				
<i>Sexualized</i>				
<b>Defecation</b>				
<i>Non-Sexualized</i>				
<i>Sexualized</i>				





## CONCLUSION

We hope you've enjoyed working through this booklet and that it has helped you to clarify your own boundaries around doing intimacy work for the screen. If you'd like to go deeper into understanding your rights as a performer in scenes of intimacy, how to navigate consent and boundaries conversations in rehearsal and on set, and learn other tools to apply the knowledge you've gained here, sign up for IPA's *[Introduction to Intimacy Work for Actors](#)* online course. It's a self-paced course to which you'll have lifetime access after purchase.

If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to reach out to us at [info@IPAinternational.org](mailto:info@IPAinternational.org). You can also sign up for our [newsletter](#) to stay up to date on future course offerings from IPA.



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*Want to learn more about performing in scenes of intimacy?*

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