



Inclusion, Diversity, Respect, and Tolerance

DIVA has adopted the Chicago Theatre Standards in order to ensure that everyone enjoys a safe and comfortable creative environment. We have adopted a Concern Resolution Path which provides for the availability of individuals at two levels to assist participants in resolving issues between or among themselves. In addition, we use the *Ouch/Oops* method of expressing and acknowledging offense. At every level, DIVA strives to prevent and respond to unsafe and/or abusive events, environments, and individuals.

Participants should have insight as to their own levels of sensitivity and independently determine whether a particular project is likely to cause more discomfort than may be tolerable. In projects that intend to challenge limits, push boundaries, and include explicit language and content, transparency is key from the outset. Full disclosure of the nature of such projects will ensure that all participants consent to being exposed to content which may, in other contexts, be considered unacceptable and offensive. Potential participants have every right to inquire further and should decline to participate if the project may veer into areas which are likely to cause discomfort, offense, or harm with fear of reprisal.

One of many intended DIVA Productions is the Department of Improv, as well as periodic DIVA Ed improv workshops. An improvisational setting, especially comedic, will often push the boundaries of humanity at all levels. All potentially offensive content cannot possibly be disclosed in advance or avoided in the spontaneous and open environment that is improvisational theater. In fact, a comedic setting necessarily blurs lines of what is considered appropriate, sensitive, and offensive. Comedy can provide an outlet for frustration and despair. The invention of an offensive character should not necessarily result in attributing such traits to the inventor. Often, such an expression may often be an outlet for identifying and exposing such unsavory characteristics.

A qualified choreographer is required for any production that involves a fight scene. Under no circumstance should actors without the requisite training be directed to spontaneously simulate violence. If a production includes sexual intimacy, safeguards should be put into place to ensure comfort, safety, and consent of all participants at every stage. Any and all fight/intimate choreography should be transparently staged and blocked in a safe and sensitive environment that includes the presence of multiple parties. Such scenes should not be rehearsed without an independent monitor unless all participants consent, nor should the choreography, staging, and blocking, once established, be modified, except by mutual consent.

DIVA pledges to all participants a welcoming environment free of harassment and discrimination. To ensure a shared understanding of conduct that should not be tolerated, we provide the following definitions.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendos, or taunting about a person's racial or ethnic background, color, place of birth, citizenship, ancestry, creed, or disability.
- ▶ Unwanted questions or comments about another person's private life.
- ▶ Posting or display of materials which may cause humiliation, offense, or embarrassment.



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Sexual harassment is one or a series of comments or conduct of a gender-related or sexual nature that is known or should reasonably be known to be unwelcome, unwanted, offensive, intimidating, hostile, or inappropriate. Everyone has a right to be free from:

- ▶ sexual solicitations or advances made by anyone but in particular by a person in a position to confer, grant, or deny a benefit or advancement; and
- ▶ reprisal or threat of reprisal for the rejection of sexual solicitations or advances where the reprisal is made by anyone but in particular by a person in a position to grant, confer, or deny a benefit or advancement.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendos, or taunting about a person's body, attire, gender, or sexual orientation.
- ▶ Unwanted touching or physical contact such as touching, kissing, patting, hugging, and pinching.
- ▶ Unwelcome inquiries or comments about a person's sex life and/or sexual preferences.
- ▶ Leering, whistling, or other suggestive or insulting sounds.
- ▶ Inappropriate comments about clothing, physical characteristics, or activities.
- ▶ Posting or display of materials which are sexually oriented.
- ▶ Requests or demands for sexual favors which include, or strongly imply, promises of rewards for complying (such as advancement opportunities) or threats of punishment for refusal (such as the denial of advancement opportunities).

A person does not have to be a direct target to be adversely affected by harassment. Harassment includes conduct and comments that create and maintain an offensive, hostile, or intimidating climate. This may occur unintentionally and accidentally, in which case it is imperative to address the concern in real time (see *Ouch/Oops*).

In addition, DIVA strives to maintain an ethical atmosphere when engaging with content that explores complex human experiences which may include representations of violence, racism, homophobia, abuse, and other challenging content. When producing culturally sensitive work, DIVA will ensure the respectful, safe, and equitable treatment of such content. To that end, participants have the right to inquire how their cultural personhood or other identity aspect will be used in the context of any project. Such inquiries should be received thoughtfully and confidentially. If a participant is uncomfortable with such use at any phase of the project, s/he may decline to continue without fear of reprisal (such as the loss of future opportunities).

Diversity and inclusion should always be a consideration in selecting and staffing any project; specifically, cultural- or other identity-specific work should seek project personnel who can and are willing to speak to that experience. In such projects, the following may be considered offensive and/or intolerant and should be avoided:

- ▶ costume pieces that can reasonably be understood to be culturally demeaning, particularly if such intention was not disclosed in the selection process and/or could not have been expected by a reading of the script or other available materials;



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- ▶ staging of violence, abuse, sexual encounters, and the like, that was not disclosed during the selection process;
- ▶ accents or dialects to underscore a cultural representation not disclosed during the selection process;
- ▶ make-up that can reasonably be described as “black-face,” “brown-face,” or similar portrayal of skin color not disclosed during the selection process;
- ▶ the intended use of insensitive stereotypes of any group not disclosed during the selection process.

A failure to adhere to any of above guidelines may create a negative and/or hostile atmosphere for individuals or groups. This may have the effect of poisoning the inclusive and collaborative environment for inspiration and creation that is DIVA’s mission. As a result, DIVA stresses the importance of these standards in order to foster a community that makes the arts accessible to everyone.