

Intimacy and Ensemble Guidelines

A guide produced specifically for LAMDA

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Background & Approach to Intimacy at LAMDA

LAMDA's movement team is made up of a diverse group of core staff and its primary research focus is ensemble and inclusive practice. According to LAMDA's ethos,

"For us, working as an ensemble is an essential skill in acting that is tackled in each class, rehearsal and sharing. As part of an ensemble each actor is accountable and responsible to work and take creative risks with everyone. We take care of our body, and we take care of the body of the ensemble." (Excerpt from LAMDA's movement ethos statement)

We view intimacy at the core of everything that an actor does: acting is intimate. Therefore, we teach ensemble practices that include the pillars of intimacy (communication, consent, context, choreography and closure) in every class, project, and production. Although the initiative of offering intimacy guidelines has come from the movement team, we consider this an interdisciplinary project: everyone at LAMDA should be aware, contribute, collaborate and integrate within these guidelines into their practice to share a professional language and tools for open communication when working with students.

We are committed to continuously training our staff according to the latest developments in the industry with best practice and ensemble ethos. We aim to prepare our students to be excellent professional actors in an ensemble to create, drive innovative change in our industry with multihyphenate artists who can create their own work.

Introduction

These are guidelines, and not a rulebook. There are lots of circumstances that may affect how intimacy can be integrated, progressed and a part of the process from pre-production, rehearsals, and into production with a collaborative approach. The priorities are that acting in classes or doing scenes of a play are given careful consideration, that **everyone's human first with well-being upheld, people's boundaries are respected, open communication and consent are central to the entire process.**

The primary aims of the intimacy guidelines are:

- To safeguard the emotional and psychological health of students.
- To put protocols in place to safeguard the students from potential harassment, misconduct, or abuse (whether intentional or unintentional) when dealing with intimate content.

- To understand when and how an Intimacy Director/Intimacy Coordinator can be brought onto a process as a supportive member physical storyteller and creative member of the production team.
- To be aware of how to work with an Intimacy Director/Intimacy Coordinator
- To encourage a clear reporting structure for students and LAMDA staff.
- To enrich and diversify thoughtful conversations about consent, intimacy, gender, sexuality, and emotional themes on stage.
- To broaden opportunities at LAMDA for staged intimacy, nurturing empowered actors who collaboratively engage with creative and production teams to thoughtfully craft and perform intimate scenes, emphasizing care and best practices.
- To prepare students who are acting, directing, producing, stage managing and taking technical roles to approach intimate work with knowledge, confidence, and empowerment.
- To equip students and staff with professional language and tools for open communication when working on intimate material, including the use of inclusive language
- To educate students about consent and uplift clear processes of consent when working with sensitive material.

Definition of Intimacy (Theatrical Intimacy Education example)

LAMDA considers stage action in which the context of the scene or production require physical or imaginative touch or simulated sex or sexual violence between actors as a moment of "theatrical intimacy" (TI). These moments may include but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Kissing
- Intimate touch
- Imaginative intimate moments (moments where the actors are asked to portray moments of romantic chemistry between characters even when physical touch is not needed)
- Touch that is interpreted as an abusive physical, coercive, assault, sexual and/or emotional act
- Imaginative violent moments without touch
- Nudity: full exposure of any performer's torso, breast, buttocks, or pelvic/genital area
- Partial nudity wherein the actor is in a lesser state of dress than they would typically be in rehearsal.

When should you work with an Intimacy Director (ID)?

When preparing for a production at LAMDA, directors for productions or projects fill a form communicating the needs of the production/project and the information gathered will help us determine whether an Intimacy Director is hired. This is a basic, initial guide and there are many circumstances that fall beyond this, so think critically about the content involved in the production or project.

When tutors start working at LAMDA, we offer an introductory workshop on our ethos on intimacy and ensemble that will hopefully offer you some skills and clarify when to engage an intimacy director. For guidance, here are some key aspects in which we base our decision-making for if an Intimacy director needs to be engaged:

An intimacy Director/coordinator is essential if:

- There is nudity (exposure of anything that would be covered by swimwear) or partial nudity
- There is simulated sex (including simulated manual stimulation, oral sex and penetrative sex)
- There is intimacy including minors or vulnerable artists
- There is simulated sexual assault or non-consensual action (also requires a Fight director)
- An actor or a member of the team has requested an intimacy director

An intimacy Director is recommended if:

- There is intense kissing or “making out”
- Physical touch or “groping” of the body that might be sensitive or triggering

You might find it beneficial, but you do not need an intimacy director if there is consent-based communication in rehearsal and there is:

- Light and/or casual physical touch
- There is light kissing
- There is chemistry or sexually charged content

If you have any questions or need support, please contact our Producer (rebecca.lyle@lamda.ac.uk) , Course Leader for the year group you are working with or the Head of Acting Training (philippa.strandberg-long@lamda.ac.uk)

Skills Projects and Graduating Shows: Communicating the Needs Before We Start

Directors working on Graduating year shows in the Sainsbury, Linbury and Carne Theatres now must complete a form as soon as possible after their contract is confirmed communicating the needs for the specific project. Each form now has an Intimacy section (see next page for screenshots), so that Lead Practitioner in Movement and Dance (Micaela Miranda) and LAMDA's Producer (Rebecca Lyle) can know what content is in a show/project. This means that the Producer can then know whether they need to get an Intimacy Director and provide extra support.

The same procedures apply to acting projects for non-graduating years from the second year in the BA course and second term for the MA/MFA courses: tutors directing projects will be sent a form to gather information about the needs for the project for movement and intimacy support.

Directors should note if they *know* there is intimate content (it's an essential part of the story and is in the script, e.g. *Spring Awakening*). Directors can also note if they *think* they will include it or it's in their 'vision' (e.g. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where the fairies are partially nude).

Remember: it is better to flag the highest potential for Intimacy, and have best practice in place, and then actually pull back to a lower level of intimacy content ~~Intimacy~~ if needed. For example, if it *might* be part of the 'vision' to include intense touch or kissing, and flag these details in the form, even if it might not actually be needed.

If Intimacy is flagged, the following processes will be initiated:

- LAMDA puts wheels in motion for an ID to be hired in some cases (please see section on.
- LAMDA sends the Producer, SM and Director these guidelines, requiring confirmation that they have read and acknowledged their responsibilities.
- The Producer sends the Actors these guidelines, letting them know whether an Intimacy Director is involved, as well as information as to who they can approach throughout should any problems/issues occur (see reporting structure below). The Lead Practitioner in Movement and Dance will check with the Producer that this has been done.

Screenshots from LAMDA's show needs application form for directors

7. Intimacy content: please select one of the following

- ☐ There will definitely be intimacy content in this production
- ☐ There will maybe be intimacy content in this production
- ☐ There will definitely not be intimacy content in this production

8. (CW:// sexual assault) Please note here wether there are moments of intimacy likely to take place in the show, based on the script or your plans for the show so far.

- ☐ There is full nudity or partial nudity* (The school policy is not to nudity from students within productions. If there is a case where it is integral to the production and the student consents and believes it is important to their role it will be handled as per our intimacy ethics guidelines available on LAMDA world)
- ☐ There is simulated sex
- ☐ There is simulated sexual assault or non-consensual action
- ☐ There is simulated childbirth
- ☐ There is intense kissing or "making out"
- ☐ There is physical touch or groping of the body that might be sensitive or triggering
- ☐ There is light and/or casual physical touch
- ☐ There is light kissing
- ☐ There is chemistry or sexually charged content
- ☐ Other (please specify in comments)
- ☐ None of the above

10. In case you need intimacy: could you please specify what moments in the play you think you will need to work with an intimacy coordinator (this can be a bullet point list for now)

Enter your answer

You can also find the full form here: [Microsoft Forms](#)

Intimacy Workshops

At the start of every term, LAMDA will offer a 2-hour *Basics of Intimacy & Ensemble Practice* Workshops available to all staff. This workshop is compulsory for any staff leading work with students and available to other staff that is interested in the matter. Complementary workshops will be done along the term to bring questions that arise directly from consent-based practice, its challenges and innovation. The aim of these workshops is to consolidate a consent-based language of work with students across all classes, projects and productions. These workshops should also empower our staff to understand what constitutes intimate moments that need Intimacy Directors, and what are the skills they need to lead a room where consent is practiced, and the needs of the work do not call for an intimacy director/coordinator.

These workshops are **not replacements** for the need for Intimacy Directors in productions with Intimate content. Where a show has Intimate content that needs an Intimacy director, LAMDA's Producer or Lead Practitioner in Production Management will be in touch with representatives from the show to discuss arranging a separate session with an Intimacy Director to work specifically on the content in that production.

For skills classes, there will often be class observations where the use of a consent based language is one of the criteria considered. Throughout the term, should you need support, please contact Lead Practitioner in Acting (brittany.cope@lamda.ac.uk) and Lead Practitioner in Movement and Dance (micaela.miranda@lamda.ac.uk) and we will arrange a 1:1 support session with you, or a class observation, should you need feedback on your consent-based practice. Please bear in mind that it might take a couple of days to arrange this.

Journey of intimacy training for students at LAMDA

All year groups have integrated in their training the following:

In all classes, projects and productions there is a consent based language of work with students consolidated and reviewed at the beginning of each term with *Basics of Intimacy & Ensemble Practice* Workshops available to all teaching staff.

- 1st stage intimacy skills: Working on elements of intimacy through ensemble building sessions (consent, context, communication, choreography and closure)- covered by specialist LAMDA staff within ensemble sessions and by all teaching staff through a shared language of work.
- 2nd stage intimacy skills: Intimacy basics workshop with an intimacy director: intimacy coordination and applied intimacy work in theatre and screen project: direction and coordination (on demand for projects - 6 hours max per project)

- 3rd stage intimacy skills: working with an intimacy director/coordinator when needed in production in their graduating years.

Short courses (S1, SS8, SS4, AIE, IAT) at LAMDA only get the 1st stage intimacy skills in their training journey. The Foundation course students get 1st stage intimacy skills and introduction to 2nd stage in their training. All other courses have access to the three stages of intimacy skill.

Reporting Structures

All parties must be made aware of who they can contact in the case of issues. There should be multiple levels to a reporting structure, to be decided. These include:

- People in the room (Professional Intimacy Director, Stage Manager, Director, Assistant Director, designated Actor who isn't involved in any Intimacy).
- Members of the production who are not in the room (Producer, Assistant Producer, members of the Stage Management team).
- Drama School Staff (lead practitioners, associate tutors)
- LAMDA Staff.

We offer a diverse array of reporting options because it is important in case of personal conflicts. Particularly in an environment where people are likely to know each other and be friends, productions must be aware and mindful of these pressures. For example, it is not sufficient for a for an Assistant Director to be designated as the first point of contact in case of a problem, if: they are best friends with the Director; just finished a tour with half of the actors; are currently auditioning some of the cast for another project.

As a staff member, if an issue is reported to you, you should contact the Course Leader for the cohort. If that, for any reason is not possible, please contact the Head of Actor Training (philippa.standberg-long@lamda.ac.uk) and student services manager (amy.richardson@lamda.ac.uk).

Please see the LAMDA's reporting policy [here](#)

Student Intimacy Directors

Students should not hold the role of Intimacy Director on productions or when preparing work outside of class that might have intimacy.

Intimacy Directors undergo rigorous training in consent, communication, closure and choreography to ensure everyone's well-being is upheld throughout a theatre process. They

receive awareness training in Unconscious Bias, Sexual Harassment, Bullying & Harassment, LGBTQIA+ Awareness, and Bystander Intervention, and complete Adult Mental First Aid training to respond in the case of any problems. They receive mentorship support from Intimacy Directors as they begin work in the industry.

Intimacy Directors are impartial professionals. By the nature of being a student in a very busy theatre scene at a University, students are likely to have worked together a lot before, be friends, dislike each other, be trying to impress each other, know about each other's personal lives, and more. This is not conducive to the clarity and professionalism needed.

Untrained, unprepared (or partially trained) Intimacy Directors can do more harm than good. This does not mean that students cannot possess a comprehensive understanding of how to navigate basic Intimate content and bring this into their theatre-making, and support each other through these processes.

Students should not be responsible for Intimacy because this is high-risk content, and it should not have to be on their shoulders to respond if something goes wrong, for example, someone feeling uncomfortable, a crossing of boundaries, a trigger response, an anxiety attack.

LAMDA has also a list of mental health first aiders here and first aiders [here](#).

You can also contact our well-being team for more student support here:
amy.richardson@lamda.ac.uk

Consent*

Intimacy is based on a thorough consent-based approach. There are a few central tenets of consent that must be upheld for consent to be truly possible. The **FRIES** acronym (originating from Planned Parenthood) is a helpful resource here. Consent must be:

Freely Given

Performing Intimacy with someone is a decision that should be made without pressure, force, or manipulation. Examples where consent is not being freely given include:

- “If you don’t do the kiss we might have to cast someone else.”
- “The scene isn’t working, it’ll look rubbish unless there’s more physical touch, come on.”
- “The costume with the long trousers looks weird, everyone else is just doing it in the shorts and they’re fine, can’t you just wear them?”

Reversible

Anyone can change their mind about what they want to do, at any time. Even if they've done it before or are in the middle of performing Intimacy.

- Just because a performer is topless in the first scene doesn't mean they're happy to be topless in every scene.
- Just because a performer had a simulated sex scene in a play last term doesn't mean they'll be happy to perform one in every play they do.
- A performer may say they are happy to perform a kiss and then change their mind when it comes to trying it.

Informed

Be honest and communicate what is going to happen.

- Let performers know beforehand when a rehearsal is going to include Intimacy, try to give them at least 48 hours' notice.
- Let performers know whether a run-through will include the Intimacy or not. Perhaps a quick run which is mainly for lines needn't have Intimate content and the performers may be unclear whether they should be performing the Intimacy or not.

Enthusiastic/Engaged/Embodied

Enthusiastic consent is the notion that performers should be completely happy with performing an action for it to be true consent.

Some people have noted that this perhaps puts extra barriers in place for people who may not be able to be enthusiastic about performing Intimacy but still want to have the opportunity to do so. This has led to the use of Engaged and/or Embodied. For example, a performer with sexual trauma may never be enthusiastic about performing a certain Intimate act, but they may still want to perform the moment if they are present, aware, confident, mindful of themselves, and supported.

Specific

Saying yes to one thing doesn't mean they've said yes to others. There are no uncertainties over the physical choreography.

- Just because a performer has agreed to passionately kiss someone with firm touch on their back, head and arms, doesn't mean they're okay with their buttocks being squeezed.
- Saying "those two characters should go and be intimate with each other on the sofa" or "on that line, touch them" is not clear enough, that can mean very different things to

different people, and therefore someone cannot consent because they don't know what they're consenting to.

Nudity, intimate scenes, representation of sexual/extreme violence policy

We encourage our students and staff to embrace creativity, boldness and innovative story telling within their craft, nevertheless we also want to ensure that studio/rehearsal practices are considered and conducted with empathy and transparency across the board.

We acknowledge that drama and theatre inherently delve into themes related to sensitive subjects, which can present complex challenges. Our main goal is to ensure the comfort, open communication, and informed consent of all parties involved, whilst cultivating mature and professional artists who can confidently and empathetically approach these themes. As an ensemble centred institution, we hold a collective responsibility for each other's well-being and the following policy have been developed, in consultation with staff and students, to ensure that best practices are followed.

Procedures for work involving nudity, intimate scenes, simulated sex, and sexual/extreme violence

The procedures below are to be applied to nudity, both full and partial, for all genders, and questions of working in underwear, swimsuits, men working topless and other instances of revealing costuming should have the same principles applied. The policy also refers to intimate scenes, simulated sex, sexual/extreme violence.

1. There are no circumstances where Acting students should be required or expected to work with full/partial nudity in projects, classes, rehearsals - whether in directed, devised or self-directed work.
2. Before each production or project starts, there is a production needs form in which this need for intimacy is identified beforehand (it is not acceptable to flag nudity in the middle of the process)
3. No staff member, student or visiting practitioner working for LAMDA should lead or co-lead a class, rehearsal, workshop or performance involving nudity, intimate scenes, simulated sex, sexual/extreme violence without intimacy protocols in place and specific agreement with Head of Actor Training (Principal of LAMDA & Executive Dean may be

consulted if required), and consent* of the relevant student/s. Where this is granted, relevant students, practitioners and course leader/s will be consulted and will be made aware of what has been agreed. LAMDA Intimacy protocols will be followed.

4. Nudity is not, in any circumstance, a course requirement, and there should be no expectation from staff or students that working or performing in full or partial nudity will be part of the course. In some classes, such as *Uta Hagen Exercises*, *Scene study* or *Self-created work* – if the imaginary circumstances requires it - students can choose to partially undress as part of an activity. In such circumstances this must be communicated to the tutor and class ahead of time. The student that is making that creative choice should make sure that they are undressed for the scene only - and they dress or bring a robe to take notes. Please note that no full nudity will take place in these sessions and any form of undress is by choice of the student and by no means a requirement of the task.
5. Under no circumstances should a LAMDA student ever be made, or pressurised, by a member of staff, visiting practitioners or fellow student, to undertake any class exercise, rehearsal, devising practice or performance involving full/partial nudity, intimate scenes, simulated sex, representations of sexual/extreme violence without full and proper consent*.
6. In public facing work if nudity, simulated sex, and/or representations of sexual/extreme violence are a requirement of the play/production then this must be flagged to and discussed with the Course Leader and Producer to see if it is necessary/critical to the action, and cannot take place without specific agreement with the Principal of LAMDA and/or Executive Dean, and consent* of the relevant student/s. Where this is granted, relevant students, practitioners and course leader/s will be consulted and will be made aware of what has been agreed. Reasonable adaptations in costume for students can be put in place in order to accommodate personal boundaries. i.e. special colour of skin underwear, onesies. The decision sits with LAMDA and not the freelance director. LAMDA Intimacy protocols will be followed.
7. Decisions around costuming for public productions involving any revealing clothing (and/or nudity subject to the conditions above), should be discussed with a wardrobe supervisor present, as well as any arrangement to be made for quick changes, options for underdressing, gowns, quick change areas, quick change assistance etc. The outcome of such conversations needs to be noted on the rehearsal report. Arrangements need to be communicated as necessary to relevant staff and students, including the relevant

course leaders. PTASS students should be trained in this areas standard, and aware of relevant issues and procedures before working on any such production.

8. It is never appropriate to verbally sexually objectify anyone's body in a rehearsal room or theatre.
9. Where relevant, discussions around nudity should form part of casting conversations with the students in advance of final casting. Note that an expression of willingness to be considered for roles involving nudity is not consent in itself, merely an indication, and any expression of willingness can be withdrawn. Consent must be FRIES* (see chapter regarding consent in these guidelines)

Working with an Intimacy Director (ID)

Intimacy Directors do not all work in exactly the same way, and they will adapt their processes depending on the content, the performers, the timescale, the venue and much more. It may also depend on whether those involved have attended any of the Basics of Intimacy Practice workshops. The intimacy director will support in the rehearsal process with the following: However, you can expect the ID to:

- Meet with the director and creative team to discuss the intimate content and the director's vision for the piece
- Check in ahead of time with how the performers are feeling about the scene.
- Establish and discuss the context of the scene.
- Try not to block the intimacy choreography without the Intimacy Director present. Their absence can create a negative power dynamic in the space and inconsistencies in rehearsal practice. We recommend that you use placeholders (clap or high five gesture to mark the intimate moment) for those moments so Performers can walk through the scene/dance routine from start to finish. Later in the intimacy sessions, the Intimacy Director will collaborate with the performers and director/dance choreographer to facilitate intimacy choreography.

Improvising Intimacy in Rehearsals: It is our recommendation that intimate moments should not be improvised. Improvisation can restrict the performer's ability to consent and in order to consent they need to be informed beforehand. If you'd like to explore improvisation/devising style rehearsal processes your Intimacy Director should be able to help facilitate a framework with an agreed set of parameters whilst overseeing consent in the room.

- **Understand and have creative dialogue** with the director's vision on the play and specific intimate content with the scenes, and/or what they want to establish or see in the scene (if anything).

- **Closed room protocols** with only the necessary performers, director, ID and stage management in the rehearsal to create the initial intimate choreography.
- **Time out word and gesture** established at the beginning of rehearsals in the studio and into technical rehearsals for performers/production team to call hold, time out, stop to offer clarity, open communication, or possibly if person has become activated to step away from the work outside for the short break. ID will follow up with person and then report as needed for safeguarding purposes.
- **Hygiene Reminders:** In their Rehearsal Call a day beforehand performers should be reminded politely of the need for hygiene (no smoking before the session, avoid strong smelling foods, brushing teeth, shower, deodorant, mouthwash, nails cut etc.). This is especially important if a performer is allergic to a certain food, perfume or body lotion ingredient.
- **Check in** continuously with the performers' requirements and boundaries (where they are comfortable with touch and intimate content) for agreement and consent and support this process for checking in with their scene partner with establishing a professional structure (e.g. body mapping).
- **Transferable Health Conditions:** These can be passed through kissing and via physical touch. We recommend that Performers are asked to inform the Intimacy Director and/or Stage Management Team if they have a transferable health condition (such as a cold sore). A certified Intimacy Director will be able to advise how choreography involving touch/kissing can still be staged using alternative techniques.
- **Access Requirements:** Intimacy Director to have access to learning agreements to read ahead of production to make reasonable adjustments and support with inclusive practice in the room. Also Intimacy director to check in with performer(s) ahead of rehearsal so they can best support with inclusion at the heart of the collaboration. The intimacy director collaborates with director to support their vision to craft and create consent based choreography and movement language to build the intimate content with the actors.
- **Establish the choreography of the Intimacy**, with basic physical steps, in conversation with the performers and supporting the director's vision. Depending on the content, this may specifically costume requirements to include the use of modesty garments with internal barriers, and/or external barriers. Genital

contact does not belong in intimate scenes. Genital contact between actors, i.e. bare genitals touching, must never occur in intimate scenes. Genital contact can be avoided by means of choreography, modesty garments and stage craft.

- **Intimacy Call:** Go through the Intimacy separately before running the scene or play, to refresh memories and see if any clarification is needed. Mark through the physical choreography in clear, simple beats. When marking the movements, do them mechanically first and then you can also work with qualities in movement. Quality rather than emotion is an important milestone at first to help students separate their personal self from the character. Check that everyone is clear and confident with that choreography and that they're comfortable with performing it during the scene or run-through.
 - Intimacy Director to support with giving notes during run through and direction throughout the arch of the project/production. Add the emotional journey onto the choreography.
 - Support stage management team with intimacy choreography notation in their script book, then to develop the intimacy call in collaboration.
 - Establish closure practice and support with well-being resources.

During rehearsal, this time, it's important to make sure that notes are written up over the decisions that are made regarding the choreography. These are for the performers', director's and stage manager's reference and should not be shared around with anyone unless there is a good reason and it is agreed by the performers.

Working on Intimacy Without an Intimacy Director (ID)

If you are working with a consent-based practice without an ID, below are some guidelines to help you oversee this content.

You might also be working on a Production that has an ID attached, and the ID has facilitated and choreographed a moment of Intimacy, but the ID is not present in rehearsal.

- Decide whether you need to, or want to, perform the Intimacy during that rehearsal. Perhaps someone is feeling exhausted or sick and would rather not, or perhaps everyone is very confident with the Intimacy so thinks it's not necessary, or maybe people aren't sure about it so would really appreciate the chance to practice.
- Consider Consent, Communication, Context, Choreography and Closure in all the work you will be doing

- You should have your clear notes on the choreography that can be referenced as a reminder.
- **Closed room protocols in place:** Be mindful of who is in the room. Check in with whoever is performing the Intimacy, and make sure to prepare the whole cast: they may not want to watch the Intimacy and should be given an option to look away or leave the room. Remind the company to be respectful and professional, to avoid whispering, and to put their phones away.
- Check in about the performers' emotional state that day and how they're feeling.
- Check in about the performers' physical boundaries that day and see if there are any changes.
- **Intimacy Call:** Go through the Intimacy separately before running the scene or play, to refresh memories and see if any clarification is needed.
- Mark through the physical choreography in clear, simple beats. When marking the movements, do them mechanically first and then you can also work with qualities in movement. Quality rather than emotion is an important milestone at first to help students separate their personal self from the character.
- Check that everyone is clear and confident with that choreography and that they're comfortable with performing it during the scene or run-through.
- If so, perform the scene or run-through with the Intimacy.
- Afterwards, make sure there is a moment of closure between the performers.

If there are changes:

- Small alterations and notes may be easy to give between performers and from the director.
- If the intimacy needs to be reduced or made less intense, that can be done with open dialogue, consent-aware practice, and plenty of time and care.
- If someone decides they would like to increase the intensity of the Intimacy, and/or change the physical choreography to include new content, that can be done with open dialogue and consent-aware practice. You will need to make time for it to be worked through with care. In case of doubt, you should check in with an Intimacy Director

(please contact the Course leader for that). If there is an intimacy director on the project, then they should be consulted and come into rehearsals to support with editing, changing or modifying this choreography. ID across the arch of the project as a creative member of the team. Here are some examples: there is an agreed passionate kissing scene, and one performer thinks that the other performer should grab their buttocks, or the director thinks they should remove their tops and continue kissing.

Whose responsibility is it?

In the industry, it is often the stage management team who ensures that check-ins happen and keeps a close eye on the choreography records and whether this is being maintained in practice, as they are always present in rehearsals. If the Stage Manager (or an appointed DSM or ASM) is confident with this and can commit to being in these rehearsals and run-throughs, this would be preferable.

In non-graduating years projects, there are no PTASS students in stage management. You might consider giving a stage manager rotational role (a student at a time fills the role in each rehearsal) or you, as the director will have to take on that task.

Auditions and casting

There should not be any Intimacy in an audition for drama school. If there is Intimacy required of a role in production, that should be made apparent when performers are casted. This may mention “essential” requirements of the role (e.g. they refer to kissing in the script, or the director is certain that they want nudity) and “preferable” factors (i.e. the director thinks it would be good to include and it may be taken into consideration when casting, but isn’t needed). This could look like the below:

ROMEO. Handsome, intelligent, and sensitive. Though impulsive and immature, his idealism and passion make him an extremely likable character.

Essential Skills: confident singer.

Intimacy: Essential: kissing, nudity above the waist. Preferable: rear nudity above the waist, touching of Juliet’s breasts through clothing.

Actors can then be asked if they are able to play the role but wouldn’t be comfortable with the “preferable” content. This is done with the Course Leader. This information should be confidential to the director.

There are lots of variables when it comes to the nature of a production and the casting process. Ultimately, those who are casting should be clear, honest, direct and upfront about the Intimacy in the show, ready to provide all the information that they can, respectful of the performers, and very aware of the power dynamics that come from them deciding who gets a role and who doesn't.

Actors: when there is a role that you really want, it can be hard to take stock of how you feel about performing the Intimate content that it entails. Take the time to reflect on whether you feel able to perform this level of Intimacy and whether you feel confident in the processes in place to support you. Being involved may not be worth the strain it puts on you. There will always be other roles. Your wellbeing is the priority.

Intimacy During Tech

Follow the above guidelines regarding working on the Intimacy without an ID present. When working with an ID in tech, arrange for closed tech, and have ID present to support these actions. In addition:

- Informing the whole company about the Intimacy also extends to the technical team. They must be made aware of what content they will be watching and when it is happening.
- Tech the Intimacy specifically, for performers to get used to it in the space, which can feel like a very different experience. There may be factors to get used to, for example:
 - Set (on a bed, against a wall, etc.)
 - Lighting (very exposed harsh lighting, very dark, blinding side-light, etc.)
 - Costume
 - Temperature in the space
- For more heightened Intimate content, nudity, or if it is requested by a performer, you should turn off any unnecessary monitors (e.g. behind the bar) or make sure that they are not accessible to everyone, e.g. the DSM's monitor is needed but shouldn't have extra performers standing around it watching.
- Signage should be applied to doors to the stage and auditorium so that only essential personnel are present in the space. For example: Closed Rehearsal in progress, please do not enter. Call: 07xxxxxxx if necessary. [with Director/SM/AD's number.]

Partial Nudity

- A performer might be rehearsing nudity for the first time during the tech.
- Ideally an Intimacy Director is present for this process.
- If not, and it has been agreed that the performer does not need an ID to be there, this process must be handled with the utmost sensitivity and care. The above guidelines apply regarding signage and monitors.
- Robes should be available to the performer where possible and appropriate, i.e. if they undress on stage and then there's a blackout, a robe is made available for them in the wings at a specific point that is placed on a chair, or if they have to enter while nude, they are provided with a robe that they can shed just before going onstage. Stage management or a fellow cast-member that is chosen by the performer may aid them in this process (i.e. shining a small light in the wings so the nude performer can find the exit in the dark, and help them into their robe).
- Unnecessary cast should not be in the wings during nudity on stage or when the performer leaves the stage, and if they must be in the wings they can adopt "Privacy Positions": an agreed position with averted eyes which affords the performer some privacy.

Intimacy During Dress & Performances

All of the above best practice must be maintained throughout the dress rehearsal and performances.

A performer has the right to change their mind and refuse to perform the Intimacy. Even if this provides logistical and/or creative issues, this must be respected.

For simulated sex and more intense or heightened Intimacy (or anything requested by the performers) there should be an Intimacy Call before the performance. Here, much like in rehearsals, there should be a check in about boundaries, and a review of how the Intimacy felt during the previous performance (where applicable).

Performers should go through the Intimacy as basic physical beats, to ensure clarity ahead of the performance. The Intimacy Call does not need to include lip-to-lip contact, nudity, or a full performance of the Intimate content with emotion and character.

Inclusivity

When working on Intimate material, be careful of making assumptions over someone's experiences, comfort levels, knowledge, gender, sexuality, or body. That being said, it is not appropriate to ask or require performers to disclose any of these details. Remember:

- Not everyone has experience of any intimate behaviours or attractions in their personal lives.
- Someone's comfort levels cannot be assumed based on their general personality or previous behaviours.
- People may not know about certain sex acts or parts of the body.
- Someone's gender identity cannot be assumed.
- Someone's sexuality cannot be assumed.
- The body that someone has cannot be assumed.

Extra Details

Photography

If there are photos being taken in the rehearsal room or of a Dress rehearsal or performance, there should be a conversation around the Intimate content, so the photographer knows not to take pictures of certain moments. There should never be photos of simulated sex or nudity. Performers can decide how they feel about photos of partial nudity, kissing, and other types of Intimacy.

Language

One should maintain anatomical, professional language when discussing Intimacy (e.g. breasts, penis, vagina, genitals). Use non-sexual language for staging the intimacy or discussing it with the actors. If you need to talk about the character's actions, use character names and refer to scene number (e.g. Act 1, scene 2 instead of the sex scene) in rehearsal calls and documentation. Refrain from making sexual jokes, innuendo, or comments. Offer De-Role-ing (differentiating oneself from the character).

Content Warnings

Consent-practice extends to the audience. Content Warnings allow the audience to be Informed about the Intimate content, and they should be Specific. Content notes are a critical part of responsible storytelling. Part of commitment to access, equity, diversity, and inclusion involves letting folks know what they are about to sit through, and making that information easily accessible. Content notes are information statements that are provided to artists and audiences in order to allow informed engagement with the material to follow in a show or experience. Content notes may be used to inform audience of potentially challenging aspects of an upcoming play, to be included in a job description looking for a stage manager on a specific potentially challenging project, or to add to a script so that a reader can be informed of the material.

The inclusion of content notes is neither restrictive nor coddling, on the contrary: it treats our community members as individuals who can (and should) attend to their wellbeing with all available information. The use of “content note” is intentional language. “Trigger warnings” are content notes that are geared toward a very specific trauma disorder with a very specific symptom. They are designed to support people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or other anxiety disorders: part of the symptom profile of PTSD is that distressing content that may cause intense physiological and psychological symptoms.

Informed consent is key. It is more important that a specific group decides how they want to engage with challenging content rather than forcing a group into a specific method. For example, some ensembles have community agreements around how they discuss challenging conversations. However, when there is movement in and out of the group (like an audience, or a changing class roster) or there hasn’t been a discussion of HOW this group discusses sensitive material, content disclosure is a great place to start.

Content notes should be as clear and as specific as possible (e.g. if it’s a type of discrimination, specify what sort) – there is a sweet spot between being detailed enough to give sufficient warning and being so descriptive that your notes solicit reaction by themselves. Offering layered content notes could be a solution. Make sure they are accessible.

- Example: Layer One (Large Lobby Display): This play contains themes of mental illness and addiction. For content details, please see QR Code.
- Example: Layer Two (QR Coded Web Page): This play contains description of mental health crisis due to bipolar disorder, the effects of mental health on family members and caretakers, and depiction of oral drug use.

“Content notes” are similar to “trigger warnings”, “content disclosure”, “content advisories”, “content warnings”, etc. We use this language specifically because it is deloaded, and not framing of the content as dangerous, but rather as a neutral communication tool.

Guidelines for reference

The below are resources for the wider industry. These guidelines have been taken from guidelines created by Robbie Taylor-Hunt for Cambridge University student theatre and adapted to LAMDA’s reality. They are not comprehensive to the intricacies of working in the industry at large, and provide extra specifics that are not relevant to the theatre industry.

- Finnish Film – reason for guidelines: <https://ses.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Guidelines-for-intimate-scenes.pdf>

- <https://www.intimacyforstageandscreen.com/guidelines> - then “Guidelines for Live Performance”. A set of guidelines for professional theatre.
- <https://www.bectuintimacybranch.co.uk/intimacy-guidelines> - a range of guidelines from countries around the world (note that many will be for screen).
- Intimacy on Set Guidelines – best practice guidelines developed by Ita O’Brien of Intimacy on Set · Intimacy Directors Coordinators (IDC): <https://www.idcprofessionals.com/>
- Theatrical Intimacy Education (TIE): <https://www.theatricalintimacyed.com/> - Authors of the book Staging Sex by Chelsea Pace and Journal of Consent Based Performance
- SAG-AFTRA Intimacy Coordinator Resources: <https://www.sagaftra.org/contracts-industry-resources/workplace-harassment-prevention/intimacy-coordinator-resources>

Intimacy Directors/Coordinator Collaborators

LAMDA holds a master document with all contact details and information about intimacy directors that have collaborated with us in the past. Let us know if you need any recommendations by contacting our producer.

Additional Thanks

Thank you to Robbie Taylor-Hunt who has created guidelines for intimacy for the Theatre in Cambridge and has kindly made them available and easy to adapt. Adaptations to LAMDA’s reality were made by Micaela Miranda. Thank you to Brittany Cope and Philippa Strandberg-Long for the help in the review of this document. Thank you to Christina Fulcher for her support and consultation on contributing to these intimacy guidelines.

Feedback

If you have any feedback, questions or suggestions for improvement regarding these guidelines, please email micaela.miranda@lamda.ac.uk