The KECC

(KINK EDUCATORS CODE OF CONDUCT)

THE KECC V. 1 (FULL VERSION)

KinkFest has opted to adopt the KECC in full unless specified in the document below as a redaction with reasons why. Full credit for the english version goes to the KECC collective.

INTRODUCTION

The Kink Education Code of Conduct (KECC) establishes a code of conduct for kink educators and producers. It provides practical guidance for navigating many of the ethical dilemmas we face and creates a framework for clear communication between educators and producers.

The KECC is a roadmap for reasonable human beings, not a precise legal code. You should interpret it using good judgment and good faith, seeking always to adhere to the spirit of the code.

This is the full version of the KECC.

Organization

Each section of the KECC has three parts:

The **educator** parts are applicable to anyone who teaches. Depending on individual circumstances, they may also be relevant to leaders and performers.

The **producer** parts are for anyone who hires or hosts educators.

The **discussion** parts provide background information and explain some of the reasoning behind the KECC.

MODELING CONSENT

Educator

I consistently practice excellent consent in private and in public. Excellent consent is:

- Verbal or written when I am teaching or playing in public. Verbal, written, or covered by a pre-existing relationship or negotiation when in private.
- Done with an understanding of both my capacity and the capacity of the other individuals involved.
- Fully informed, where all parties understand what is agreed to.
- Expressed with explicit or enthusiastic agreement.
- Consistent and continuous, where any doubt or confusion means stopping.
- Not coerced, not forced, and free of manipulation.

I practice and model excellent consent during my classes:

- I have no implied consent to touch or demonstrate on any student. I obtain specific verbal consent from each person before touching them.
- I do not conduct new negotiations or solicit new consent in front of a classroom audience.
- I teach consent in every class.
- I provide sufficient information to my students so that they don't have doubts about whether they are witnessing a consent violation during any classroom demo.

Producer

We actively promote a healthy consent culture at our events:

- We integrate consent into all aspects of our educational programs and ask our educators to include consent in every class.
- We expect our attendees to practice a high standard of consent. Our programs and policies support them in doing so.
- We hold our staff and educators to an even higher standard and we support them in meeting that standard.

Discussion

Because students learn how to practice kink by emulating their teachers, it is particularly important that educators model excellent consent. An educator who plays fast and loose with consent during demos encourages students to do the same in their personal lives. It is vital that educators not only have consent during demos, but make it clear that they have consent.

Prior negotiation with a demo partner can be used to demonstrate your consent practices to your class. If your prior negotiations are written, you might provide a copy to your students. If they were verbal, you might repeat a segment of the

conversation in front of the class.

For better or worse, students learn from educators' personal lives as well as from what they see in the classroom. An educator who practices shoddy consent outside the classroom sets a harmful example: a responsible educator must practice what they preach.

USING STUDENTS FOR DEMOS

Educator

I am mindful of the consent risks and the power differential associated with doing demos in a class setting. Keeping in mind some demos have more consent risks than others, I avoid putting any student in a situation where their ability to give meaningful consent is compromised. In order of preference:

- I use fellow educators or existing play partners for demos.
- I select demo volunteers at least 24 hours before class and negotiate with them in writing, explicitly describing what they are volunteering for and what risks are involved.
- As a last resort, I take student volunteers during class using the practices described below to reduce the inherent risks.

I do not pressure anyone into volunteering:

- I state in the class description and at the beginning of class that I will be asking for student volunteers.
- I ensure every volunteer gives informed consent by explaining exactly what each demo entails and what risks are involved before asking for student volunteers.
- I do not ask or call on any specific individual to volunteer.
- I do not pressure the class as a whole to volunteer. I ask for volunteers once for each demo, and if nobody volunteers promptly I skip the demo and move on.
- I do not tolerate anyone pressuring another person into volunteering for or agreeing to a specific activity, or any form of heckling or coercion of volunteers and potential volunteers.
- I only use volunteers who give unambiguous and enthusiastic consent.
- I make it clear volunteers may opt out at any time and for any reason.
- I select volunteers based on their safety, their enthusiastic consent, and their

ability to perform the activities of the demonstration as the main criteria for selecting volunteers. Volunteer demonstrations are also potential opportunities for inclusivity, and I use these moments to model inclusive practices around gender, race, age, orientation, body shape, physical ability, and so forth.

I accept responsibility for taking care of student volunteers:

- I only use student volunteers if I am available and willing to provide whatever aftercare they may need and to take full accountability for their experience.
- I have a formal plan for providing aftercare to student volunteers. I describe that process in writing to the venue and I explain it at the beginning of class.

Producer

Because of the consent risks associated with using students for demos:

- We have clear standards for using students during demos and we work closely with our educators to ensure they understand and follow those standards.
- If an educator needs demo volunteers, we encourage them to find suitable candidates and conduct proper negotiation in advance.
- We take an active role in providing support to any student who has a bad experience during a demo.

Discussion

Using student volunteers for class demos is a popular practice among both students and educators. When it goes well, it makes classes more fun and interactive. However, there are multiple challenges with using student volunteers that increase the risk of consent violations:

- There is a substantial power differential between an educator and a student.
- The pressure to conduct a successful and entertaining demo may prevent an instructor from recognizing a student's discomfort.
- The social pressure of the classroom makes it difficult for a student to say no, especially once a demo is underway.
- Even the perception that an educator is picking demo volunteers based on attractiveness can be deeply alienating to other students, whether or not that is actually occurring.

Taken together, these factors mean using students for demos is an intrinsically high-risk activity. We encourage educators and producers to consider adopting more

restrictive policies than the KECC based on what is appropriate to their circumstances.

As part of teaching good consent practices, educators must ensure that every student demo clearly models good consent. If an educator allows a student to volunteer another student based on an existing power exchange relationship, that relationship must be explained to the class.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Educator

I teach within my area of expertise:

- I only teach material I thoroughly understand and am capable of teaching correctly.
- If I teach techniques that are contrary to commonly accepted best practices, I clearly communicate that and explain my reasons for doing so.

When teaching any topic in the domain of a particular profession—for example physical fitness, stretching and warmup, anatomy, nerves, blood play, breath play, hypnosis, trauma response, mental health, legal issues, or any kind of medical play—I explicitly tell my students whether:

- a) I have relevant professional qualifications, or
- b) I have reviewed the material I am teaching with a qualified professional, or
- c) I am teaching my own opinion.

I respect each person's right to choose their own risk profile:

- I do not pressure anyone to perform techniques outside their risk profile.
- I make it clear that students are welcome to audit any techniques they are not comfortable performing.
- If I teach high-risk techniques or activities, I clearly communicate the risks involved and I encourage my students to negotiate in class before engaging in any hands-on practice.
- I respect each venue's policies about high-risk activities.

Producer

We provide high-quality education and give our students the information they need

to make informed decisions about risk:

- We seek out educators who are expert in the topics they teach, being careful to distinguish between competence and confidence.
- We ensure every educator teaches within their area of competence and clearly communicates their credentials to students.
- We don't use educators who have misrepresented or falsified their credentials.

Discussion

Kink is a niche field and much of what we do falls outside the expertise of existing professions. There are no professional standards for breath play, for example, and many medical professionals have licensing concerns that prevent them from teaching needle play. It is therefore inevitable and appropriate that kink education is largely the domain of expert amateurs. The lack of formal certification, however, requires us to be diligent about our expertise.

In order to practice informed consent, students need accurate information about risk. Because students by definition lack the expertise to evaluate the information they are being taught, it is imperative that educators a) teach accurate information and b) clearly disclose their level of expertise.

INCLUSION

Educator

I treat everyone in a respectful manner and make them feel welcome:

- In both my personal and professional lives, I do not discriminate against someone because of that person's race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, sexuality, and pregnancy status), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. I also do not retaliate against anyone because they have submitted a complaint about discrimination.
- I do not do anything that creates a hostile environment for any group of people.
- I apologize when something I do creates a hostile environment for any group of people.
- I use correct pronouns for each person. I ask people what pronouns they use when I am not sure.
- I refrain from using microaggressions during my class and help ensure

attendees also do not use microaggressions in my class.
- Except when teaching gender-specific topics, I present material in a gender-neutral fashion rather than assuming specific gender roles.
- Whenever possible, I teach techniques that are applicable to all genders, body types, and physical abilities.
- I support students with special learning needs and actively seek to develop educational approaches that best allow students in my class to learn.

Producer

We strive to be inclusive and we believe that diversity among our staff and educators is vital to that effort:

- We do not discriminate against someone because of that person's race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, sexuality, and pregnancy status), national origin, age, disability or genetic information. We also do not retaliate against anyone because they have submitted a complaint about discrimination.
- We actively seek to have diverse staff and educators.
- We include and actively seek to include diverse perspectives when making decisions.
- We are mindful of diversity and inclusion when designing and promoting our events.
- We are open to feedback about making our programs more diverse and inclusive.

Our events are safe and welcoming to all attendees:

- We publish a code of conduct for our events.
- We don’t tolerate bigotry or harassment at our events.
- We have a formal mechanism for reporting and handling consent incidents, harassment, and other problems.
- Each of our events has at least one staff member who is trained to handle consent incidents and harassment.
- We do not work with staff or educators whose personal beliefs are incompatible with treating everyone fairly.

Discussion

Understanding that this isn’t feasible in all cases, we encourage producers to track and publish data about the diversity of their staff and educators.

We recommend having a plan for supporting people who are triggered or experience trauma during an event.

We recommend training staff on diversity and inclusion practices, when possible.

Microaggressions

A **microaggression** is a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority. Microaggressions may not be intended to be negative, but are still discriminatory in nature.

Microaggressions are a common reason that members of many marginalized groups feel uncomfortable in the broader kink community. We recommend training staff and educators about microaggressions and how their presence in a classroom can create an unwelcoming and hostile environment.

There are three types of microaggressions:

Micro–assaults are most akin to conventional racism. They are conscious and explicit racial or derogatory actions that are intended to hurt. For example, intentionally serving a white person before a person of color or deliberately referring to an Asian person as “Oriental.”

Micro–insults are unconscious communications that demean a person from a marginalized group. Examples include a teacher not calling on students of color, fetishizing a person of color, or a white person asking a person of color “how did you get your job?”, implying that they are not qualified and got the job because of affirmative action or a quota program.

Micro-invalidation minimizes or disregards the thoughts, feelings or experiences of a member of a marginalized group. A white person asserting to a person of a color that they "don't see color" or that "we are all human beings" are examples.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Educator

I hold myself accountable for my actions and enable the community to help hold me accountable:

- I acknowledge that I am flawed and will not always succeed at applying this

code of conduct to my behaviors and actions.
- I respectfully and proactively seek feedback from the people I play with, the people I teach, my peers, community leaders, and others.
- I acknowledge my inevitable mistakes and am receptive to others telling me when I have fallen short.
- When I make a mistake I do my best to apologize, make things right, learn from the experience, and make changes to ensure the same mistakes don't happen again.
- I engage openly and honestly when addressing any reported consent issues, including participating in an accountability process with anyone who reports that I violated their consent or injured them.
- I follow this code of conduct and the accountability processes of producers and organizations I work with.
- I post this Code of Conduct wherever I have an online presence and explicitly state that I have voluntarily committed to following it.
- I have at least one accountability contact and make their contact information available wherever I have an online presence, as well as in my class handouts.
- I do not use any kind of non-disclosure agreement or threat of legal action to prevent my partners from discussing their experiences with me.

Producer

We hold ourselves and our educators accountable to our community and the individuals we serve:

- We post this Code of Conduct wherever we have an online presence and explicitly state that we have voluntarily committed to following it.
- We have at least one accountability contact and make their contact information available wherever we have an online presence. We also share their contact information with all students and event attendees.
- We have a written accountability process for our staff, educators, and attendees, or we are in the process of developing one. The process is posted publicly.

Discussion

We define accountability to mean a process for addressing and rectifying actions that are inconsistent with our values and commitments. While there is substantial individual variation in values, we hope that this Code of Conduct will serve as a starting point for educators and producers to articulate and commit to shared values. None of us are perfect, and we fully expect that we will all fail to adhere to these

values from time to time. Our accountability processes exist to help us recognize and learn from these lapses.

The kink world is still in the process of developing best practices around accountability and we expect that this section of the KECC will evolve significantly over time. An emerging practice that we feel has substantial merit is the use of **accountability circles** and **accountability contacts**. The definitions of an accountability contact or circle are not consistent throughout the kink community, but the following are the definitions we are using in this document.

An **accountability contact** is a trusted person who has agreed to: 1) serve as the point of contact for anyone who has a safety or consent concern and 2) act as a repository of information about safety and consent incidents. Both individuals and organizations may have more than one accountability contact. Accountability contacts are usually part of an accountability circle, if one exists.

An **accountability circle** is a group of people who provide advice and if necessary coordinate an accountability process. Members of an accountability circle may or may not also be accountability contacts.

As you put together your accountability structure, we recommend that you consider the following:

- To encourage impartiality, your accountability contact should not be a romantic or play partner, business associate, or close friend. Some people in your accountability circle may fall into those categories, but at least some in the circle should not.
- Having multiple accountability contacts ensures that people with concerns about you can still express them even if they aren't comfortable with one specific individual.
- Accountability contacts and members of an accountability circle should be diverse, provide a range of perspectives, and feel approachable to all members of the kink community. In particular, you should make sure that your circle contains racial, gender, and role diversity.
- Choose people who are trusted by you and by your community at large.
- Even if you have more than one accountability contact, a single person should be designated as the central repository for all information about you, to assist in identifying problematic patterns of behavior.

BOUNDARIES WITH STUDENTS

Educator

I maintain professional boundaries during classes:

- I maintain a professional demeanor during class and do not cruise or engage in recreational play during class with any student with whom I do not have an existing relationship.
- I clearly communicate the relationship agreements I have with my partners in a class so as to provide context for my behavior.
- I am as professional in private lessons as I am in public classes.
- I scrupulously follow the policies of every producer/venue I work with regarding relationships with students.
- I have a formal policy about engaging in sex, play, or romance with students. My policy was created with input from other educators, my accountability circle and contacts, and/or other professionals.

If I choose to engage in any kind of sex, play, or romance with a current or former student, I do so with great thought and care:

- I am scrupulous about following best consent practices.
- We have a frank discussion beforehand about our power dynamic and the risks associated with relationships between educators and students.

Before beginning a mentoring relationship, I explicitly negotiate boundaries around play, sex, and romance. If I expect sex or play in exchange for mentoring, I am explicit about that at the outset.

Producer

We have clear written standards for relationships between educators and students and share those with educators prior to them teaching.

Discussion

Recognizing this is a highly controversial topic, the KECC does not include a blanket prohibition on relationships between educators and students. We believe, however, that a blanket prohibition is preferable in most cases and we strongly recommend both educators and producers adopt such a policy, depending on their values and circumstances.

As you formulate your policy, keep the following considerations in mind:

- There is an explicit power exchange relationship between educators and

students which creates significant consent risks, particularly if it is combined with other types of power exchange (e.g., dominant/submissive), even when these are consensual.
- The perception that an educator is flirting with one student can alienate other students.
- Someone who appears to trade on their status as an educator damages not only their reputation but the reputation of the venue that booked them.
- Prohibiting educators from playing with students may be a useful tool for weeding out predatory instructors.
- If you restrict new relationships between educators and students, we recommend at least a one month waiting period.
- Circumstances matter: behavior that might be entirely appropriate for someone presenting at a large convention might be inappropriate for someone teaching an intimate weekend intensive, and vice versa.

We recommend producers publish their policy.

Be mindful also of the potential pitfalls and conflicts of interest associated with producers having relationships with educators. It isn't necessarily unethical to hire a partner as an educator, but it is certainly unethical to trade professional opportunities for sex or play.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Educator

I am a professional:

- I represent myself honestly, giving complete answers to all questions during the booking process.
- I provide complete and accurate information about my experience and qualifications.
- I am clear and up-front about my expectations regarding logistics and compensation.
- I show up on time and prepared to teach.
- I understand my conduct reflects on the venues that hire me and behave in a professional and responsible fashion while working.

Producer

We carefully select educators who meet a high bar for knowledge, expertise, safety, and consent:

- We have a process for vetting all educators, whether they are on staff or external.
- We consider personal as well as professional misconduct when vetting educators.
- We do not hire educators who have a pattern of consent violations or who have displayed malice, manipulation, or deception regarding consent.
- Although we believe people can change, if someone has committed serious consent violations, the burden is on them to demonstrate they are no longer a significant risk to the community.
- When we work with new educators, we coach them and provide them with roles appropriate for their emerging level of expertise.
- We are very cautious about hiring educators with controversial consent histories. If we choose to do so, we enable our attendees to make an informed decision about attending by providing complete and accurate information about the controversy in the event listing.
- We listen respectfully and empathetically to reports and concerns raised by individuals in the community about instructors, attendees, and event leaders. We take these reports seriously and we have a process in place for responding to these reports.

We are professionals:

- We treat educators fairly and courteously, and respect their time.
- We clearly communicate our expectations of educators and our commitments to them.
- We honor the commitments we make to educators.

We hold our educators to a high bar and support them in meeting that bar:

- We require all educators adhere to the KECC while working with us.
- If we help cover travel expenses for a visiting educator, we require they adhere to the KECC during their entire stay in our city.
- We clearly communicate our expectations to educators, including providing them with any written policies that go beyond the KECC.
- We support educators in understanding and meeting our standards, especially if their local consent culture is different from ours.

We have a policy about how to handle attendees who are known consent violators or have a history of safety issues.

Discussion

As influential role models, educators who model poor practices in their classes or their personal lives can do substantial and lasting damage to a community. Whether we like it or not, booking an educator provides them with status, access to potential victims, and the de facto endorsement of the venue or organization.

In order to protect their communities as well as their own reputations, it is therefore imperative producers put great care into selecting the educators they work with. As part of that vetting process, producers should solicit relevant information from educators and also consult outside sources.

Soliciting information from educators

To reduce the amount of paperwork associated with applying to different venues, we encourage producers to share educator questionnaires with other venues when possible.

At a minimum, producers should ask the following questions of all educators:

- Do you have an accountability contact we can talk to?
- Have you ever caused a significant injury? If so, please provide details of what happened and what steps you have taken to prevent further injuries.
- Have you ever been accused of a consent violation? If so, please provide information about what happened, how it was resolved, and what steps you have taken to prevent further violations.
- Have you ever been banned from attending any kink or sex-related event? If so, please provide details.
- How do you incorporate consent into your classes?
- Will you use demo bottoms in your class? If so, what are your processes for managing consent with them?
- What is your experience teaching this material? Do you have any relevant qualifications?
- What is your teaching experience?
- Do you follow the Kink Education Code of Conduct?

Soliciting information from others

Although asking for references can be useful, references supplied by an educator don't provide adequate vetting on their own. Producers should consult with other, more objective sources of information. We particularly recommend that you talk to the education coordinators at venues where prospective educators have previously taught.

In addition, Shay and Tame Lioness run the Kink Producer Network Group, which is an excellent resource for vetting educators.

Regardless of the source of information, producers should treat the information gathered with appropriate confidentiality. Producers should limit access to confidential information to individuals who have a compelling need for it.

Vetting goes both ways

Just as producers should vet educators, educators have the right to vet venues and producers. There are venue owners and producers that either explicitly or implicitly condone questionable consent practices. Well-regarded educators teaching at these venues give a de facto endorsement of the venue and associated persons. Therefore, educators should consider asking producers about the venue's consent and accountability policies.

DISCLOSURE AND PRIVACY

Educator

I proactively provide producers with complete and accurate information about:

- Any consent incidents I have caused or been accused of
- Any injuries I have caused or been accused of
- Any accountability processes I have been the focus of
- Any sanctions or exclusions from any kink organization or group
  When disclosing information to producers or in public, I am careful to protect the privacy of anyone I may have harmed.

I respect other people's right to freely discuss their experiences with me:

- I never pressure anyone to keep quiet about their experience with me, nor do I ask my partners to refrain from discussing their experiences with me or others.
- I do not retaliate against anyone for sharing their concerns about me with others, either directly or via third parties.

I respect everyone's right to hold private discussions about educators and venues:

- I do not ask anyone to share private information with me, nor will I look at information that should not have been shared with me.

- I do not harass, challenge, or question anyone who shares information about me in a private forum.

Producer

We prioritize the privacy of our attendees and educators:

- Except as outlined below, we do not disclose identifying information about any attendee.
- We handle all private information with great care and limit access to people who have a specific need for that information.

If we choose to share information about potentially harmful individuals with other producers, we always prioritize maintaining the privacy and safety of anyone who was harmed by the individual in question.

While prioritizing attendee privacy, we endeavor to be open about any consent incidents or injuries that occur at our events.

Discussion

Balancing privacy and disclosure is one of the hardest challenges we face.

On the one hand, kink is a highly stigmatized activity and many educators as well as attendees have a critical need to maintain their privacy. In addition, many of us prefer to keep our intimate lives private, especially the parts that are painful to us.

On the other hand, secrecy allows serial abusers to access a steady stream of new victims who don't know their history and therefore can't give informed consent to engage with them. We believe students have a right to make an informed choice about who they take classes from, which means they have a right to know if educators have a pattern of injuries or consent violations.

There are no easy answers to these questions and no clearly established best practices for navigating them. In many cases, the need to disclose information about a consent violation or injury can be in conflict with the need to maintain the victim's privacy. The KECC Collective continues to work on best practices for individual and community-level disclosure and privacy and we expect this section of the KECC will evolve significantly in the future.

In the meantime, we encourage you to consider the following principles:

- Everyone's privacy is important and should be respected whenever possible.

- Part of the responsibility that comes with being an educator is agreeing to a heightened level of scrutiny and therefore a somewhat diminished expectation of privacy.
- Understanding that situations are often not clearcut, the privacy concerns of victims should be given greater weight than the privacy concerns of the people who may have harmed them.
- In considering how much to disclose about an injury or consent violation, great weight should be given to the desires of the victim. However, other factors should also be considered including community safety, the well-being of other involved parties, and fairness to everyone involved.
- Everyone has the right to rebut or respond to public allegations against them. However, such responses should be proportionate, non-punitive, and respectful and should not re-victimize anyone whom they might have previously harmed