



What Do Your Fellow Players Want Out of the Story?

Good consent starts with communicating about what you want. Take the time before a game starts to talk to your fellow players about the story they want to tell!

Before play, try asking the table:

- What kind of tone do we generally want for our story: light-hearted, goofy, serious, grim?
- What kind of challenges do we want our characters to face during this session?
- Is there anything people actively don't want included in the story?

But won't that ruin all the dramatic suspense? No! The story can still go in surprising directions, but knowing what people want to see in the game will help you to contribute ideas that are exciting, engaging, and fun for everyone. Building shared expectations before play contributes to all of that.

Additional Resources

Consent isn't just about sex. It's about asking and listening, no matter what the context is. To learn more about how to build consent into your daily life, check out this Everyday Feminism article: tinyurl.com/practice-consent-everywhere

Want to try role-playing games for the first time, or need help figuring out how to teach a new player? Check out this article on Shut Up & Sit Down: tinyurl.com/get-started-roleplaying

Looking for GMing techniques that build on consent? Storybrewers Roleplaying has you covered with two simple skills: tinyurl.com/two-GM-tricks

For more on the X-Card, visit: tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg

Want to learn about some other safety tools for your next RPG? Breakout Con in Toronto has a great primer on a few additional options: breakoutcon.com/extras/safety-tools

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What is Consent at the Table?



No matter the context, consent is about making sure that everyone is an enthusiastic participant who gets a say in what happens next. Consent means being able to negotiate outcomes and being able to walk away if something feels wrong.

Consent at our gaming tables helps to make sure that everyone feels safe and excited to play.

Creating Safer Game Spaces



Do We All Have Power at the Table?

Power imbalances change how people contribute to social spaces. What do power imbalances look like at the gaming table?

First, there's often a Game Master, or GM, who has a unique role and disproportionate power over what happens in the story. If you're a GM, ask yourself: does everyone have equal opportunity to make interesting contributions, or are you playing favourites and trying to maintain control? Are you GMing responsibly or irresponsibly?

Beyond game roles, we also bring in power dynamics from the outside world. Things like gender, race, and class change how people tend to treat one another. Who has to prove that they belong at the table before they'll be taken seriously? Whose ideas get overlooked the most often?

When you play a game together, put in the effort to make sure that everyone gets a fair say in the story and that everyone is treated like they belong.



Can Players Say No to Story Ideas?

Our brains all work differently. That's part of what makes role-playing games exciting! But it also means we need to pay attention to how our ideas impact others, because a story idea that's fun and cool to one player can be upsetting or triggering to another. Luckily, the tabletop RPG community has come up with some really helpful tools.

Try using the X-Card! Put an index card with a huge X on it at the centre of the table. Anyone can lift up the card at any time, or simply say "I want to X that out." The group edits out the idea, and play moves forward. If the GM announces that your group of fantasy adventurers is about to fight a horde of giant spiders, and you're someone with arachnophobia, you can use the X-Card to say, "Hey, no hard feelings, but that would be really upsetting to have in the game." The GM can switch it up for a horde of venomous snakes, and play continues.



Let Her Slay Dragons in Peace.

In addition to gatekeeping, women and gender minorities often have to deal with unwanted flirting and sexual pressure. Whether this happens in-game or at the table, it makes it harder for people to show up and play the game. No matter who's getting treated this way, when you see people being harassed or hit on inappropriately, step in and speak up! This can be as simple as saying something like, "Hey, this doesn't seem like the time and place for that kind of question!" If we look out for one another, we can create a gaming community that's welcoming, safe, and fun for all.

Have a crush on someone you met at the gaming table, and not sure what's appropriate? Play it safe, and save those feelings for when the game is over. That way, you'll know that you aren't pressuring someone who feels socially obligated to stay there sitting next to you for hours. Flirting is a two-way process based on respect and mutual interest, so pay attention to whether you're receiving as much interest and attention as you're giving.

