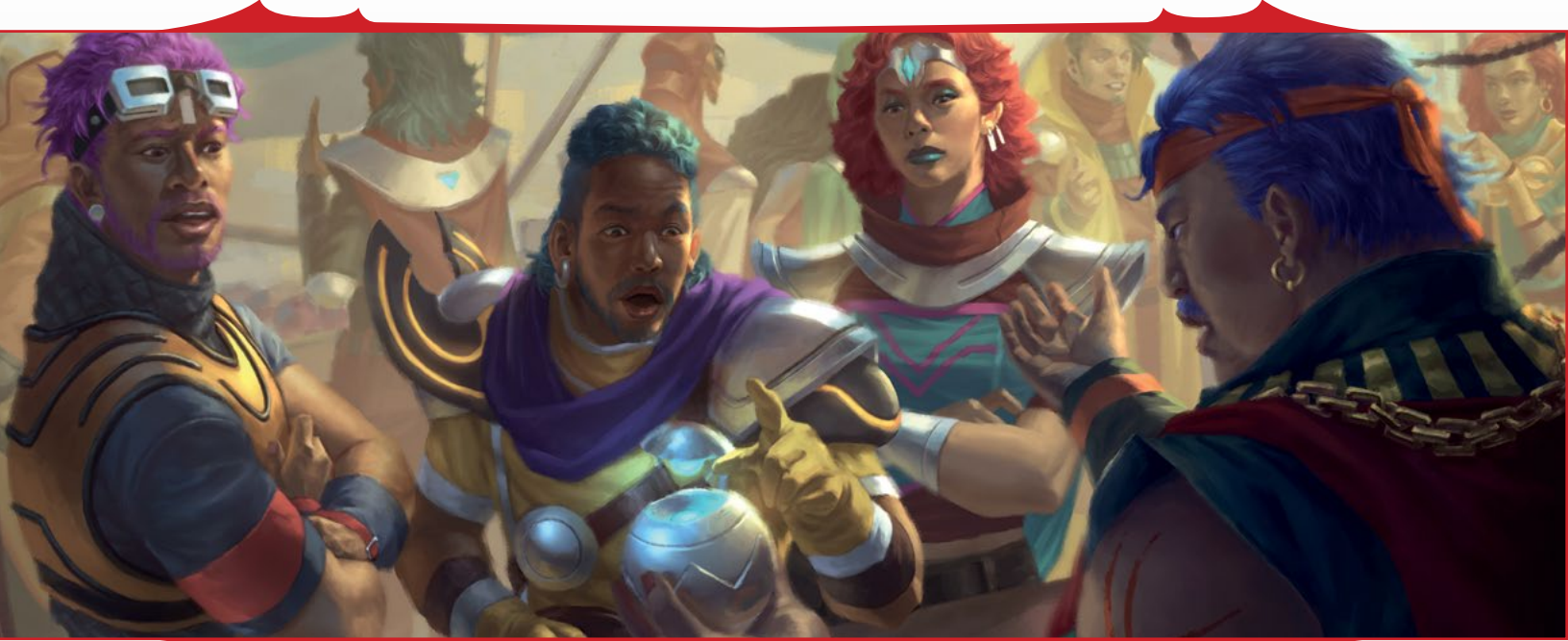


# CONSENT IN GAMING



By Sean K. Reynolds & Shanna Germain

# CONSENT IN GAMING



**R**oleplaying games (RPGs) allow you to explore and experience things that you'd never want to deal with in real life, or approach topics from the perspective of characters who may be very different than your actual self. Playing RPGs is a shared experience that is supposed to be fun for everyone involved, and part of that is making sure that everyone in the game has consented to the premise and expectations of the campaign and game genre.

Many RPGs put characters in life-or-death situations, emotional conflict and intensity with other people, or traumatic or unhealthy environments—things you might avoid or deflect if it were directed at you personally. By playing a character instead of yourself, it gives you a safe emotional distance to think about and deal with those situations. You might be horrified at the thought of encountering a horse-sized spider, but you could enjoy playing an arachnophobic adventurer who has to fight a giant spider to rescue their friends. You may not be interested in an actual relationship in your personal life, but you might enjoy

roleplaying a flirty or even romantic partnership between your character and a PC or an NPC. You probably wouldn't want to deal with the dangers of an actual zombie apocalypse, but you might have fun with a game scenario where you face off against the walking dead. The core of this idea is consent: whether or not you agree to participate in some aspect of the story.

And all of that is completely fair.

Here are some important things to remember when dealing with consent issues in an RPG.

**You decide what's safe for you.** It is always your choice, and nobody ever gets to make that choice for you. Even if the GM is really excited about a particular idea for a game, that doesn't mean you have to accept it. Even if the other players are really enthusiastic about an idea, that doesn't mean you have to accept it. They should not persuade or pressure you into going along with a game idea you're not comfortable with (and if they try, that's a sign of poor respect and a lack of trust at your game table).

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*This product is designed to be a resource on consent in gaming, but is not meant to be a comprehensive document on the topic. There are many ways to accomplish a safe, supportive, and inclusive group at the gaming table, and we encourage you to research and use any that are appropriate to your group. Check out the Additional Resources list at the end of this document for some great places to start.*

**The default answer is “no.”** Ideally, consent starts with opting *in* to things you want to try—that’s the goal of preemptive tools like consent checklists— but it’s inevitable that sometimes it also involves opting *out* of things you want to avoid. Of course, there are people who purposefully disrespect or ignore someone’s choices, but more likely, someone at the table will add something to the game that is unexpectedly difficult. It’s always okay to say no after something is introduced, even if it wasn’t talked about ahead of time.

**It doesn’t matter why consent wasn’t given.** Maybe you don’t like stories about demons because of your religious upbringing, or because when you were seven you sneak-watched a horror movie about a demon and it really terrified you. Maybe you don’t like stories about post-apocalyptic survival because you spent time in a war zone and know first-hand how traumatic it can be. Maybe you’re not comfortable roleplaying a flirting interaction with someone you’re not attracted to, or that you only consider a friend, or because you’re aromantic. The specific reason doesn’t matter. What’s important is that the topic makes you uncomfortable and you don’t want it to be part of your fun recreational gaming time.

**Nobody has to explain why they’re not consenting.** Nobody is owed an explanation to the game group about it. The person refusing consent is not responsible for making the group understand why a topic is a problem for them. Roleplaying in a gaming group is not meant to take the place

of therapy, nor religious advisement. It’s not the group’s job to counsel people about a consent topic. If you are the one objecting to that topic, you don’t have to volunteer that you don’t want to talk about it—the default is that you don’t have to and aren’t going to talk about it. (Note that if your gaming group includes people who are your friends and care about you, they may ask if you want to talk about the topic, but you can still say no.)

**There may not be a reason why they’re not consenting.** They may not be able to explain why something bothers them. It just bothers them. That’s okay. Even if they can’t put it into words, it’s valid that something creeps them out, makes them feel unsafe, or scares them. It’s okay for people to listen to their feelings; humans are complicated creatures and not everything we do operates on logic or conscious thought.

**There’s a spectrum for each topic.** A person might be okay with having goldfish in their game, but not be okay with vivid descriptions of their goggly eyes, weird smell, and scaly skin. They might be okay with violence, but not graphic descriptions of blood and gore. They might be comfortable with flirting, but not declarations of love or descriptions of physical affection (whether platonic or sexual). Everyone in the game consents only to exactly as much as they want to consent to. A player may be comfortable with veiled allusions to aspects of a topic but have hard lines that they’re unwilling to cross. If they’re unsure about how much detail

*Discussing consent ahead of time does not mean you can’t have surprises in the game; it does, however, mean the group has more knowledge of the players’ comfort and discomfort, and can frame narrative plot twists in a mindful, more meaningful way.*

*An RPG is not supposed to be a therapy session where people work out their real-life trauma (that’s an unfair burden to everyone at the table, who probably aren’t qualified to be therapists).*

## IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT CONSENT

- You decide what's safe for you.
- The default answer is "no."
- It doesn't matter why consent wasn't given.
- Nobody has to explain why they're not consenting.
- There may not be a reason why they're not consenting.
- There's a spectrum of consent for each topic.
- It's not up for debate.
- They can always change their mind about what they are or aren't consenting to.
- Anyone is allowed to leave an uncomfortable situation at any time.

*To use a toilet-humor anecdote: "I know I won't like a poop sandwich, and no matter how many times you tell me that this particular poop sandwich is the best poop sandwich ever made and I should give it a try, I'm not going to."*

*Fade to black is another great way to talk about comfort and consent limits in play. Fade to black means that something is alluded to within the story, but isn't explicitly described or discussed. We see this often in movies with regard to sex scenes—the couple begins to make out, the camera fades to black, and then we see them chatting after. We can infer what happened from the before and after without seeing the details.*

you're comfortable with on a topic, it's fair to err on the side of caution and decide whether they're comfortable with more specifics later.

**It's not up for debate.** It's inappropriate and unfair for anyone else in the game to pressure, persuade, bribe, or influence someone to change their mind about a consent topic. They shouldn't argue why it's actually okay. The group shouldn't outvote them and make them accept a topic they're not comfortable with. They shouldn't beg the person to try it. They shouldn't offer that person snacks, extra loot for their character, a date, or a promise that the next game will use their favorite game system. They shouldn't threaten to kick that person out of the group if they decide not to play this game. The point of gaming is to have fun, and nobody should try to convince them to do something that they don't think will be fun. (This point is presented here specifically because some people think it's okay to talk others into something they don't want to experience, but that's actually *not* okay.)

**They can always change their mind about what they are or aren't consenting to.** If a person thought they'd be fine with a topic, and it later turns out that they *aren't* fine with it, it's all right for them to let people know this, at which point that topic should

be removed from the game. They also can change their mind about a subject that they thought might bother them and let the group know that they now consent to it in this particular instance (however, the group should be slow and cautious about introducing that subject, just to make sure that person is actually comfortable with it). It's also acceptable for a person to change their mind more than once about a topic, but changing their mind more than once is probably a sign that they're actually not fully comfortable with it and it should remain on their non-consent list.

**Anyone is allowed to leave an uncomfortable situation at any time.** Each person's feelings of comfort and safety are more important than participating in the game. If a problematic situation comes up and someone doesn't feel like continuing the game, it's all right if they step out. It doesn't matter the circumstances of how it's in the game—perhaps someone made a joke comment, or an aspect of this issue slipped into the scenario accidentally, or it's being introduced despite that person not consenting to it. The person who is feeling uncomfortable doesn't have to confront the group about it (especially if that would make them feel more uncomfortable), they can just leave the table. Convenient excuses are: they're not feeling well and need to rest (or vomit, as most people won't argue with

that one), they got a text from a friend or family member and need to leave (because of an illness, injury, or to give someone a ride in their car), or they need to get up early in the morning. Remember that the uncomfortable person doesn't have to bring up this consent issue in the game right away; the immediate priority is making sure they feel safe. In the longer term, they can decide to discuss the consent issue with the GM or another player they trust, stating that they're changing their earlier position on that topic or reiterating that they didn't consent to it. If they don't feel comfortable with talking to anyone about it or don't think the situation will change, it's fine to not play in that game for a while, or permanently.

### NO WORDS AND GO WORDS

No words and go words are great to use for quick and easy check-ins at the table. A no word (sometimes called a safeword) is a word that anyone can say at any time and the action stops. You can use it in a similar way as the X-Card described on page 6. Just make sure it's a word that won't be used in the normal flow of the game conversation.

A go word is the opposite of a no word: it is the verbal expression of enthusiastic consent, and you can use it a number of different ways. As the GM, you can check in with players directly: "We're going to move into talking about [topic]. Is everyone ready for that?" As a player, you can check in with your fellow players in the same way.

Note: no words and go words don't have to be verbal. They can be written on cards, depicted in a thumbs-up/thumbs-down gesture, or anything else that makes sense in the game, so long as it's very clear when someone is using a no or go word.



## THE X-CARD

No Thank You, Evil! has a similar option built into the rules for stopping or changing the action of a game. Players can use the No Thank You, Evil! mechanism (or say “No thank you, evil!”) whenever they’re feeling nervous, anxious, or just need to pause, stop, or change directions.

A useful follow-up question from the GM is, “Are spiders the only problem, or am I including too many descriptive details in other monsters?”

Remember that you don’t have to justify why you don’t want something discussed, and you can always change your mind about what you are or aren’t consenting to.

The X-Card is a game tool (usable in any game) where someone at the table can silently signal that whatever is happening or being discussed is making them uncomfortable. This is usually done by having a note or index card on the table with an “X” on it that the person can tap or show to the group. The idea is that some people might not want to (or be able to) *speak* about something that’s bothering them, but still want to be able to prevent that topic from continuing.

If a player uses the X-Card, the GM (or whoever is acting when the X-Card is activated) should either revise the current content to avoid the problem content or skip ahead so that the problem content is no longer present.

After the session, if it wasn’t clear what the problem content was, the player might be willing to elaborate so that you can adjust the consent checklist or make other accommodations going forward. However, the player might not want to share or elaborate, and it’s best to respect what they are willing to discuss and what they might simply want to leave in the past. The answer could be as general as “I didn’t opt in for this topic on our consent checklist,” in which case the group needs to address the problem (see Recovering From Consent Mistakes). The answer might be as specific as, “I don’t normally have a problem with spiders, but your descriptions of chittering mandibles, dead eyes, and bristling hairs is really giving me the creeps,” in which case the GM can stop using such detailed descriptions. The answer might be, “I’d like to opt out of this consent topic,” in which case the group should take immediate steps to remove that subject from the current session and the rest of the game.

It’s the group’s responsibility to remember and uphold the decisions and changes that were made. Examples are, “Remember that [topic] isn’t something we consented to have in our game,” “We’re removing [topic] from our opt-in consent list,” or “I’m not going to be using such graphic descriptions for spiders any more.”

You don’t specifically have to use the X-Card. Maybe your group is more comfortable with a code phrase (like “beep-beep” means “it’s time to stop talking about that”), knocking on the table, or playing a siren or gong on your phone. The point is to make sure everyone has a way to signal that they’re uncomfortable and make changes so they’re comfortable again.





*You have to be able to be casual around the other people in your game group. If you have to always keep your guard up, or always worry about what someone will say, it's really hard to have fun. You need the freedom to tell jokes and say silly things. (Because of course, those things are a big part of RPGs.) And at the same time, you have to feel that no one is going to say something that makes you feel uncomfortable. We need to be willing to recognize when someone just makes a mistake, just like we want them to be able to handle our own mistakes gracefully, but I'm referring to more than just a rare, insensitive gaff. Sometimes, there will be someone in a group who just holds different beliefs than you, just like in any group of people in life. And, just like in other aspects of our lives, some of those beliefs might be downright offensive or make you feel unsafe. And no RPG is worth that.*

—Your Best Game Ever

## RECOVERING FROM CONSENT MISTAKES

No matter how careful everyone is about consent, someone might make a mistake and introduce a topic that isn't on the opt-in list. It might be table talk about something they read on the internet, talking about a new movie in the theaters, or an inappropriate joke. It's unfortunate, but it happens, and the group needs to know how to pull back from that situation and recover. Here's an overview of the steps your group can take when this happens.

- Someone recognizes that the conversation moved to a non-consent topic.
- One person should call out that it happened. Of course, stating this as a bullet point doesn't make it easy. It's awkward to be the person who points out a consent problem, especially in front of everyone else, but trying to handle it privately may mean that the problem conversation might continue for a while longer, which just makes the situation worse. All someone needs to do is say, *"Hold on, I think [topic] isn't one of the things we agreed to have as part of our game, can we look at the checklist and see?"* You may not want to be the person who says this, especially if it's one of your opt-out consent topics; if

that is the case, try texting or passing a note to the GM or a player who you think would be comfortable bringing it up. Alternatively, your group can use the X-Card or a similar tool to signal when they're uncomfortable.

- The person who made the error should apologize to the group. Some people find it hard to apologize because people in general are discouraged from admitting they're wrong. But here's the thing: you're a roleplayer. If you can pretend to be an elf or a cyborg, if you can insult the king to his face or stand your ground against a horde of charging orcs, if you can accept that you killed the entire party with a fireball or take credit for killing a dragon with a critical hit, then you can apologize to your friends for saying something that made someone uncomfortable. You don't need to single out anyone with your apology (you may not even know which person is bothered by what you said, and you don't really need to know), just apologize to everyone. You can smooth things over with a simple apology like, *"I wasn't thinking about our consent topics when I said that. I am sorry."*
- Everyone in the group should agree to be more careful about it. That keeps the person who just apologized from

X-Card, page 6

**Note:** Don't say "I'm sorry if anyone was upset." That's a weak apology and doesn't acknowledge that someone is upset. Just say, "I'm sorry."

*“A good game group should offer a comfortable, safe space for everyone involved.*

*A part of this is dealing with issues sensitive to all involved, and that means finding out what those topics are and staying aware of them. There are topics—with both sex and violence being at the forefront—that require an understanding of the other people at the table. Think of it in terms of the movie rating system.*

*Is this a G-rated game? PG? R? There is no right or wrong answer, but before you say or do anything in the game that isn't G-rated, make sure that everyone's on board. If there are younger people or kids at the table (or nearby), this probably becomes doubly important.”*

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being singled out, and reminds everyone that dealing with consent is everyone's responsibility.

- The GM should make sure that everyone feels comfortable, without singling out anyone. The GM might suggest a short break from the table to relax (which also would be a good time for the GM to check in individually with all the players), get snacks, use the bathroom, and so on. After that little reset, everyone can move on with the game.

The point of all of the above is that gaming is supposed to be fun, an uncomfortable topic squashes the fun, but it's possible to recover from an error, keep playing, and get back to the excitement and teamwork of playing an RPG.

## AFTERCARE & CHECKING IN

Even a game that goes perfectly—enthusiastic consent, fantastic player and character interactions, and a good time for all—could use a post-game check-in. Sometimes called aftercare or debriefing, the goal of a check-in is to create a space between the game and the real world that invites everyone to process the experience in a safe, supportive environment.

In a less-intense game, this space might involve mostly retelling favorite bits and planning for the future, both in and out of character. An intense game probably requires something more structured, with

players talking about things that they're worried about or mulling over. This is a great opportunity to discuss anything that was emotionally charged or potentially problematic in the game. It's also a good time to chat about any future plans that could benefit from early parameters, such as a new flirtation that occurred between two characters or the mention of a potentially triggering beast or encounter.

Some things to think about during a check-in:

**Be aware of bleed.** Bleed occurs when the emotions of a character affect the emotions of the player (and vice versa). There's nothing wrong with bleed—in fact, it's part of the reason we play games. We want to be excited when our character is excited, to feel the loss when our characters do. However, bleed can cause negative experiences if not handled carefully. For example, maybe a character acted in a way that your character didn't like, and it made you angry at the player too. Or maybe your character is flirting with another character, and you're worried that it's also making you have feelings for the player. It's important to talk about these distinctions between characters and players early and often, before things take an unexpected turn.

**Be aware of your own feelings.** Try to be as self-aware as possible about the emotions you're experiencing. Are you actually mad



*There's a strange place where things that happen in the game bleed into real life and vice versa. Games are social experiences, but because of this, they can create social confusion as well. Is the person across the table having their character flirt with your character? Great, but don't assume that means the actual person is flirting with you. Is that person's character angry with your character, drawing their sword and preparing to attack? Okay, but that doesn't mean that the actual person is angry with you. Or, if it does, then things have gone horribly wrong and you should pause the game right there. No one should ever, ever try to use character actions to resolve or express real emotions.*

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that the elf stole your bag, or did you have a bad day at work? Try to be as true as you can when talking about your feelings and experiences, even if you're not entirely sure how and why they happened. It's perfectly okay to say you don't know why you reacted a certain way, and to ask for more time to think about it.

**Become aware of others' feelings.** Check in with each other, even if things seem okay. Sometimes things can fester and become something bigger than they are. Don't force another player to talk to you, though. It's an invitation for conversation; not a requirement. Listen when someone tells you how they're feeling and thinking. Active listening is an important part of checking in.

**If possible, end on a positive note.** One of the risks of a check-in is for negative feelings or experiences to linger and affect the players going forward if you only spend time talking about difficult or emotional things, and then all leave the room. Ideally, spend the last little bit of any check-in talking about what was great about the game. Who respected your boundaries in a great way? What moments really made you happy to be part of this group? What are you looking forward to for the next session?



*Don't leave aftercare and checking-in solely to the GM. This is a group activity, and as a player, you have just as much right and responsibility to initiate it as the GM. Support your co-players, and don't forget to include your GM in the discussion—it's possible for them to have a difficult experience during a game as well.*

person. Players might be fine with one GM handling a sensitive subject, but less comfortable with that topic in the hands of another GM.

**Player Name:** This is mainly here so the GM can ensure that everyone handed in a checklist. However, it's fine if players want to remain anonymous so they won't be put in a situation where they have to discuss or defend their non-consent topics. If the group would rather that all of the responses be anonymous, they should cross out this line so none of the players write in it.

**Planned Theme:** A place for the GM to give a quick summary of the game so players can immediately know if they'd be interested in participating in it. Examples include "band of scrappy heroes uniting to defeat a necromancer's zombie army," "shapeshifting alien hunts people on a spaceship," or "angry ghosts haunt an old building."

## THE CONSENT CHECKLIST

On page 13 is the RPG Consent Checklist, which is a tool the GM can use when planning a game. The idea of the consent checklist is that the GM prints or photocopies one for each of the players and themselves, and everyone fills out their own form and returns it to the GM. The checklist has the following sections:

**GM Name:** Although this seems like an obvious point of information, it's still important to have this on the form. The GM might be recruiting players who don't know them, and the potential players might want to ask people about the GM. The GM might plan to co-run the game with another



*Your game group needs to make you feel safe. This is a step beyond just being comfortable to play the game. This is a safe space free of hassle, harassment, negativity, judgment, and unfriendly behavior in general, both in and out of the game. You should never have to be worried or anxious at the game table, unless it's because you've only got 4 hit points left and the dragon is getting ready to breathe fire again. No one should have to worry about real life situations, drama, or intimidating or obnoxious behavior, though. Particularly in those spaces while you're taking a break, or talking about something other than your character's actions, or packing up your stuff to go home, you want to be surrounded by people who make you feel welcome and safe.*

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**Movie Rating:** How the game would be rated if it were a film based on violence, substance abuse, profanity, sex, and other mature content. Using the United States ratings terminology, the ratings are G (general audiences, all ages permitted), PG (parental guidance suggested, some material may not be suitable for children), PG-13 (parents strongly cautioned, some material may be inappropriate for children under 13), R (restricted, under 17 requires accompaniment by a parent or guardian), or NC-17 (no children, nobody under age 17 admitted). There is also a blank space for non-US ratings systems. This quickly lets a player get a sense of what sort of content might appear in the game.

**Consent Topics:** This is a long list of topics with an opt-in consent checkbox for each. Some of these are purely fantasy, but some are real-world issues, and there are several blank lines for the player to write in other consent issues they specifically want to address or avoid. The player should check the opt-in box for any topics they are comfortable having as part of the game.

**Clarification:** The last part of the checklist is a space for a player to answer whether they want to clarify any of their checklist responses. The default is “no,” because no player is expected to defend or justify their non-consent issues. If the player selects yes, the GM can arrange to discuss it later. There's also a space for the player to leave a short answer if they don't think a longer discussion is needed.

## USING THE CONSENT CHECKLIST

Once everyone has filled out and returned the Consent Checklist, the GM can then look at what topics the players do and do not consent to be a part of the game, and plan the game accordingly.

Remember that the GM should fill out a checklist for themselves, just to make sure they've thought about their own position on potential consent issues. You might think that the GM doesn't have to worry about their own consent topics because they run the setting and control all aspects of the world that aren't the player characters—it's not like an arachnophobic GM is going to accidentally put spiders in their own campaign. However, players and PCs can make choices that surprise the GM, and that means a player might introduce a consent topic without knowing it. For example, a player might use a player intrusion to say that when they push an NPC into a cave, they fall into a huge web full of spiders.

Once the GM has put together the list of consent topics that everyone has agreed to, they should let the players know which topics everyone (including the GM) is comfortable with, so it's all in the open. (Ideally, the GM should also give this list to the players in writing or an email so they can save it for their own reference.) The group should then discuss if there is any nuance about the list of acceptable topics; some players might consent to a topic

*It's always better to know beforehand that you should avoid a topic than to introduce a topic that upsets someone and have to deal with hurt feelings (and perhaps undo something that happened in the game).*

in general, but may want to avoid certain aspects of those topics. For example, a player might be okay with a horror RPG scenario featuring a possessed spirit board, but doesn't want to touch an actual spirit board or pretend to use one (such as in a fake séance performed by the players). The GM might be fine with spiders in the game, or in a terrarium in the game room, but doesn't want a player's pet tarantula crawling around loose on the table.

Once everyone is aware of the opt-in consent issues and the follow-up discussion is done, the game can proceed. However, remember these two things:

- It's always okay to bring things up for discussion again at a later date.
- It's always okay for someone to change their mind about any consent topic.

Just to be considerate of everyone's feelings, it's a good idea for the GM to take a moment before each game session to remind players that the game may include mature topics, and give everyone the option to change their consent position about any of those topics.

## HOW NOT TO USE THE CONSENT CHECKLIST

The checklist is a set of mature or controversial topics that people may or may not feel comfortable appearing in a game. Once the group is aware of what topics may and may not be included, there are two things that everyone should remember.

- The **opted-in** consent topics don't have to be a part of every session. The GM has an idea of how they want the story to go, and the players should trust them to do that naturally in a way that fits the narrative. For example, just because torture is on the group consent list doesn't mean that the PCs should torture someone every session. Conversely, the GM shouldn't think, "the whole group agreed to this thing, so I should make sure it happens every session." Think of the approved consent topics as a list of things that are *allowed*, not a list of things that are *required*.
- The **opted-out** consent topics should never be introduced into the game, ever. It doesn't matter if it's in-character or out-of-character. In other words, don't

*"We don't like to talk about this kind of thing. We want to assume that we'll all get along. We all love dragons, spaceships, or telling stories, and we want to think that those things mean we're all cut from the same cloth. And sometimes those things do create wonderful and empowering bridges between us. But not always. And, just like you would in any situation, if you find yourself feeling threatened or in danger in any way, leave. Tell another player. Both."*

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use the consent checklist to find out what things people are uncomfortable with and then deliberately choose to hurt them with those things. That's bullying, harassment, and an abuse of trust, and that sort of cruelty shouldn't be part of a game session that's supposed to be fun for everyone.

Once the GM knows what topics the group has agreed to, they can account for those things appearing in the game. Of course, the GM doesn't have to use all of the group's opt-in consent topics. If the GM's intent was to run a scary game with creepy dolls and claustrophobia, it doesn't matter that the group also opted in for romance and terrorism, the GM doesn't have to include any topic they weren't planning for the campaign.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### THE TTRPG SAFETY TOOLKIT

The TTRPG Safety Toolkit is a resource created by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk. The TTRPG Safety Toolkit is a compilation of safety tools that have been designed by members of the tabletop roleplaying games community for use by players and GMs at the table. You can find it at [bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit](http://bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit).

### X-CARD

The X-Card is a tool created by John Stavropoulos. It allows anyone in a game to edit out any content they are uncomfortable with and deal with problems as they arise. Learn more at <http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>.

### NO THANK YOU, EVIL! MECHANISM

No Thank You, Evil! is a game we created for families, and it has a built-in way to stop, pause, or change the direction of a game. Players can use a No Thank You, Evil! token at any time (or they can just say "No thank you, evil!"). Learn more about No Thank You, Evil! here:

<http://www.nothankyoevil.com/>

### THE SAME PAGE TOOL

Christopher Chinn's The Same Page Tool is designed to be used before a game begins, and helps get everyone on the same page in terms of what game they're playing. You can learn more about it here:

<https://bankuei.wordpress.com/2010/03/27/the-same-page-tool/>

### GENDER PRONOUN NAME TAGS

Although not designed specifically for RPGs, there are a number of places to download or purchase name tags that have a space for gender pronouns. For example, Congregation Beth Haverim offers free downloads of name tags with a variety of genders. Check them out here:

<https://www.congregationbethaverim.org/pronounnametags>

*"If you have issues, it's your responsibility to let the group know about them. You don't have to give details or any more than you want, but it's only fair that you reveal what your red flags are.*

*You'll find that most people will give you the respect and consideration you are due, but you have to let them know what your parameters are, and what your needs are."*

—Your Best Game Ever



*You might very well be talking about things in the context of your game—sex, violence, religion, strong emotions, revenge, discrimination, acceptance, romance, family, values, principles—that you wouldn't talk much about otherwise. You might avoid the topic of morality when talking to your friends but then, lo and behold a moral quandary arises in the roleplaying game. You don't want to do that in a group where things are going to get uncomfortable, awkward, or unpleasant. This is a game, and we do it for fun. If someone in your game group expresses beliefs that you find abhorrent and you can't find a way to easily resolve the issue in a friendly matter, that's not the right group for you. (Or, perhaps, for them.)*

—Your Best Game Ever

# RPG CONSENT CHECKLIST

GM Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Player Name: (or leave blank) \_\_\_\_\_

Planned Game Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

If this game were a movie, its movie rating would be: G PG PG-13 R NC-17 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark the color that best illustrates your comfort level with the following plot or story elements.

- Green** = Enthusiastic consent; bring it on!
- Yellow** = Okay if veiled or offstage; might be okay onstage but requires discussion ahead of time; uncertain.
- Red** = Hard line; do not include.

**HORROR**.....

Bugs .....

Blood.....

Demons .....

Eyeballs .....

Gore .....

Harm to animals .....

Harm to children .....

Rats .....

Spiders .....

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**RELATIONSHIPS**.....

Romance .....

    Fade to black .....

    Explicit .....

    Between PCs and NPCs .....

    Between PCs.....

Sex.....

    Fade to Black.....

    Explicit .....

    Between PCs and NPCs .....

    Between PCs .....

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES**.....

Homophobia .....

Racism .....

Real-world religion.....

Sexism.....

Specific cultural issues .....

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH**.....

Cancer .....

Claustrophobia .....

Freezing to death.....

Gaslighting.....

Genocide.....

Heatstroke .....

Natural disasters (earthquakes, forest fires)

Paralysis/physical restraint .....

Police, police aggression.....

Pregnancy, miscarriage, or abortion .....

Self-harm.....

Severe weather (hurricanes, tornados) .....

Sexual assault .....

Starvation.....

Terrorism.....

Torture.....

Thirst .....

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ADDITIONAL TOPICS**.....

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Do you want the GM to follow up with you to clarify any of these responses? If so, which ones?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_