Intimacy Directing and Education: Staging Scenes of Sex and Violence for the Academic Performer

Karen J. Gilmer

Motivation
Support Chancellor Gallagher’s initiative to help Prevent Sexual Misconduct on University of Pittsburgh campuses by:
• Employing Intimacy Directors on theatre productions where scenes of intimacy and violence are involved
• Educating students and faculty on the skills and techniques for consent and best practices when staging scenes of sex and violence in the classroom, rehearsals and theatre productions
• Creating respectful classrooms and safe space environments that demonstrate best practices when staging scenes of sex and violence

Project Description
• Host workshops on Staging Intimacy for University of Pittsburgh’s Theatre Arts department students and faculty through Intimacy Directors International (IDI) and Theatrical Intimacy Education (TIE)
• Attend Intimacy Directing workshops and training sessions for accreditation to be a certified Intimacy Director

Two Tools of Intimacy Directing
*Button
Self care cue word for the performer when there is a question, a need for a pause in the action for an emotional, physical or mental self care when staging intimacy and sexual aggression

*F.R.I.E.S
Freely given Consent
Reversal of Consent with no judgement
Informed about the storytelling and the use of staged intimacy or sexual aggression
Enthusiastic consent
Specific and choreographed action

BUTTON* AND F.R.I.E.S*
INTIMACY EDUCATION TOOLS TO EMPOWER CONSENT AND BEST PRACTICES WHEN STAGING SCENES OF INTIMACY

Context
• Due to the growing number of plays that have staged sex and violence clear and established boundaries, positive body image and no judgement are newly ideas promoted by intimacy directing
• Teaching and creating a safe and supportive environment for staging sex and violence
• Inspiring students to demonstrate safe practices and incorporate best practices when staging scenes of sex and violence with or without an intimacy director

Potential Impact
• Staging Intimacy establishes ways to stage scenes of sex and violence that empower the performer’s agency with collaborative and enthusiastic consent
• Puts a system in place when the actors are the agents in the staging with or without an intimacy director
• Changing the culture and creating an environment where established boundaries when staging scenes of intimacy are less “weird”

References and/or Acknowledgements
• Intimacy Directors International (IDI)
• Intimacy Directors and Coordinators (IDC)
• Theatre Intimacy Educators (TIE)