

Consent Incident Response:

A Team Role for Event & Organizations

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Table of Contents

Why Incident Response Team?	3
NCSF Guidelines for Consent Incidents	4
Why NIMBY (Banning) is Not a Good Answer	5
How the IRT Changes Things	6
Supporting Those Involved	7
Minimum Requirements	7
A Note on Privacy	7
Evaluating the Situation	7
Talking with the Attendees	8
Hearing and Understanding	9
Motivational Interviewing	11
Creating empathy through reflective listening	11
Reflective Listening Techniques:	11
The Danger of M.I.	12
When in doubt, EEPE	12
AFFIRMATION as a Tool for Harm Reduction	13
The Best Technique: STFU	13
Non-Violent Communication as a Diagnostic Tool	14
Observation without Evaluation:	14
Feelings	15
The Four Reactions	16
Evaluations are not Feelings	16
“The Masks of Accountability”	17
Managing the Incident Response Team	19
Self-Care for the Incident	19
Other Logistics	19
ROLE PLAY EXERCISES	20
“Sexy Rope”	21
“Rough Play Gone Wrong”	22
“Bigger Than That”	23
Bibliography/Additional Resources	24
Appendices	25
Appendix A: A Not-So-Complete List of Examples of Psychological Manipulation	25
Appendix B: Example of Report Sent to Event	27
Appendix C: ROPECRAFT IRT Report	29

**The goal of
Consent Incident Response
is that *everyone* involved feels**

**SUPPORTED,
HEARD,
UNDERSTOOD,**

**...ultimately working towards
a place of mutual understanding.**

***We trust everyone's intent
until it is clear we cannot.***

Why Incident Response Team?

The use of the word “incident” is deliberate. A key part of the entire process is based around the sociological phenomenon known as “The Rashomon Effect.”

“The Rashomon effect is contradictory interpretations of the same event by different people.”

The Consent Incident Response method is so named because we acknowledge, with all seriousness, that *something happened*. There is an incident that took place, and it affected people enough that they wanted, at the very least, to contact someone for support. We do our best to listen to them, and also gather whatever information from others that might strengthen that support. The final goal is try to help the various people involved understand better the contributing factors and feelings around the incident, with the hope that that will lead to constructive resolutions.

The only way this can work is with the optimistic idea that serial predators are the exception in the community, not the rule. **We trust the intent of everyone involved, until it becomes clear that we cannot.**

“So many consent issues stem from misunderstandings and miscommunication along with inadequate negotiating...” - Loni Angel, one of the original Incident Response Team

There is a clear understanding that as a community we have a responsibility to police our own. With all respect to legal structures in place, the experiences of many people who have gone to these resources have shown that they are often inadequate or even destructive. While professional experience in therapy, rape crisis, and sexual trauma counseling can be useful, it’s important to understand that most of the circumstances around a “consent violation” at an event do *not* fall into that realm. If one does, then the IRT immediately draws upon the professional resources available in a given community.

Unfortunately, professional experience can sometimes be a hindrance to working with the issues that present at events. Rarely do rapists come in to tell a counselor “*I’m worried that I may have raped my partner*”, for example. There are also serious questions of legal and licensure issues that can come up, and vary from place to place.

On the other hand, community leaders, activists, and members of under-represented communities are often able to bring experience, perspective, and most of all *calm* to the incident itself. This is one of the reasons the IRT is often consisting of one “team lead”

with several team members; it helps allocate the right resources to the incidents that come up.

NCSF Guidelines for Consent Incidents

“Groups and businesses have a responsibility...that there are clearly marked delegates of the group available.” - NCSF Guidelines

Part of the reason for an IRT is following this guideline: *clearly marked delegates*. One of the problems events have when they simply say *“If there’s a consent incident, contact a staff member!”* is that it puts the burden of interrupting a staff member who is almost always busy doing something else on the attendee with the complaint. They have to ask themselves *“Is my complaint more important than whatever this person is doing?”* and that is a level of guilt that goes against the idea of “supported”.

Instead, the IRT is a group of people who are there *solely* for the purpose of dealing with whatever consent incidents might come up; that makes a difference not only for the incidents themselves, but (in our experience) for overall feeling of the entire event.

The NCSF is a very useful organization in terms of legal issues and kink, however, most of their guidelines about consent incidents are more about an organizational-level approach, where the IRT is there to help the attendees in the moment. The IRT is also able to offer suggestions, guidance, and knowledge to event owners and organizers to help them in making better decisions when dealing with consent policies.

The NCSF is a great source of support for organizations, groups, events, etc., in any alternative lifestyle. The IRT can offer to put anyone who is involved in an incident in touch with a representative from the NCSF to offer resources and/or to follow up with after the event.

Case Studies

What are the things we face?

What are the results?

- **For the attendees involved?**
- **For the community?**

Searching for a single solution to fostering resilient recovery might not be responsive to the way risk and resilient patterns vary across situations...

A multifaceted approach is recommended, with a number of different interventions that are sensitive to the cultural and event context, as well as to differential exposure levels and unique reactions of affected individuals.

- National Center for PTSD

Why NIMBY (Banning) is Not a Good Answer

...an accountability process for the aggressor can be confrontational, even angry, but it should not be de-humanizing....

If we separate ourselves from the offenders...we fail to see how we contributed to conditions that allow violence to happen.

...a process of engagement with a person's story...rather than determining the Objective Truth of What Really Happened.

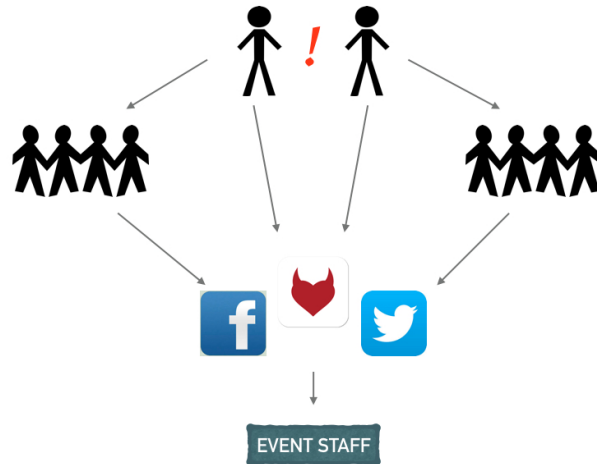
--taking risks:
implementing grassroots community accountability strategies

Historically, ostracization has been an effective threat for communities because people depended on communities for survival. That is not the case for kink communities, and any permanent ban from a group is simply saying *We believe this person will hurt someone again, but we don't want to know about it.* Creating a new group – which now is the “sexy, risky” group – is far too easy.

Restorative justice models are sorely needed within the kink community. However, this is not the purpose of the IRT, nor should they be involved in anything beyond harm reduction at events.

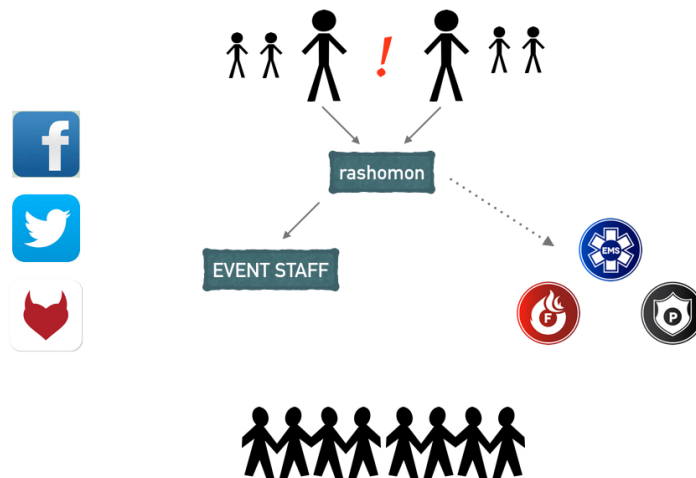
How the IRT Changes Things

A COMMON SCENARIO



An incident occurs. Sides are taken, opinions expressed without dialogue, often brought to social media, and the event staff finds out much later.

AN ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO



An incident occurs. The Incident Response Team comes in, gathering information, determines what resources are needed, and informs event staff. Social media is still available to all, but the participants feel heard, the event staff are informed, and the observers see that things are being done.

Supporting Those Involved

The most important thing you can provide for those involved is the ability to *listen* to what they need. Not everyone will be able to articulate their needs, but for those who can you need to avoid trying to suggest things *unless asked*.

Minimum Requirements

- **Dedicated Rooms:** Taking the individual out of the space where the trauma occurred is the very first thing to do. Try to frame this as a “different” environment, not necessarily a “safe” one (that word can be triggering). “Quiet”, “calm”, “comfortable” are words that can help.
- **Informed Consent:** It is important to identify yourself as part of the IRT and make sure they know you are here to help them. Inform them of whatever rights to privacy your IRT has committed to, and that they are *not* obligated to accept your support.

A Note on Privacy

At this time, there is no “client privilege” involved in IRT. Even if you have some job that gives it to you, unless you state that you are acting as their lawyer, physician, etc, you do *not* have any right to confidentiality protected by law.

That means it is up to each individual IRT member to decide what level of privacy they are willing to uphold (plead the 5th? Risk contempt of court charges? “...no recollection of events...”?). It is important to the idea of informed consent that the attendee be aware of that.

Evaluating the Situation

- Is there immediate danger?
- What is the person asking for at the moment?
- What can you offer to this individual immediately?
- What do you know about this person?
- Who else is involved?
- What are complicating factors before taking action?

Talking with the Attendees

You may be tempted, at first, to ask “what happened?” Please resist! Current studies show that a “debriefing” after trauma is not helpful and may cause further harm. Instead, frame your conversation as follows:



PRINCIPLES FOR INTERVIEWING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

(Adapted from International Association of Chiefs of Police)

1. Respect the participant's immediate priorities.
2. Build a rapport with the participants.
3. Ask if they would like to have a support person present.
4. Recognize the impact of trauma.
5. Provide participants with resources.
6. Do not pressure the participants.

The mental and physical conditions that follow traumatic events are extremely complex, unstable, and rapidly changing. Perception of the event may vary from one individual to the other, individuals may be suggestible and unusually reactive: they may be very responsive to the emotional tone of helpers, but also reactive to real or fantasized realities, such as rumors.

- The National Center for PTSD

Hearing and Understanding

“...it is very important to remain diplomatic in spite of your own opinions of the situation.” - Loni Angel

“...we make everyone who needs to be as safe as we can, then we listen...No plans, no judgements, no preconceived notions.” - Iron Temple Dog

Listening Exercise:

Purpose: To introduce participants to the principles of crisis intervention and to listening techniques.

Directions: Have the group break up into pairs. They will be taking on the roles of Listener and Talker. Each will get a turn at being in each role. Ask them to decide who will be the Talker first.

Instruct the Talkers to talk about themselves for 3 minutes – when the first minute pings, the listener should deliberately start tuning out, thinking of other things (only mentally, not checking phone, etc.). At the second ping, bring back attention.

Switch roles and repeat the exercise.

- How did it feel to be the Listener?
- What were your impulses?
- How comfortable or uncomfortable was it to do this exercise?
- How did it feel to be the Talker?.
- What were the differences between tuning in and tuning out?
- What didn't feel good about it?
- How was the experience overall?

Follow-up exercise or homework:

The point of this exercise is to help crisis counselors-in-training to pay attention to their usual listening habits and to focus in on what we want or need from a listener. For most of us, this happens on an unconscious level.

- Pay attention to your listening habits for the next week and note when you feel heard and when you don't feel heard.
- Ask yourself, "What do I do when I listen?" and "What do I want or need from a listener?"

Motivational Interviewing

**Not “What’s Wrong?”
but rather
“What happened?!”**

**“What did you experience?”*

Addressing the Challenges of Traumatic Experiences:

- *Credibility*
- *Isolation/alienation*
- *Emotional disconnect*
- *Victim blaming/-ization*

Creating empathy through reflective listening

*Non-judge mental respect
& collaborative feelings*

Support

Gentle persuasion

EMPATHY

Listen, don’t tell.

Sincere Compliments

Reflective Listening Techniques:

Simple: *repeat statement as neutral*

Attendee: *“I would never do that!”*

IRT: *“You don’t think what happened was an intentional violation.”*

Amplified: *reflect with emphasis or overstatement*

Attendee: *“Why would he do that? Everyone knows it’s wrong.”*

IRT: *“You feel she’s hurting people on purpose, even though he knows better.”*

Double-Sided (the Rashomon): *_ give back + contrary modes*

Attendee: *"It's not like what happened was a big deal, it's a rope scene!"*

IRT: *"You feel he should have known that would happen. You also said earlier things went further than you expected, didn't you?"*

The Danger of M.I.

When Motivational Interviewing is used in therapeutic and interrogation practices, it is designed to help identify and point out discrepancies in the story. **You are not a therapist or an interrogator when you are on an IRT.** If discrepancies come up, let the attendee notice it or not; your job is to *reduce harm*.

Do not:

- Order
- Warn
- Advise (*you may provide options*)
- Logic or lecture
- Moralize
- Blame or criticize
- Agree or praise (*except for the Sincere Compliment*)
- Shame or ridicule
- Interpret or analyze

Arguments are counterproductive; labeling is unnecessary.

Adjust to resistance rather than opposing it.

When in doubt, EEPE

- Elicit their prior knowledge.
- Elicit permission to share
- Provide an idea or information
- Elicit a response

...repeat as needed

AFFIRMATION as a Tool for Harm Reduction

- **Strengths:** *Find what they don't see.*
- **Verifiable actions:** *Where have they shown courage or compassion*
- **Expanding locus of control:** *Start small. Don't make promises you can't keep.*
- **Personal responsibility:** *Help them find a constructive path, but let them choose it.*

The Best Technique: STFU

"No one reaches out to you for compassion or empathy so that you can teach them how to behave better. They reach out because they believe in our capacity to sit in the dark with them.

Unfortunately, we have a tendency to try to flip on the lights."

- Brené Brown

*Our job is not to shed light on anything.
Our job is to go into the dark with those involved,
and stay there with them until they see a glimmer of light
- and then help them move towards it.*

Non-Violent Communication as a Diagnostic Tool

The Process of NonViolent Communication can be broken down into the following four steps:

1. **Observation (w/o evaluation).**
2. **Feelings**
3. **Needs**
4. **Requests**

It's important - *vital* - to understand that NVC in terms of Consent Incident Response is a tool, not an end unto itself. It is a way to reduce tension while at the same time helping the attendee become more aware of their own feelings and needs, and thereby be able to better request the resources they need.

In some situations NVC has been known to be a manipulative and passive-aggressive tool; it is *essential* that the IRT member avoid this. We are not there to change anyone's mind, or argue; we are there to support, hear, and help to understand.

With that in mind, here are some of the NVC techniques useful for Consent Incident Response:

Observation without Evaluation:

"Static language is the enemy." - Wendell Johnson

Observation + Evaluation = Criticism.

Remember, the Incident Response Team's job is to strip away the labels *without* invalidating the feelings of the attendees. This does not mean your feelings (as an IRT) are not valid. It simply means that this is not the place for it. A useful mantra to remember is *"This is not about you."*

Language to watch for and unpack further with NVC:

- "To be" verb without responsibility: *"You are creepy!"* vs. *"I feel creeped out when I witness this behavior!"*

- Verbs with evaluative connotation: *“He’s slutty.” “She’s dramatic.”*
- Prognostication: *“This is what always happens!”*
- Non-specific: *“You know the way subs are.” “All doms are egomaniacs.”*
- Ability statement w/o evaluation tag: *“He doesn’t know the first thing about flogging!”* vs. *“I don’t think he knows the first thing about flogging.”*
 - Also adverbs & adjectives: *“That outfit was ridiculous!” “That suspension sucked!”*

A useful way to keep people in the concrete is to keep asking them **to bring it back to specific time and context.**

- Avoid static language (good/bad, normal/not normal, correct/incorrect).
- Go for dynamic language, be open to changing the situation!
- Don’t contradict, no matter what! If absolutely necessary, present other viewpoint; you are NOT there to argue.
- Avoid subtle judgement words like should, ought and must.
- Avoid judgements, such as creepy, sexy, slutty, domly, etc.
- Avoid hyperbolic words such as always, never, ever, whenever, often, frequently and seldom.
- Always speak kindly, firmly and clearly.

Test: Which of these statements are observations? Which are also evaluations?

1. He groped my ass.
2. She said it was ok.
3. He was stalking me.
4. I knew she wanted it.
5. I thought he wanted it.
6. He never said that.
7. They touched my cock.
8. He is lying.

Feelings

Remember that we have a lot more words that call people names than we have for how we are feeling.

This includes the names that we call ourselves: *“I feel so stupid!”* → is not a feeling. It is a self-criticism and judgement. Take a look at the inventory list attached for the words associated with needs that are being met vs. unmet.

The Four Reactions

It can help everyone understand what is going on during a discussion by looking for which of the following seems to be happening:

1. **Blame self:** *Fuck, I'm a rapist!*
2. **Blame others:** *She is lying!* (note: this is an evaluation)
3. **Sense feelings & needs of self:** *I am scared because this might ostracize me from the only place I've ever felt whole. This is where the Incident Response Team wants to help the attendee get to.*
4. **Sense feelings & needs of others:** *"I think he is angry because we had sex and he didn't want that to happen because he's scared that his partner will be jealous."* Lovely for NVC, but not the responsibility of either the attendee or the Incident Response Team at the time of the incident.

Evaluations are not Feelings

There is a big difference between *I feel like I raped her!* (an evaluation of what happened) vs. *I feel scared that I might have raped her* (an actual feeling: *scared*). Note that there are further ways to unpack this, because the fear is of the consequence of a particular possibility (in this extreme example, rape):

- Social sanctions
- Personal sanctions
- Empathic Pain (or even triggering from past trauma)
- Change of status (*community member* to *rapist*)

Use the process of NVC to narrow down generalizations: *I feel horrible!* isn't terribly useful information. Is it *scared*? Of what? *Disgusted*? By what/whom? Remember we are not looking for the **correct** word, we're looking for the **useful** words to help them understand their own feelings.

Other People's Reactions Are Not Feelings

- *I feel misunderstood by her* → assigns an evaluation to the other. It's more likely it's *I feel anxious/annoyed because I feel she misunderstood me.*
- *I feel ignored* → Could be relief, could be hurt.

- Avoid verbs that connote evaluations such as: “consent violator” “victim” “perpetrator” “predatory”

“The Masks of Accountability”

These are some of the ways that humans avoid talking about their own feelings and needs and instead push them off onto other people or intangible ideas

1. Impersonal pronouns: *It isn't fair... That shouldn't have happened...*
2. “Because” not followed by “I”: *I feel this way because **you**...because **it**...*
3. Only talking about others.

The De-Masking Formula:

To get past these kinds of things, you can try to guide the person into expressing themselves in a format of “*I feel... because I need...*”

The IRT uses NVC and Motivational Interviewing in the same way an EMT uses shears at an accident scene: to cut away the detritus, the clothing, the things covering the wound in order to uncover what is actually causing the pain.

You can model this by expressing your own needs and intentions as the Incident Response Team:

I am not here to judge, or to find out some ultimate truth of what happened. I am here to try and help you feel supported, heard, and understood by everyone involved.

Listening Exercise: Observation vs. Evaluation

Observations: These are empirically true, and without any value attached.

Total: _____

Evaluations: These are either directly static (good/bad) or have connotations of value.

Positive.

|

Negative.

Total: _____

Managing the Incident Response Team

Self-Care for the Incident

- Be aware of increased sensitivity/fragile emotions
- Support Network (likely on the team, due to confidentiality)
 - Be aware of what your partner may be able to handle.
- Treat it as Con Drop/self-care
- Take time off
- Compartmentalizing has a price
- Consider play very carefully
 - Not a terrible idea, but treat it as “comfort food”
 - Probably not the time for edge play or catharsis
- Do something non-kinky and distracting
 - Two Dots, Game of Thrones, Crossfit

Other Logistics

- “On-Duty” + “On-Call” + “Reserve” Incident Response Team
- Radios
- Integration with Security, DMs & Medical Staff
- Integration with local resources
- Diverse & Experienced Staff
- Training?

Other Notes:

ROLE PLAY EXERCISES

These role plays can be a way to begin to explore how to interact in a traumatic situation with scenarios plausible in the kink community.

- Divide into groups of three.
- Each member gets one of the three role plays (or more if you've created additional scenarios).
- Each person will get a chance to be Attendee, Incident Response Team, and Observer. Ideally, in each role play only the person who is in the "Attendee" role has read the scenario.
- There is no wrong way to approach a role-play; they are intended to be used as practice only.
- The role-play may feel awkward and contrived – that's okay; it will still provide useful material for discussion.
- Try your best to keep track of questions as they come up.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER FOR EACH ROLE:

Attendee:

- What was helpful?
- Do you think the Incident Response Team has all the information needed to take next actions?
- What might have been more helpful?

Incident Response Team:

- What was helpful?
- Did you feel stuck or unsure of what to do next?
- At what point?
- What strategies can you think of now that might help?

Observer:

- What did you notice about what worked or did not work in this interaction?
- What did you notice about the emotional state of the Incident Response Team?
- What did you notice about the emotional state of the Attendee?

“Sexy Rope”

You are a rope top who has been accused of non-consensual touch by another attendee. The Incident Response Team is getting your side of the story. You don’t remember touching anyone outside of negotiated play, and you thought that “sexy rope” meant you could touch sexually.

Suggestions for your role:

- Your voice has a slightly whiny quality to it.
- You can’t seem to make any decisions on your own.
- You keep asking Incident Response Team what he or she thinks you should do.
- You have a spouse who does not know about the assault.
- Become *very upset* if the Incident Response Team tells you the attendee may involve Law Enforcement..

Please write down your feelings each time you played a particular role:

Attendee:

Incident Response Team:

Observer:

“Rough Play Gone Wrong”

You negotiated a rough-play scene with a presenter you saw at the event. He seemed popular and well-liked and you were very attracted to him, and flattered when he asked to play. No sex was agreed to, but it also wasn't left out, and when he penetrated you during the scene you were frozen, surprised but “*maybe that's how people at his level play*”. You feel it was your fault. He is friends with the event organizer.

Suggestions for your role:

- You are twenty-three.
- You thought this man was really sophisticated. You smoked a joint with him after the scene.
- You have only been to one convention before this, and never played beyond spanking and basic bondage.

Please write down your feelings each time you played a particular role:

Attendee:

Incident Response Team:

Observer:

“Bigger Than That”

You are a current National-level presenter. You negotiated a scene last night with a close friend involving edge play, so it was in the hotel room. At the end of the evening they attempted to sexually assault you. You want to talk to someone on the Incident Response Team team but are afraid that they might be someone you know. You are also trying to convince yourself that it is not that serious, that you should be “bigger” than that.

Suggestions for the role:

- You are thirty-three years old.
- You are African-American.
- You have been a presenter for six months.

Please write down your feelings each time you played a particular role:

Attendee:

Incident Response Team:

Observer:

Bibliography/Additional Resources

Resources:

- [Sexual Assault Training Curriculum for New Counselors and Advocates, Jane Doe Inc](#)
- National Coalition for Sexual Freedom
- Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence Against Women and Girls
- UN Women/ Violence Against Women program
- [A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professions](#)
- [Psychological First Aid for First Responders](#)
- [Personal First Aid Mobile App](#)
- [The National Center for PTSD](#)

Look for complete updated resources at <http://consent.rocks>

Appendices

Appendix A: A Not-So-Complete List of Examples of Psychological Manipulation

*Please remember that many of these behaviors are also legitimate responses to perceived threats (i.e., relying on procedures & red tape to protect identity, etc). The presence of any of these does not **automatically** mean the person is manipulative; patterns of behavior and inconsistencies will indicate that the person's intention may not be able to be trusted.*

1. Manipulation of Facts. Examples: Lying. Excuse making. Two faced. Blaming the victim for causing their own victimization. Deformation of the truth. Strategic disclosure or withholding of key information. Exaggeration. Understatement. One-sided bias of issue.

2. Overwhelm You with Facts and Statistics. Some individuals enjoy “intellectual bullying” by presuming to be the expert and most knowledgeable in certain areas. They take advantage of you by imposing alleged facts, statistics, and other data you may know little about. This can happen in sales and financial situations, in professional discussions and negotiations, as well as in social and relational arguments. By presuming expert power over you, the manipulator hopes to push through her or his agenda more convincingly. Some people use this technique for no other reason than to feel a sense of intellectual superiority.

3. Overwhelm You with Procedures and Red Tape. Certain people use bureaucracy – paperwork, procedures, laws and by-laws, committees, and other roadblocks to maintain their position and power, while making your life more difficult. This technique can also be used to delay fact finding and truth seeking, hide flaws and weaknesses, and evade scrutiny.

4. Raising Their Voice and Displaying Negative Emotions. Some individuals raise their voice during discussions as a form of aggressive manipulation. The assumption may be that if they project their voice loudly enough, or display negative emotions, you'll submit to their coercion and give them what they want. The aggressive voice is frequently combined with strong body language such as standing or excited gestures to increase impact.

5. Guilt-Baiting. Examples: Unreasonable blaming. Targeting recipient's soft spot. Holding another responsible for the manipulator's happiness and success, or unhappiness and failures. By targeting the recipient's emotional weaknesses and

vulnerability, the manipulator coerces the recipient into ceding unreasonable requests and demands.

6. Victimhood. Examples: Exaggerated or imagined personal issues. Exaggerated or imagined health issues. Dependency. Co-dependency. Deliberate frailty to elicit sympathy and favor. Playing weak, powerless, or martyr. The purpose of manipulative victimhood is often to exploit the recipient's good will, guilty conscience, sense of duty and obligation, or protective and nurturing instinct, in order to extract unreasonable benefits and concessions.

7. Pretend Ignorance. This is the classic "playing dumb" tactic. By pretending she or he doesn't understand what you want, or what you want her to do, the manipulator/passive-aggressive makes you take on what is her responsibility, and gets you to break a sweat. Some children use this tactic in order to delay, stall, and manipulate adults into doing for them what they don't want to do. Some grown-ups use this tactic as well when they have something to hide, or obligation they wish to avoid.

From [14 Signs of Psychological Manipulation](#) by Preston Li, Psychology Today

Appendix B: Example of Report Sent to Event (used with permission of Jing)

Hi XXX,

I wanted to send you an email about a negative interaction I had with a member of our philadelphia community — YYY .

We attended the same vetted private house party last saturday, April 30th. At this party, YYY repeatedly and throughout the night made unwanted advances and unwanted physical contact after repeated and very strongly issued No's. It resulted with him disrupting a scene with physical contact (his hands around my neck) and again aggressively in the kitchen in front of others, with him physically and aggressively putting his hands around my neck.

I believe that because no one else helped enforce my no, until the second physical aggression with WWW and CCC, that he believed his conduct to be in good standing. The second physical aggression led for me to make a public announcement and demonstration of what consent sounds like, promptly having him end his advances because his ego was hurt.

However, when I approached the host who had positive encouragement that they would talk to YYY, there were many others at the party who were defending his behavior because this isn't usually "like YYY" from a few years ago. The excuses created were, but not limited to:

*"YYY gets topspace like nobody's business
YYY doesn't know how to take no for an answer
He wasn't always like this, I'm just trying to understand why he did it [in response to I don't know why ..who cares...he still did it]"*

I am concerned that his old reputation in the community is enough of an excuse for others that this behavior of violating my consent [put lightly, I am considering this as assault] could be allowing him from doing the same or worse to people not as versed in our community about the respect of boundaries. I am reaching out to all the munches in the area... and to his partners.

I am requesting that YYY no longer be in a position of authority, and best case scenario, is to be held off from the [Event] and [Event], which bring a large amount of new people, until his allegations diminish over a period of time. While I have no problem confronting or being in the same room/event as him, I will be making sure that everyone in our community is aware of his behavior. I do not consider him to be a safe person [I am not speaking for his play] as all encounters happened in areas where play was not happening.

Please let me know if you have any questions. By writing this, I am also consenting to you, XXX, to send this to whomever you need to, and also if need be, have my writing to you placed in a public setting for others to review.

J.

Deborah Hinchey (Quota on Fetlife), Owner of the Aviary, on her response:

She brought me the complaint. I asked her to send me a written statement and asked anyone else who witnessed it to send me a written statement.

Then I reached out to XXX to meet with me to discuss the situation or send me a written statement, they had the option to do both, either or none. I met with XXX and listened to their version of events and then discussed what I believed appropriate sanctions were and what I believed their best next steps were. That is typically my process for all situations.

People have to abide by whatever sanctions are imposed by the Safety Team. Once those have expired they can apply to gain re-entry to our events. As long as there have been no incidents during the sanctioned time and the sanctioned individual is not acting aggressively towards the community or the accuser we will let them back in.

I like my system to execute sanctions that need to be handed out but Incident Response Team are great for on-the-ground conflict resolution. I have only banned about 6 people permanently. My sanctions range from 1-12 months of no entry or no volunteering. We also have a watch list for people we think are problematic but we have no actionable complaints.

I like the system that I have built. I think other cities should use it.

Appendix C: ROPECRAFT IRT Report

Responders Present: EternalAngel & IronTempleDog

Other Staff Involved: Graydancer, P and S

Place of Response: Help Desk Area

Parties Directly Involved: Party A and Party B

Parties Indirectly Involved: Attendee C, Party B's Play Partners

Incident Observed on the Sunday afternoon in front of the helpdesk area where several males stood around Party A in a protective stance and Head of Security told Party B to stay away from Party A without any clear reason mentioned within earshot. Party B reacted in a defensive manner and at the time was approaching the Help Desk Volunteer to engage in conversation. This startled the Volunteer, as the situation elevated quite quickly with P demanded that Party B stay 30ft away from Party A at all times and wanting to know his actual name. There was a verbal exchange of words between Party A and Party B with accusations of who Party B is to Party A.

Myself and IronTempleDog made a decision to step in and I offered to attend to Party A due to gender and make her feel more comfortable as she was distressed and crying.

Breaking the semi circle of predominately male individuals around Party A and offering to take her into the Staff only area and away from the public eye, Party A initially became more upset since another person was approaching her, however followed my lead to move away from the public space.

Once in the Staff area, I gave Party A a little bit of space to calm down, I spoke to her and asked if she could explain what was happening. Party A explained there she was certain that he was an ex partner, who during that time, had been very abusive to her. Party A has PTSD and anxiety. Party A stated that her ex had been called Gene and looked like a spitting image of her ex, although it was a number of years ago that she had been with him.

Party A explained that Party B had been stalking her all weekend. I asked Party A to give examples of this from the beginning of the weekend.

Party A offered an example that she was talking with a friend outside the Dungeon and Party B seemed to be walking back and forth past them and flicking an item (clothing or toy) which kept getting her attention. Party A asked her friend if she thought that Party B was being stalkerish by going back and forth in front of them and her friend stated that she thought Party B was. Party A felt that Party B was following her everywhere over the weekend, in and out of rooms and standing in places that allowed him to 'watch her' or get close to her without actually initiating any direct contact.

Party A spoke to P at the recommendation of a friend, and P told Party B to stay away from Party A however, as I understand from Party B, with no explanation as to who he had to stay away from.

Party A was supported by Cannon throughout the majority of the time that I discussed the incident with Party A, however did not interrupt, just providing morale support. During this time, S came in (part of the security team) also to offer the same support.

I asked Party A about the last known whereabouts of her ex and any details she might be able to give me to assist in identifying him. Party A gave me basic details about last known location and the bits of his name she could remember.

I asked if I could leave her to go and find out and sight his ID for her own safety and also find out some more information. Party A was fine with this and I left her in the care of Cannon and S and requested they both stay put.

I went and spoke with Graydancer who had spoken to Party B, and confirmed his ID. I asked if I could go and speak directly with Party B.

I approached Party B who was happy to discuss what was going on. We found a private space in one of the educational spaces that was not in use. I explained to Party B my role and what I was looking to achieve and I was not there to judge him, I wanted to gain information from both parties to ensure the best possible outcome for both parties. Party B explained that he wasn't sure what was going on other than he had become aware through this incident that he was being accused of being someone in relation to Party A. Party B had been warned to stay away from someone by Head of Security, however did not know who it was exactly as it had not been explained to him nor why.

Party B was approaching the Volunteer at the desk to ask her if she might want to discuss the possibility of play that evening when he felt like he was attacked by Party A's group (the males standing around her) and caught off guard in an accusation by Head of Security. I asked Party B if I might sight his ID since I had spoken to Party A about the person in question that she was afraid of – Party B showed me his ID and business card that displayed information regarding employment into the police force as an Auditor and that this kind of accusation could be harmful to his career and he became quite upset. I explained that this appears to be a case of mistaken identity and that Party A has had previous trauma that affects her ability to make a rational identification when triggered.

I felt satisfied in the evidence and body language of Party B that he is not the person that Party A felt that he was. Party B asked if I could let Party A know that he will stay away from her now that he understands who she is and what is going for her. And that he holds no ill will towards her and hopes that she could enjoy the rest of her time at the event. I requested that Party B not attend a portion of the evening as Party A was participating – prior to even finishing the request, Party B offered to stay away from it. I offered to speak with Party B's play partners and explain what has happened to ensure that there is no damage done to his reputation and standing with them as he had not done anything wrong. Party B accepted this. I spoke with the individuals and explained that there has been a case of mistaken identity – they felt safe with Party B still and understood the situation.

I returned to Party A and explained that I had physically sighted ID and business card, and that it is not the same person. Party A felt a range of emotions from feeling crazy for the mistaken identity to guilty for accusing someone that wasn't her ex.

I explained to both Parties during the discussions that this is really best case scenario for them. Party A didn't leave without knowing and still being triggered and potentially then discussing it friends or on FetLife and having it affect Party B in way that cannot be controlled and having a much broader affect than the few people that have become involved in this.

This did assist both Parties in processing this situation. Party A needed time to process the situation as she had been in a trauma space for the majority of the weekend – she hadn't approached the Incident Response Team because she didn't feel like it was a breach of consent on her being – I explained the role of a Incident Response Team and that this type of incident is something that we should have handled as a team.

I left Party A in the care of those that supported her through the incident and also noticed that IronTempleDog was speaking with the Volunteer. I spoke with him after this and explained that Party B is safe and not at fault and if he could pass this information onto the Volunteer this would assist any questions she might have.

Through this process, I also apologised to Party B over the mishandling of the situation by Security and explained the role of Incident Response Team and how it should have been handled and will be in the future.