Philly Zouk Code of Conduct

Last Modified 9/23/2023, based on the 2023 Canada Zouk Congress Code of Conduct, not associated with a specific event but used by attendees and organizers as a guideline.

The Zouk community has a great reputation as a warm and welcoming dance community! We hope you will help us nurture that reputation by emulating these guiding principles.

Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault

We strive to encourage an inclusive environment for dancers of any age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, religion, race, body size, ethnicity, or chosen dance role. This includes freedom from harassment, assault, or discrimination for any reason. The policy applies to all participants. Whether it is another attendee, a member of our staff or volunteer team, or an artist.

Consent

You must have consent from your partner for any dance, movement, or intimate moment. While accepting a dance does imply consent for a dance within normal boundaries, you should get additional verbal consent prior to performing any lifts on the floor, and **especially** before engaging in any sexual behavior (including kissing or touching). You should help your partner understand your boundaries by making them clear. While many dancers can successfully read your body language, many cannot. Words are the best tool to clarify your enjoyment of or discomfort with a movement or behavior. Consent that was previously given may be rescinded at any time. It is ok to consent to a move with one dance partner and not to consent with another. Immediately respect any request to not perform a specific movement, or to stop a behavior.

Dance Etiquette

Anyone can accept or decline a dance for any reason. Whether you decline or are declined a dance, always treat the opposite party with respect. You are encouraged to request that your dance partner stop or avoid a specific behavior, movement or set of movements that you don't desire. For example, you can ask to not hug, do lifts or dips, perform head movement, have your hands gripped tightly, etc. You may need to remind your partner more than once, as they may be new or nervous. We encourage you to end a dance if you have communicated your boundaries, but your boundaries have not been respected.

Participants should use their full range of senses on the dance floor to avoid accidental collisions and injuries. It is the responsibility of leads to stay attentive and prevent, to the best of their ability, their follow being led into a collision. Followers should assist in collision prevention as well when leads are traveling backwards.

Unsolicited Feedback

While dancers often have the best intentions when giving feedback to a partner, unsolicited feedback may be misinterpreted, taken as condescending, or may even be incorrect. Please do not offer unsolicited advice to fellow dancers on the social dance floor. (This does not include statements reaffirming personal boundaries and safety). All dancers should dance at their partner's level and refrain from trying to teach more advanced movements on the social dance floor. You are welcome to request feedback. However no one is obliged to provide feedback that is requested of them. If you are having difficulty executing a move and would like feedback, we suggest requesting feedback such as:

- "I am having trouble with the move, how does it feel to you?"
- "Is there anything I can do to make the move more comfortable?"
- "I am not quite feeling what you are leading. Can we please try it again?"
- "I would love to have an instructor watch us to see if we are doing it correctly, do you mind?"

Hygiene & Public Health

Appropriate hygiene for dancers includes washing hands, maintaining fresh breath, wearing deodorant, and changing sweaty shirts/ bringing a towel to wipe sweat as needed.

Brazilian Zouk is a close contact activity where skin to skin contact and breathing in close proximity is often unavoidable. Therefore, participants shall practice common sense principles of infection control such as staying home when sick or covering infectious areas to reduce potential exposure for fellow community members. Participants are responsible for consulting their healthcare providers and local public health professionals for guidelines and recommendations on diseases and health conditions specific to them. In the case of another public health concern (COVID 19 for example) organizers have the right to require masks, proof of vaccination, a negative test before entry, or other CDC recommended health precautions at any of our events.

Substances & Alcohol Policy

If anyone is belligerently or disruptively intoxicated they will be asked to safely leave.

Our Staff Policy

We expect our staff & volunteers to maintain aid in creating a safe and positive space for our participants. Staff are required to comply with the code as well as the following additional policies. Staff & volunteers…

- are not permitted to pressure any individual for sex or intimacy during their employment with us.
- are not permitted to fraternize with a student if they are providing private lessons. Should they pursue a relationship, they should recommend an alternative instructor. This is to protect both student & teacher, as some students may pursue instructors and teachers may feel pressured to maintain a source of income.
- should never become intoxicated to where they are unable to behave professionally during our events.

Reporting Incidents

As we are all learning and mistakes can happen, you are encouraged to respectfully and directly alert a fellow dancer who breaks the code of conduct at the time that it occurs, when it is safe to do so. If anything at the event happens that you are uncomfortable with or don't know how to handle, or if you have questions, you can approach any organizers/staff.

Consent is a cornerstone of our reporting process. We will ask you for your consent before doing any of the following:

- Speaking to the other individuals involved
- Speaking with 3rd parties (for example, other organizers)
- Mediating an interpersonal conflict between you and the person alleged

The decision to give your consent remains your choice at all times. Please note that if you ask us not to use your name or you do not give us your consent to take further steps, our ability to manage the issue may be limited. We will always investigate any reported incident before concluding what action (if any) needs to be taken. After investigating an incident, we may decide to do one of the following:

- Take no action
- Listen and provide emotional support
- Educate the other party(ies) about their behavior
- Mediate a resolution between the parties (if applicable, and consented to)
- Require the other party to enter into a written behavioral agreement to continue to attend the event
- Suspend or the party(ies) temporarily or permanently from the event
- Ban the other party(ies) temporarily or permanently from the event