

## RULES FOR CROOKED RIVER CIRCUS PLAY

1. **Waiver.** If this is your first time, please make sure to read and sign the waiver before starting play.
2. **Space.** Respect our space! Please clean up after yourself, and don't forget your belongings. This includes bottles, food wrappers, clothes, and so on. If you bring food to share, please take the leftovers with you. Food needs to stay on the green part of the gym floor. Do not bring food into the gym or onto the mats.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Code of Conduct is based on simple, common-sense principles of respect, empathy, and risk management, for the benefit of the community as a whole. **Failure to abide by this code at Crooked River Circus Open Gyms, Classes or Events, or elsewhere, may result in temporary or permanent exclusion from our jams, events, and social media.**

1. **Safety.** There are inherent risks involved in Circus Arts – Aerial, Acro, Flow, and others. While these risks can't be eliminated altogether, we do our best to minimize them. Please practice safety first. Use accurate self-assessment; know your capabilities and limits. Be aware of the space around you and what people are doing. Riskier material should be saved for more structured classes and ALWAYS done with experienced spotters or teachers. Ask for guidance and spotting from an experienced community member when learning challenging new material.
2. **Drugs and alcohol.** Give the gift of your full presence. Using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol is not allowed at our open gym or other events.
3. **Harassment.** Unwelcome sexual advances, sexual coercion or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether explicit or implicit, are not allowed at our jams and events. A history of harassing behavior, at our events or elsewhere, will make you unwelcome in our community. Do not exploit power imbalances in pursuit of sexual connection – for example, if you're experienced and skilled at partner acrobatics, making passes at new people is not a great idea. Respect the sacredness of touch and keep this space and this community about the skill.
4. **Community respect.** We practice together in a spirit of mutual support. When you play in a group, you are part of that fabric; and when you play in public, you are an ambassador for us all. Be prepared to adapt your attitude and play style to the context and agreements of the event at which you're playing or performing.
5. **Treatment of New Circus Members.** New community members are our future. Treat them with kindness and a spirit of inclusion, and if you're qualified, consider teaching them a thing or two. Please only teach a level of acro they can fully understand, participate in as a partner, and for which they can provide informed consent. Remember they will often attempt this material later without you, so don't show them things way out of their skill level.

## CONSENT

Consent happens when one person voluntarily agrees to the proposal or desire of another one. It is about expressing, listening and accepting the boundaries of an individual. A very important aspect of safety and developing trust is the ability to ask for consent and to listen for the consent being granted or denied.

- **A simplified guideline for consent is:** Ask your partner if they would like to do a skill. Then listen to their response.
  - **No is no.**
  - **Maybe is still a no.**
  - **A forced or coerced yes, is also a no.**
  - **Yes! Is yes!**
- If something happens in which you observe or experience the lack of consent, address it immediately. If you do not feel qualified to address it personally, find a mentor, community leader or teacher that could help mediate the situation.

## ETIQUETTE

Even the most basic acro is a multi-person activity, and partner work is also a key part of aerial and the flow community, so building and maintaining relationships with one another is key to what we do. Refining these skills can be a lifetime practice, but here's a non-exhaustive list to help you get started.

### Hygiene

- Acro is a close activity. Be clean! (But stay away from heavily scented products.)
- Trim your nails! Fingers and toes!
- Breath matters. Just sayin'.
- Tie back long hair.
- You'll get sweaty. Make good use of a towel. Consider lying on one when you L-base.
- Lotions, sunscreens, and massage oils make you slippery, so avoid them if you're going to be doing partner work.
- Take good care of your feet. You'll be amazed what a difference a simple foot file and a little lotion can make. Your fellow circus peeps will thank you.

### Clothing

- Baggy clothing, untucked shirts, and pockets can hook fingers and toes. Snug, non-slippery, movement-friendly clothing is best.
- Jewelry can snag the silks, destroy apparatus, or cut yourself or your partner, compromise grip, and also get broken. It's best to leave it at home.
- Gonna wear tights? Make sure they're completely opaque, even when stretched. Trust us on this one.

### Communication and Empathy

- Be in the moment with your partner. When you let the connection become secondary to the technique you're trying to nail, the photo you're trying to get, or the person you'd rather be playing with, you're robbing both of you of the rich experience you *could* be having.

- You won't be able to do everything you know with every partner, but you can find an interesting and fun way to play with almost anyone. Look past your expectations – who knows what you might discover!
- Stay away from comments about weight, size, or ability. Focus on what you *can* do together and build from there.
- Be especially mindful of uneven power dynamics, and don't use them to push people into material and situations to which they'd have trouble saying no.
- Use your words. Be kind. Think about the long-term impact of what you say. If you don't feel you're being listened to, don't be afraid to firmly speak your truth.
- Learn to gracefully receive a No. The best response is a smiling Okay, and an invitation to find something that works for both of you, or an open invitation to play another time.
- Stay away from giving firehose feedback, especially when it's full of the word "you": "You're doing this wrong, and that wrong, and you should be doing this other thing." Reshape this into smaller discussions and ask what you can do together to help things.
- Listen to what your partner's body is telling you. If their words are saying Yes but their body is saying No, it's best to err on the side of caution.

### ACCURATE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Accurate self-assessment has just as much to do with YOU as it does with your base, porter, flyer and spotters! Please remember the well documented Dunning-Krueger effect that shows that people new to a skill or discipline generally have a less accurate and more inflated self-assessment than people who have more experience. Let's start with you! Ask yourself:

- Do I fully understand the skill?
- Have I done drills or have the foundation to learn the basic movements of the skill?
- Do I feel capable of performing the skill safely? (This can vary day to day)
- How much spotting do I need?
- What is my risk of personal injury?

Now let's think of everyone else involved:

- Do I feel like I can keep my partner safe?
- Does my partner understand the skill?
- Has my partner done drills (if any) to learn the basic movements of the skill?
- Do we, as a team, understand what to do if the skill fails?
- What is the risk of injury to my partner if the skill fails?
- Do my spotters understand the skill and understand what I need from them (hands on/off, proximity, level of involvement)?
- What is the risk of injury to my spotter if the skill fails? (Remember that the spotters are usually at the highest risk for injury!)

You don't have to be perfect to try a new skill! We all have to start somewhere, and every time we try something new, there is a high potential for failure. Accepting failure and preparing for it is a big part of accurate self-assessment. Failure is not only ok, but essential in the learning process. Failing SAFELY is the difference between a great learning experience and an injury. The use of accurate self-assessment before attempting any skill will set all parties up for the best possible success.