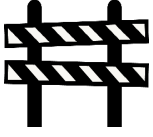# Safety Tools for Tabletop RPGs

BEFORE PLAY

LINES AND VEILS [by Ron Edwards]
Ask your players which contents make them feel uncomfortable and decide how to handle them. "Lines" are contents which they want to exclude from the plot completely. "Veils" are topics which should only be part of the story in a softened, mitigated form. Offering the players suggestions helps to break the ice.

CONTENT WARNING
Signal potentially critical topics in your story to your players before the start of the game. This is especially helpful at conventions, where a summary of your game session is shown on an online or offline notice board. In this way only players sign up who are comfortable with the contents of your scenario.

TONE CONVERSATION
Tell your players which in-game atmosphere you aim for. Examples are creepy, sad, dreamy or light-hearted. Clarifying this upfront helps to have everyone work towards the same mood in the scenario.

C.A.T.S. [by Patrick O'Leary]
Give the players a rough summary of the game's contents in four steps:
1. Concept: What is the game about? Summary of the setting, characters and the main plot.
2. Aim: What is the goal of the players? To overcome an enemy? Player-versus-player? Play-to-lose?
3. Tone: Which kind of atmosphere do you want to achieve? Creepy, serious, goofy?
4. Subject Matter: Discussing potentially critical topics, ask for your players' consent.

OPEN DOOR POLICY
Tell your players that they can leave your game session at any time, no questions asked. No matter if they feel uncomfortable with a certain topic of the story, or if they simply don't enjoy the game, they can always stand up and say goodbye.

DURING PLAY

X-CARD [by John Stavropoulos]
Put a card or sheet of paper with a big X on it on the table. If someone taps the card or holds it up, this signals that the content of the current scene makes them feel uncomfortable. You should then quickly end this scene or change the topic. If necessary, it's ok to ask the player to clarify. Other than that the player raising the X-Card is not meant to explain their reasons for doing so.
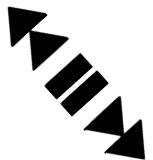
SCRIPT CHANGE [by Beau Jágr Sheldon]
Put a card or piece of paper on the table with these symbols on it: 1. Pause: Stop the game to ask questions and clarify details. 2. Fast backwards: Go back in time and adjust what has happened in the last few moments in-game. 3. Fast forward: Quickly finish up the current scene or skip to the next one. When altering scenes with this tool, discussion is welcome and necessary to get consent from everyone at the table.

CHECK-IN
During play simply ask another player, "Hey, is everything fine? Is the current scene ok with you?" The other one then replies with a Yes/No, thumb up or down, nodding or shaking their head. This lets you know if you can move forward with the current topic, or if you should take it more easy with this content or even end the scene quickly.

Safety Tools for Tabletop RPGs

AFTER PLAY

DEBRIEF
Talk about everyone's experiences with the game, tackle open questions and give each other feedback. This eases up some of the emotional tension that may have built up during play.

ROSES AND THORNS
Ask your players these two questions: 1. Which part of the game did you like the most? 2. Which part of the game would you have done differently, if you could? Everyone takes a turn. As each player starts out with some positive feedback, it's easier for them to provide some criticism afterwards.

IDEAS FOR TOPICS TO EXCLUDE

Here are some suggestions for contents you or your players might want to exclude in your game session. For some people it can be easier to pick a list rather than to proposing a topic themselves.

- sexualised violence
- child abuse
- animal cruelty
- racism
- discrimination agains minorities
- sexuality in general
- torture
- spiders
- snakes
- clowns
- dentist
- serious illnesses
- sexism
- suicide