

TORONTO CONTRA DANCE CODE OF CONDUCT

TORONTO CONTRA DANCE includes and values dancers and guests of all ages, dance experience levels, sexual orientations, gender presentations, ethnicities, and abilities.

We are a consent-based dance community.

- Dancers should ask and receive verbal consent before doing anything with a partner or neighbour beyond the moves of the dance dictated by the caller (e.g., “Do you like twirling?” “Can we swing like this?”)
- We encourage you to tell your partner about your preferences before the dance begins and to ask about theirs (e.g., “Which role would you like?” “Slow swing, please. I get dizzy easily.”)
- You may refuse any invitation to dance for any reason. If someone refuses your invitation to dance, just say “okay!” Then find another partner.
- If someone is doing something you don’t like, it’s okay to say “Stop!” or “I don’t like twirls.” or “Please move your hand towards the centre of my back.” or “You’re swinging too close.”
- If you feel very unsafe or uncomfortable, you can leave the line. Your safety takes priority.
- A culture of consent includes not engaging in sexual harassment. Do not engage in sexual banter or innuendo, or comment on other dancers’ appearances.
- If anyone asks you to stop doing something, apologize and stop doing it.

If anyone makes you feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or embarrassed, you can address it with them during or after the dance. If you’re not comfortable addressing it with them, we encourage you to approach one of the organizers (wearing green name badges) who will work with you to resolve the situation in a way that helps you feel safe and comfortable. This will typically involve the committee members reminding the dancer of our community standards, and asking them to change their behaviour. For rare cases of serious or repeated breaches of standards, we reserve the right to suspend or ban a dancer.

Dance-Floor Etiquette

Contra dancers generally change partners after every dance. Please look to the sidelines for new dancers or those who are sitting out.

Give full attention to the caller, line up quickly, and take hands four on request. Do not talk while the caller is walking us through the dance.

The two dance roles in contra are usually called “gent” and “lady,” but dancers are encouraged to dance whichever role(s) they prefer, and many dance both.

Contra dancing brings dancers into close contact with each other. Please:

- Do not wear scented products to our dance events. Many are allergic.
- If you have a cold, consider staying home for the evening.
- Watch out for other dancers around you—stay in your space and mind your elbows and feet. Heavy jewellery, unsecured long hair, and heavy shoes may be hazardous to others.