



RPG Research Role-Playing Game Sessions Code of Conduct

Version: Recreational, Educational, and Community Settings

Revision 20220827j by W.A. Hawkes-Robinson

This document provide an outline of RPG Research’s Role-Playing Gamer Code of Conduct for general participation in recreational, educational, and community settings. We have other modified versions for other specific settings including research, therapeutic, and other settings.

The latest versions of our Code of Conduct documents can be found at <https://rpgresearch.com/coc>

At RPG Research, and our related programs, participants join together to share the distinctive, beneficial, and enjoyable experiences of role-playing gaming. In order to maintain a fair and fun environment, all players are expected to honor the Code of Conduct. Please read the Code of Conduct carefully, paying close attention to each point.

Remember we try to run mostly family-friendly programs. Family-friendly means along the lines of PG or younger appropriate language, while still potentially covering complex adult topics in creative ways. This makes our as accessible and inclusive as possible for the widest audience possible.

Occasionally we may run more mature content (such as Call of Cthulhu), in such cases, please pay special attention to the Game Content Consent Form we provide to help keep the environment as comfortable as possible.

Note About Recordings, Streaming, Photos

We record with audio and video most of program sessions for liability, research, program improvement, and private training purposes. These are stored locally and never in any public cloud or public services. Only a select few of our staff have access to these secured recordings.

We also often record or live-stream one or more of our programs, usually for special events. These are public recordings, but you will be informed if a program you are interested in will be made public.

We also from time to time take photos of our program environments for our records, research, promotional, and training purposes.

BY PARTICIPATING IN ANY OF OUR PROGRAMS YOU ALLOW US TO USE THESE PHOTOS IN OUR MATERIALS. IF YOU WISH TO OPT OUT OF THIS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR FACILITATOR AND WE WILL ADJUST ACCORDINGLY.

Be Respectful

The Program Facilitator (PF), Dungeon Master (DM), aka Game Master (GM), and other staff will treat you with respect by default. It is expected that you will treat everyone else with respect and that other players will treat you with respect as well, so you have no reason to mistreat them. Disrespect in any fashion may be grounds for disciplinary action.

RPG Programs: Story First, Rules Second

Rules are tools. Use them, but do not let them trap you.

If the GM chooses to make changes here or there to encourage the flow of the story, do not let the flow of the game be ruined by frequent rules debate.

If you have a concern, then please write a note about your concerns and pass it to the GM, speak with them during a break, or decide to discuss the topic at the end of the game session to make an official decision for future sessions. Then the GM can opt to adjust a rule/ruling. Sometimes a critical issue will be impacted by a ruling in the moment, so the GM may rarely allow interrupting game play to quickly research and resolve the ruling, but these instances should be kept to an absolute minimum as close to zero per session as possible.

Take it to the Game Master (GM) – Debate is Welcome, Avoid Arguing.

Respectful and intelligent debate is welcome as long as it doesn't disrupt the flow of the program session. However, be careful that your emotions do not take control of you to a detrimental level, be careful you do not violate the rule about arguing. Please do not kill the immersion, potential flow state experiences, and the "suspension of disbelief" for the players by disrupting the game or bogging it down with frequent interruptions, rules debate, or arguing.

If you can address an issue very briefly during your turn, and ask for a quick ruling by the GM, that is fine. Otherwise, as stated, please make a note to yourself to talk about any issues with the GM at the end of the session, or if it is more urgent pass a note to the GM asking to discuss the topic during a break or at the end of the session, so that the GM may hear you out in full. Please always keep it civil and be considerate of others.

Respect All Other Participants, Facilitators, Staff and Their Right to Have Fun

Role-playing gaming is a collaborative effort. It provides the most enjoyable and beneficial experience if everyone is working together, not just in the game, but outside of it as well. Contribute to everyone's fun and not just your own. To help with this, let's tell a good story together, and have a good time doing it!

As part of being contributory, one must keep things like the following in mind:

- If your character is starting to cause resentment in the other players, it *might* be time to either make a new character or find an in-game way to alter the character in some way. We want to make sure everyone is having fun.
- Please remember that the game session's fun is not entirely dependent upon the GM, the burden also rests upon each player! Even an inexperienced GM can still end up running a fun session if the players are working *with* the GM and the other players, rather than simply expecting perfection from everyone else.
- Out-of-Character (OOC) physical abuse, discrimination, or verbal abuse is not tolerated.
- Everyone is to maintain common sensitivity. Out of consideration to others, public intimacy is discouraged. Please do not “hit on” your fellow players or player characters. Except for folks that have known each other for years, and/or more emotionally mature players, this tends to make everyone uncomfortable, and will usually drive players away.
- For our more mature programs, with completed Participant Consent Forms provided, with pre-approval from the GM/Facilitator, it may be acceptable for your PC to flirt with NPCs (as appropriate to your character, campaign, group expectations, and the adventure), but don't get too carried away. Treat your fellow players as an associate, friend, or friendly family member, not a potential date. Unless discussed and allowed by all participants and GM in advance of the program starting, detailed descriptions of sexual acts in (or out) of the game are not allowed. If you and another player are already romantically involved, please do not incorporate that into the game, it usually causes other participants to feel very uncomfortable.
- No pornography or otherwise rated "X" material is to be displayed. Do not use, post, distribute or link to obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit, graphically or gratuitously violent, derogatory, demeaning, malicious, defamatory, abusive, offensive, hateful or discriminatory language or content. If using any electronic tools, this includes "masking" language by using alternative characters/spelling /spacing to get around profanity filters or claims of profanity filter “testing.”
- Players are prohibited from making final rules calls or chastising others for improper role-playing. Players should instead politely call the rule or player actions into question and let the GM appropriately resolve any issues. If a rule or player's behavior is called into question, said rule is to be reviewed by the GM and/or SH to determine its legality/compliance. Respect the authority of the Game Master and/or Show Host.
- Please try to keep the language family friendly, for the widest possible audience. We can live with PG-13, but the closer to PG, the more people will be able to enjoy the show, including at their workplace, home, etc. where others may overhear.

Be Respectful of All Property

Show respect toward all property and possessions. Damage or theft of a Player's, GM's, or Host's property is not tolerated. This also includes dice, pencil, books, other gaming materials, as well as online reputations, accounts, etc.

Harassment & Hate Speech

If someone says “No” or “Leave me alone” and you don't listen, that is harassment.

Consider harassment to be a pattern of unwanted contact, attention, or behavior.

Hate speech is any speech, gesture, conduct, writing, or display which may incite violence or prejudicial action against or by a protected individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates an individual or group.

Do not harass, bully, threaten, harm, and wherever possible try to avoid knowingly causing discomfort for other persons. If made aware of causing such discomfort, adjust your behavior accordingly.

Out-of-character racist, bigoted, or excessively vulgar or distasteful language is strongly discouraged.

Do not:

- Use hate speech or racial, ethnic, sexist, homophobic or religious slurs.
- Harass a specific person (repeated flaming or personal attacks).
- Make sexual advances toward other players
- Troll or bait the participants in general with inflammatory statements, such as ones designed to elicit a negative response from the participants.
- Cause violence, threats of violence, or any other action or gesture that compromises the safety of participants.
- No harassment or hate speech of any kind.
- Religious slurs and comments (be considerate of Christian and other players' sensitivity to using certain names “in vain”).
- Be careful with “off color” jokes.

Methods of Communicating Potential Triggers or Discomfort

We try to provide Participant Consent Forms in advance of each session for settings that might be more upsetting for some participants. For sessions that may be designed to cover difficult topics, we may provide you with a “No Thank You Evil”, “X card”, private post-it notes, or other means of discretely communicating to the GM that something is bothering you, for the GM to address it ASAP.

Optional In-Character (IC) Exceptions

In-character racist, bigoted, or excessively vulgar or distasteful language is discouraged, but if approved in advance by all participants and the GM, *may* in moderate amounts, as per in-advance discussion with the GM and other players, be allowed if appropriate to the campaign and player characters, for example racial comments about orcs, or orcs vulgar threats to the Free People of Middle-earth might be allowed if appropriate to the circumstances and the predefined characters. But it is important to discuss this in advance to know what is appropriate for this campaign and this particular stream.

It is also important that these terms be included in handout or other means of text, providing a description with as much advance warning as possible, detailing the list of issues, triggers, or other content that may be a concern for participants

For some of the more mature programs, with consent from all participants and the GM in advance of the program beginning, and with completed consent forms, behavior that is completely disallowed for Out-of-Character (OC) might be allowed for In-Character context.

Things get complicated for historically placed games, such as a World War I campaign being played in a relatively historically accurate early 1900s, there are many attitudes, behaviors, and terms in that time period that are no longer appropriate in this day and age.

It is important to know which terms and behaviors are appropriate for the session and that they discussed and agreed upon clearly by the GM and all participants, in advance of starting the session.

For example, many Call of Cthulhu games are set in the 1920s. Some Facilitators and players opt for an “alternate reality” of the time period and drop any references to racism, sexism, etc. However, other groups (with prior consent) may opt to run a more “historically accurate” setting which includes behaviors of the time period that are not considered appropriate by today’s standards. Such groups must handle these topics with extreme care.

Hygiene, Allergies, Dress Code, Alcohol, Drugs, & Smoking

Please be considerate of all the other participants. Some participants have strong reactions from allergies, asthma, and other sensitivities to strong chemicals, perfumes, or excessive body odor.

Please avoid excessively poor grooming, noticeable body odor, or excessive perfumes out of consideration to everyone else. Severe body odor isn’t just unpleasant — it can irritate medical conditions like allergies, asthma and migraines, and is highly disruptive to the enjoyment of the game for everyone else.

No participant shall have an odor generally offensive to others when attending a session. An offensive body odor may result from a lack of good hygiene, from an excessive application of a fragrant after-shave or cologne or from other causes.

No alcohol or illegal drugs are to be brought or used at gaming sessions. Obviously intoxicated or high participants may be asked to leave the game.

Smoking/vaping must comply with Washington state laws (25' distance away from entrances and windows).

Since some participants are known to have allergies and asthma, if you do need to smoke, please refrain from smoking/vaping until after the game session is over. Smoking/vaping just before a game, or during a break, tends to bring a strong unpleasant odor unto the game room afterward, and can trigger asthma attacks, so please try to wait until after the game session is over to smoke. No smoking is allowed at the gaming table.

If you do have offensive odor, the GM and/or SH will attempt to discretely let you know so that you can resolve any such issues.

Props and Costumes

Props are allowed, but brandishing of naked steel is generally discouraged, unless the GM allows, and all participants indicate they are comfortable with it. Please consult with the GM before bringing any prop-type weapons to the gaming session.

For most of our TRPG sessions, though you may wear costumes and props, when not at a convention setting, most of our groups are not expected to dress in any costumes at all.

All attire must be appropriately modest and considerate of others. Determination of “appropriately modest” is to be decided by the facilities staff, facilitators, management, and/or the GM.

Be Respectful of the GM

Your character is free to do whatever you want it to do as appropriate to the theme of the campaign. If this is a heroes-only campaign then avoid blatantly “evil” PC actions.

Please take the GM's scenario seriously, but not *too* seriously, and follow the GM's lead, at the very least in spirit. The GM works very hard to learn to perfect or design a scenario to be exciting. All that is asked is that you not make intentional efforts to break that work or intentionally disrupt the game.

Tabletop role-playing gaming is about working together: the GM provides you with a scenario and helps you run through it, in return please provide the GM your sincere cooperation.

The Game Master (DM or GM) and/or Program Facilitator (PF) may arbitrate debate about the game rules or other such. The DM and/or SH takes the approach of “beneficent dictator”, they will hear the concerns of those that wish to speak about an issue, but in the end all rulings by the GM and/or SH are final.

Take Turns, Pay Attention, & Avoid Distractions

Take turns. Do not speak over each other. It is always important to take turns in a TRPG setting. For individuals or groups that struggle with impulse control, a useful method the GM may opt to use is an object such as a “talking stick” to help with training better turn-taking.

Even if it is not your turn to speak, it is polite, considerate, and helps speed up the flow of the game, if everyone is paying attention to each other throughout the session.

Please mute or turn off your cell phones.

Please do not be engaged in out-of-game chat, instant messaging, social networks, or other distractions not directly related to the session, the GM, the players, and the adventure.

Significant research www.optimizedrpg.com shows that removing such distractions will not only improve your experience by not missing any details and being ready to respond to the GM and other players promptly and in a prepared manner, it also impacts the enjoyment, level of immersion, and flow state opportunities, of your fellow players and the GM.

And when broadcasting, unless it is designed to be part of the show, is just plain bad form to talk over each other, and makes it nigh impossible for the audience to understand anyone.

The Consequences of Violating a Rule(s)

This is only an example progression to provide some approximate guidelines of expectation. They are not "hard and fast" methods, and cannot possibly cover all situations. Alternate or additional remedial actions may be taken, based on the discretion of the GM, Program Facilitator, Staff, Management, or facilities owners, and the severity of any individual case may escalate remedial actions. The remediation is usually at the GM's discretion.

We believe that zero tolerance equals zero thought, so we do not implement a zero tolerance policy.

One size does not fit all. If necessary, disciplinary consequences are only implemented for actual behaviors, not potential behavioral scenarios (“might haves”) that never actually happened, and certainly not for thoughts or feelings. Speech, sign-language, and writing are also considered active behaviors that may require disciplinary consequences. You may think or feel anything you want, but once you state your feelings or thoughts it becomes a behavior that is potentially subject to disciplinary action.

Context is critically important, though it requires more effort than a zero tolerance policy, our 40+ years or research and evidence-in-practice, supports our policy that the context-driven approach is the most just and fair approach for everyone. We make all reasonable efforts to understand the contextual appropriateness or inappropriateness of an action in the broad and immediate contextual circumstances of the issue(s) of concern.

If something is determined to be inappropriate, here is a non-exhaustive list of potential consequences:

1st Level Offense: A verbal (or passed note) warning.

2nd Level Offense:

- Verbal reprimand (GM and/or Facilitator will try to speak with the participant discretely away from the group if possible (this may be difficult in some situations and may require a more public response).
- Potentially a loss of turns or control of character for a given time period may occur.

3rd level Offense:

- Removed from participant in the rest of the day's session (or next session).
- Up to being banned from a number of multiple sessions.

4th Level Offense:

- Banned from all future game participation in this group.
- Depending on the contextual circumstances, may or may not be allowed to work with the organization or at the facility in other capacities.

5th Level Offense: Banned from any participation at any programs, activities, or facilities for a set or indefinite period of time. This is extremely rare, reserved for only the most egregious behaviors.

Player Character Campaign Guidelines

Most of our RPG programs have the expectation of the player characters (PC) being “the good guys” in a typically “heroic” campaign, the character must be good at heart. If needing some guidance and specific examples of what we mean by a “good” “heroic” style, the works of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and other writings provide excellent examples.

It is okay for player characters to be flawed, have eccentricities, and struggle with difficult moral decisions and actions (which can lead to some great role-playing). A less subtle extreme example of a heroic but flawed character includes Boromir's temptation and loss of self-control caused by giving into the will of The One Ring. In the long run they must be well-intentioned towards the greater good. Boromir is an example of an heroic character that gave into temptation and a moment of evil action, and experienced consequences to the actions.

If your character commits too many evil acts, the PC will increasingly lose free will, succumbing to impulse and/or the will of others. Too much transition into this "shadow", as determined by the GM, may lead to the PC increasingly losing self-will. At the GM's discretion, if the PC performs too many evil or questionable acts, if the player repeatedly ignores the GM's warning the player may no longer be allowed to control the PC, and relinquishes partial or full control of the PC to the GM.

Contact information

RPG Research

US Toll-free: (833) RPG-INFO

Cell/text: (509) 508-7630

info@rpgresearch.com

101 North Stone Street

Spokane, Washington 99202 USA

This Role-Playing Game (RPG) Code of Conduct Document by [Hawke Robinson](#) is licensed under the:

[Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

Based on a work at <http://spokanerpq.com/archives/gamer-intake>.

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at
<http://spokanerpq.com/archives/permissions>.



Below is the HTML version of the Creative Commons License for this document for online versions:

```
<a rel="license" href="http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/"></a><br /><span xmlns:dct="http://purl.org/dc/terms/"
href="http://purl.org/dc/dcmitype/Text" property="dct:title" rel="dct:type">Role-Playing Game (RPG) Code of Conduct for Broadcasts</span>
by <a xmlns:cc="http://creativecommons.org/ns#" href="http://spokanerpq.com/archives/gamer-intake/rpg-broadcast-code-of-conduct"
property="cc:attributionName" rel="cc:attributionURL">Hawke Robinson</a> is licensed under a <a rel="license"
href="http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/">Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License</a>.<br />Based on
a work at <a xmlns:dct="http://purl.org/dc/terms/" href="http://spokanerpq.com/archives/gamer-intake"
rel="dct:source">http://spokanerpq.com/archives/gamer-intake</a>.<br />Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <a
xmlns:cc="http://creativecommons.org/ns#" href="http://spokanerpq.com/archives/permissions"
rel="cc:morePermissions">http://spokanerpq.com/archives/permissions</a>.
```