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PROTOCOL GROUP

What do the members of your group have to say about the following topics?

- Common protocols concerning rank, responsibility, appearance, sexual/non-sexual conduct, online communication, behavior before/during/after a BDSM scene or relationship, communication with others, etc.
- Relationship between protocols and:
 - safety (your own or that of others)
 - establishing and maintaining the parameters and structural integrity of a BDSM scene/relationship
 - confirming consent
 - recognizing abusive behavior
- Codifying and enforcing protocols and punishment (e.g., a Dom/sub contract)
- When to implement, eliminate, change, or disregard a protocol (especially as part of punishment)
- Using protocols as a form of education and self-discipline for all parties



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PROTECTION GROUP

What do the members of your group have to say about the following topics?

- Self-protection vs. protection of others in a BDSM scene / relationship
- Protocols that are designed to protect yourself, partners, integrity of a scene or relationship and when to disregard or eliminate them
- Punishment because of failure to protect one's self, the people in a scene / relationship, or the structural integrity of a BDSM scene or relationship
- Changes in responsibility (e.g., when does a sub have to protect a Dom?)
- Protection as it pertains to:
 - giving and receiving consent
 - online conduct
 - aftercare
 - vetting for others
 - abusive behavior
 - health (mental, physical, or emotional)

Art by Silverjow



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PUNISHMENT GROUP

What do the members of your group have to say about the following topics?

- Punishment and issues of:
 - consent (*i.e.*, did everyone agree to the punishment?)
 - consistency (*i.e.*, was punishment meted out as discussed?)
 - reasonableness (*i.e.*, does the punishment fit the offense?)
 - aftercare when the punishment is finished (and is it a form of protection?)
- Differentiating punishment from playtime — and also abuse
- Different types of punishment and what they are used for; is punishment ever beneficial?
- Punishment resulting from failure to protect one's self, others in a BDSM scene/relationship, the structural integrity of a BDSM scene or relationship and the lessons that can be learned as a result;
- New protocols put in place as a form of (or result of) punishment
- Punishment meted out in error



SUGGESTED TAKEAWAYS

- Communicate honestly, clearly, and often with your partner(s) before, after, and in between scenes. Ask questions, even if you think they are silly and especially if they are hard.
- Know your sexual limits and consider not only how far you are willing to stretch/stick to them, but also who (in addition to yourself) will be mindful of them. Consider writing them down and revisiting them periodically.
- Read *The Leather and BDSM Handbook* or *The Complete Leatherboy Handbook* by Vincent L. Andrews and consider it a tool to formulate your own protocols and/or corresponding punishments.
- Third party perspectives can sometimes be helpful. Consider long-term mentorship from a more experienced practitioner or a kink-positive therapist... someone with whom you can check in periodically where matters of safety, consent, and thorough communication are concerned.
- There's a fourth P to remember: PRIVILEGE
Always try to remember that it is a privilege to explore, test, and enjoy the physical/emotional/mental limitations of another person... and that someone letting you test theirs is just as much a privilege. Treat it as such.
- HAVE FUN... 'cause hey, that's really what this is all about after all!