

# The D/s Negotiation Checklist

*A working document for pre-scene and pre-dynamic conversations.*

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## How to Use This Checklist

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This is the operational application of the consent framework. The four qualities of consent are not abstract. Ongoing, enthusiastic, revocable, informed. Each one gets translated into specific decisions that this document walks through.

Use it together, in conversation. Not as a form one partner fills out and hands to the other. The conversation is the point. The written record is what helps you both remember what you agreed to.

*This is a working document. It is not a legal contract. Nothing here transfers legal authority, modifies criminal law, or substitutes for direct communication. It is a structured way to have the conversation that good D/s practice requires.*

Revisit it when circumstances change. The yes you give today is not a yes for all future scenes or arrangements. This document is meant to be edited, dated, replaced.

## Before You Begin: Capacity Check

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A negotiation requires both partners to be in a state where they can form an informed, freely chosen yes. If any of the items below is no, postpone the conversation. Compromised capacity is not a valid consent foundation.

### **Both partners confirm:**

- We are both sober. Neither of us is intoxicated by alcohol, recreational substances, or medications that impair judgment.
- We are both adequately rested. Neither of us is operating on severe sleep deprivation.
- We are both free from acute emotional crisis. Neither of us is in active distress, recent trauma activation, or destabilization that would compromise our judgment.
- We have time and privacy for this conversation. We are not rushing it, and we are not being overheard.

- Neither of us is operating under coercion. There is no financial pressure, threat of leaving, withdrawal of affection, or social pressure shaping the agreement.
- We both want to be having this conversation. Not because we have to. Because we have chosen to.

*If all six are checked, proceed.*

## Section 1: Scope

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This conversation is for:

- A specific scene (one occasion, defined activities, defined time)
- A specific activity (standing consent for one practice, separate from any single scene)
- An arrangement (an ongoing dynamic structure, protocol, or daily expectation)
- A relationship-level agreement (the broader configuration of the partnership)

Each scope has its own consent operations. A yes in one scope is not a yes in another. Standing consent for impact play is not consent to needle play. Arrangement-level commitment is not authorization to override scene-level safewords.

*Be explicit about the scope you are negotiating. Where this checklist is used for a scope other than scene-specific, treat the references to 'scene' as references to the broader arrangement.*

## Section 2: What

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What are we agreeing to?

**Type of scene or activity**

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**Specific activities in scope**

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**Duration or time frame**

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**Setting or context**

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## Section 3: Limits

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Each partner names their own limits. The Dom has limits; the sub has limits. Both lists are authoritative.

### *Hard Limits (Never, No Exceptions)*

Hard limits are non-negotiable. They are not invitations to push. They are the lines that, if crossed, end the dynamic.

*Sub's hard limits*

*Dom's hard limits*

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### *Soft Limits (Only Under Specific Conditions)*

Soft limits are activities one partner does not generally want, but might consider under named conditions. The conditions are part of the limit. 'Maybe sometimes' is not a soft limit; specific conditions are.

*Sub's soft limits and conditions*

*Dom's soft limits and conditions*

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### *Edges (Currently Uncertain)*

Activities one or both partners are curious about but have not yet decided about. Edges are not agreements to do the activity. They are agreements to revisit the conversation.

**Edges to revisit later**



## Section 4: Safewords

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Safewords are not requests. They are commands. When invoked, they get honored without question, without negotiation, without retaliation.

### **Primary verbal safeword (full stop)**

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*When invoked: the scene ends immediately. Aftercare begins.*

### **Slow-down word (proceed with caution, check in)**

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*When invoked: the activity pauses. The Dom checks in. Adjustments are made before continuing, or the scene ends if the slow-down does not resolve the issue.*

### **Non-verbal safeword (when verbal is not possible)**

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*When invoked: same response as the primary verbal safeword.*

*The default convention is red (stop), yellow (slow), green (continuing well). Many partners use this default; others use custom words. Either works. What matters is that both partners know what each signal means and that the Dom will honor it.*

## Section 5: Information Share

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Each partner shares what the other needs to know in order to consent informedly. Withholding relevant information undermines the validity of the consent given, even when 'yes' is technically said.

*Sub*

*Dom*

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### **Physical health relevant to this scene**

*Injuries, medical conditions, medications, surgeries, mobility limits, anything that affects what is safe to do.*

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### **Mental health context relevant to this scene**

*Diagnoses if relevant, medications if relevant, current state of well-being.*

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*Diagnoses if relevant, medications if relevant, current state of well-being.*

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### **Known triggers**

*Specific words, scenarios, sensory experiences, or contexts that activate trauma response or destabilization. The Dom has triggers too.*

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### **History with similar activities**

*Experience level, prior partners, any history of injury or scene-related complication.*

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### **Current life circumstances**

*Anything outside the scene that might affect what you both need from it: work stress, family situation, sleep pattern, recent emotional events.*

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## Section 6: Aftercare

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The scene ends. The agreement does not. Aftercare is consent practice in the post-scene window.

*Both partners need aftercare. The Dom's aftercare is not optional; it is the structural counterpart to the sub's. Plan for both.*

*Sub*

*Dom*

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**What is needed (physical, emotional, both)**

**What is needed (physical, emotional, both)**

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**How long is the aftercare window**

**How long is the aftercare window**

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**Specific care actions wanted**

**Specific care actions wanted**

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**Drop awareness**

*What drop has looked like in the past, what helps.*

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## Section 7: Re-Negotiation

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This agreement is not permanent. Both partners need a structure for revisiting it.

### When will this agreement be revisited

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*After a specific number of scenes. On a date. When circumstances change. Always revisit when capacity, health, or life context shifts significantly.*

### How will concerns be raised between negotiation sessions

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*A specific time for check-ins. A standing invitation to raise issues. A signal that means 'we need to talk.' Whatever works for both partners.*

### What happens if one partner wants to revise before the next scheduled revisit

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## Section 8: Consent Confirmation

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Both partners confirm, by checking each box, that the agreement above is valid consent:

- Ongoing.** We both understand that this yes can be withdrawn at any time, including mid-scene. Withdrawal is not betrayal. It is updated information.
- Enthusiastic.** We both actually want this. Not 'fine, I guess.' Not because the other partner wants it. The yes is honest.
- Revocable.** This agreement is revisable. We can walk back specific items. We can end the arrangement. The yes today is not a yes forever.
- Informed.** We have both shared what the other needs to know. We have not withheld relevant information about health, history, capacity, or current circumstances.

*If any of the four cannot honestly be checked, the consent is not yet valid. The discipline is to address the gap before proceeding, not to proceed despite it.*

*Optional: Date and Initials*

*This is a working document, not a legal contract. Sign and date if you want to formalize the conversation.*

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*Sub initials*

*Dom initials*

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*Date of conversation*

*Next scheduled revisit*

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## What This Document Does Not Cover

This checklist is comprehensive but not exhaustive. Some things it deliberately does not include.

It does not specify the activity in advance. The 'What' section is intentionally open. Specific practices have their own conversations, and this document supports those conversations rather than replacing them.

It does not assess your partner. For the deeper question of whether the person across from you is someone you can negotiate safely with, see the vetting and red flags pages on Life Beyond Vanilla.

It does not address higher-risk practices. CNC, edge play, and other practices that carry elevated physical, emotional, or legal risk require more rigorous negotiation than this template provides.

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### *A final note*

The most important part of this checklist is not the document. It is the practice of having the conversation, repeatedly, over time. The document is what helps you both remember and refine. The practice is what makes the dynamic worth keeping.

For more information on healthy D/s relationships visit [lifebeyondvanilla.com](http://lifebeyondvanilla.com).