

**FITTING
ROOM
BEST
PRACTICES**

As performers and costume designers, we work closely to build characters and stories through costume. It is vital to maintain the sacredness and safety of the fitting room space.

Here are some best practices to keep in mind to ensure that no matter your gender identity, body size, body dysmorphia, disability, neurodivergence, race, age, or ethnicity, you will be treated with respect and find the support you need with your collaborators. These responsibilities apply to performers, costume designers, and costumers (costume team), as it's our mutual commitment that can ensure everyone's well-being.

Our commitment to each other's safety should encompass all areas of our collaboration. Performers have a measure of power on set and can speak up to protect the costume team if they see inappropriate behavior toward them. Costume teams are on the front lines and can speak up to protect actors during body mic placement, scenes with nudity, and at other times when they may feel vulnerable.

With mutual respect and shared goals, we can use our close working relationship to positively affect the tone of the workplace. Here are ways to ensure a productive collaboration.

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HAVE A PRE-FITTING DISCUSSION

During this discussion, the costume designer and costume team should get the following information:

- The performer's pronouns.
- A performer's current sizes and measurements of their body. It is essential that a performer take new measurements at the beginning of every job, even if they feel certain they have not changed. Without these, the design team cannot be properly prepared for a fitting, which will put production behind schedule.
- The **QR code** on the back of this pamphlet will direct you to a helpful measurement chart.
- Performers can also take their measurements by using a piece of string and comparing it to a ruler or hard tape measure.
- Any access needs to consider, including certain fabrics or closures, if assistance will be required navigating to the facility, and that there is adequate space in the dressing area for assistive devices and/or personnel, wheelchairs, canes, service dogs, personal care assistants, etc.
- Any allergies or sensitivities to fabrics, specific undergarment needs, and color or cut preferences, if applicable.
- Some costume teams may ask for a performer's current weight in order to fit them. However, some performers either cannot or should not share this information and must feel comfortable saying so. Performers in recovery for disordered eating likely know that knowledge and disclosure of their weight jeopardizes their recovery. Others might simply have distanced themselves from weight-conscious culture and no longer own a scale.

Regardless, the realities of weight stigma mean a person's weight should be treated as privileged information. If the costume team feels they cannot proceed without it, asking for it should be handled on a phone call between a performer and a costume designer and not included on a performer's fitting sheet. This allows for a private, trusted environment for individual designers to state their need for a performer's weight, and individual performers to explain why they might be unable to provide it.

2 PROVIDE A PRIVATE CHANGING AREA FOR EVERY FITTING

It is in everyone's best interest that a private changing area be provided and utilized regardless of individual comfort levels. The area must have adequate space to accommodate the needs of disabled performers, such as changing benches, room for mobility aids, and ADA-compliant restrooms in the facility. A private changing area precludes the most obvious opportunity for potentially harmful behavior from all parties when a performer is in a state of undress, and is therefore important for the mental health and safety of both performers and the costume team. This is a simple way to prevent harm to everyone involved, particularly if anyone present experiences body dysmorphia or is uncomfortable with nudity. In the case of minors, all members of the costume team should leave the room and allow the parent or guardian to help the minor dress in full privacy.

3 KEEP THE FITTING ROOM FREE OF ANTI-FAT & SIZE BIAS, ABLEISM, & GENDER BIAS

Anti-fat and size bias is prevalent in the film/TV industry. By being aware of this dynamic, we can avoid the harmful behaviors of body-shaming, limited clothing options, and downplaying the feelings of curvy, fat, thick and plus-sized performers. Please note that body issues may affect actors of all sizes and genders. Ableism can occur with comments about how "inspiring" people with disabilities are and also with inappropriate comments about disability (visible and non-apparent). Gender bias affects us all differently; people need to be aware that this can occur with male-presenting performers as well. Another way gender bias exists is in relation to trans performers. Comments to avoid include telling trans performers they don't look trans (the implication being that looking cis is favorable), having limited clothing options, ignoring pronouns, and making any inappropriate body-related comments.

4 PROVIDE PROPER UNDERGARMENTS

- Performers are responsible for showing up to a fitting wearing well-fitted undergarments.
- Costume teams are responsible for ensuring that the size and fit of any specialty undergarments work for a performer.

5 REMEMBER THAT PHOTOS MAY BE TAKEN

Reference photos could be taken in order to be shared with the rest of the production staff. Performers can help the costume team with the presentation of their work by arriving in whatever state of photo readiness the performer is comfortable with.

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SEEK CONSENT BEFORE TOUCHING SOMEONE

Working in such an intimate, vulnerable setting means extra care must be taken to ensure consent before touching performers during a fitting. For performers and costume teams, being aware of the setting and the extra caution required when in sensitive states of undress is essential. Never touch a disabled performer or their assistive devices without the express permission of the performer themselves.

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KEEP THE FITTING ROOM FREE OF BODY TALK OF ANY KIND

This applies to anyone of any gender identity, body size, disability, or race. Even coming from what is intended to be a kind or complimentary place, comments about bodies might be harmful. In the same way one cannot assume a person's pronouns, one cannot assume someone else's relationship to their body. Compliments and comments about clothing and fit are entirely appropriate, whereas compliments and comments about the body within it are not.

- If someone does comment on your body in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, set boundaries by politely letting them know that you would prefer they didn't.
- All parties should also avoid making disparaging or comparative statements about their own bodies during the fitting process.
- When taking measurements, ensure that the numbers are kept between the fitter and the designer by physically showing the measurement tape to the person writing the measurements rather than announcing them aloud.

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COLLABORATION IS KEY

The fitting room is the appropriate place to discuss comfort levels with different clothing items, character questions, fit, and anything else that performers and the costume team need to be on the same page about.

For costume designers, this is the time to share your vision for the show and how a performer's character fits into the narrative. **For performers**, this is the time to feel empowered and voice what you need to do your job comfortably and confidently.

The fitting room is a place of mutual vulnerability, and these simple tips can help performers, costume designers, and costumers do their best work while ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Scan the QR code on the back for a resource list.

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Resource List



Measurement
Chart