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What is a BDSM Play Party?

Whisper Enterprises

Original published by
Whisper Enterprises

www.whisper.co.nz

A BDSM Information Booklet

What is a play party?

A play party is a social gathering of like minded persons (BDSM) where attendees are encouraged/expected to engage in BDSM activities as well as engage in conversation which is routinely, but not limited to, BDSM related.

Or, imagine a party, any party where people are sitting round talking, having the odd drink or two, some may be dancing, some may be smooching in the corner on the couch. Your everyday typical party.

Now, add to that a submissive on the coffee table getting soundly spanked, another submissive strung up in bondage in the doorway getting stroked and caressed by their dominant, yet another stretched out on a cross getting flogged by two leather clad dominants at the same time, and you have the makings of a BDSM play party.

What is a party safeword?

A party safeword is a word used to stop a scene in progress when either of the parties playing feel they are in danger or if the Top has not respected the negotiated scene safeword. If the party safeword is used, anybody can and should intervene.

Usually the party safeword is “**SAFWORD**”, however you should be told what it is by the hosts of the event.

Do I need to take my own toys?

Yes, you are expected to bring your own play equipment with you. The venue will most probably have large items such as a St Andrew's Cross, spanking benches or tables, bondage/suspension frames and such like, however it is expected that you provide your own cuffs, rope and anything else you choose to use.

You are responsible for your own equipment at all times. Keep your gear in a bag or case when you are not using it and leave play areas clean and tidy when you have finished your scene.

Can anyone use the play stations?

Yes, the host provides a venue with various play stations and play equipment for the use of all the guests.

Some pieces of BDSM play equipment are more popular than others, it is courteous not to spend too long on one piece if you are aware there are others wanting to use it also,

Make sure you leave the play area clean and tidy, ready for use as it was when you arrived there.

Play Safe and Enjoy :)

Do not expect to be played with just because you are there.

If you wish someone to play with you, ask respectfully, and accept a "no thanks" gracefully. Following someone around, even if it is just by watching, or in anyway making another person feel uncomfortable is not acceptable behaviour .

Before you approach someone and ask them to play with you, watch how others are interacting with them. You may find that if you wish to speak to a submissive, you need to approach their Dominant first.

The best way to get played with at a play party is to organise a play partner prior to the event. Bring along someone you feel comfortable playing with, or negotiate a scene with someone you know is going to be present at the party prior to going. Don't expect the hosts to provide you with a play partner, they have already provided you with the opportunity and the venue, the rest is up to you.

Do I have to call everyone by a title?

No you don't. No one who is not your own personal play partner owes deference to you beyond common, everyday courtesy. Addressing people as Mistress or Sir, just because the person is, or appears to be, a Dominant is considered bad form. The same for boy, girl or slave etc. to a submissive. If you treat everyone with polite respect, then you can't go wrong.

Will there be any sex or nudity?

A BDSM play party is not a swingers night, it is not a sex orgy, and in fact it is unlikely you will see any full on sex at all. There may be some nudity and a lot of fetish clothing worn, as many people see a play party as an opportunity to dress up and show off their fetish wear.

Where do I find out where the play parties are?

Most BDSM play parties, private and BDSM group hosted, are invite only affairs and are only advertised amongst those known to the host. Generally to get an invitation to such an event, you need to be a member of a munch group, or be sponsored by someone who is. Attending local munches and discussion groups is a good way to meet other like minded people, and once you gain their trust, you may be invited to group events.

If I go to a play party do I have to participate in the BDSM play if I don't want to?

Absolutely not. BDSM follows the rules of "safe, sane, and consensual." No one is ever asked to do anything against their will. Until you feel comfortable, just socialise with the other party goers, observe how people interact with each other.

The hosts will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have about the scenes happening around you..

Are there any rules?

Parties vary from place to place and have different internal rules or protocols , however there are some protocols that are accepted by most as being essential behaviour. You will usually be informed of the party rules prior to the event. If not, ask to see them when you arrive, they will usually be posted on a wall somewhere.

What is a DM?

A DM is a Dungeon Master/Mistress. This is a title given to a person who will be constantly monitoring what scenes are in progress and making sure they are not interrupted etc. If you have any questions or have any special requirements for a scene you are planning, then this is who you speak to.

What is Safe Sane and Consensual?

Safe meaning that the participants' life and health are of supreme importance, and that proper safety precautions are followed at all times (including safe sex).

Sane in that the activities are intended to result in the mutual pleasure of both parties and are not intended to result in injury of the body, emotions and/or mind for the sole gratification of one party at the expense of the other party.

Consensual which means that all parties involved must be consenting adults, who are capable of giving informed consent, and are allowed to revoke that consent at any time during a scene, usually by means of a safeword or other agreed upon signal. Engaging in S&M play with someone against their will is a criminal act, and is not tolerated by any of the responsible members of the BDSM community.

What do I wear?

What you wear to a play party is usually governed by the dress code of the event. Usually the dress code is fetish wear, which gives you a very broad range, or black clothing. If you are not going to turn up in fetish wear, then it is only fair that you show you have made an effort by wearing tidy black clothing.

Be appreciative of what you see other people wearing, but don't openly stare no matter how delicious the person looks. If this is your first play party then it is important that you don't make others feel uncomfortable around you, or you might not get invited back to the next party.

If you are arriving at the play party in fetish wear, please keep covered with a coat or similar when outside of the venue.

May I watch when others are playing?

Yes you may watch if you do so with respect to those who are participating in the scene. It is important that you do **NOT** interrupt a scene in progress. When observing a scene, please do not interrupt, interfere or attempt to join in unless invited to by the Top.

Do not speak to either party involved in the scene in progress, they are not going to be interested in answering questions or entering into a conversation with you at this time. The top in the scene is concentrating on the bottom's pleasure, and the bottom is almost certainly in a very private mental space. Neither the top nor the bottom will appreciate being yanked back to reality by a loud suggestion or greeting.

Be respectful to those who are playing and give them their space. If what you see is not to your liking or upsets you in any way, then don't watch. Often a lot of noise is not welcome during an intense scene. If you have questions about the scene, either ask the DM or wait until the scene is over and after-care has been completed. A good sign this is over is when the couple start to mingle and socialise amongst the other party goes again.

Can I have a few beers?

While alcohol is permitted at most New Zealand play parties, it is expected to be kept under control. Someone who gets intoxicated and disruptive is not going to be welcome and would most probably be asked to leave.

If you are planning to play, then it is best to keep your alcohol consumption to a minimum, or wait until you have finished playing. It is up to the hosts on the night as to the restrictions placed on alcohol consumption.