

LARP - Calibration System and Mechanics

The Archivists utilize calibration mechanics in order to create a safer play space for everyone at the LARP; we value clear communication and calibration at all stages of play, including before, during, and after a scene has concluded.

For this event, our calibration system is built around informed consent, which includes: pre-game information with themes and ingredients, baselines for interaction, expectations for personal responsibility, and mechanics that can be utilized before, during, and after play.

Pre-Game Information:

- **Themes and ingredients.** We will provide clear and accurate information on the topics and themes of the LARP and characters. That way, everyone will know what to expect in the LARP and opt-in. This information can be found on the website, in the design document, and for individual characters once they are distributed.
- **Baselines for Interaction.** Players should be comfortable witnessing the following actions from other players as a general part of the LARP: shouting, pushing, general altercations, psychological manipulation, yelling and arguing, crying, hugging, general touching, and romantic play including cheek kissing, touching, and light sexual situations (such as raunchy humor, implied or referenced sex).
 - The exceptions to this are that we expect everyone not to grab people from behind and also not grab the “beach body,” i.e., the area covered by a bikini.
 - There should be no actual, physical sexual intimacy occurring publicly at the LARP.

Ownership of interactions:

- **Personal Responsibility.** We expect you to have self-knowledge of your own limits and be responsible for all actions that happen to you and your character. You are responsible for your boundaries and safety and communicating these clearly to other players and organizers by using the mechanics provided to you in this document, and in-person during our workshop. This is a cornerstone of the mechanic and play. We all have to trust that everyone will know and signal their limits, and when these have been reached.

Calibration mechanics during play:

- **Off-game Discussion.** We expect everyone to calibrate any intense play through off-game discussions. These can happen during the workshops, off-game periods, before big scenes, or even from interactions outside this LARP. The goal is to get a general idea of how the interactions should go between players and let that guide the play.

- **Out of Character (OOC) signal**

- **Action:** Press your fist to your head.
- **Meaning:** You are now speaking out of character.
- **Purpose:** Use this signal for quick scene calibration (e.g., checking boundaries, clarifying intent, or asking brief questions)
- **Limitation:** If your OOC conversation will take more than a few moments, please move to the designated OOC room to avoid disrupting the game for others.

- **Check-In**

- **Action:** Discreetly give a thumbs up or thumbs down.
- **Meaning:**
 - **Asking:** If you want to check on your partner's comfort or intensity level, discreetly offer them a "thumbs up?" gesture. This is a question: "Are you okay with this?"
 - **Responding:** When you are offered a check-in (or at any time you wish to communicate), you respond with one of these two signals:
 - **Thumbs Up:** "Yes, I'm good. Continue as we are, or you can escalate."
 - **Thumbs Down:** "No, I'm not comfortable. Please tone it down, pull back, or stop."
- **Purpose:** A non-verbal check-in tool with your scene partners about their comfort and the scene's intensity.
- **Limitation:** This tool is excellent for a fast, non-verbal "stop" or "slow down" signal. However, it is not a replacement for a verbal check-in. If a situation needs further clarification, please utilize the OOC signal.

- **Tap Out**

- **Action:** Use one of the following signals:
 - Tap your scene partner's arm or body twice. (Repeat this as firmly or as many times as needed to get their attention.)
 - If you cannot reach your partner, tap your *own* body clearly and visibly.
 - Say the words "**Tap Out**" out loud.
- **Meaning:** This is a mandatory stop. It is used to immediately de-escalate, change, or leave a scene for any reason.
- **Immediate Effect (All Players):** Everyone in the interaction must stop what they are doing. (If you are holding someone, you release them; if you are screaming, you stop; if you are blocking someone's path, you make sure they are free to go.)
- The player who used "Tap Out" controls the next step, **without any questions or repercussions:**
 - **1. Leave the Scene:** The player may leave. Other players must allow them to go. This is not to be questioned, during the scene or after.

- **2. Recalibrate the Scene:** If the player stays, it means they wish to continue with adjustments. This is a good opportunity to re-engage with out-of-game calibration. The player may offer suggestions on playstyle without needing to explain why.
 - *Examples: "I'm good with the scene, but don't grab me," "I'm ok with our interactions, but don't call me a bastard."*
 - **Purpose:** This stops the scene. The player who signaled may leave or adjust the scene as required, without any questions or repercussions.
 - **Limitation:** "Tap Out" is best reserved for situations where a full stop is truly necessary for safety or de-escalation. If a player knows they want to make a *small* adjustment (e.g., "don't yell so loud"), the **"Fist to Head" (OOC)** signal is a more appropriate tool for calibration.
- **Participation in Mechanics.** We want everyone to feel safe and secure, and we expect players to show consent to help calibrate scenes and interactions. If you do not utilize the mechanics, then we assume that you are communicating that you are content with what's been agreed upon.

Decompression Options:

Should you need to decompress after a tough scene or in general we have several options:

- **Out of Character space.** You are welcome to take a breather in the snack area and kitchen at any time. This is ideal if you need a moment to center, catch your breath, and hydrate.
- **Care Room and Facilitator Assistance.** Should you need to decompress with people, we will have an off-game care room available with snacks, soda, and similar items just behind the kitchen. You can also ask a facilitator to help you process things. Remember, they are not trained psychologists but can help talk and support you.

Workshops:

We will practice these principles and mechanics with everyone in the workshops before the game and ensure you are comfortable with the system. You will also have an opportunity to bring up any exceptions that you may have to the baseline and communicate those to fellow players.

Other relevant mechanics

In addition to the above safety and calibration mechanics, there are two other mechanics we will utilize at the LARP.

- **Look down.** It is used to indicate that you are not there, or to leave a scene. You shield your eyes, look down, and move quietly around as necessary. This should also be used if you need to leave a scene, where you feel that simply tapping out is not enough.

- **Saying “Cut.”** This stops a scene and should act as an emergency freeze for everyone—this is a stop for everyone who can hear it, not just everyone in the scene. It should be used if there is a dangerous or critical situation that everyone needs to stop. Players can sort out the issue, get a facilitator to assist if necessary, and restart when everyone is ready.