

## Oops and Ouch: One way to handle negative comments or actions in real time

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We'd like to recommend a system of "Ouch" and "Oops." For instance:

*Speaker A is trying too hard to be funny and makes a thoughtless remark. Speaker B says "Ouch!" This cues Speaker A to realize that the funny remark was potentially hurtful. Speaker A says "Oops" to indicate recognition and regret. Then there's a Pause.*

It's up to the Ouch-caller whether this moment requires some conversation. So maybe there's a conversation – or maybe the Ouch caller says "Cool, let's move on." But the decision to move on must come from the Ouch-caller.

Please note that anyone in the room can call "Ouch." It does not have to come from the person who is the focus of the potentially hurtful remark.

Any questions or discussion?

- Most common *question* is: "Sometimes I don't know there was an "ouch" until I'm trying to sleep that night. Can I bring it back later?"
- I say "Yes. If you've felt an ouch and didn't say anything, please do bring it to whoever you're comfortable with on the leadership team. We want to know and we will figure out how to address it."
- \*\* most common *comment* is "If anyone is thinking this feels like overkill, let me tell you what happened to me last week at blahblah (insert bad story here). If something like this had been set up in advance, I bet it wouldn't have happened."

Thank you. May I ask that we pledge to each other that we will work together to promote an environment where it feels safe to speak up -- and that we will welcome any reminder to maintain a positive and respectful room. If you so pledge, please say "I do."

Thank you. If an experience ever feels larger than an Ouch-Oops moment, please know that concerns about harassment, safety, or a negative environment may be reported through several channels.

1. For cast members:

- a. The stage manager.
- b. The non-equity deputy (NED) (After the first week of rehearsal, the cast elects a member who agrees to be a conduit to bring cast questions or concerns to the stage manager or to the organization).
- c. If you do not feel comfortable reporting to either your stage manager or the NED, please report to either \_\_\_\_\_ (Artistic Director) or \_\_\_\_\_ (Managing Director)

2. For production team:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ (Production Manager)
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ (Artistic director) or \_\_\_\_\_ (Managing director)

## **Additional Resources for Conflict Resolution**

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### ***Books***

Nonviolent Communication by Marshall B. Rosenberg

### ***Workshops***

Effective Management Strategies for Theatre Leaders, produced regularly by the League of Chicago Theatres