



Discussion Pack

SSC vs RACK

Dominant Guide

Submissive Guide

LunaKM

J's Kallista

Purpose & How To Use

Purpose

- ❖ To educate the attendees on the philosophies of Safe, Sane, Consensual (SSC) and Risk Aware Consensual Kink (RACK)
- ❖ To give attendees the opportunity to compare the two philosophies and to assess their validity and compatibility
- ❖ To give attendees the opportunity to think about their personal goals within their practice of BDSM, and to encourage them to decide what aspects of SSC and RACK best fit those goals.

How to use

This packet was designed to be used as a stand-alone resource for creating discourse about the intended topic. It is recommended that the discussion director print out at least two copies of the article: one that he/she can make notes on, and one that he/she can distribute during the discussion. There are several methods of informing the attendees of the information within the articles:

- 1) **Director Led:** You can read each article and provide the group with a summary of each (there is an optional PowerPoint that you can use as a guide if you choose to); you can then run the group through questions with the intent of adding information from each article as necessary while questions are being answered.
- 2) **Socratic:** If you know you're going to have attendees who are more familiar with the topic, you may find it useful to allow them to share what they know about the topic, and prompt them and others to elaborate and expand on what they know using the discussion questions.
- 3) **Discussion Based:** Distribute all of the articles to each attendant/couple who comes to the discussion, and give them about 15 minutes to read through the materials; then use the questions for consideration to guide the attendees through the discussion, being sure to add in any key points you think they're missing as they go.
- 4) **Jig-Saw:** If you want your attendees to take an active role in teaching each other, give each couple or attendee a different article, and give the group approximately 5-10 minutes to read through the article they were given; then have attendees summarize the article they read to the group. After each article is summarized (or as they are being summarized) you can ask questions from the discussion packet.

*It is highly recommended that in order to use the packet to its full potential, you create additional questions, make comments on the articles as you read them, and prepare a conclusion that fits the nature of the group which you are leading.

Resource & Contact Cards

Print out as many copies of resource pages 1 and 2 (front & back if possible) and pass these out to the people who attend the munch. If you are comfortable with doing so, fill out the contact card with the information that you are comfortable with them having so they can ask any follow up questions.

General Definitions

Safe, Sane, Consensual (SSC)

In the BDSM community, **safe, sane and consensual (SSC)** are common principles guiding relationships and activities.

The principles are that BDSM activities should be:

- *safe*: attempts should be made to identify and prevent risks to health
- *sane*: activities should be undertaken in a sane and sensible frame of mind
- *consensual*: all activities should involve the full consent of all parties involved, but note that legal consent may not create a defence to criminal liability for any injuries caused and that, for these purposes, non-physical injuries are included in the definition of grievous bodily harm in English law.

Other people in the BDSM community do not consider SSC to be an accurate term for these relationships or activities. The term Risk Aware Consensual Kink (RACK) is sometimes used as a substitute description.

For those who dissent, issues generally arise from the subjective nature of each term in SSC when using the term as a yardstick to evaluate activities. It can be argued that the terms in RACK are equally subjective. "How safe is safe enough" is a legitimate question, and "how aware is aware enough" is an equally legitimate question.

Most attribute the term to David Stein who coined it in 1984 for GMSMA. More information can be found in the essay titled *Safe Sane Consensual: The Evolution of a Shibboleth*, where he states that the term was developed "to distinguish the kind of S/M I wanted to do from the criminally abusive or neurotically self-destructive behavior popularly associated with the term 'sadomasochism'."

Risk Aware Consensual Kink (RACK)

The purpose of RACK is awareness and education. You should endeavor to learn all there is about a play activity before engaging in it.

danae from Within Reality explains the differences with a scenario played by both versions:

The difference between the two terms is even clearer when the spirit of them is applied in the public scene.

When watching a scene that may involve some heavy risk you might hear the person next to you whisper to their partner "they shouldn't do that...its unsafe...that is a dangerous Dominant" - that is the spirit of SSC.

If you hear whispered "I wonder if he knows the risk involved in doing that....I wonder if he does "this" it could be made safer....I think I will tell him about it later after his scene" - that is the "spirit" of RACK.

Why is Safety Preached to Novices and Why It's Important to Know Anyway

Being in the BDSM community for any length of time you are likely to come across the common sermons of SSC, Safe Calls and First Meeting Safety. When you are novice in BDSM I'd encourage you to listen to these sermons and listen hard; they could protect you as you venture out into the world to feed your desires. Then again, they could turn out to be useless to you. But at least you listened.

I believe that as you mature in your place in BDSM the often preached safety items can become obsolete or you may develop your own opinions that don't match what you were taught as a novice. There's nothing wrong with that, but knowing where you started and the importance of knowing these basic safety rules is that foundation.

SSC

Safe, Sane and Consensual is a mantra to those in the lifestyle and many BDSM groups use this as their main source of education for novices. Playing safely, while remaining sane and making sure you are consenting to what is happening is the basics of SSC. It's a great premise to get your foot in the door and for years I lived on this very code of conduct for my activities. As I've matured in my role I find myself using other forms of similar code, but SSC still is the one that I refer most people to; especially novices when talking about safety.

Safe calls

Sometimes I wonder if this is a lost cause, with how many I've heard say they don't use safe calls or won't use them. They have existed since blind dates started, they just had a different name. And vanilla dates have them too! But I don't know how many people think that if they are out with someone they don't know that having a safe call is a waste of time to set up. Novices out there, please use safe calls. Even the more seasoned people use them if they intend on meeting someone that others don't know about.

Simply put it is someone who knows that you are going out with someone and where you expect to go. After your date you can call your safe call and let them know things went well. If they don't get a call they know to try to contact you and alert authorities if you don't answer. It's for your protection and you won't look paranoid if you have one, trust me.

People who have been in the scene for a while know that you can never be too careful. We heard bad stories all the time and know that just a small sense of security can make or break a date with someone. I tend to think that experienced players use safe calls more than novices and some use them because, like me they've had a bad experience. Why repeat it?

Red Flags

We hear it all the time but it bears repeating; listen to your gut. Instincts are generally right. So if you are talking to someone and you have this bad feeling about what they are saying - it is likely to be right. Listen to your inner self. Listen to what others have said are red flags about people. Develop personal standards.

The majority of people you meet won't raise those red flags, but that shouldn't stop you from having them. If it doesn't feel right, leave. And if it feels great - have a great time.

We know all these things, we beat them to death in discussions, forums and conversations. It's imperative that we as a community keep these things at the forefront of our novice education so that as we move deeper into our roles we still are able to connect with the novices that are entering the scene and taking our advice to heart.

A Submissive Approach to Safe, Sane and Consensual

When you first enter the more public BDSM community one of the largest catch phrases you will here is SSC, also known as Safe, Sane and Consensual. It is a security blanket approach to safety when playing and negotiation of play. As a submissive, you have a lot of responsibility to keeping yourself safe and well.

When I first learned about SSC I found that it was very important that I understand what it means to me and my experiences in BDSM. Everywhere I went I found essays that mostly pertained to playing safely, negotiating and choosing the right partners. It didn't really sit well with me because I was looking for a relationship and not just play. So I defined it for what I was looking for.

Safe

While most essays you read will undoubtedly say that you need to play safely with respects to using barriers, who you play with and within your knowledge level or experience level none of them touch on relationship safety.

Safety as far as relationships go would be protecting what you feel to be valuable. This would be your limits, your needs and wants and any other substantial believe systems you already have in place, such as religion or family ties. You also want to protect your physical and emotional safety. During negotiations for a relationship, or just getting to know one another, figure out how your partner plans to take care of you and if they will allow you some leeway in how you can care for yourself if needed. Even slaves have responsibility to make sure that their emotional and physical well-being is taken care of.

Sane

For sanity the essays out there stick with knowing fantasy from reality and not acting on fantasy. There is so much more attached to the word sane though. For example, what about expectations of service; keep them realistic. No submissive should be expected to learn 4 pages of rules and protocol in a short period of time or kneel for hours on end without a break. This is what fantasy porn is made of.

Also, listen to your gut about red flags and uneasiness. You generally don't have invalid feelings when you feel it in your gut. If something feels crazy, then it's perfectly okay to investigate it. Keep it yourself sane.

Consensual

Of course the two or more parties involved should agree to the play activities, it's pretty much a given. BDSM isn't about forcing the unwilling at all. But also, this part of SSC covers illegal activities such as incest, child abuse, animal abuse and other unsavory activities.

When relating it to relationships consensual should be that all relationship items should be agreed upon. There are good dominants and bad dominants. Holding onto your wits and enforcing your rights should keep the bad ones at bay. This means that no rules should be forced upon your that you don't want to do.

All in all, keep it safe, sane and consensual.

Why SSC and RACK Are Both Important

One of the biggest challenges that we face in the kinky community is the acceptance of kinks which do not align with our own. A group of individuals can bond over a shared desire to bend over someone over their knees and give him a good spanking, but introduce into that group an individual who enjoys hanging others by their ankles and cutting on them, and chances are someone in the group is going to throw some red flags onto the playing field. The conflict does not necessarily arise from the differing interests of the individuals involved, but rather from their interpretation of the rules of the community to which each of these individuals belong.

The mantra "Safe, Sane, Consensual" (SSC) is probably one of the first things that someone new to the scene learns. What's the difference between being treated like a slave whose master can do anything to you, and being in an abusive relationship? The Master/slave dynamic is created within the perimeters of "Safe, Sane, and Consensual" while an abusive relationship has no such limitations. Yet, herein lies the issue with the SSC philosophy: even the bog-standard Master/slave dynamic can permeate the realm outside of SSC.

Why SSC isn't enough

Recently, I published an article on Submissive Guide called, "Keeping Your Voice" which advocates to new submissive in the scene that it is acceptable to have limits, and that, regardless of the perimeters of the relationship, a sub who feels unsafe or uncomfortable in a relationship is always free to advocate his/her needs or walk away from the relationship; the article received a lot of backlash from slaves in the community who argue that they are the property of their masters and they simply don't have (and don't want) the freedom I describe. Again, the issue here is not that I or the group of respondents was more or less correct than the other, but rather the perimeters of their relationships were not, to me, safe, sane, or consensual. To the respondents, however, the relationships they were in fit well within the confines of their philosophy of SSC.

Each of us has our limits, as Doms, as subs, as those who fit in between. The problem is that no one's limits are going to perfectly a line with another's, and therefore in each relationship that we embark on, we strive to push passed our limits, to grow into our roles, to find new interests and develop new levels of intrigue in old interests. Due to the ever-evolving nature of our own interests and limitations, the concept of SSC in itself is insufficient to describe even an individual's expectations and limitations within the community. What I considered interesting and uninteresting five years ago is not necessarily what I consider interesting or uninteresting now. So, too, have my limitations shifted; my Dom has much more control over my life than she did when we first began practicing BDSM or exploring the power exchange involved. I don't recall speaking to anyone who has been practicing for more than a year and hasn't undergone some change of ideals in that time. This doesn't make one's past-self correct or incorrect, it simply means that one has developed a better understanding of his or her environment and interests.

As our interests and limitations will never perfectly a line with another's, our experiences and the rate of our growth will also differ. So an individual who has never been spanked for erotic purposes might say to another: "Spanking doesn't sound safe to me," and the second individual might reply, "Oh, I've been spanked many times, and the worst that's happened is a few bruises and a sore bottom, so it's completely safe." Likewise, a group of Doms who enjoy spanking, but are uncomfortable with handling knives might say, "Cutting on a submissive isn't a safe thing to do," while a Dom who works in the medical field might say, "These cuts are shallow, well placed, and will be dressed properly afterwards, my sub is very safe."

Despite these differences, the delicate nature of our community requires that we strive to understand each other, even when our limits and interests do not align. Because of this, Safe, Sane, and Consensual, which is highly limited by our own opinions, interests, and limitations, is simply an inefficient description of what can be considered acceptable in the community. Therefore, in addition to understanding and utilizing SSC, we should also be aware of the philosophy of Risk Aware Consensual Kink (RACK).

What is RACK?

In its simplest form, RACK is the idea of being educated, communicative, and careful regarding your interests and their execution. Unlike SSC, which stands for three separate principles outlining a standard you can use to rule out interactions, RACK stands for two principles designed to give you the opportunity to move outside of your current comfort zones, into a place of interest.

The first phrase is “*risk aware*.” Generally, it’s taken to mean exactly what it sounds like it should mean: be *aware* of the *risks* you take in each scene. Are you tying weights to someone’s nipples? Be aware that you risk cutting off their circulation. Are you gagging someone? Be aware that this may impede that person’s breathing. Are you penetrating someone? Remember that in addition to STDs, it’s possible to pass allergens from one person to another through bodily fluids.

Knowing the risks doesn’t mean that you should necessarily be dissuaded from taking the action, but rather that you should be prepared to combat the risks in basic, but effective ways. Monitor the colour and temperature of the appendages being bound; prep your bottom about the best way to breathe when gagged (and remind him/her periodically throughout the scene); avoid eating those Brazil nuts at lunch if your partner is allergic, and use a condom during intercourse. By thinking about the risks of what you’re doing, and educating yourself on ways to neutralize or minimize those risks, you’re creating a safe environment for the activity to take place in. We do this every day outside of BDSM: we look both ways before we cross the street, we drink water before and after we exercise to keep ourselves from dehydrating, and we put on sunscreen when we go to the beach to minimize the risk of burning. It is our willingness to do these basic things that allow us to take risks and to enjoy ourselves. Likewise, the ability to assess risks in the moment and limiting yourself to actions you’ve prepared for can keep a scene within the realms of safe and sane. If you didn’t prepare the aftercare for a scene that included knife play, simply don’t embark on knife play in the middle of a scene because the whim it. If, however, you didn’t intend to include knife play in a scene, but your general aftercare kit includes the appropriate materials, including knife play spontaneously is a calculated risk.

The second phrase is “consensual kink” which should generally be taken to describe the attitude of the participants regarding the activities being invested in. By communicating our interests, we can find people who have similar tastes to our own, by explaining what we each desire, what our limitations are, and what we are willing to do in a particular scene (which should be treated differently than what we are willing to do in general) before embarking on a scene, we can create a consensual environment for each other.

How RACK works with SSC

Often times, those who address the philosophies of Safe, Sane, and Consensual seem to unintentionally indicate that an individual must follow either one or the other. The reality, however, is that they should be used in tandem, as separate, but complimentary terms to describe both your own position and the positions of others. Safe, Sane, and Consensual can only truly be followed by individuals who have first considered Risk Aware Consensual Kink. After all, it is awareness of the risks involved: the research that an individual does, the practice and care that her or she puts in, and the forethoughts regarding the impact of each action on his or her partner that will make a situation safe or unsafe, sane or insane. It is the preparation, communication, and shared interests between interacting individuals that creates the air of consent and the joy of experiencing kink.

Ultimately, I like to think of the two in this way: any time you step outside of your safe-zones, the action requires extra awareness and communication of the risks involved; thus RACK is an appropriate guideline. Once you become familiar and comfortable with an activity, however, it can easily fall into what you would consider SSC.

Discussion Points

General Safety

- What do we mean by safety?
 - Understand safety is more than physical safety
 - What methods do we use to stay safe?
 - Safe calls
 - Safe words
 - Communication w/ friends, partners, family, etc.
- How do we judge what is safe and what isn't safe?
 - Intuition/instinct
 - Experience (either personal or passed on)
- What are the rules for being safe in BDSM?
 - SSC & RACK

Safe, Sane, Consensual

- Having discussed safety, what do we mean by sane?
 - Rational/ thought through behavior: NOT emotional or heat of the moment
 - Use of forethought and preparation
 - Activities suitable for people involved, location, and within reason of limitations of participants
- How do we define consensual?
 - Who needs to consent? (Everyone, including the sub and non-intended participants in the location)
 - How do we consent?
 - What happens if someone retracts consent?
 - Safewords/safety nets
 - Rational response
 - Communication of what went wrong in scene
- What if I think I'm following SSC and someone else doesn't?
 - Limitations of SSC
 - Black and white view
 - Non-universal standards set by personal limitations & interests

Risk Aware Consensual Kink

- What do you mean by "Risk aware?"
 - Understanding the potential harm of an action
 - Knowing how to combat potential risk
 - General preparedness for accidents/inevitable side effects of play
 - Play-kits/safety-kits at home & outside
- Is Consensual Kink different than Consent in SSC?
 - Yes and no - SSC may exclude rape fantasies for some people, but CK allows for it across the board provided participants are all consenting to the kink
 - Allows for greater level of acceptance outside of your own limitations/interests w/o encroaching on your limitations/interests.

Conclusion

- Are the philosophies compatible?
 - Usually they are. & They're best used together.
- Which best fits your needs?

Questions for Consideration

Regarding General Safety

- Compared to a vanilla relationship, what additional safety concerns might BDSM practitioners have?
- Are these safety concerns different for tops and bottoms? Remember to consider concerns outside of the bedroom as well as inside it.
- When we talk about safety, remember, we're talking about emotional and psychological safety as well as physical. What kinds of concerns might fall under these categories?
- In what ways do we prepare for and cater to these additional safety concerns?
- Additional Questions here: _____

Key Words to Listen for:

If you don't hear some of these words, try working them into the discussion.

- Vulnerability (vulnerable)
- Harm/hurtful
- Predator(y) behavior
- Awareness /unaware
- Power exchange (or dynamic)
- Ignorance/misconception

Regarding Safe, Sane, Consensual (SSC)

- What are the benefits of following the SSC philosophy?
- What are the restraints?
- What is the biggest difference between SSC and RACK?
- How does this difference inform your decision regarding which philosophy you primarily use?
- Additional Questions here: _____

- Additional Questions here: _____

Risk Aware Consensual Kink (RACK)

- How would you describe the main focus of RACK?
- What are the benefits of following the RACK philosophy?
- What challenges does RACK face when addressing activities in the community?
- Do you feel that RACK and SSC are compatible?
- If so: how might you integrate RACK into your own practice in addition to SSC? If not, what makes them incompatible?
- Additional Questions here: _____

Resource & Contact Cards

Print this and the following page on front-back printing, and distribute to discussion participants. Be sure to fill out your contact information on page 2.

Resources & Works Cited

J's Kallista. "Why SSC and RACK Are Both Important." 2016.
LunaKM. "A Submissive Approach to Safe, Sane and Consensual." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/a-submissive-approach-to-safe-sane-and-consensual/>>
LunaKM. "RACK: an Alternative to SSC." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/rack-an-alternative-to-ssc/>>
LunaKM. "Why Safety is Preached and Why It's Important to Know Anyway." Submissive Guide. 2010. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2010/06/why-safety-is-preached-to-novices-and-why-its-important-to-know-anyway/>>
SubmissiveGuide Encyclopedia. "Safe, Sane, and Consensual." <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/encyclopedia/safe-sane-and-consensual/>>

Resources & Works Cited

J's Kallista. "Why SSC and RACK Are Both Important." 2016.
LunaKM. "A Submissive Approach to Safe, Sane and Consensual." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/a-submissive-approach-to-safe-sane-and-consensual/>>
LunaKM. "RACK: an Alternative to SSC." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/rack-an-alternative-to-ssc/>>
LunaKM. "Why Safety is Preached and Why It's Important to Know Anyway." Submissive Guide. 2010. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2010/06/why-safety-is-preached-to-novices-and-why-its-important-to-know-anyway/>>
SubmissiveGuide Encyclopedia. "Safe, Sane, and Consensual." <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/encyclopedia/safe-sane-and-consensual/>>

Resources & Works Cited

J's Kallista. "Why SSC and RACK Are Both Important." 2016. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2016/03/why-ssc-and-rack-are-both-important-safety-acronyms-to-know/>>
LunaKM. "A Submissive Approach to Safe, Sane and Consensual." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/a-submissive-approach-to-safe-sane-and-consensual/>>
LunaKM. "RACK: an Alternative to SSC." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/rack-an-alternative-to-ssc/>>
LunaKM. "Why Safety is Preached and Why It's Important to Know Anyway." Submissive Guide. 2010. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2010/06/why-safety-is-preached-to-novices-and-why-its-important-to-know-anyway/>>
SubmissiveGuide Encyclopedia. "Safe, Sane, and Consensual." <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/encyclopedia/safe-sane-and-consensual/>>

Resources & Works Cited

J's Kallista. "Why SSC and RACK Are Both Important." 2016. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2016/03/why-ssc-and-rack-are-both-important-safety-acronyms-to-know/>>
LunaKM. "A Submissive Approach to Safe, Sane and Consensual." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/a-submissive-approach-to-safe-sane-and-consensual/>>
LunaKM. "RACK: an Alternative to SSC." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/rack-an-alternative-to-ssc/>>
LunaKM. "Why Safety is Preached and Why It's Important to Know Anyway." Submissive Guide. 2010. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2010/06/why-safety-is-preached-to-novices-and-why-its-important-to-know-anyway/>>
SubmissiveGuide Encyclopedia. "Safe, Sane, and Consensual." <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/encyclopedia/safe-sane-and-consensual/>>

Resources & Works Cited

J's Kallista. "Why SSC and RACK Are Both Important." 2016. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2016/03/why-ssc-and-rack-are-both-important-safety-acronyms-to-know/>>
LunaKM. "A Submissive Approach to Safe, Sane and Consensual." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/a-submissive-approach-to-safe-sane-and-consensual/>>
LunaKM. "RACK: an Alternative to SSC." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/rack-an-alternative-to-ssc/>>
LunaKM. "Why Safety is Preached and Why It's Important to Know Anyway." Submissive Guide. 2010. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2010/06/why-safety-is-preached-to-novices-and-why-its-important-to-know-anyway/>>
SubmissiveGuide Encyclopedia. "Safe, Sane, and Consensual." <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/encyclopedia/safe-sane-and-consensual/>>

Resources & Works Cited

J's Kallista. "Why SSC and RACK Are Both Important." 2016. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2016/03/why-ssc-and-rack-are-both-important-safety-acronyms-to-know/>>
LunaKM. "A Submissive Approach to Safe, Sane and Consensual." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/a-submissive-approach-to-safe-sane-and-consensual/>>
LunaKM. "RACK: an Alternative to SSC." Submissive Guide. 2009. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2009/02/rack-an-alternative-to-ssc/>>
LunaKM. "Why Safety is Preached and Why It's Important to Know Anyway." Submissive Guide. 2010. <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/2010/06/why-safety-is-preached-to-novices-and-why-its-important-to-know-anyway/>>
SubmissiveGuide Encyclopedia. "Safe, Sane, and Consensual." <<http://www.submissiveguide.com/encyclopedia/safe-sane-and-consensual/>>

Resource & Contact Cards (page 2)

Questions?

Contact me at:

Or check out these free resources:
www.dominantguide.com
www.submissiveguide.com

Questions?

Contact me at:

Or check out these free resources:
www.dominantguide.com
www.submissiveguide.com

Questions?

Contact me at:

Or check out these free resources:
www.dominantguide.com
www.submissiveguide.com

Questions?

Contact me at:

Or check out these free resources:
www.dominantguide.com
www.submissiveguide.com

Questions?

Contact me at:

Or check out these free resources:
www.dominantguide.com
www.submissiveguide.com

Questions?

Contact me at:

Or check out these free resources:
www.dominantguide.com
www.submissiveguide.com