

# The Cuddle Sanctuary Event Design

## Sequence and Language

Dear Students,

This design document will familiarize you with the order of events at a classic Cuddle Sanctuary Social. Some of our students have asked us for our exact recommended wording. If that's you, it's all below. Other students like to put things in their own words. If that's you, please take what you see below and make it your own.

Much love,

Jean

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### Welcome Newcomers (Before the Event)

We'll start at [TIME]. You're welcome to stay here or take a walk. We close the doors at [TIME]. You're welcome to take your shoes off whenever you're ready and put your things here. [Show them where.] The restrooms are [POINT IT OUT] and you can help yourself to some water. You can treat this area [POINT TO THE CUDDLE AREA] as a very large, very low living room. Feel free to stretch and relax, you're welcome to introduce yourself to anyone. What questions do you have? [If you can, introduce them to a few people and point out who has arrived who is also new.]

## Opening Circle (5-10 minutes)

Start on time

With volume and confidence, ask people to make a circle

Introduce yourself

Round Robin

- a. Share your name (or a pseudonym)
- b. Between zero and 10, how are you right now?
- c. Or other questions you create

## Body and Breath (up to 5 minutes)

### *Breath*

I'm going to guide you through a breathing exercise. As best you can follow my count. Exhale the air in your body and now inhale two-three, hold two-three, exhale two-three, hold two-three. Again inhale two-three, hold two-three, exhale two-three, hold two-three. One more time: inhale two-three, hold two-three, exhale two-three, hold two-three. You're done.

### *Body*

Lay on your back and tense and release each body part one by one: Feet, lower legs, upper legs and butt, stomach and lower back, upper back and shoulders, upper and lower arms, neck, head and face. Now inhale and tense your whole body gently and all at once. And let it all go.

## First Five Guidelines (2 minutes)

Share these guidelines with the group:

1. Arrive and stay sober - so you don't miss important social cues
2. Keep attendance confidential (unless given permission).  
[Suggest they raise their hand to indicate agreement.]

3. There's no touch required.
4. You can change your mind at any time
5. Respect the boundaries of others (ideally with enthusiasm)

## No Thank You Exercise (1-2 minutes)

In a moment, I'm going to put you into pairs for an exercise. The exercise is called "No Thank You." There's no touch required. The first person will ask their partner for a hug. The partner needs to say "No thank you." The first person says something accepting and kind like, "Thank you for taking care of yourself." And then switch - so that both of you get a chance to request a hug and also to say "No thank you" to one. This will take about a minute to complete. What questions do you have? Here are your groups: Two, Two, Two, Two..." Go ahead and get started. Okay, welcome back everyone. Welcome back. Please come back to the circle.

## "No Thank You" Debrief (3-5 minutes)

Question: What was it like for you to say "no thank you"?

## Final Three Guidelines

Share these guidelines with the group:

1. Keep touch Rated G (and stay clothed.)  
Examples: hugging, caressing the arms or face, foot, back or shoulder rub, playing with hair, sitting or lying side by side, spooning.

2. If you get aroused, don't freak out. You can celebrate that your body parts are working. Then make a shift. You can change positions, activities or what you're thinking about.

3. Ask and Wait - if you want to touch someone, ask. Then wait for their answer. This means keep your body language neutral when asking. And be ready for a "no thanks."

a. If someone asks you for touch and you're a "maybe," just say "no."

b. Moment by Moment: If someone says "yes" to you at one point in the workshop, it's only a "yes" at that moment. If you want to touch that person again later, "Ask and Wait."

c. Step by Step: If someone says "yes" to a particular kind of touch and you'd like to touch them in a different place or in a different way, "Ask and Wait."

## Hug – No Hug Exercise (6 minutes)

In a moment, we'll all be standing up. You will have the option to hug people. There's no touch required. You must say "no thank you" to at least one person. The main purpose of this exercise is to practice the Ask and Wait Method. If you'd like to hug someone, keep your body language neutral and ask. Wait for them to respond. If they say "No thanks," say something kind and move on. If you don't want to ask anyone for a hug and you don't want to receive any hugs, simply stand and say "No thanks" to whomever asks. There are three great ways to request a hug - you can experiment: May I give you a hug? Would you give me a hug? Can we share a hug? What questions do you have about this exercise? The exercise takes about three minutes to complete. Please stand and get started.

## “Hug/No Hug” Debrief (2 minutes)

Question: What comments do you have about this exercise?

## Four “Cuddle Safe” Concepts (3 minutes)

### 1. *The Solo Salon*

Point out the place in the room that people can go to where they can have some quiet time. “If you see someone at the Solo Salon, give them privacy and quiet.”

### 2. *The Buddy Bench*

Point out the place in the room where a person can sit. “The buddy bench is a place you can sit to nonverbally request that you’d like to connect or cuddle with somebody.”

### 3. *The Exit*

“You can leave at any time for any reason. Please just give me a heads up.”

### 4. *Your Cuddle Coach*

“I am here to support you and answer any questions you have throughout the event. Even if it looks like I’m cuddling, your question or concern is my top priority - so please let me know if you need me.”

## Paired Practice (10-12 minutes)

In a moment I’m going to put you into pairs. Together you’ll figure out an activity that you both would like to try and then do that activity. There’s no touch required in this exercise and you can change your mind at any time. You’ll have about three-five minutes with that partner. And then I’ll ask you to find a new partner. We’ll do this several times. Here are options to choose from.

### Non-touch options

1. Eye gazing/staring contest
2. Mirror Game
3. Verbal Cuddling - gratitude swap

### Touch options

1. Companionship
2. Thumb wrestling
3. Sitting back to back

## Demo 1 – Ask a Person to Cuddle With You

(3 minutes)

It takes courage and vulnerability to ask to interact or cuddle with someone. I'm going to share with you a technique so you can see how it's done. John, will you demonstrate the Ask and Wait method with me? Would you be open to allowing me to be the Mama Bear? [Discuss which position works for you both and allow the group to listen to this. Keeping "Asking and Waiting" with your demo buddy until you are comfortably in position. Take a breath and enjoy.] Thank you, John. [Move out of the position and then ask the group] What did you notice about our technique?

## Demo 2 - Ask to Join a Group (3 minutes)

Don't assume if you see two or more people cuddling that they don't want more people to join them. The only way you'll know for sure is if you ask. Here's a demonstration. Rachel and Lisa, would you get into a cuddle position that you both feel comfortable doing? [Wait for them to "Ask and Wait" themselves into position.] I'd like to ask them if I can join them in some way. The first thing that I'll do is get on their level rather than tower above them. [To Rachel] Rachel is it okay if I play with your hair? [Choose a request that feels right for you.] If the activity would impact both people, then ask them both. If either one says "No thanks" then thank them and move on. [If you're given permission to proceed, use Ask and Wait and enjoy the activity or

position for a moment. Move out of the position] Thanks Rachel and Lisa. [To the group] What did you notice about our technique?

## Guided Cuddle Lab (10-15 minutes)

It's time for the Guided Cuddle Lab. I'm going to give you several choices of activities you can do. You are welcome to move from one activity to another. There's no touch required and you can always opt out or hang out at the solo salon. The Guided Cuddle Lab will last for about ten minutes.

[Designate a place for at least three activities.]

Here are some recommended options:

1. Massage train
2. Stargazing (no touch required)
3. The Bear Den (mama bear, papa bear, baby bear etc.)

## Voluntary Cuddle Lab (60-75 minutes)

Lower the music and ask people to find a stopping point in their conversations. Introduce the Voluntary Cuddle Lab.

It's time for the Voluntary Cuddle Lab. You are free to make requests for cuddling, have alone time, experiment with cuddle activities and create your own experience. The Buddy Bench and Solo Salon are there for you. And please come to me as your Cuddle Coach at any time - for ideas, support or to practice the Ask and Wait method. This lab will last for \_\_\_\_ minutes and then we'll have our Closing Circle. I'll give you a heads up when we have ten minutes before the Closing Circle. Good luck: The Cuddle Laboratory has begun.

## Closing Circle (10-15 minutes)

- Use techniques for debriefing to guide the Closing Circle
- Gently encourage people to come back to the circle
- Three options to share:
  - Highlights - peak moments
  - Firsts - did something happen to you that's never happened in your life?
  - Praises - do you want to compliment someone in the room?
- Lowlights (optional): Individuals can share disappointments. You don't need to fix them. Remind the group that they don't need to fix a person's lowlights. It just can help to be heard.
- Share upcoming events or promotions
- Give the option to help clean up
- Final Round Robin  
Let's go around person by person. Please let us know how you are. Or you're welcome to fill in this blank: I leave here with \_\_\_\_\_. If you'd like, of course you can pass.
- Turn on upbeat music

Done!