



BALTIMORE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SOCIETY

ORIENTATION AND WELCOME

Welcome to BESS!

Thank you for your interest in BESS. BESS is an organization devoted to providing educational and social opportunities for persons interested in BDSM. We consider BDSM to include the practice of consensual bondage and discipline, sadomasochism, power exchange between willing and consenting adults, homosexuality, bisexuality, heterosexuality, fetishism, and / or other related sexual or dominance-and-submission activities. In order to teach the subject matter effectively, some of the programs sponsored by BESS may involve nudity or may be sexually explicit. We expect our Contributors and guests to consent to the explicit nature of such programs and certify that they do not find these subjects offensive or objectionable. Also, given the nature of the material covered and the activities engaged in at BESS events, we expect all attendees to respect the confidentiality of other attendees. This includes both not revealing attendees' participation in BESS events to non-attendees and not approaching other attendees in public.

For additional information on BESS, please check our website at <http://www.bess-md.org>.

This orientation package contains:

1. Orientation Sheet (this document)
2. Party Rules and Dungeon Etiquette
3. Terms of Contributorship
4. Safe Space Policy
5. Contributorship Application Form

What We Do:

- BESS is a not-for-profit organization serving the greater Baltimore BDSM community. BESS is multi-sexual: We welcome individuals of all sexual orientations.
- Our goal is to provide a safe, friendly, and discreet environment for the education, socialization and support of people interested in consensual BDSM.

- We offer bi-monthly education meetings at 7:30pm on the first and third Wednesday of each month. The meetings feature lectures, demonstrations and workshops on various topics of interest to the BDSM community. A listing of the meeting topics can be found on the BESS website. The admission fee is also listed on the website. Suggestions for topics are always welcome. Just talk to the Education Team or e-mail them at Education@bess-md.org.
- We offer monthly socials for Contributors, guests and members of reciprocal groups only. Party dates and locations are announced on the website and by e-mail. To attend a party, you must make a reservation by responding to the announcement e-mail.
- If you are new to BDSM, we provide information on the lifestyle and BDSM in general. Send your questions and concerns to new2bdsm@bess-md.org.

How BESS is Administered.

- BESS is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the Contributorship at the Annual Business Meeting in November. Board meetings are open to all Contributors and are announced on the website. If you're interested in attending, contact bess-info@bess-md.org.
- BESS is an all-volunteer organization. If you're interested in becoming an active part of BESS, please contact the BESS volunteer coordinator at volunteers@bess-md.org

Your Responsibilities As a BESS Contributor.

All Contributors agree to, and are bound by, the BESS Terms of Contributorship. A copy the BESS Terms of Contributorship is included in this packet. Please read this document carefully before signing the application form.

- All Contributors must be age 19 or older. Guests and meeting participants must be of age 19 or older to attend open educational meetings.
- Contributors may bring guests to Contributor-only parties and meetings. All guests attending such meetings must be at least 19 years of age and must bring a photo ID for verification. All guests must sign a BESS Guest Waiver at the event.
- We are not a sex club or swingers' club. We are not a dating service. You will get the most out of BESS if you approach your participation in BESS events as an opportunity to learn and socialize with a community of individuals with similar interests.
- BESS maintains a Safe Space Policy to insure that all BESS events are safe and

comfortable for all attendees. Unacceptable conduct may result in expulsion from an event and/or the imposition of sanctions by the BESS Board of Directors.

- Please don't leave BESS materials lying around the hotel: if there's anything you don't want, please return it to us.

Becoming A BESS Contributor.

- To become a Contributor, you must complete the Contributor Application Form, provide photo ID to prove that you're 19 years of age or older and pay the annual fee for Contributorship.
- The information on your application will be checked by members of the Contributor Team or any other Team's Team Leader and will reside, thereafter, with the Contributor Data Coordinator. Only the Contributor Data Coordinator and the Contributor Team Leader will have access to the completed application forms.

How We Communicate With Contributors.

- We communicate with Contributors by e-mail ONLY.

Questions or Comments

- Input from BESS Contributors is how we make BESS a better organization for everyone. Any member of the BESS Board or Team Leader will be glad to hear your suggestions on educational topics, operation of the organization, or anything that will make BESS the best it can be.