



**board with sex**

Ride-along Guide  
for Relational  
Cohesion in  
"Decorum"



# DEEPENING YOUR CONNECTION

SETTING THE STAGE FOR RELATIONAL COHESION WHILE ENGAGING IN THE "DECORUM" GAME

RIDE-ALONG  
GUIDE  
FOR "DECORUM"

## WHY GAMING?

Board games have long been enjoyed as a form of entertainment, but they can also be used as a powerful tool for personal growth and self-exploration, particularly in the context of psychotherapy. The use of board games within the therapeutic setting allows individuals to tap into their playful and creative sides, leading to increased emotional expression and exploration. Additionally, board games can provide a structured and safe environment for individuals to engage in interpersonal interactions, promoting the development of communication and problem-solving skills. Moreover, in the context of relationships, the importance of playfulness and novelty cannot be overstated. As relationships evolve and develop, it can be easy to fall into a routine and lose sight of the fun and playful aspects that initially brought individuals together. Board games provide an opportunity for couples to engage in novel and engaging activities together, promoting shared experiences and a sense of connection.

In this way, board games can be effectively used both in and out of therapy sessions to promote growth and development within relationships. Whether used as a tool for introspection and personal growth or as a way to promote playful and novel experiences within a relationship, board games offer a unique and valuable way to enhance the therapeutic process and strengthen relationships.

## DECORUM | AN OVERVIEW

Decorum is a social deduction board game developed by Floodgate Games. In the game, players assume the roles of aristocrats in a futuristic society, competing for power and influence in a society ruled by a powerful artificial intelligence. Each game of Decorum is designed to last approximately 60-90 minutes, depending on the number of players and their familiarity with the game mechanics. The game is designed for 3-6 players and is suitable for ages 14 and up.

During each episode, players take turns performing various actions, such as advancing their position within society, manipulating the artificial intelligence, and sabotaging their opponents. Players must use strategy and deduction skills to outmaneuver their opponents and achieve their objectives.

Overall, Decorum is a fast-paced and engaging board game that encourages players to think strategically and work collaboratively to achieve their goals. The game is designed to be played over multiple sessions, with each episode building upon the previous one to create a rich and immersive gaming experience.

## SETTING UP THE ENVIRONMENT FOR PLAY

Decorum is a game designed to help players practice communication and conflict resolution skills in a fun and engaging way. To set up the game for success, it is important to follow a few key steps.

1. Find the right group: It is important to play Decorum with people who are committed to practicing healthy communication and conflict resolution. Make sure everyone is on board with the goal of the game and willing to work together to achieve it.
2. Set the scene: The game is played in three rounds, each representing a different time in a relationship. Before starting each round, take a few minutes to set the scene. Discuss what has happened in the relationship up to this point and what challenges the players may face in the coming round.
3. Follow the rules: Decorum is designed to simulate real-life situations, so it is important to follow the rules of the game. This includes using the communication prompts provided and taking turns listening and speaking.
4. Take breaks when needed: The game can be emotionally intense, so it is important to take breaks when needed. If a player becomes overwhelmed or needs to step away, allow them to do so without judgment.
5. Debrief after each round: After each round, take time to debrief and reflect on what happened. This is a crucial step in the process, as it allows players to process their emotions and gain insight into their communication and conflict resolution skills.

By following these steps, players can set up the game of Decorum for success and use it as a tool to improve their relationships and communication skills.



# DEEPENING YOUR CONNECTION

## COMING TOGETHER AFTER THE GAMING EXPERIENCE

### THE IMPORTANCE OF COMING TOGETHER

Playing board games together can be an effective way to practice communication and conflict management skills. Board games often require players to work collaboratively towards a shared goal, and this requires effective communication and conflict management in order to be successful.

One of the benefits of playing board games together is that it provides a low-stakes environment in which to practice these skills. Players can experiment with different communication strategies and conflict management techniques, and can receive feedback from others in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. This can help to build confidence and competence in these areas, which can then be applied to real-life situations.

However, it is important to complete the experience by debriefing together on what took place during the game. This allows all players to externalize their experience and share their thoughts and feelings about what happened. This can lead to greater understanding and empathy between players, as well as increased intimacy.

The pillars of intimacy include emotional intimacy, physical intimacy, intellectual intimacy, and experiential intimacy. Playing board games together can help to build all of these pillars by creating opportunities for shared experiences, deep conversations, and moments of connection.

### QUESTIONS FOR POST-PLAY DEBRIEF

It is imperative to come together after the completion of game play with your partner and give the relationship a chance to externalize and for individuals to promote self-disclosure and vulnerability. When asking debrief questions after playing Decorum, it is important to approach the conversation in a way that is respectful and non-judgmental. Here are some guiding thoughts to help ensure that the conversation is productive and positive:

1. Be curious, not critical. Approach the conversation with a sense of openness and a desire to learn more.
2. Be aware of your tone and body language.
3. Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements. This helps to avoid placing blame.
4. Be mindful of your partner's feelings. Pay attention to their body language and verbal cues, and be willing to take a break or change the subject if things start to feel tense.
5. Take responsibility for your own feelings. If something your partner says or does during the conversation triggers a strong emotional response, take a step back and reflect on why you are feeling that way. Try to communicate your feelings in a non-blaming way.

Questions to pose to the self or each other after game play:

1. What did you enjoy most about the game?
2. Did you feel that you were able to communicate effectively with the other players during the game?
3. Was there a particular moment during the game where you experienced conflict with another player? How did you handle it?
4. Did you feel that the game challenged your strategic thinking skills? How so?
5. Were there any moments during the game where you felt stressed or overwhelmed? How did you manage those feelings?
6. Was there a particular player or strategy that surprised you during the game?
7. Did you feel that you were able to work collaboratively with other players during the game? How did you navigate any disagreements that arose?
8. Were there any moments during the game where you felt that your communication or conflict management skills were tested? How did you handle those moments?
9. How do you think the experience of playing Decorum can inform our communication and conflict management skills outside of the game?
10. Would you play Decorum again? Why or why not?



# ABOUT THE 'BOARD WITH SEX' PROJECT

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF PSYCHOTHERAPY IN RELATIONSHIPS

### BOARD WITH SEX

The 'Board with Sex' project is a novel initiative aimed at exploring the therapeutic potential of board games for promoting sexual health and wellness. Led by psychotherapist and gaming enthusiast Joshua Littleton, the project seeks to bridge the gap between gaming and sexual health by creating a series of custom-designed board games that are specifically tailored to promote self-exploration, intimacy, and communication around issues of sexuality.

Through a combination of research, collaboration with other experts in the field, and extensive playtesting with a diverse range of individuals and couples, the 'Board with Sex' project aims to develop a series of innovative, engaging, and effective board games that can be used both in and out of therapy sessions to promote sexual health and wellness. Key themes that the project explores include sexual communication, boundaries, consent, desire, and pleasure, with an emphasis on promoting healthy and positive attitudes towards sexuality.

Ultimately, the 'Board with Sex' project represents an exciting new frontier in the field of sexual health and wellness, offering a unique and innovative approach to promoting greater self-awareness, relational cohesion, and sexual fulfillment for individuals and couples alike.

### ABOUT THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST

Joshua Littleton is a licensed psychotherapist, researcher, and avid gamer based in Tampa, Florida. With over a decade of experience in the mental health field, Joshua is passionate about exploring the intersection between gaming and therapy to promote greater self-exploration and improved relational cohesion and intimacy within relationships.

Joshua's interest in the therapeutic potential of gaming began early in his career, when he noticed the profound impact that playfulness and novelty could have on his clients' emotional states and ability to engage in therapy. He began experimenting with integrating games and other playful activities into his sessions, and soon discovered that they could be powerful tools for promoting growth, insight, and connection.

Today, Joshua is recognized as a leading expert in the field of gaming and therapy, and has published numerous articles and research papers on the topic. He is also a sought-after speaker and presenter, and has presented at conferences and events around the world on the therapeutic potential of gaming and the importance of play in promoting emotional wellness.

In addition to his work in the mental health field, Joshua is also an avid gamer and collector of board games, card games, and video games. He believes that games have the power to bring people together, foster meaningful connections, and provide a safe and supportive space for self-exploration and growth.

Through his innovative work in bridging therapy and gaming together, Joshua is helping to transform the field of mental health and promote greater emotional wellness and relational cohesion for individuals, couples, and families alike.

### DISCLAIMER

The board game Decorum, developed by Floodgate Games, is designed as an entertainment product and not specifically intended for therapeutic purposes. However, as a therapist, I have found that the game can be utilized as a tool for self-exploration and personal growth in therapy sessions. It is important to note that the use of Decorum as a therapeutic tool should be guided by a qualified mental health professional who is trained in the use of games and play therapy techniques.

Furthermore, I want to express my gratitude and respect to the developers at Floodgate Games for creating such an engaging and thoughtful product. The game offers a unique approach to fostering communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution skills within relationships, which can be beneficial for many people. As a therapist and a board game enthusiast, I value the contribution that Decorum makes to the world of games and entertainment.