Red Tent & Screening Planning Toolkit

Things We Don’t Talk About
Women’s Stories from the Red Tent
A film by Dr. Isadora Gabrielle Leidenfrost

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About the film

"Things We Don't Talk About: Women Stories from the Red Tent" is a groundbreaking 1-hr documentary that shows how the Red Tent, a red fabric space is empowering women. The film documents the things women hide, the things that bring them pain and joy, and for many it is a place to be honest for the first time in their life. "Things We Don't Talk About" seeks to humanize the stories in the Red Tent—to put a face on the space.

FAQ’s

Q: What is a Red Tent?
   A Red Tent is a safe, woman-only space and supportive community.

Q: What do women “do” in a Red Tent?
   Within the Red Tent, women may talk about taboo topics, get vulnerable about their current problems, laugh, cry, sing, dance, give each other back or foot rubs, play with face and body painting, give or receive massage and other types of body work, tell stories, eat soup, drink tea, sleep, meditate, journal, create artwork, knit ... just to name a few!

About this Toolkit & Hosting a Red Tent Movie Event

This toolkit is designed to be used by Red Tents, Red Tent Temples, Moonlodges, grassroots women’s groups, community organizations, non-profits, faith-based organizations, and student groups that want to create a Red Tent or host a screening of “Things We Don’t Talk About.”

We have tried to make this toolkit detailed and comprehensive to empower you to do the best event possible, and we realize that some sections will not be applicable in every case. We are making suggestions, but you will have to decide what works best to reach and impact your audience. We also want to encourage you to be creative!

Getting Started

Consider your goals and needs – and use the film to support them in a practical way. Before any event, you should consider the following:

1) IDENTIFY OBJECTIVES

Identifying your objectives will lay the foundation for your event planning. Think about what you’d like to get out of the event, how it can benefit your group or organization, and what is realistic. Here are a few suggested objectives (these are not mutually exclusive!):
• Raise awareness about taboo topics.

• Raise awareness about the importance for women to take time for themselves.

• Heighten visibility and spotlight the importance of your work by connecting it with the issues raised in the film.

• Build bridges between different age groups, races, and religious or spiritual practices.

• Educate women about opportunities that are available in your community.

• Establish coalitions with other groups or organizations and inspire the development of new programs that address the needs of women in your community.

• Fundraise for your group or organization. By joining forces with “Things We Don’t Talk About” we can work together to build the world we want to live in.

2) TARGET AUDIENCE

Because a Red Tent is a woman-only space, your primary audience will be women. While we suggest that you start by inviting your girlfriends and female family members, we also want to encourage you to consider opening the flaps of your tent a little wider. For suggestions of how to do that see the section “Getting the Word Out” on page 4.

3) EVENT ENHANCEMENTS

• Invite your community leaders
• Invite other local organizations or women’s groups
• Invite the press, perhaps your local newspaper reporter is a women, invite her!

Finally, it’s important to have Action Steps:
Offer the “inspired” women who attend your event an opportunity to get involved. For example, maybe they can bring some food next time or maybe they can help give out some postcards for the film.

HELP?

I don’t know how to create a Red Tent.

1. You don't need tons of red stuff, but it sets the tone and it makes it more fun.

2. For advice on how to create a Red Tent we suggest you participate in the monthly "Red Tent Temple Movement Teleconferences" with Alisa Starkweather, the founder of the movement.

For info visit: http://www.redtenttemplemovement.com
Getting the Word Out

There are many ways to get the word out. We believe that people will feel compelled to attend an event if it feels relevant, important and timely, and if it speaks to them as an audience.

At any given time there will be many possible tie-ins to women’s lives and “hooks” for particular media outlets. Having a Red Tent in every community will help millions of women and girls. One of the film’s goals is to reach “beyond the choir” and we believe that you can do it too!

Take into account how best to reach your audiences. Not everyone uses e-mail, and not everyone hangs out at progressive coffee shops. A clear understanding of how to reach each audience segment will make you more effective, and the best strategy is likely to be a combination of the techniques listed below. And remember, the best publicity will do more much than attract people to your Red Tent or screening: it will bring the overall message that we need Red Tents in our communities to a much wider audience.

Finally, be sure to send us your event information (info@redtentmovie.com) so that we can publicize for you too! If you booked a screening with us, you submitted a license and we added all of your information to our upcoming screening page and all of our other social media PR.

1) ELECTRONIC/VIRAL OUTREACH

This is one of the most effective ways to reach people, but attention spans are short, and it works best when it is accompanied by other sorts of outreach and publicity. In all electronic outreach, be sure to include a link to www.redtentmovie.com so people can view the trailer, or better yet, embed the “Things We Don’t Talk About” trailer on your website.

• Newsletter or e-mail announcement: You can use the downloadable flyer templates or the template e-mails we provide at www.redtentmovie.com/host.html as the basis to create an email announcement to spread the word about your event. We recommend you send out these emails at least twice: two weeks before, and then a reminder a few days before your event.

• Blogs: Reach out to any bloggers that you know and to bloggers who are popular with your target audience. Even a brief mention with a link to the event is helpful. Be sure to send them information to link to or embed the “Things We Don’t Talk About” trailer from www.redtentmovie.com onto their site for increased impact.

• Social networks have become hugely important in reaching certain audiences, and can be especially useful when there’s a Facebook group connected to a specific local community such as a Red Tent, university, local women’s organization, etc. We suggest setting up an “event” and inviting members of your community to forward and distribute the event information to friends. (Be sure to enable the features that allow people to forward your event information to their friends.) You can also just send a message with the event information to your friends and to groups that might be interested, including links to the “Things We Don’t Talk About” website and to our pages on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/redtentfilm and Twitter http://twitter.com/rdtentmovie

2) POSTERS & FLYERS

Putting up posters and flyers around your community, in the right coffee shops, and on community bulletin boards can be incredibly effective. We offer a number of free downloadable template flyers and mini-posters (at www.redtentmovie.com/host.html) that you can easily customize to include your event details and then print on your own printer.
3) LOCAL MEDIA

As mentioned earlier, we have designed this toolkit to be comprehensive in order to empower you to do the best event possible. We realize that some sections will not be applicable to everyone and this section on local media is a great example – depending on your objectives and your audience, you may or may not decide to pursue media coverage. That’s fine, as it’s all about how best to reach and impact your audience. But read on for some guidance for how simple media outreach can be!

If you or one of your co-sponsoring organizations has a communications department that can take the reigns on contacting press, get them involved right away. But we understand that many small groups or community organizations may have limited capacity, so we’ve put together some basic tips that can be useful to those who are new to working with local media.

Before you make complicated plans about how to promote your event, spend some time thinking about who is most likely to understand and appreciate your event, and what media your target audience listens to, reads and logs on to. By targeting your core audience, you might decide that it makes more sense to focus on, say, an alternative weekly paper that already covers innovative community initiatives vs. the headline-driven daily paper that tends to focus on crime and celebrites.

Below are some basic tips for your media outreach:

• Use the template press release available at www.redtentmovie.com/host.html as a guide to create your own.

• Ten days before the event, issue the release to a wide range of mainstream, alternative, community and specialized media. Make sure to send it to reporters covering women’s issues, the arts/entertainment, and metro sections.

Here are a number of ideas:

• Leave a stack of flyers at appropriate local businesses and ask if you can place a miniposter in their window. Try video stores, coffee shops, restaurants, community centers, barbershops/salons, churches, synagogues, schools, campuses, and anywhere else that your audience likes to hang-out. You can also try placing an ad on local bus systems, on school shuttles, and similar places. (Some ambitious organizers have even gotten sponsorship from the local bus system in the form of free ad space!)

• Distribute flyers at events with similar themes. Be sure to send (or e-mail) flyers to cosponsoring organizations to distribute at their events.

• Go to local organizations that do work that relate to women and ask if you can leave flyers at the entrance or if they’ll post the mini-poster.

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• If press wants photos or a press kit about the film itself, you can always direct them to www.redtentmovie.com

• Get your event on calendar listings in your city’s weekly publication(s) and on the web.

• Make calls to local television and radio programs. Let them know about your event. Pay particular attention to local radio shows and shows that focus on women’s issues, as they frequently need guests and may be very happy to promote a local event! Here’s who to contact:
  - Local TV news: assignment editors
  - Public affairs or magazine programs: producers
  - Talk radio or local/community radio: producers or hosts

• A couple of days prior to your event contact the people to whom you sent press materials and encourage them to attend the event.

4) CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

We strongly encourage including other organizations in your plans, as it helps you broaden your reach and establish new, potentially long-term partnerships. Allied organizations can get involved in a range of ways depending on their capacity. This can include getting the word out through listservs or websites and contributing time or resources. There are many groups that would make good co-sponsors, including women’s organizations and Women’s Centers at universities.

The key in approaching co-sponsors is to help them understand how your event fits into their priorities as an organization, and how they will ultimately benefit from being associated with your plans. Be sure to allow enough lead-time – building new relationships often takes time.

**An additional Tip:**

Pass out the “Things We Don’t Talk About” postcards or flyers.

These postcards will help women carry the message about the screening or Red Tent event and will provide all of the information they need to let their friends know.