

Caller Responsibilities

A great strength of FolkMADS is the diverse group of callers who bring their personal perspective on what dance is about and their personalities that enliven the dances. The regular dances in Albuquerque and Santa Fe are the foundation of our community. A successful dance is one that is fun and inclusive in a way that keeps the regulars coming back while encouraging new dancers to return. New and old dancers alike should find our dances a place of friendliness, respect, safety, and community.

Callers carry much responsibility for the success of a dance evening. The dance committee and/or the Board of FolkMADS shall conduct evaluations of our performers to ensure our dances are successful (see separate guidance for evaluations [cite title of document]). If the evaluation indicates a caller is struggling to fulfill the following responsibilities, a constructive conversation between a representative of FolkMADS and the caller will be had about the issues. With encouragement and assistance the issues may be resolved. If the issues can't be resolved, then the caller's place in the caller rotation may be removed or reduced for the good of the community. The New Mexico Callers Collective is an excellent place to find assistance to improve one's calling; other strategies for improvement are also available.

The following is a list of responsibilities and skills reflecting FolkMADS values concerning caller performance meant as a guideline for the callers role as a leader in our community. When callers meet these responsibilities the dance will likely be successful. These are not meant to constrain a caller's style but to provide agreement between the caller's role as dance leader with both the standards for the good of our community and FolkMADS's vision.

The Face of FolkMADS: When hired, the caller is the face of FolkMADS for the evening and must act accordingly. Dance attendees should feel welcomed, included, and safe. The caller sets the mood and should do so in accordance with our code of conduct guidelines (separate guidance [cite title of document]).

1. **Stage presence:** Politely and effectively get the dancers' attention for walkthroughs and recover quickly from caller, dancer, or band mistakes.
2. **Mood:** Treat dancers and the band with friendliness, patience, courtesy, and respect (without blaming the dancers or the band for mistakes regardless of who is at fault).
3. **Openness:** Be receptive to suggestions and feedback, while maintaining decorum and control.

4. Basic reliability: Show up on time to dances, show up when scheduled to call, and return phone calls or respond to emails in a timely manner.

Caller skills:

1. Timing: Consistently time dance calls to the music, stating the calls with the music and not early or late.
2. Walkthroughs: Make teaching clear and concise, use demos as necessary.
3. Band: Communicate with the band about tempo, starting and stopping the music, type of tunes requested for a dance, etc.
4. Flexible programming: Change an evening's program based on the skill level of the caller, band, or dancers such that the program is suited to the caller, band, and dancers. Be able to throw out a dance if the walkthrough is going poorly. Be able to successfully call a variety of dances.
5. Responsiveness: Be cognizant of the situation on the dance floor, being aware of any breakdowns that may be occurring during the dance, and making adaptations as necessary.
6. Sound: Effectively use the microphone to enhance the caller's voice, without shouting or being too quiet. Use a clear and pleasant voice that enunciates and projects the caller's calls.
7. Dropping Calls: Be cognizant of the dancers such that dropping calls allows for the dancers to better connect with the music without causing dancers to become confused or lost.
8. Dance Length: Run dances for the appropriate amount of time such that dancers have thoroughly enjoyed the dance but not so long that the dancers or band gets bored. Be able to end a dance early if necessary.

FolkMADS board, approved 3/13/2016