Become a Left/Right Confusion Friendly Dance Caller!

Left/Right Confusion is **common** on the dancefloor. Here's how to minimise the impact at dances you call!

Key Ideas

- **Some** people know left from right instinctively and instantly.
- Everyone **else** must "work it out". Some need a lot of "processing time"
- As with other disabilities and differences, you need to fix the dance – **you cannot fix the dancer** (Google "social model of disability")
- Do **not** offer clever ways of working out left and right – there isn't time to use them
- You may be able to "translate" a dance to make it more accessible, but it can be better to select (or write) naturally accessible dances. There's 30 ceilidh dances at eceilidh.org.uk/lrc
- "Left" and "Right" are **not completely banned words** – but use them sparingly and carefully.

How to use left and right "carefully"

- If/when you use these words, *expect delay and errors and allow for them*
- EG: A "left left right" may be very hard. Can you pause between each direction? Or have you chosen an obsolete dance?
- Correctly identifying the left or right of the dancer opposite you is even harder.
- Consider demonstrating a move rather than explaining it.

Substituting other wording for left and right often makes it even harder

- References to the "line with their backs to the windows" can fail in several ways
- The problem is with lateral directions – not the word(s) used to describe them

Example of a dance that doesn't use left and right at all

This dance is popular at ceilidhs and is based on "Boston Tea Party" by Jean Butler. The original dance is devoid of left/right although it does use gendered terms. The version below addresses both diversity issues.

5 couple longways sets

1. Top couple hold both hands with your partner and dance down to the bottom of the set
2. Same couple make a 1-handed arch over one line of dancers (doesn't matter which line) and dance back to the top
3. Same couple keep the arch and dance down over the other line
4. Same couple hold both hands with your partner and dance to the top of the set
5. Top couple hold nearest hands with each other and dip and dive to the bottom of the set where you stand and make a two handed arch
6. …meanwhile, the other couples join the dip and dive but as soon as they've danced with the top couple, cast out and down to below where the bottom couple are standing, meet your partner, go through the arch and end up a little closer to the band than you were.
7. Swing your partners.

Remember:

- Don't expect to eliminate left/right completely.
- **Reduce** the need for dancers to work out left/right.
- Every time you use left/right (*and you can!*) allow for some delay and confusion.

This is just a one-page summary. For more information, see leftrightdance.org