

## Practicing safe (safer) dancing

Mark Beecher – Grapevine Productions

As people gather for weddings and events once again, some are finding that not everything is returning exactly back to normal. Many florists, cake providers, caterers and venues have revamped the way they are doing business in order to make things safer for themselves and guests in this COVID 19 world. Sanitation has never been so stringent. Many couples I have talked to have asked what can be done to make the dance floor safer for friends and family. Wearing face masks and social distancing are not really practical expectations when the music moves you and your guests to dance with friends and family...and strangers.

Here are some ideas and suggestions for couples who are concerned about the safety of their guests when it comes to dancing, yet still wish to have some semblance of “normalcy” at their celebration.

- In recent years “dance time” has really seen a steep increase of time from 2 hours, to sometimes 3 hours or more. Limiting the amount of dance time may decrease risk/exposure.
- Consider dropping the late night snack which also encourage the dancing to continue later into the night.
- A lot of popular music is “bump and grind”. Fifties, 60's, 70s and 80s music causes people to dance differently and further apart. Also consider a few more slow songs each hour to put the brakes temporarily on high energy dancing.
- Props such as glow sticks, hats, sunglasses etc should be discouraged.
- Singing is a way to spread the virus - Choirs have been linked to several coronavirus outbreaks. Restrict “sing-a-long” songs like Piano Man and Sweet Caroline.
- At this time I would **encourage** non contact group/line dances as people are facing the same direction and distancing somewhat..almost like in a class room where students are facing forward.
- Thomas Catering owner, Kelly Early, suggests cocktail rounds on the dance floor. This is a logical move for a couple of reasons. First it forces distancing while dancing. Secondly, it is a physical reminder to guests about social distancing while still engaging in the celebration. The addition of hand sanitizer on the tables themselves is another layer of protection that guests may choose to use...it mentally reminds people to do *their* part to be safe.
- This goes against every fiber of being a DJ, but keeping the room lights up would have an affect on how and how long people dance.
- Finally, you might want to avoid ending the night with a last dance where guests circle the bride and groom arm in arm. DJs can trigger that tradition by playing certain songs like Friends in Low Places, Wagon Wheel, Piano Man etc. I love doing this but I also really enjoy ending the night by playing the couples first dance song, for the last dance.

Incorporating any or all of these ideas won't lessen your celebration, it will only alter it slightly. Guests will understand and appreciate that you are looking out for their best interests. Having your dream wedding is not out of the question – Seek out professionals who have a vested interest in helping you make your wedding safe and fun!