How to Host Stranger Sessions

A field guide to finding applicants through the Hub and photographing two people meeting for the first time.

What you're hosting

A Stranger Session is a guided photoshoot for two people who haven't met. Give them something to do together, photograph the nerves and laughter, and let the interaction unfold at their pace.

What the Hub handles

Applicants complete a questionnaire and upload photos through Stranger Session Hub. Use the photographer portal to find people in your area, review suggested pairings, and track sessions. You choose whom to invite and manage communication, planning, and delivery.

Set expectations about costs

The Hub's $15 application fee is non-refundable and an application does not guarantee a booking. Tell each participant separately what your session includes, any fee you charge, and who pays for extras such as admission, food, or parking. Share those details before anyone commits.

Plan the experience before you promote it

Choose a service area, a location you can work in comfortably, and a session format you can repeat. A coffee walk or an ice cream stop can give participants as much to react to as an elaborate setup.

From McCaffry Photography

Based on Lindsey Mohn's original guide, including the interviews, outfit coordination, staggered arrivals, and warm-up photos she uses in her own Stranger Sessions.

Find applicants through the Hub

Send interested people to one application, then use the photographer portal to find potential pairings.

Invite people to apply

Post a short description and the Hub link on your website and social pages. Share in local Facebook groups that allow it. Ask followers to send the post to a friend. Use session photos or behind-the-scenes clips you have permission to share. Name your city or region so applicants know where you work.

Copy-ready local caption

Would you let a photographer set you up on a blind-date photoshoot? I'm looking for people near [city] who are up for a Stranger Session. Curious? Read the details and apply at strangersessionhub.com. Applying puts you in the pool for consideration. If you know someone who'd do this, send them this post.

Search by ZIP code and radius

Open the photographer portal. Use **Matches** to review suggested pairings and **Applicants** to browse profiles in your search area. Start with the area you can realistically serve. If the pool is small, try widening the radius or promoting again locally. Confirm each person can get to your chosen location.

Read both profiles before reaching out

Review both profiles in the portal. Look for a shared activity and consider whether their expectations fit the session you're planning. Use the contact details the portal makes available for the pairing. Keep application answers, photos, and contact details private. Other photographers in your area may also see the same applicant pool.

From match to scheduled

Use the portal status to reflect what's actually happening with the pairing.

Move from Available to Pending

When you're ready to pursue a pairing, mark it **Pending** and contact each person separately. Pending lasts up to one week before the pairing returns to the pool. Release it sooner if either person declines or you decide against moving forward.

First outreach

Hi [first name], I'm [name] with [studio]. I found your application through Stranger Session Hub and wondered if you'd be interested in a short call about a possible session near [city]. I'll explain the shoot, what might be shared afterward, and any costs. Would [time] or [time] work for you?

Interview each person separately

Ask what made them apply, what they're excited or nervous about, and what they hope to get out of the experience. Ask about their comfort with posing, physical contact, photos, video, and public sharing. Give them time to ask questions and make participation optional. If you want to record an interview, ask permission first and explain how the footage would be used.

Move from Pending to Scheduled

Once both people confirm, record the date and time in the portal and send each person the details privately. Use the reschedule option if you agree on a new date. If the session falls through, cancel it in the portal so the pairing can return to the pool. Use the portal's reporting tools if a concern comes up.

Plan the date and prep both people

A short call and clear arrival instructions make it easier for participants to relax on set.

Choose a theme they can both enjoy

Pick an activity that gives them something to do with their hands and an easy way to start talking. Try choosing records, sharing a picnic, or picking out ice cream flavors. Plan for travel, lighting, weather, restrooms and accessibility. Have a backup if the location or weather changes.

Coordinate outfits and protect the surprise

Give each person a color palette and practical clothing suggestions. If one sends an outfit photo, share the clothing reference with permission and leave out identifying details. Tell both people the general plan and what to bring. Keep gifts optional.

Collect signed contracts and model releases

Before the shoot, have every participant sign your session contract and model release. Explain where images and clips may appear and ask separately about behind-the-scenes filming, interview footage, and tagging. Tell each person who will be on set. Avoid sharing a participant's identity, location details, or social profiles with the other person without permission.

What goes in the confirmation text

Include the date, each person's individual arrival time, the exact meeting point, parking or access details, wardrobe, expected duration, and your day-of contact number. Let them know how to reach you if they're late or need to make a change.

On set

Give them a moment to meet, then start with a prompt that makes it easy to move or laugh.

Stagger arrivals by about ten minutes

Tell each person where to wait and ask them to text on arrival. Greet them individually and explain the first few minutes of the shoot. If both want a surprise reveal, ask them to turn away from each other and turn around on a count. Let them introduce themselves before you begin.

Start with three simple prompts

Walk. Have them walk side by side and tell each other how they almost talked themselves out of coming.
Choose. Give them a small task, like choosing each other's ice cream flavor.
Pause. Have them face each other from a comfortable distance and see who laughs first.

Check in before changing the level of contact

Ask both participants before suggesting touch, a close pose, or a kiss. Either person can skip a prompt, change their mind, or pause at any point. If someone hesitates, offer a little more space or switch back to an activity. Check in privately if you sense discomfort.

What to say in the moment

"How does this feel for both of you? We can stay right here, give you more space, or try a different prompt."

Close the session clearly

Thank them individually and tell them when to expect photos and what has been agreed for sharing. Let each person choose whether to exchange contact details.

Deliver, share, and close out

Finish the gallery and give participants a clear idea of what happens next.

Close out the session in the Hub

After the shoot takes place, mark it **Completed**. The Hub sends the participants a review invitation. Keep gallery delivery and any promised follow-up on your own schedule.

Share only what you have permission to publish

Deliver the gallery privately. Before posting, check that the images, video clips, names, and tags fit the permissions you received. Give both people a heads-up about when a post is going live. Ask how they'd like to be identified and let them know they can adjust their social media privacy settings.

Plan for comments

Decide who will monitor the post after it goes live. Remove harassment or comments exposing private information. Tell participants how to reach you if a comment or message makes them uncomfortable. Keep public updates about a pairing's relationship status subject to both people's approval.

One last check

Before: Both participants confirmed and signed their contracts and model releases. Location and arrival texts sent.
During: Introductions, warm-up prompts, and opt-in check-ins.
After: Hub status updated, gallery delivered, sharing permissions checked, comments monitored.