

Manifesto Safe(r) Space

Consent is not the absence of "no." It's the presence of a "yes."

Safe(r) space

A safe (r) space is a supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages openness, respect, a willingness to learn from others, as well as physical and mental safety. It is a space that criticizes the power structures that affect our daily lives.

It is a space that strives to respect and understand the specific needs of everyone. Everyone who enters a safe (r) space has the responsibility to uphold the values of the space.

We say "safe (r)" because we realize that not everyone experiences spaces in the same way as others, so any set of guidelines designed to create safety may not meet everyone's requirements and there may be complications or mistakes in meeting those guidelines in practice.

In general, safe (r) spaces are inviting, fascinating and supportive. Establishing guidelines for circumstances that are not acceptable in a room, and action plan (s) for what someone will do if those circumstances occur is part of being proactive to create a safer room. Issues such as offensive language and behaviour (both within the space itself and in patterns that fall outside the activities of the space), violence, touching people without their permission, intolerance to one's religious beliefs or lack thereof, racist, ageistic, sexist, heterophobic, homophobic, transphobic, most skilled, classic or other behaviours or language that can perpetuate oppression are addressed with a safer policy.

As the undersigned of this manifesto, we strive to recognize the power dynamics and privileges*¹ that exist in our society. As well as the suppression of the queer * community anchored in the history of this structure. We also acknowledge that these dynamics can creep into the community itself and we are committed to preventing this. We are working on creating safe (r) spaces and naming the tensions.

We realize that no place can be completely safe, so we use the term safe (r) space. In addition, we would like to introduce the term *brave space**, with the emphasis on entering into dialogue with each other when definitions about safe (r) space clash, even when entering into dialogue proves to be confronting and difficult. Of course, consent of all parties is a condition for this dialogue to proceed safely.

As an organization, we recognize and value diversity, including but not limited to differences in ethnicity*, gender identity and expression, origin, place of birth, skin colour, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marital status, health status, physical or mental ability, financial situation, professional status, etc.

We call on everyone to have a positive attitude with regard to inclusiveness*, empathy*, openness and a critical view of what is considered norm / given / self-evident in our society.

¹ Words with an * are explained in the attached glossary.

People who participate in our events or, by extension, any activity organized by us are asked to pay attention to their language and behaviour and to what extent they could hurt, exclude or damage others. As an organization, we believe that stigmatization, bullying, intimidation, and violence is a serious problem that can have far-reaching consequences. This behaviour can be of a physical, verbal, social, mental or online nature. No form will be tolerated.

In our organization, there is no room for, among other things but not exclusively: violence, racism*, sexism*, transphobia*, body negativity, sexual harassment, discrimination of age, visible or invisible mental or physical limitations, religion or belief, gender* or sexuality,... In short: there is no room for any behaviour against a person which places them in a minority. Unrespectful and harmful behaviour or behaviour that encourages this will not be permitted. Any incitement to behaviour that gives others a feeling of insecurity or discomfort, directly or indirectly affects the self-image of others, gives others the feeling that they belong less or not to the space than a certain group, that hierarchizes the value of certain identity facets, is not tolerated.

We also recognize that members of these communities and minority groups are still experiencing difficulties in society and are still not treated equally everywhere. We recognize that there are sometimes obstacles that can lead to unequal access to basic rights, security, work, education, information, activities, programs, housing, cultural sector and services. We want to make an effort to improve accessibility and to empower people.

We want everyone to be aware of the space they occupy. By this, we mean that people are aware of their privileges and the amount of verbal and/or physical space they occupy in relation to others.

We believe in the importance of consent. It is everyone's responsibility to ask consent and get a confirmation for every activity that involves another person. We also want to pay extra attention to sexual behavior. We think it is important to point out enthusiastic consent* and the right of the other person to withdraw that consent at any time. When someone says "no" (both verbally and through body language), we find it important that respect is shown here too. Moreover, it is important to see the consent context specifically. A "yes" to one situation does not mean automatic consent to another situation. For example, consent to a kiss cannot mean consent to sex.

It is important not to assume anything about someone's identity, experiences or past. We find it important that people are aware that it can be perceived as offensive by the other when communication is based on prejudices and that they simply cannot be applied. We find respect in language use and general respect for yourself, others, the physical place and the organization important.

We use a zero tolerance for all forms of discrimination*, regardless of whether this is expressed in derogatory names, inappropriate questions, exclusion or any other form. If we notice discrimination, we will take action and give recognition to this issue.

We think it is important that no one feels obliged to answer personal/intimate questions based on stereotypical* representations of people of colour and we want to point out that these questions are completely out of context in the first place.

Gender discrimination can manifest itself in deliberately misgendering others, not using the chosen pronouns or basing pronouns on prejudices, using derogatory terms and showing no respect for everyone's self-chosen identity and pronouns*. Also in the communication of the organization, we pay attention not to use gendered language. As well as that the physical space, such as toilets, are not gendered.

We think it's very important that everyone is aware of the impact that misgendering* can have on someone. If this happens by accident, we urge people to apologize, start the conversation if there is room for this and then express respect by paying extra attention to it.

We acknowledge that there are more than two genders and take this into account in our communication online and at events themselves. We also believe that gender is measured by the person himself and must not correspond to state documents.

We are aware that not everyone has the same options, also on a physical level. For this reason, we provide free access to mobility aids. If the space does not allow this completely, we provide alternatives. In this way, we want to fully guarantee the accessibility of our organization. We communicate the accessibility of the location as good as possible: is it wheelchair accessible, are there seats, etc.? We also pay attention to the people with disabilities with hearing and seeing. As far as possible, we provide interpreters and guidance, or at least notifications that this can be requested from our organization so that everyone knows that everyone is welcome.

We attach great importance to self-care and we also promote this in our vision of the organization. When we notice that people are experiencing problems with this, we offer easily accessible help to support this. For example, if we see self-harm happening, we try to start the conversation in a respectful way.

Under no circumstances do we contribute to destructive patterns (such as toxic masculinity*, patriarchy*, capitalism*, etc.), whether they are aimed at their own person or at others. We take responsibility for addressing problematic behaviour to the person or persons accountable. We will take action and impose sanctions in the event of such problematic incidents.

As an organization, we are open to feedback about the safe (r) space that we want to create. People can contact us about how we can contribute better to their sense of security and inclusiveness in our organization. We think it is important to train every new member of the organization about this safe (r) space: what it means and how to respond if the vision is not respected. We also ensure that our members or employees follow these guidelines, as they are an extension of our propagated vision.

We consider the right to privacy* important and ask consent from everyone when, for example, photos are taken or names are published somewhere. If people do not give consent, this is taken into account. This is also possible, for example, by using stickers or straps.

We focus on trigger warnings*. We realize that many people from the community are processing traumas and therefore want to be supportive and not harm these processes. That is why we focus on alerting the public or attendees of an event when sensitive topics will be discussed.

We see the importance of allies. Even if organizations do not consider themselves exclusively queer, it is important to be a safe (r) space for those who do identify themselves like that.

As an organization, we see it as our responsibility to not only inform members of the organization about this manifesto but also people that come into contact with us. We realize that the manifesto is not equally accessible and understandable for everyone, so we make every effort to make this accessible and to ensure that as many people as possible in the room are aware of and understand the safe (r) space. We also provide a point of contact for people who want more information or have questions.

We see the added value of a confidant* where things can be reported. Like this, there is a physical person people can go to when they don't feel safe.

If one of the above rules is violated, we as an organization declare that we will take action. The form of this is always situation-specific but can translate into:

- Addressing people about their behaviour.
- Remove people from the room.
- Organize a mediation interview* with a neutral person if all parties agree.
- Inform people about the limits they have crossed and continue the conversation.
- Deny people access to the organization.
- Provide additional information about the cause of certain conflicts and how they can be prevented in the future.

We encourage feedback on this manifesto. This document is a process and not the whole truth; it is a document that will continue to evolve. That is why adjustments will be made in the future. You can certainly contribute to this.

If you as an organization are interested in signing this manifesto, you can also contact us.

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Appendix 1: Glossary

Brave space

A brave space encourages dialogue. Recognize the difference and hold each person responsible to share experiences and gain new insights - an achievement that is often difficult and usually uncomfortable.

Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic system that is based on investing money in the expectation of making a profit.

That capitalism and the mode of production influences on the associated ownership relationships, technology, social organization, the relationship between state and tribe-family-family-individual, the male-female-x role patterns and racial relationships. Because of this, there is a link between the liberation of the queer community and the fight against capitalism.

Confidential advisor

A confidential adviser is a person within the organization to whom confidential matters can be trusted, such as the feeling of unsafety.

Consent

Consent is not the absence of "no". It is the presence of a "yes".

Consent initiator is permanent and consent can be withdrawn or denied at any time. It means listening to each other, respecting each other and paying attention to all our interactions. Practicing consent is an important step in creating a culture in which we want to live. A culture in which people are respected and have their autonomy, choice, freedom of choice, and therefore the freedom to decide for themselves what is best for them.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unequal treatment or disadvantage of a certain group of people. In this particular group of people, a distinction is made based on certain very different characteristics such as race, origin, orientation, gender or religion.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Enthusiastic consent

Enthusiastic consent is the idea that consent goes beyond the initial 'yes' and is demonstrated by commitment and enthusiasm. The point is to acknowledge that permission cannot be given if there is manipulation, pressure, threats and if both people are not in the right mood.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a socio-cultural identity that connects a certain group of people or a number of population groups. The concept of ethnicity is rooted in the fact that members of certain population groups identify with common characteristics, such as nationality, tribal relationship, religion,

language, culture or history and the norms and values derived from them. The common "heritage" and the solidarity experience based on its form of ethnicity

Gender

The concept of gender refers to the social context, the ideas, and expectations about "masculinity" and "femininity". These are socially and culturally determined and are constantly being changed, refined and refined. This is in contrast to sex, the biological gender, the biological differences between men and women.

Inclusion

Inclusion means the including disadvantaged groups fully in society on the basis of equal rights and obligations.

Mediate

Mediating is the process that contributes to conflict resolution between two or more parties, possibly under the guidance of a neutral party.

Misgendering

Misgendering is referring to a person with terms expressing the wrong gender, unknowingly or intentionally; for example, by calling a woman "son", a boy "she" or a non-binary person "he" or "she" instead of "they/them".

Patriarchy

Patriarchate is a term in sociology to indicate a form of society in which men play a dominant role.

Patriarchate is a system of gender polarity. That is, all human variation and diversity are forced, kneaded and squeezed into two boxes, men and women, with very rigid prescribed rules for their behavior (gender roles). The patriarchy organizes these created groups in such a way that the group of men is above the group of women or others (this is called gender stratification, in sociological terms). Women* as a group are being suppressed. This means, men generally have more power, more access to public facilities, and more opportunities for self-development.

Privacy

Privacy or private space is a defense right that protects the personal life environment. It is personal freedom, being able to stay somewhere unhindered, alone, in your own circle or with a partner; opportunity to isolate oneself, to avoid disturbing influences from the outside world, a situation in which a person is sure that as few as possible other people will enter their territory without their permission. This also means that it is possible to decide for yourself who receives what information about them and the right to live unobserved and unguarded.

Privilege

A privileged position of a person or group. For example the white privilege: referring to the social privileges of the majority group (white community) compared to the lesser privileges (at social, political or economic level) that minority groups experience.

Pronouns

The current binary pronouns (= word that refers to something or someone) he/she, him/her, his/her respectively get company of the gender-neutral pronouns they, them and their. It is always advisable to ask each individual for their pronouns.

Queer

Some see queer as a synonym of gay or lesbian or LGBT. This statement falls short. Those who fall under the LGBT group can also take place within queer, but queer is not a constantly defined definition. Queer does not fit in the list of neat social categories, or the sum of our identities. It is the qualitative position of opposition to presentations of stability, an identity that questions the manageable limits of identity.

Queer is an area of tension defined against the dominant story of the white straight monogamous patriarchy. It is an affinity with all who are marginalized and suppressed. Queer is what is considered strange, abnormal and dangerous by society.

Queer is about our sexuality, gender, but so much more. It is our desire and our fantasies and even more. Queer is the coherence of everything in conflict with the heterosexual capitalist world. Queer is a total rejection of Normal's regime.

Racism

Racism is the exceptionalistic idea that races can be classified as superior and inferior to each other. As a result, different standards can be laid down for one variety than for the other.

Sexism

Sexism is discrimination based on gender and the stereotypes, attitudes and cultural elements that sustain this discrimination.

Stereotype

A stereotype is an exaggerated image of a group of people that often does not (fully) correspond to reality. It is often a prejudice or negative idea and is often used as justification for certain discriminatory actions.

Toxic masculinity

Toxic masculinity refers to harmful behaviors and attitudes that are often associated with some men, such as the need to suppress emotions during stressful situations and to act in an aggressively dominant manner.

Transphobia

Transphobia is the fear of transgender people and transsexuality, as well as the hostile and discriminatory behaviour that emerges from this feeling.

Trigger warning

A statement at the beginning of an article, video, performance or others, that warns the reader or viewer that it may contain disturbing material. It is a warning to people suffering from PTSD that something terrible that they have experienced is about to be discussed or shown and may cause flashbacks or other negative feelings.