

Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Policy
Adopted AGM: October 2011
Ammended SAGM: March 2015

PREAMBLE:

The framework of anti-oppression begins with the premise that there are power imbalances in all social relations. By anti-oppression we mean the practice of combating all facets of racism, colonization, classism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism, etc.

Through these power inequities, which are learned ideologies or socially constructed, a hierarchical relationship benefits a dominant or privileged individual or group(s), and marginalizes others. This can be either explicit or implicit. Oppression occurs when a person is excluded from opportunities towards self development, barred from full participation in society, denied rights that the dominant group takes for granted and/or is assigned a second class citizenship, not because of individual talent, merit or failure, but because of their membership in a particular group or category of people.

Oppressions such as racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism etc., are interrelated and interlocked. Aspects of social differences such as race, gender, sexual orientation and class can't be understood fully without considering them in relation to each other. Individuals and/or groups can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression from more than one source of their social location.

Anti-oppressive practice recognizes that social identity and oppression is complex, takes many forms and has many intersecting relationships. Power and privilege are relative to one's location or position in society. Through anti-oppressive practice and policy, the University of Victoria Pride Collective aims to create and sustain a safer space for all marginalized, queer individuals and seeks to ally with other organizations and groups that support marginalized communities. Deconstructing and 'unlearning' oppression is possible by engaging in a conscious and active process of challenging previously held personal and organizational values, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes. If one believes that oppression is learned, then anti-oppression can be viewed as a process of deconstructing and 'unlearning'. This requires that all Pride members and allies acknowledge the power and privilege that come with their social location. Strategies for change require that we all share responsibility to address oppression.

ANTI-OPPRESSION AND ANTI-RACISM POLICY

In conjunction with the University of Victoria Pride Collective's Constitution and Bylaws and set within the previously stated PREAMBLE, the Collective is committed to anti-oppression and antiracism in the following ways:

Access

The Collective aims to make our office space, as well as space utilized for Collective events, as accessible as possible.

The Collective seeks to promote services and events using language that is accessible to the general student body, as well as to the broader community.

The Collective membership seeks to engage in dialogue that is accessible to its membership and allies, where possible, and if not, is open to questions and clarification of terms, theories and ideologies.

Inclusiveness

The Collective seeks to actively reach out, in culturally appropriate and respectful ways, to include and welcome queer-identified individuals and allies from diverse communities to participate in Collective meetings and events. This commitment involves including and welcoming individuals from diverse groups to provide input into Collective's policies, procedures and services.

Respect

The Collective membership recognizes, values, and respects the views, beliefs, orientations, histories and cultures of diverse individuals/groups within the collective, while acknowledging the significance of the Collective primarily as a "space for individuals whose identities and experiences represent various aspects of queer and ally communities at the University of Victoria and throughout the Victoria area" (University of Victoria Collective Constitution and Bylaws).

Respect for others necessitates locating oneself within the framework of anti-oppressive practice as an individual who may experience sites of power, privilege and oppression simultaneously.

Commitment to Anti-Racism

The Collective acknowledges the additional systemic, institutional, cultural, and attitudinal barriers that racialized, queer individuals face on a daily basis. The Collective is committed to combating and speaking out against all forms of racism (be it direct or indirect, subtle or overt, intentional or unintentional) in the effort to create a more welcoming and inclusive space for all within the Collective.

Accountability

The Collective aims to ensure that its active membership is engaged in the implementation of Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism policy. Further, should an individual and/or group feel that efforts are not being made by the Collective to fulfill these policies, they may file a complaint via the process(es) stated in the Collective's Safer Space Policy (see University of Victoria Collective's Constitution and Bylaws). Advocacy The Collective will continue to advocate – through individual and collaborative measures – policies, services and events that seek to actively eradicate systemic barriers to equity, equality, inclusiveness, access and respect for all marginalized people, especially for queer-identified individuals and work in solidarity with the other UVic advocacy groups.

Equity

The Collective aims to ensure fairness in the way collective meetings and events are carried out. The Collective is committed to including the Collective membership in decision-making processes, sharing power and resources between Coordinators (paid and volunteer), Board Representatives, active members and Collective allies.

Ethical Purchasing and Environmental Justice Guidelines

The Collective recognizes that global capitalism reinforces and perpetuates systems of oppression; that one cannot make ethical purchases while existing and contributing under a system of capitalism, and that issues of environmental safety and land sovereignty are social issues.

The Collective acknowledges the complicated relationship between environmentalism and colonization and aims to employ a decolonizing lens towards environmental justice. The Collective aims to mitigate its negative impacts through ethical purchasing practices, including buying fair trade, sweatshop-free and union-made products from companies with unionized labour or small, local businesses with good labour practices. The Collective also seeks to mitigate its environmental impacts by purchasing products that are reusable, recyclable or compostable, and the Collective seeks to be conscious of the socially and environmentally unjust processes both at the points of creation, transportation, consumption and disposal of its purchases.

The Collective also recognizes that spending collective monies is accomplished through a system of reimbursement, which means individual collective members are required to pay for collective spending up front and out of their own pockets. Because of institutional barriers such as race, class, gender, ability, and colonization, the collective recognizes that these guidelines may not always be feasible to follow.

Bodily Autonomy

The Collective recognizes every individual's right to make choices about their own bodies, regardless of age or ability.

The Collective recognizes bodily autonomy includes access to non-judgmental information and health care and supports every individual's right to access all information, as well as the ability to decline services and procedures. In order for individuals to fully be able to make autonomous decisions, all options need to be safe, affordable, accessible and free of judgement.

The Collective recognizes the importance of access to health care practitioners who have a specific understanding of diverse sexualities and gender identities.

The Collective recognizes that stigma associated with consensual sex and sexual acts, including sex work, exist. The Collective aims to celebrate consensual sex acts and reduce stigma through a framework of sex positivity, which supports people's right to have or not have sex on their own terms.

Reproductive Justice

The Collective supports full access to reproductive health services and parenting resources in a supportive and non-coercive environment, and is committed to reproductive justice.

The term reproductive justice was coined by feminists of colour and refers to “the right to have children, not have children, and to parent the children we have in safe and healthy environments -- [it] is based on the human right to make personal decisions about one’s life, and the obligation of government and society to ensure that the conditions are suitable for implementing one’s decisions” ¹.

This includes access to comprehensive, accessible and affordable reproductive health services, including abortion, contraception appropriate for all genders, assisted reproductive technology, prenatal health services, community-based and community-specific childcare, adoption services and foster care, and sex education.

Reproductive justice also encompasses the right define one’s own family and the right for people of all abilities, socio-economic statuses and backgrounds to make decisions about their reproductive choices, parenting and families.