

AntiStigma Policy

Amended: November 2016

PREAMBLE:

The UVic Pride Collective recognizes the impact that the criminalization of illicit and controlled substances has had on many oppressed and marginalized communities. The criminalization of illicit and controlled substances refers to a set of policies and ideologies which claim that substance use is inherently harmful to society, and constructs substance use as a moral issue to promote punishment of those who engage in certain forms of substance use by criminalizing some drugs while encouraging the prescription of others. Since being established in the 1970's, the criminalization of illicit and controlled substances has led to a reliance on the violent tactics of the Crown, the courts and law enforcement and the creation of industrial prisons.

These policies also work to further criminalize poverty and racialization by targeting drug use occurring on the streets and in the homes of impoverished, and often racialized, people while largely ignoring the drug use of white university students and professionals. The Collective acknowledges that a disproportionate number of women of color and Indigenous women are incarcerated for possession and substance use, thus we recognize that the criminalization of illicit and controlled substances is racialized, gendered, classed, and colonial in nature.

Additionally, Pride calls for the recognition of sex work as legitimate work and recognizes the complex relationship between sex work, sexual practices, and the increased criminalization of substance use. Pride also calls for an end to the harassment of sex workers by the police and recognizes that sex workers who are targeted with violence are disproportionately Indigenous women, women of color, and/or trans women.

In order to resist oppression within our collective, we recognize the value in destigmatizing all substance use and consensual sexual practices, while advocating that appropriate information be made available to all people. The Collective therefore seeks to create a space that is free from judgment on a person's engagement in these practices, and provide accessible information on safer substance use and sex.

The Collective recognizes the autonomy and agency of its membership to self-determine and make the right decisions for their physical, mental and emotional needs. The Collective will not

define the term “health” or apply it to its membership. The Collective also recognizes that food practices are personal and seeks to create a space where everyone can eat or not eat without judgment.

***NOTE:** The term “substances” is used throughout this policy to describe drugs, regardless of legality, that people may use recreationally, medically or otherwise. The Collective respects all people’s abilities to make decisions about their substance use for themselves.

AntiStigma 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 antistigma in the following ways:

Advocacy

The Collective will actively seek to support antistigma initiatives including, the decriminalization of sex work and of substances, and the efforts of members to create spaces which challenge stigma in all its forms. Additionally, the Collective will strive to create or provide appropriate resources and education that reflect the spirit of the preamble. Furthermore, the Collective recognizes the need for comprehensive and nonjudgmental substance use and sex education for people of all ages, the recognition of the role that race, class, gender, ability and colonization play in the daily realities of substance use and in legislating substance use; the need for testing kits for recreational substances; the right of people to know what is in their substances; and the need to move away from abstinencebased models of education and policy while respecting personal decisions to abstain.

Education

The Collective will actively seek out appropriate workshops, resources, supplies and educators in order to implement an antistigma approach in all the collective’s activities and to better provide services to the collective constituency and communities.

Safer Spaces

In accordance with respecting the Safer Spaces Guidelines and Policy, the Collective commits to maintaining safer spaces in all our activities, keeping in mind multiple sites-of oppression

which affect the decisions people make while respecting their agency. The Collective will not tolerate policing the decisions of others but will aim to provide nonjudgmental support to those that ask for it.

NonJudgmental Support

The Collective respects the bodily autonomy of its members and shall strive to resist all policing of bodies and behaviours that stigmatize and pathologize substance use, sex work and other consensual practices, such as body modification, self-cutting, and BDSM practices. When it is sought out, the Collective shall provide affirming support or be able to refer people to appropriate resources.

Harm Reduction --

Safer Substance Use Supplies

Harm reduction refers to policies, programs and projects that aim to reduce the health, social and economic harms associated with substance use.

In naming our harm reduction resources "Safer Substance Use Supplies" we hope to lessen the stigma associated with substance use, and recognize that all people have their own autonomy and strategies, from safer use, to managed use and abstinence.

The Collective must work to foster a safer space for all that use these substances, and creating a space free of stigma. Coordinators will be required to have Harm Reduction Training provided by the University of Victoria Pride Collective (Delivered by AIDS Vancouver Island) so as to support folks and maintain anti-oppressive practices and an anti-stigma framework; distribute supplies discretely; and respond in case of overdoses.

The Collective recognizes the importance of harm reduction practices while also remaining critical of its shortcomings, thus the Collective shall make use of relevant harm reduction strategies; such as distributing harm reduction resources (ie. Safer smoking/injecting/snorting etc. supplies) and information,

The Collective will provide ongoing harm reduction training to Harm Reduction Volunteers in conjunction with AIDS Vancouver Island. Volunteers will be trained in what harm reduction is, why it is necessary, the importance of safer consumption sites, overdose training, how to distribute supplies discretely, as well as to add to the training as it develops. The Collective will also deliver at least community-oriented harm reduction workshops a year that pertain to issues in harm reduction (including and similar, but not limited, to those that are given to volunteers).

Sobriety

The Collective recognizes the complicated histories many people have around substance use and other stigmatized and pathologized consensual practices. For this reason, the Collective also commits to providing support for those who are living a life free of substance use and other

stigmatized consensual practices due to past experiences and/or traumas, and will work to provide spaces in which members are able to choose the level of engagement they wish to have with-substance use and other stigmatized consensual practices, and/or conversations related to these topics.