

Safer Spaces Policy UVic Pride Collective

Ammended - October 19, 2015 SAGM

Amended - November 8, 2016 AGM

PREAMBLE

The UVic Pride Collective works to create an intentionally safer space in the Pride Centre and at all Pride Collective events. As such, this policy is always in effect in the Pride Centre and Pride Collective events. An intentionally safer space is created when participants work towards safety for all people and actively challenge all forms of oppression. We define safety as freedom from oppression as outlined in the Collective's Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism policy, while recognizing that systemic oppression and power structures are pervasive in all spaces. UVic Pride, as well as the University of Victoria, are located on colonized territories of the Lekwungen people. The land that the university exists on was originally a gathering place for camas bulb harvesting as well as for trade and commerce. As an organization, Pride operates within a context of ongoing colonization and is complicit in this ongoing process. Decolonization is an integral part of creating safer spaces. Allowing dominant power structures and systems of oppression to be recreated and reaffirmed creates spaces that exclude people who experience those oppressions and we become complicit in actively harming them. For this reason, safety and active creation of safer spaces is prioritized over comfort.

Safer spaces are welcoming and educational spaces. This policy provides some guidelines creating safer spaces through mutually respectful dialogue. We must all act intentionally to create safer spaces. All who access the Pride Centre and Pride Collective events should address oppressive behaviour or actions and to our challenge our own oppressive beliefs, behaviour, or actions. You may be asked to engage in a conversation or thought process about your contributions and/or experiences with oppression.

Pride Collective spaces do not exist solely as hang out and socializing spaces. Their primary purposes are advocacy, education and to provide services; interactions within these spaces should fall within the mandate of Pride's Constitution and Bylaws. We recognize that the Pride Centre also serves as a refuge for people experiencing oppressions in their daily lives. We don't all have energy to be constantly engaged in activist work- you do not have to be engaging in activism all the time and you are not expected to be engaged in Pride Collective activities every moment that they are in the Collective space; however, everyone who uses this space is expected to uphold their responsibilities as Collective members (outlined in the Constitution). Regular users should be aware of their responsibilities.

This policy outlines expectations in three areas: personal responsibilities, shared responsibilities, and ways to address issues and concerns.

POLICY

1. Personal Responsibilities

a) Regular users of this space are expected to act as a Collective member and agree to follow all of Pride's bylaws and policies, including the Safer Spaces policy and UVic Pride's Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism policy. You will also be expected to complete Anti-Oppression and Safer Spaces training, at minimum, at the earliest opportunity.

b) We don't expect everyone to be instantly familiar with Pride's Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism policy; however do look at these policies and ask if you are unsure about something. You may be approached by a coordinator to read the documents if you have not done so after spending a significant amount of time in the space.

c) Be aware of your social location. While this space exists for people who experience transphobia/cissexism and homophobia/heterosexism, people also experience many other intersections of oppression. Avoid talking with authority about a form of oppression you do not experience. Don't assume people have universal experiences regardless of how you identify. Different things are okay with different people. Be aware of the space you take up if you are talking with someone who does.

d) Be respectful of the Collective space, including the physical space in which the Collective space is located and space the Collective uses to put on events outside the Pride Centre. Be aware of how you are using it and how much space (emotional, physical and mental) that you are taking up.

e) Try to take being called out or asked to leave seriously, not personally. We want to work toward a Collective where everyone can intentionally work toward a safer space.

f) Be prepared to be challenged on beliefs and actions that are oppressive; everyone makes mistakes and this is a time for self-reflection, not to be defensive. It is not appropriate to argue with the person who challenged your oppressive behaviour, rather it is a time for you to understand that you have harmed someone, whether intentional or not, and to learn from your mistake and experience.

2. Shared Responsibility

a) As a collective, we are all accountable to each other. Every member shares responsibility to create safer spaces and created a welcoming environment. We collectively have the

responsibility to uphold Pride's Anti-Oppression and Anti-racism Policies.

b) It is important to create a welcoming environment. Collective members should welcome new people to the space and show them where to find Collective documents like the Anti-Oppressive and Anti-Racism policy, and other useful things like Pride's resources and services.

c) We must all work to avoid oppressive behaviour and must also actively address oppressive behaviour, content, etc. to the best of our abilities, keeping in mind personal safety, emotional capacity, etc.

d) Collective members are responsible for educating each other. If you are comfortable, take the time to proactively share resources, or start a conversation with someone explaining why something may be problematic or oppressive.

e) Respect people's boundaries, whether these be mental, physical or emotional. Ask consent from potential participants before engaging in physical contact, beginning potentially triggering or upsetting conversations, or talking about very private or intimate topics.

f) If someone has done something that violates this or the Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism policy and you were not comfortable bringing it up at the time or want to discuss it further, please contact the Safer Spaces Coordinator (or a Collective Coordinator) to discuss your concerns. The Safer Spaces Coordinator is always available to discuss safety concerns, even if you just want to chat. The Safer Spaces Coordinator can take a variety of actions, from an informal conversation to helping you submit a formal complaint, if needed.

g) Be aware that UVic Pride has historically been hostile towards IBPOC, and that the space has been known to promote overt and casual colonial violence, anti-Blackness, erasure of the contributions of IBPOC members and an overall alienating atmosphere to racialized and Indigenous members. Members who are white or who experience varying degrees of privilege and oppression related to race are expected to hold themselves and each other immediately accountable, and take personal initiative to access anti-racism documents and trainings in order to contribute to an inclusive environment in Pride.

3. Addressing Issues and Concerns

a) If the Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Policy has been violated, education is a priority. Collective members who are comfortable can address the incident in several ways, such as having a private conversation with the person or providing useful resources. If you have violated the policy and someone would like to discuss it with you, you should listen to what they have to share.

b) If you say or do something that violates Pride's anti-oppressive policy and it has upset someone, you should take some time away from the space; the people who have been hurt

have the right to the safer space over the person who has caused harm, intentional or not. If Collective members who are present wish to address the issue, they are encouraged to do so, however an alternate space should be found.

c) This space does not condone any forms of oppressive behaviour, but in particular, if you engage in triggering behaviour such as oppressive slurs (racist, ableist, sexist, colonialist, etc), jokes about sexual assault or sexualized violence, or body policing, you are expected to leave immediately. These comments can cause visceral reactions and people who experience them may need the safer space.

d) If someone asks you to leave the space for violating this or Pride's Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism policy, you should respect that request; if there is serious disagreement or conflict you should contact the Safer Spaces Coordinator or a Collective/Paid Coordinator. It is inappropriate to argue with the request, or to validate your right to the space.

e) If you've left the space because you have engaged in oppressive behaviour, intentional or unintentional, please contact the Safer Spaces Coordinator before returning to discuss the incident and expectations of Pride's policies.

f) The Safer Spaces Coordinator or Collective/Paid Coordinators shall have a limit of two weeks to take action to resolve the safer spaces concern. Examples include: speaking to those involved with the conflict, providing resources, and contacting the Anti-Violence Project or other local organizations for assistance and mediation. g) All members of the collective are responsible for creating a Safer Space. This is a learning process for everyone involved people will make mistakes, and those who are self-reflective of their oppressive behaviour, who have taken actions towards understanding and implicating their own privilege and power in perpetuating systems of oppression, and who have taken actions towards working against these systems and unlearning their oppressive behaviours will be welcomed back into the space by the Safer Spaces Coordinators and/or Collective/Paid Coordinators. h) This policy does not follow or supercede the removal process outlined in the constitution and bylaws. i) This policy shall not be used as a tool for removal of collective members based on personal issues. All concerns addressed must pertain to safer spaces at UVic Pride Collective spaces and events.