

SAFER SPACE GUIDE FAF #8

What is the safer space guide and why do we have it?

ASEED aims to ensure that spaces are as safe and accessible as possible to a wide range of people. In order to achieve this, it is central that all the participants of the FAF read and respect the following points on **relating to each other**, **consent**, **privileges and oppressions**, **taking care of spaces**, and **taking responsibility for our actions**.

Who is the awareness team and what do they do?

The awareness team is there to do its best to **prevent discrimination and violence**, **ensure the safer space guide is respected**, **be approachable in case of need**, and **de-escalate arising conflicts**. While it is everyone's own responsibility to treat each other with respect, the **Awareness Team** can step in to help mediate a situation and listen to those involved. They will be available during the entire festival. You can recognize them because they will be wearing **yellow vests**. However, there are limits in their knowledge and capacities, and they cannot provide medical and therapeutic help.

1. **Relating to each other: the basics**

1. Foster a spirit of **mutual respect**. Listen to the wisdom everyone brings to the group. Give each person the time and space to speak.
In workshops, raise your hand to speak and wait until the facilitator has given you the word.
2. Coming from different backgrounds, seek **clear and sincere communication**, explaining what certain ideas mean to you.
Some terms that are used in academia or activist circles might be unfamiliar to or might be interpreted differently by others.
3. **Before smoking or consuming alcohol**, make sure everyone around you feels comfortable with it, otherwise there are designated areas for smoking.
4. Non-human friends are welcome, but keep in mind that some might feel unsafe around them or be allergic to them. **Please keep dogs on a leash**. If your dog could put someone in danger, we might ask you to leave the festival. The quiet space is a pet-free zone.
5. **Try to be punctual** with activity schedules.
Starting late or having people arrive while a workshop is already in progress could interrupt the flow of the initial dynamics.
6. It is okay to express your feelings and needs, **ask for help whenever you need it**. To build a safer space, we need to rely on mutual support which can only be carried by collective responsibility. Seek support from your people, but also from the awareness team.

2. **Culture of consent: give only what others want to receive and take only what is offered to you**

1. Actively **seek explicit consent** in all types of interactions, really offering room for response. Listen, accept, and appreciate the response (especially if it's a no). Help others seek explicit consent in their interactions, too.

Not everyone may welcome physical contact. Similarly, not everyone may want to discuss certain topics in certain spaces.

2. **Keep checking in**, everyone can change their mind. Make space for this change.

3. Ensure the person you interact with is **in a position to accept or reject** your interaction.

Various conditions can prevent someone from consciously giving consent, think of age, intoxication, or other vulnerabilities.

4. **If you want to take off your T-shirt**, be aware that some identities and bodies tend to feel more comfortable showing their bare chests than others, and this often/sometimes affects how comfortable the people around feel.

5. **If taking photographs or videos**, ask if people want to be in them, and explain what you intend to do with them, for example posting them on social media.

There is a sticker that people can wear if they don't want to be photographed.

3. **Privileges & oppressions: take responsibility for how your identity impacts others**

1. **Discrimination** or prejudice based on ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, sexuality, ability, asylum status or religious affiliation **is not accepted and will be challenged**.

2. Some people tend to dominate spaces due to their socialization and identity: **check if your will to speak is preventing others from speaking**.

Men, cis people, white people, or academics tend to have more confidence to speak and take up space.

3. **Do not try to downplay or dismiss someone's emotions**, opinions, or life experiences, especially if you are not directly involved in the situation. Every perspective contributes.

Some discussions might bring up strong emotions to some people, especially when they are directly affected by the subject of the discussion.

4. Become **aware of your biases and question them**. Discrimination is not always intentional, but still causes harm. Be aware that certain people have to go through such situations continuously.

Sometimes we need to make an effort to expand our own view: What kind of a situation is the other person in? Why do I want an answer to this particular question? What would the answer mean to me, and what would it mean to the other person?

5. **Respect the autonomy** of everyone with disabilities, talk to the person directly. *Remind yourself that many disabilities are not visible.*

6. **Children are welcome at the festival** and there will be a space made for them. Kids have their personal boundaries, just like everybody else, they need to be respected, listened to and not touched without their consent.

7. Contribute to an atmosphere that makes it **comfortable for people to take care of children**. Breast-feeding can be done everywhere in the festival, if you need a more private space the low-sensory area is an option.

8. **Do not interpret or assume others' identities** (gender, origin, etc.). Instead, let people speak for themselves.

There will be stickers available to write one's name & pronoun: he she, they, etc. Respect the pronouns used by each person.

9. We encourage you to respectfully **point out if you interpret a racist, sexist, ableist, etc. comment or joke** being made. We are all learning!

10. We see **cultural appropriation as a form of coloniality**. This occurs when members from a dominant culture adopt elements from a minority culture without acknowledging it. If the awareness team or someone affected by it considers something offensive, we might start a conversation, based on the needs of the (potential) person affected by it.

An example of cultural appropriation could be: mimicking traditional hairstyles or clothing, cultural ceremonies, using colloquial language or slang.

11. **Do not "other", exoticize or fetishize BIPOC** (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour): *Do not say things like "I love BIPOC", do not touch the hair of BIPOC, do not assume someone's identity based on stereotypes.*

12. We want the FAF to be a place where we can stand against colonialism. ASEED stands **in solidarity with the people of Palestine** and other peoples and places facing oppression and genocide. No one is free until we are all free.

4. Take care for the spaces we are in

1. Be appreciative and caring of the surroundings. Please **clean up after yourself**, and when you see litter or items out of place, pick them up.

Do not throw cigarette buds to the ground.

2. Respect the **intended purpose of each space**.

Do not have inappropriate conversations in the children's area, do not speak in the silent area, etc.

5. Take responsibility for the consequences of your actions

1. **Separate act and person**; what you do is not necessarily who you are. If you engage in inappropriate behavior, it does not mean you are a bad person. This also counts for behaviors and people you observe.

2. **Take responsibility for any harm** you may have caused to others.

3. **Listen and allow yourself to receive criticism**. We have learned in this system to relate in ways that may be harmful without necessarily realizing it. We all do. Accept when someone gives you feedback that can help you learn how to change.

How can you respond with responsibility when an incident happens?

What if...

... you feel unsafe?

Seek support in your direct environment, everyone should be attentive to take care of each other.

When feeling secure, explain to the person hurting you your experience and where your boundaries are. Going into this conversation with a person who made you feel unsafe can be difficult. When feeling the need, we invite you to speak to someone who might be able to help you. Together with the awareness team, we can figure out what you would need and might request from the other person.

... you hurt someone's feelings?

If someone tells you that they are hurt by what you said or did, acknowledge their experience. Try to recognize feelings of defensiveness arising in yourself. This is not an attack on your personality, someone is simply sharing how they experienced something you did or said. Try not to interrupt the other person, but try to understand what they are trying to tell you.

Navigate together how you can respond to each others' needs. Sometimes an immediate apology is not possible, and some time and space may be needed.

... you witness a violation of the agreements, inappropriate behavior, or aggression?

If the agreements above are violated, a discussion or mediation process can happen, depending on the wishes of the person who was harmed. If a serious violation happens (e.g. to the extent that someone feels unsafe), the person can be asked to leave the space and/or speak with a person decided upon by those present.

"Respect the person, challenge their behavior."

If you see that someone does something that makes other people feel uncomfortable, don't hesitate to talk to them. Approach and listen to what is happening, with honest desire to understand.

If you do not feel comfortable approaching alone, seek someone to support you, or you can always contact the awareness team at the festival for advise/help.

Use direct communication to explicitly express what behavior you see as inappropriate. Do so from a place of sincerity, not from an urge to accuse, blame, criticize or humiliate.

If there is aggression, the response will be collective. There will be an attempt to create a conversation and move away from direct confrontation. The aggressor will be removed from the situation until the incident is clarified, and the person who was targeted feels safe enough. If needed, the awareness team can guide this process.

Please note: As we want to make the festival a safe a space as possible for all, ASEED (the organizing team) will NOT call the police in situations of conflict or escalation. We cannot stop others from doing so, but our response to any issues will always be to tackle them within the group instead.