

Policy on Safer Spaces Ground Rules

Purpose

Calgary Outlink is a community based 2SLGBTQIA+ charitable organization that aims to provide support, education, outreach, and referrals for 2SLGBTQIA+ and allied communities in Calgary, Alberta. In providing its programming, Calgary Outlink is committed to providing a space that is safe for all Service Users, Volunteers, and Staff.

Persons Affected

The Calgary Outlink Staff, Volunteers, Board of Directors, Membership and Service Users.

Policy Statement

1. Calgary Outlink is committed to providing a safer space to its Service Users, Volunteers, and Staff.
2. Based on these core policies, the following applies to coordination of all peer support services.

Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of the Calgary Outlink Staff, Volunteers, Board of Directors, Membership and Service Users to:
 - a. Respect everyone and the space;
 - b. Respect people's identities, beliefs, and personal autonomy;
 - c. Respect confidentiality;
 - i. i.e. What's said at Calgary Outlink, stays at Calgary Outlink.
 - d. Respect people's right to out themselves at the pace they choose and about the issues they choose;
 - e. Respect each other's pace of learning;
 - f. Respect others' voices by listening to others;
 - i. i.e. Speak one person at a time, without interrupting one another.
 - g. Respect everyone's right to pass and right to participate at their own pace;
 - h. Respect everyone's right to have fun;
 - i. Respect everyone's right to be heard;
 - j. Respect everyone's right to make mistakes from time to time;
 - k. Respect everyone's right to respectfully correct others for mistakes;
 - l. Respect people's personal boundaries;
 - i. i.e. Always ask for permission before touching someone.
 - m. Respect people's emotional, physical, and sexual boundaries and right to say no;
 - n. Respect everyone's right to be free from mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, or psychological harm; and
 - o. Respect everyone's right to be free from experiencing homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, xenophobia, fatphobia, etc.

Procedures

1. Participants in peer support services are agreeing to the following ground rules:
 - a. Participants agree to stick to the scope of the meeting.
 - b. People expressing ideas beyond the scope of discussion may be asked to table their ideas for later discussions.
 - c. Respectful and safe expression of all communication and ideas is expected.
 - d. There are no wrong expressions of ideas, but we ask to be clear, to the point, and to be focused on discussion of events and common issues to allow all those in attendance time to speak.
 - e. It is OKAY not to be perfect.
 - f. It is OKAY to not have an answer to some questions (pass).
 - g. Discussion, debate, or disagreement is always tolerated, it is the basis of good decision-making and/or creativity, but it is always done respectfully.
 - h. Participants understand that the meeting is not to come to consensus.
 - i. Respectful disagreement with one another regarding any point of view on any subject matter is OKAY.
 - ii. People that wish to go forward on ideas which may not interest all members of the group are welcome to pursue these ideas.
 - i. Vulgar language, name calling, condemning, shaming, etc. will not be tolerated.
 - j. All forms of bullying, harassment, abuse, or discrimination will not be tolerated.
 - k. All opinions and ideas of specific members in the group are confidential and should not be shared without consent of the members, but common knowledge and common issues arising from meetings may be shared with the public.
2. Violation of Ground Rules:
 - a. If a Facilitator determines that a violation is occurring, the Facilitator may remove the participant from the session and report the incident to their Supervisor.

Definitions

- **Facilitator:** An individual who is leading or hosting an event or activity designated by Calgary Outlink.
- **Supervisor:** For Volunteers, the Supervisor will be the Manager of Volunteers and Programming. For Staff, excluding the Director of Operations and Development, the Supervisor will be the Director of Operations and Development. For violations directly relating to the Director of Operations and Development, the Supervisor will be the Board of Directors. Staff titles may be subject to change.

Revision History

- February 19, 2024: reformatting & minor revisions
- March 15, 2021: new policy extracted from former 'Governance Policy'