

INTRODUCTION.



WOMEN IN MUSIC
BRITISH COLUMBIA



‘Doing the work’ of creating safer spaces requires both inner work (unlearning and learning!) and concrete actions. It is not so much a goal, but a continual, active process of **learning** about intersecting identities, oppressions, privileges and power, **seeing** how they interact with our physical and social environments, and **building** our skills in challenging norms, spaces and systems that contribute to people feeling / being unsafe . All of these variables are shifting all the time - which is why **SOME** spaces can feel really safe for you some nights, but not others. This is also why some people never feel safe in place that may be one of your favorites. This being said, there is work being done (like the workshop you just attended) to help set a minimum standard for music venues and cultural spaces.

The concept of safer spaces is much larger than can fit in this resource, but we tried to capture some of the principles and easier to implement tools to get you started.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR SPACE TO BE ‘SAFER SPACE?’

“A safer space is a supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages open-mindedness, respect, a willingness to learn from others, as well as physical and mental safety. It is a space that is critical of the power structures that affect our everyday lives, and where power dynamics, backgrounds, and the effects of our behavior on others are prioritized. It’s a space that strives to respect and understand survivors’ specific needs. Everyone who enters a safer space has a responsibility to uphold the values of the space.”

New York Coalition for Safer Spaces.

The identities and complexities of all people that do not uphold oppressive ideologies are to be respected, embraced, and defended and not opportunities to (further) oppress people (intentionally or unintentionally). Awareness of historical and current power differentials is crucial to us being able to do this for each other. Inspired by Wasted Ink Zines Safer Space Policy.

IMPORTANT TAKE AWAY: SAFE FOR WHO?

7 D'S OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION.

DETECT. What this looks like: Paying attention in the space, reading body language, knowing what various forms of harassment can look like. **Note:** Being able to SEE things sexism, racism, ableist etc., requires doing the work of unlearning the myths you have been taught about them.

DIRECT. What this looks like: Naming the behavior and what you would like to have happen “Hey, in telling that (racist / sexist / ableist) joke, you are acting in a way that is in opposition to our Code of Conduct. Please give it read and let me know if you have any questions, and if we see you acting in this way again, you may be asked to leave. **NOTE:** This is often most suited to people close to the perpetrator or people with power/ privilege at the event.

DELEGATE. What this looks like: Recognising that someone needs to do something, but that someone is not you and involving someone who CAN act (a more skilled friend, venue security, a harm reduction team).

DISTRACT. What this looks like: Doing something unexpected or even silly to break up the power dynamic that someone is exploiting. Do a ridiculous dance, spill a drink, ask where the washroom is.

DE-ESCALATE. What this looks like: “Hey I haven’t seen you in so long, wanna go catch up over here?” or introducing yourself and asking if everything is ok to both parties.

DELAY. What this looks like: Not doing anything to interrupt the moment but taking the time to check in with the target afterward. “I saw what happened, and that’s really messed up. Can I help you with anything right now?”

DIALOGUE. What this looks like: Talking about these issues, and not staying silent about them. Asking venues, festivals promoters and other artists what they are doing to help protect more vulnerable patrons and artists.

*“It’s up to us as the bystanders, the rest of the audience, to step in when we see something off. There are more of us anyway, so we have a collective power to make sure no sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, anti- Semitic, Islamaphobic, sizeist, classist, ageist, or ableist sh*t gets a pass.”*

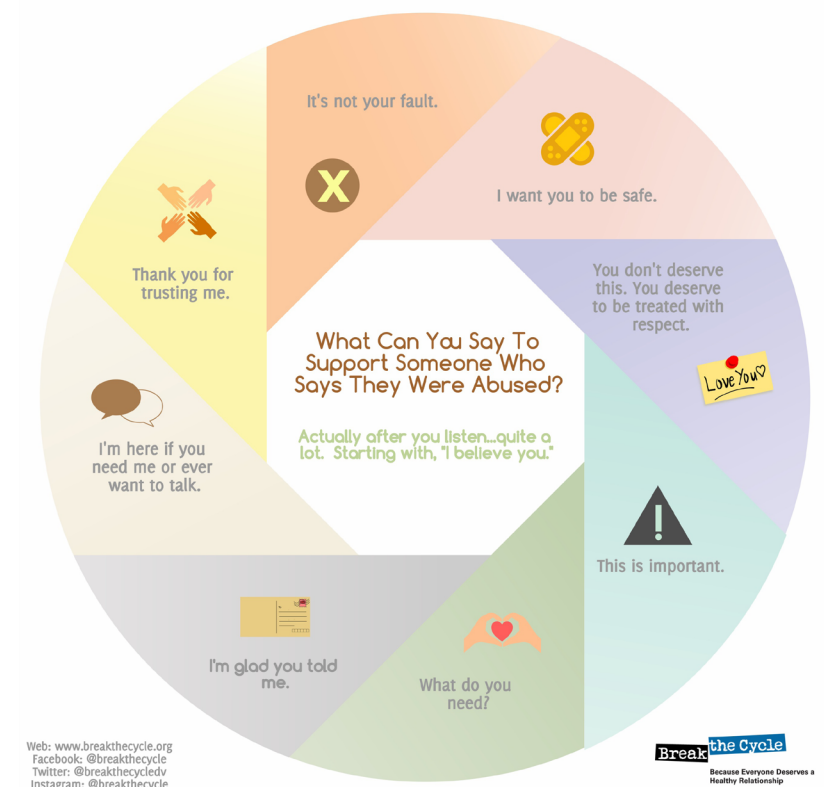
Shawna Potter, War on Women.

IDEAS OF THINGS TO INCLUDE ON A SAFETY / CULTURE RIDER OR TO ASK OF THE VENUE AND / OR PROMOTER.

- Accessible and free water
- Request for diversity in their door staff if possible
- Ensure that venue line-ups are never segregated by gender and that patrons can choose the gender of security personnel for their mandatory searches upon entry.
- Make washrooms gender neutral for the show if possible, or print and hang signage about how to access a private single stall washroom if needed
- Print out and display your personalized “Safety Poster” / Code of Conduct if you have one Alternatively, the venue may have one. If so, ask that is posted throughout the venue
- Ask if they have a clear policy for dealing with incidents that violate this Code of Conduct (e.g. warnings, ejections)
- Request that staff are briefed on how to navigate ID checks as well as having an accessible washroom for transgender and gender non-conforming folks
- The venue’s social channels share yours or the venue's “safer space policy” before the show as well as notifying where patrons can seek out help
- Ensure their staff reviews the “Security Tip Sheet” (reference below)
- Before the event through social media ask for the venue to promote their safety + accessibility features (or transparency about lack of) within the space
- Ask for accompaniment until all gear is loaded in and you are in the transportation out of the venue

TO THINK ABOUT:

Often, when you start talking about sexual violence and safer spaces, you are perceived by others as a safe person to disclose to. Sometimes the disclosures come from people you are close to, and sometimes they come from strangers. Remember that you do not personally have to respond to every disclosure with action. Responding to disclosures with “I believe you” and passing on resources such as a crisis line or other support service is an appropriate response.



A TIPS SHEET FOR SECURITY.

This is a sheet which your tour manager can run through with security before doors or provide to the venue in advance.

- Pay extra attention to the middle of the crowd, front rail, bathrooms and smoking areas, these are all “hot spots” for non-consensual, creepy behaviours.
- Check in on all interactions that don’t seem quite right, even if you aren’t sure if you are reading them correctly. It’s as easy as saying: “Hey, It’s my job tonight to make sure that everyone here has a good time – are you both doing ok?”
- Use your skill and judgement to identify people who may be more vulnerable in the crowd, seek them out and introduce yourself. Remind them how to get help if anything causes them concern. This strategy can also work for people who may be low-key acting questionable. It lets them know you have your eyes on them, without causing a scene.
- Please be mindful of how sensitively and appropriately navigate ID checks for trans and gender non-conforming patrons. There are multiple other ways to validate an ID, without relying on Gender Markers matching (address, birthday etc.).
- Please do not police people around the appropriate washroom you feel they should be using; everyone deserves a safe place to pee where they are not interrogated about where they belong. Monitor for unsafe behaviors in the washroom, not who can access. Please let us know if there is a bathroom we can designate as genderless for this event.

Some tips for navigating complaints or disclosures about someone’s behaviour.

- Listen to them. Often giving someone 5 minutes of your undivided attention is enough for them to be able to reset and go back and enjoy the show.
- Validate. It’s as easy as saying “I am so sorry that happened to you here. Thank you for telling me.”
- Don’t make any assumptions. Managing reports about consent violations are more about listening, validating and making that patron feel safe – than they are about dissecting every detail.
- Ask: “What is an ideal outcome for you here?” or “What would help you feel safe enough for you to enjoy the rest of the show?” This helps you gauge their expectations. It may not be realistic for you to kick the other patron out for something you didn’t see – but you can say “ I’ll tell you what, I will have another guard keep an extra set of eyes on that person, thank you for letting me know. Please come find me if anything else happens.”
- Remember that you don’t have to play judge and jury and believe every detail of every complaint. What you should believe is that there is a patron feeling scared enough to seek you out and we want to remedy that as quickly as possible.

A NOTE ABOUT PRONOUNS.

“People who experience multiple forms of oppression have limited energy and time to advocate for themselves. Imagine how exhausting it must be to constantly fight to be recognized as human. When we misgender someone we are letting this person know that we are not safe to be around. We are telling them that our comfort/familiarity is more important than their identity. Each one of us is the expert of our own life. Our pronouns are a reflection of how the world sees us and denying people their right to be identified as they want is upholding white supremacy, patriarchy and cisnormativity.”

From: Consent and Community Healing Workshop Resource Guide.

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN IT COMES TO SAFER SPACES.

Sometimes just existing under “these” conditions is exhausting, never mind trying to change them. Listen to your body, pay attention for signs of burnout. The community won’t be any better if you are too run down to be a part of it.

You don’t have to be perfect at this. You do have to be willing to listen and learn.

Changing the world can feel really overwhelming. Start with (re) building / transforming what is realistic - yourself, your relationships, your own spaces and community , and build out from there.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT / WORK THROUGH WITH OTHERS.

How do I / we want people to feel at our shows? What is within our power to help facilitate this?

What privileges do you hold currently? Do they shift depending on where you are and who you are with?

How can you use these privileges to help make safer spaces?

What role does language play in taking power from or giving power to people?

What might stop you or someone you know from intervening when hearing a sexist, homophobic etc. joke ? When seeing being targeted? How can we overcome them together?

How will you / your team respond when someone discloses that they have experienced racism, able-ism, homophobia or transphobia?

What would healthy masculinity in the music industry look like?

ABOUT GOOD NIGHT OUT.

Good Night Out is a BC-based non-profit society committed to building community capacity to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault in the hospitality, music, arts, and nightlife sectors.



We carry out this work on the occupied and unceded ancestral territories of the [Musqueam](#), [Skwxwú7mesh](#), and [Tsleil-Waututh](#) people. As a feminist anti-violence project and as settlers, we are committed to unpacking the links between colonialism and all forms of violence and oppression, as well as making space in our work to call attention to the continuing colonial genocide that is non-consensual land occupation and resource extraction, and the ongoing and unsolved cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). To learn more about MMIWG, [please click here](#).

RESOURCES.

[Good Night Out Vancouver](#)

[Canadian Creative Industries Code of Conduct](#)

[Factor Safer Space Resources](#)

[Making Spaces Safer: A Guide to Giving Harassment the Boot Wherever You Work, Play, and Gather by Shawna Potter](#)

[Attitude is Everything](#) - Improving deaf and disabled people's access to live music

[Native Land](#) - A resource to learn about local Indigenous territories and languages

[Concordia resources on colonialism in Canada](#)

[Gender Spectrum: The Language of Gender](#)

[GLAAD The Beginners Guide to Being a Trans Ally](#)

[DanceSafe's Guide to Navigating Power Dynamics](#)

[understanding patriarchy](#) by bell hooks

[Decolonizing Non-Violent Communication](#) by meenadchi

Crisis Support

**Both of these resources are inclusive of trans women, as well as non-binary and gender non conforming folx.*

Women Against Violence Against Women

24-Hour Crisis and Information Line: 604-255-6344

National Toll-Free: 1-877-392-7583

24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK

Battered Women Support Services

CRISIS LINE 604-687-1867

Toll Free 1.855.687.1868

Monday to Friday 10 AM - 5 PM & Wednesdays 10 AM - 8 PM