

Bus Stop Theatre Co-operative

Anti-Discrimination / Anti-Harassment Policy

Overview

The Bus Stop Theatre is committed to providing a safer and respectful environment that aims to be free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, abuse, violence, and sexual solicitation. We treat and expect all community members to be treated with respect and dignity. Whenever possible, we offer opportunities for everyone to contribute and participate in all events and activities.

We will not tolerate participation in activities or behaviors that discriminate on the grounds of age, race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental abilities, family status, ethnic, national, or aboriginal origin, or any other prohibited grounds within the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*, RSNS 1989, c 214.

Definitions

1. **Consent:** A voluntary, ongoing, active, and conscious agreement to engage in the activity in question. Consent or a “yes” that is obtained through pressure, coercion, force, threats, or by inducing intoxication, impairment, or incapacity is not voluntary consent. Silence or ambiguity do not constitute consent. Additionally, there is no consent when:
 - the person does not indicate “yes”, says “no”, or implies “no” through words or behaviours.
 - it was obtained through the abuse of a position of power, trust, or authority.
 - the person changes their mind and withdraws their consent.
 - it is given by someone else.
 - the person is unconscious, asleep, or lacks the mental capacity to consent.
 - the person is not the legal age to consent to an activity

It is the responsibility of all parties wanting to engage in an activity to obtain clear consent from the other, and to recognize that consent can be withdrawn at any time.

2. **Disclose/Disclosure:** A verbal or written report by any person to a member of the Bus Stop Theatre community that they have experienced abuse, harassment, or misconduct.

3. **Complaint:** A written report or statement alleging abuse, harassment, or misconduct by any person to a Bus Stop Theatre staff or board member under the Bus Stop Theatre process for the purpose of initiating an investigation and resolution process.

4. **Discrimination:** A distinction, whether or not intentional, based on a characteristic or perceived characteristic that has the effect of imposing on an individual or group of individuals burdens, obligations or disadvantages that are not imposed on others, or of withholding or limiting access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other individuals in society. It is not discrimination to offer a program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of

disadvantaged individuals or classes of individuals including those who are disadvantaged because of a characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

5. Harassment: Conduct or comment, either one time or repeating, that:

- is demeaning, intimidating, threatening, or abusive.
- is not trivial or fleeting in nature.
- causes offence and should have reasonably been expected to offend.
- serves no legitimate purpose in the circumstances.
- is a reprisal or threat of reprisal against an individual for refusing a solicitation or advances
- undermines authority or respect in the environment, limits opportunities for advancement, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Harassment includes conduct or comments, or the creation of a negative psychological and/or emotional environment that humiliates, excludes, or isolates an individual or group by focusing on their age, race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental abilities, family status, Ethnic, national, or aboriginal origin, or any other prohibited grounds within the Nova Act Human Rights Act.

Harassment also includes bullying, which is a form of aggression that may include physical, verbal, or emotional abuse. It can include persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behavior, abuse of power, and/or unfair sanctions which make the individual feel threatened, humiliated, and/or vulnerable.

6. Sexual Violence: Any sexual act or act of a sexual nature, or act targeting sexuality, whether physical or psychological, committed without consent. This includes, but is not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, distribution of intimate images, inducing intoxication, impairment or incapacity for the purpose of making another person vulnerable to non-consensual sexual activity, and other analogous conduct.

7. Sexual Assault: Any form of sexual contact without consent. This can include unwanted or forced kissing, fondling, grabbing, touching, vaginal or anal penetration, or oral sexual contact.

8. Solicitation: Any comment, behaviour, or act that can be perceived as soliciting sexual favours or placing sexual conditions onto any person's involvement in an activity, event, promotion, or employment (paid or unpaid) opportunity.

9. Retaliation: Taking, attempting to take, or threatening to take any adverse action or retribution of any kind against anyone involved in a report of harassment, abuse, or misconduct process. This includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, pressuring, harassment made in person, electronically, or through third parties.

Our Anti-Harassment/Anti-Discrimination Strategy

We will have and maintain a comprehensive strategy to create and uphold a safer environment, including:

- Promoting positive, safer, and respectful standards and expectations for conduct.
- Auditing organizational sites, processes, and procedures regularly to identify and remove barriers that inhibit a person's ability to engage safely and respectfully.
- Adopting practices that protect, respect, and support people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination.
- Providing an effective and fair procedure for investigating complaints.
- Always striving to find a resolution that includes the needs of the people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination.

Offensive Attire

Community members are encouraged to be thoughtful about the attire they wear. Attire containing offensive images or words, such as hate symbols or culturally appropriative attire, is not tolerated at the Bus Stop Theatre events or property.

Reporting

It is the responsibility of a Board Member, Director, or any person within the organization supervising one or more employees/volunteers/artists to take immediate and appropriate action, reporting and following up with any incident of harassment, violence, discrimination, bullying, or abuse that is witnessed, disclosed, or complaint reported. Every report must be followed up in a timely manner using the process outlined by the Bus Stop Theatre.

Violation of Policy

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to immediate dismissal from the site or event, banning from future participation in Bus Stop Theatre events or property, and/or termination of employment or position within the organization.

SAFER SPACE STRATEGY

Our community is committed, supportive, and accountable to creating a safer space. We commit to helping maintain a safer space that is inclusive to all, and will:

- Be mindful that our community is in Mi'kma'ki the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq, and as such we are all Treaty people
- Take an active role in maintaining a safer, inclusive space that embraces all forms of diversity;
- Give individuals and groups who are speaking or performing our attention and respect;

- Listen and learn when the impact of our actions may not match our intent;
- Respect other's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual boundaries;
- Seek out support to the best of our ability when we are in need;
- Be mindful of routes, facilities, and spaces that are designated for persons needing accessibility accommodations and avoid utilizing or blocking them;
- Use a person's correct pronouns (if/once known);
- Use inclusive language and listen and learn when language used may have been exclusive;
- Engage in conversations about making our spaces more inclusive; and
- Use respectful language when communicating with others.

REPORTING A DISCLOSURE OR COMPLAINT

We recognize the difference between a person disclosing information and a person filing a complaint. We respect their right to make their own decision regarding how they choose to report an incident. If public safety is a concern, we may initiate an investigation and will work closely with the person who reported the information, following their wishes as closely as we reasonably can.

Below are the ways a person may notify the Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative of an incident and file a report.

1. Online Submission

Any person may file a report by emailing Audrey Eastwood, Interim Executive Director (audrey@thebusstoptheatre.org). If the person is more comfortable disclosing or reporting to another staff member or board member by email, we support that decision. Additionally, the person can choose whether they are disclosing information or filing a formal complaint.

2. Personal Statement

Any person may file a report in person by making a personal statement to Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative Staff. The staff will walk the person through any steps required to submit a personal statement, such as whether they wish to remain anonymous, and whether they are choosing to disclose information or file a formal complaint. Please note that anonymous disclosures limit our ability to conduct a thorough investigation.

Processing a Disclosure or Complaint

Every disclosure and complaint will be read by the Interim Executive Director, Audrey Eastwood, and the Chair of the Board of Directors, Mo Phùng, with an effort to be reviewed within 48 hours of filing. You may also directly email these individuals to submit a report. Those persons providing their contact information or filing a formal complaint will receive follow up. Complaints or disclosures will be taken seriously and investigated to the extent that is reasonably practicable, using the following guidelines:

- Actions assume belief in people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination;

- Provide support and resources to persons who have experienced or has been affected by the incident;
- To the best of our ability, ensure the safety and privacy of those affected by the incident;
- Respect and follow the reasonable wishes of the person who experienced assuming no others are in immediate danger;
- When necessary, create a plan for investigation and/or adjudication in collaboration with Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative leadership, the person disclosing, and with respect for people who have been affected.
- When necessary, impose interim measures; and
- Always strive to find a resolution that includes the needs of the people who have been affected.

If required, the Bus Stop Theatre may consult their Board of Directors and staff, representatives from community partners (such as the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre), and professional experts (such as doctors, psychologists, and lawyers). In these instances, we will strive to maintain confidentiality and anonymity as we are able.

Substantiated Reports

Substantiated reports are defined as being reasonably authenticated by the Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative. Substantiated reports may or may not include engaging local authorities and/or legal action. If a report is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, as decided by the Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative. This may include, but is not limited to, formal reprimand, suspension, demotion, dismissal, and/or banning from events, activities, employment, or property.

Additionally, the Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative may offer steps towards accountability to people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination, including but not limited to, an oral or written apology or compensation for lost wages or lost benefits. Both parties to the incident will be advised, in writing, of the decision. If either party to an incident believes that the report is not being handled in accordance with this policy, they may contact the Executive Director or the Board of Directors. Persons may also file a discrimination complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission or Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Resolutions

Interim measures may be imposed on a person alleged to have committed an infraction. The purpose of this is to ensure personal safety, discourage or prevent retaliation or further infractions, protect confidentiality, and to preserve our ability to conduct a thorough investigation. Interim measures must be appropriate and proportionate to the seriousness of the alleged conduct, and as minimally restrictive as possible to achieve their purpose. This may include, but is not limited to removal from events, activities, or the premises for a period. Informal resolutions may also be sought as a course of action. An informal resolution allows the participants a greater measure of control in the process and in the outcomes by having all parties:

- agree to a resolution;
- document the resolution in writing; and
- sign the resolution, demonstrating their ownership for the self-enforced agreement.

Lastly, a formal resolution may be engaged. This may be sought at any time, including if an informal resolution fails.

Privacy & Confidentiality

All parties to an incident are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all other parties involved, limiting the discussion related to the incident to those that need to know.

ACCESSING SUPPORT

Every person's journey to recovery and wellness looks different, and we allow people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination to shape that journey - providing support as we are able. Below are a few resources that may be helpful to you.

1. Avalon Sexual Assault Centre: (902) 422-4240 or www.avaloncentre.ca

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre provides services for those affected by sexualized violence, with primary emphasis on support, education, counseling and leadership/advocacy services for women.

2. Mental Health Mobile Crisis Telephone Line: (902) 429-8167 or 1-888-429-8167 (toll free)

The Mental Health Mobile Crisis Telephone Line provides crisis intervention for children, youth and adults experiencing a mental health crisis or mental distress. The service is available 24/7 to support callers who present with suicidal thoughts, self-harming thoughts or behaviors, overwhelming anxiety, difficulty coping with distress, psychotic or distorted thinking, depression, substance use difficulties or any other self-identified mental health concerns. Crisis is self-defined by the individual calling for support.

3. Nova Scotia 211: Dial 211

Nova Scotia 211 is an information and referral service for government and non-profit agencies. It is available 24/7 in English and French and for the hearing impaired; there are also interpretation services available in over 100 languages.

4. Halifax Non - Emergency Police Line: (902) 490-5016

If less urgent, call for support.