



Toolkit

for drawing up
awareness concepts
at FAU

Be aware!

Working together for
a culture of respect at FAU!

#FAUrespect

No to harassment
and discrimination
at FAU!

Awareness Toolkit

The aim behind all awareness measures is to ensure that all participants are informed sufficiently about the valid rules of conduct, can apply them confidently and have easy access to help in the event of any incidents. The most suitable and effective measures depend on the nature of the particular event or gathering. Below, you can find a number of options from which you can choose and implement the most suited for your area. The alphabetical [*Awareness Glossary*](#) gives important additional information on the various measures.

Please feel free to share the toolkit with others! We would also like to encourage you to gather your experiences and share them with us. Ideas for further effective tools are always welcome and can be included into the toolkit. The Office of Equality and Diversity looks forward to hearing from you!

Offer training courses and qualifications

Education and practice in the form of training courses, dialog and collaboration is the most important component for raising awareness of the prevention of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence and for creating an appreciative, inclusive and safe university culture. Although most people, particularly university members, believe themselves to be aware and respectful, there are many “blind spots”. Unconscious communication habits and behavior patterns keep leading to boundaries being crossed or violated. The best way to recognize and avoid such instances is through education and practice. Each member of the university is responsible for their own interactions with other people and for their personal and professional spheres of action and influence. The format of courses and the depth and focus of content covered should be tailored to the specific target group, their tasks and requirements. Example formats are “by students for students”; courses for managers; specific courses or workshops for teams, working groups and departments. Awareness work is a work in progress and should be pursued and improved on a regular basis.

Provide a safer space

A safer space refers to a staffed room within the event that is designed to be as safe as possible, where participants can retreat, get help, have confidential conversations or just rest for a while. As it is impossible to guarantee absolute safety, the term is used in the comparative form: spaces ought to be made safer. No one who is potentially aggressive, disruptive or likely to overstep the mark is permitted to enter. At least one (or depending on the size of the event possibly also several) trained people, for instance persons of trust or members of an awareness team, are available on location or on call at short notice. These trained people ensure the safety of the room and are available as points of contact for those seeking help and protection. The safer space is free from alcohol and other intoxicating substances and offers a calm and manageable atmosphere. Its size and design may vary depending on the type of event, and may take the shape of a specially designated room, a tent or a marquee, or it may be a flexible space that is only opened or created as and when needed. The safer space must be clearly signposted, known to all participants, and easy to find. As well as the option of integrating a safer space into the event, it is also possible to design the whole event as a safer space. This is more demanding and requires a very high level of qualification, awareness and particularly good event design. However, it certainly is an option for small and manageable formats with a very high degree of awareness.

Appoint persons of trust

As a rule, persons of trust assume this function usually in a particular setting or at an event in addition to their actual responsibilities. They act as an initial point of contact for anyone concerned about any form of harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination and violence. Persons of trust should be particularly well qualified for their additional tasks, they should have a suitable personality and have all the necessary resources and capacities for these additional tasks at their disposal. It is also important that persons of trust are aware of what exactly their role involves and that they are not subject to any conflicts of interest. A person of trust is to be understood as the smallest possible format for an awareness team and can be a very effective measure in various encounter situations in a university context, for instance during excursions, lectures and seminars, or in Graduate Centers. As always, it is important to clearly inform all participants who the person of trust is and to make sure that they are easily accessible, allowing anyone facing a critical situation or experiencing harassment or discrimination to be able to approach them in confidence.

Form an awareness team

An awareness team is a unit of specially trained and qualified people who assist during larger events with an increased "risk potential." As is the case with persons of trust, it is important that team members are well informed about their role and tasks, and are well suited on a personal and subject-related level to act as a reliable point of contact during the event for anyone seeking advice and protection and to deal appropriately with any incidents. Awareness teams often consist of volunteers who work together as a flexible team, undergo regular training and play an active part in shaping and implementing awareness measures. As well as gaining qualifications in and steering awareness work, team members assume various roles at the events, depending on the respective requirements: They staff the safer space in shifts in teams of at least two people and are always available as point of contact in cases of unsafety, critical situations and instances of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence. If alcohol or drugs are consumed at the event, it is also important that the volunteers remain sober and clear-headed in order to be able to act and help in a professional manner. Many volunteers greatly appreciate the experience of working in an awareness team as meaningful and fulfilling. Within the context of the university, the organization and financing of training courses and the issuing of certificates of voluntary work can be additional motivating factors to pursue this valuable work.

Design locations and rooms with safety in mind

Different meeting places offer differing degrees of safety and have differing risk potentials when it comes to cases of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence. It is vital to inspect the location carefully before the event: Are there secluded, dark corners? Where are people potentially alone, where with company (that could provide protection if necessary)? Is the location accessible? Is it suitable for the planned event, or should you consider other alternatives? Which locations offer the most security, which may have special risks? What is the best location for the event to ensure that it is as safe as possible? As well as carefully considering all aspects of the location, safety can also be increased by additional measures such as the presence of qualified personnel (persons of trust, awareness team, security), better lighting, deliberately erecting or opening walls, doors and windows, or installing security cameras. Considerations about contact options, such as asking for help, may also be relevant. The criteria for designing the location equally apply to virtual events. In this instance, by attending various virtual rooms, designated "guides" could ensure a safe process and respectful interaction and act as points of contact if necessary. In the university context, public spaces or locations on campus are to be preferred over private rooms for supervision meetings.

Choose times consciously

The choice of time, day of the week or point in the semester also plays a role in ensuring that locations and gatherings are safe. Organize events and meetings at an appropriate time, for example when most places have plenty of people out and about and public transport is still running. You should avoid scheduling events that continue until late in the evening or are held at times when the streets are deserted. If you cannot avoid a late finish, you should consider how to ensure that participants can get home safely.

Use posters, billboards and noticeboards (both physical and online)

One simple measure to increase awareness among participants, draw attention to expected behavior and provide information on measures or points of contact for help is to advertise them clearly at suitable locations. Posters, leaflets, postcards, notices, etc. can be used in analogue environments, and can be integrated into virtual settings. Depending on the location, you may decide to use the entrance area, restrooms, bar, bulletin board, etc. Consider what exactly you would like to communicate and how to get your message across to your audience in a way that is eye-catching and easy to understand. Publishing and widely distributing information is an important first step, giving you something to refer to in the event of misconduct and allowing you to impose consequences if necessary. When designing material, take care that it addresses everyone equally: Potential perpetrators are warned and potential victims are encouraged to seek assistance in the event of an incident. Finally, bystanders and witnesses are encouraged to intervene in the event of inappropriate behavior or if someone oversteps the mark, thereby sharing the responsibility for creating a safe location where everyone is treated with respect.

Publicize points of contact and counseling services

The aim of awareness work is to prevent cases of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence in the first place. Unfortunately, misconduct still occurs. It is then important to notice this and take appropriate action. This means supporting victims and ensuring their safety in the future, as well as imposing sanctions on anyone overstepping the mark. Professional complaint management is a complex matter and must be left to the professionals. Laypeople rarely have sufficient knowledge or the required depth of social and advisory skills in order to be able to provide appropriate assistance. In addition, the tasks and options available to the various advice and competence centers vary greatly depending on the nature of the incident and the case in hand. It is therefore particularly important for event organizers to know the professional counseling services and their responsibilities and to ensure that straightforward referral procedures are in place. It may be enough to simply provide the relevant information or to refer someone directly if so required. It makes sense to train motivated and responsible people (such as persons of trust, awareness team) for each event to act as skilled "awareness first aid responders", offering initial advice and referring those affected to the relevant counseling services. You can find an overview of initial points of contact and counseling services at FAU and externally [here](#).

Design virtual measures

The virtual environment with its technical possibilities and anonymity encourages different, but nevertheless very serious forms of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence. Virtual spaces must therefore also be designed safe in terms of awareness. Many of the measures listed here can be transferred to virtual rooms and events. However, the specific risks of virtual spaces must also be taken into account, e.g. stalking, cyber mobbing or disseminating pornographic content.

Reflect on use of alcohol and drugs

Consuming mind-altering substances has a significant effect on behavior. The consumption of alcohol in particular is linked to an increased risk for overstepping the mark and violating boundaries. Alcohol and other intoxicants are usually the exception in formal university contexts, but can be particularly widespread at events where the boundaries between university and private life are not as clear-cut (e.g. Bergkirchweih, staff outings, new students' welcome event, excursion). Due to university (dependency) relationships or social desirability, people may often feel pressured to join in with activities in this gray area. In order to create more safety, it can be considered, depending on the area of responsibility, to exclude the consumption of alcohol or to regulate it through recommendations. It is always important to reflect on the potential risks linked to the consumption of alcohol during an event, to raise awareness among those present and to encourage them not to let themselves be enticed into behaving in a way that goes against their own sense of safety and comfort for reasons of social pressure or social desirability.

Use security staff

Security staff may be useful or indeed necessary for larger events. You can decide which aspects of security they should focus on. Their services often include entrance checks to ensure that only permitted people attend the event and that prohibited items are not brought to the event, such as alcohol, drugs, glass bottles, weapons or fireworks. If necessary, the security staff can impose an alcohol ban or ensure that the provisions of the Protection of Young Persons Act are complied with. In the event of violations against the event rules or in case of fights or aggressive, provocative behavior, the security staff may exercise the domiciliary rights or, if necessary, alert the police. All these aspects can come under the umbrella of awareness work provided by a professional service. Often, the presence of security staff gives participants a sense of security and can contribute to preventing misconduct. At the same time, it is important not to underestimate the fact that some people attending the event may have had negative experiences with security staff or formal law enforcer officers (e.g. racial profiling, police violence etc.). In addition, those organizing events should be aware that security staff are generally only trained to comply with hard criteria concerning violence, disregarding bans or violations of boundaries. As a rule, staff from security companies are not qualified for softer aspects that need to be taken into account within the context of awareness work. It is therefore important to incorporate other measures as well.

Give trigger warnings

Trigger warnings are warnings given by event coordinators on content to be shown during the event that might act as a "trigger" for certain people. These can be, for example, violent, sexist or racist scenes, texts or images that may be perceived as hurtful by some participants or even trigger retraumatization in people who have experienced violence. The warning allows these people to decide whether they want to expose themselves to the situation, avoid it, or whether other factors may help them to feel safer. A further benefit of the trigger warning is that it raises awareness among people who are not affected themselves, and makes them take more notice of what conditions are required for everyone to feel comfortable and safe.

Introduce a code sentence or signal

At times, someone may feel pressurized, harassed or threatened and require help in a situation where they are unable or unwilling to communicate freely. For these situations, it is worth arranging a code word or signal that is known by all staff trained for awareness work such as bar staff or persons of trust. Anyone affected can then use this sign or code word to ask unobtrusively for help and receive the support they require. In Germany, for example, the sentence "Ist Luisa da?" is widespread as a code word in clubs and at cultural events. Of course, you can decide on other codes, but you must make sure that these are sufficiently known to potential victims as well as to possible supporters. You can do so by hanging posters in restrooms and by training the awareness team, the organization team or bar staff accordingly. However, the implementation of a code sentence does not relieve event organizers of their responsibility to take measures to prevent or sanction (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence before and during an event.

Check 1:1 situations

Situations in which two people are together are particularly susceptible to incidences of misconduct. Especially in a university context, it is important to check whether these situations are necessary and useful, or how they could be made safer. In order to prevent any instances of misconduct, (sexual) harassment, discrimination, violence or abuse of power, this applies in particular to meetings with supervisors and examination situations. Both those responsible for organizing the meeting and participants should therefore consider whether a 1:1 setting is really necessary, whether it would be possible to involve other people and which measures can be introduced to increase safety. For example, during a personal meeting or counseling session, the office door can be left open or ajar, or students/employees can attend together with a person of trust.

Design and use PR and social media

One important component of awareness work is PR work that actively raises awareness for all forms of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence and encourages taking a considered approach through education, removing taboos and showing possible options for taking action. This clearly conveys to potential participants or other interested parties (e.g. prospective students) how important their comfort and safety are during the event or at the institution. As well as being good publicity and raising awareness among a wide target group, social media is also very well suited for creating networks on specific topics and offers a wide range of inspiration and possibilities for people to enter into contact with each other and collaborate on improving awareness work.

Describe and publish rules/code of conduct

Each event and each setting within the institution ought to be based on the premise that all participants and involved parties know exactly which conduct is appropriate and desired in the specific context and which is not. Various forms of (sexual) harassment, discrimination, and violence can also occur in a university context. Expectations of respectful, fair, collegial, non-discriminatory and harassment-free behavior must therefore be made explicit repeatedly in an appropriate manner and at the right place. You should express the message in a way tailored to suit the relevant situation and target group with respect to length, details, wording and chosen medium. Generally speaking, we would recommend describing the preferred behavior and promoting education, understanding and collaboration. Explicitly publishing these rules, for example in a code of conduct, makes those attending the event more aware of their obligations. In cases of misconduct, reference can be made to the code of conduct and any sanctions can be imposed consistently.

Train awareness scouts

Like the awareness team, awareness scouts are people who have undergone training qualifying them to become actively involved in ensuring the safety and accessibility of rooms and events, and who can make a valuable contribution by sharing ideas with others and helping to design the relevant measures. Unlike the awareness teams which tend to be formed for individual events, the scouts can become involved in more long-term awareness work working groups in specific projects and have a special role to play at the university as multipliers and networkers.

Use restrooms as safer places

Women's restrooms can be seen per se as safer spaces, in particular when it comes to (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence towards women perpetrated by men (80%). It is a socially accepted rule that cisgender men do not enter women's restrooms, meaning that here women are on their own with other women and in a safer environment. Accordingly, women's restrooms can be used as a location to provide information on awareness measures (e.g. safer spaces, awareness team, advisory services, code sentence etc.). In addition, clean, well-maintained and thoughtfully equipped restrooms (including, for example, free sanitary products) contribute to a welcoming atmosphere with the option of retreat. On the subject of restrooms, it is also important to have barrier-free restrooms at your disposal and to provide all-gender restrooms in order to offer inter, trans, non-binary and gender nonconforming people a place where they are protected as well as possible from discriminatory experiences.

Break taboos

Awareness work means facing up to taboos. This work can only be undertaken to improve deficits if they are recognized and clearly named as such. Universities are not "enlightened organizations"¹, rather they are particularly prone to (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence, for instance as a result of the power imbalances typical for a university setting. Against this backdrop, it is important to acknowledge and clearly name uncomfortable facts without fearing damage to our image. Taking an educated approach free from taboos and actively preventing all forms of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence is a sign of progress, a change in perception and nowadays a must for a competitive and forward-looking university. Encouraging taboos, repressing, hiding, or ignoring any potential issues are destructive behaviors that favor or even encourage misconduct. Breaking with taboos, taking an attentive approach, making an effort and implementing positive measures is therefore the shared responsibility of all university members.

Get everyone on board (commitment)

When it comes to interpreting and viewing cases of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence, consent is often discussed. In order to obtain as much clarity as possible in advance, it is important that all parties have been well informed through appropriate training courses and information material. In potentially problematic situations such as flirting, physical advances and any comments or activities going beyond the professional context and approaching a more private context, the rule "yes means yes" must clearly take precedence over the rule "no means no".

As well as individual situations, "binding consent" within the context of awareness work refers to the explicit requirements and descriptions of the behavior that is to be preferred and expected for the entire setting, for example in a code of conduct. Publishing a document such as this explicitly requests all those present to consciously pledge to follow these rules. This commitment can be underlined by using specific tools. For example, during the registration process, participants may be required to actively confirm by signing or putting a check in the box that they have read and understood the rules and agree to comply with them.

¹Blackmore/Pantelmann

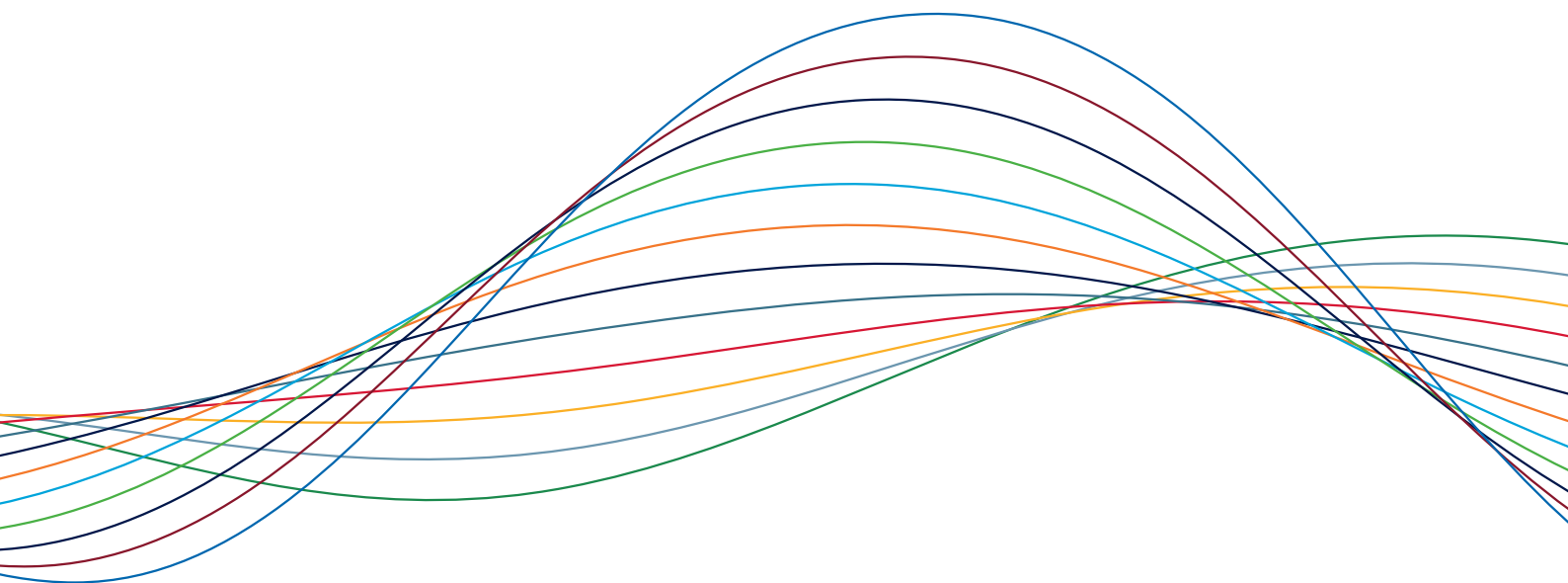
Set up an anonymous point of contact or suggestion box

As well as professional aid and counseling services, a particularly easily accessible service is to provide an anonymous way of making complaints such as a suggestion or complaints box. It is vital to underline the differences between this and formal points of contact. As it is anonymous, it can only make a limited contribution to providing help, clarifying details or imposing consequences in any individual case. Rather, its function is to give event coordinators important information regarding inappropriate incidents occurring within the context of the event and allow them to take suitable measures to prevent such incidents in future. Many victims find it easier in the first instance to report negative experiences under the protection of anonymity, as while they would like to initiate changes to the situation and the framework conditions and have their voice heard, at the same time they may fear negative consequences for themselves or are embarrassed to “come out”. Having a way to allow experiences to be reported and gathered anonymously can lead to significant insights about the types of (sexual) harassment, discrimination and violence occurring in a certain setting and can give those responsible valuable information for deciding on appropriate awareness measures. At the same time, it is important to inform participants that this form of reporting misconduct cannot serve to provide direct assistance and allow individual cases to be processed and that, if required, formal and non-anonymous options for filing a complaint are available.

Gender- and diversity-sensitive language

Language affects our thoughts, consciousness and our perception, it controls how we judge topics, it reflects and transports our values and thereby creates our reality. By encouraging gender and diversity-sensitive language, we as a university can make a contribution towards treating and addressing all people equally, thereby supporting successful and non-violent communication. Gender and diversity-sensitive language aims to encourage the use of respectful, contemporary language that values, considers and addresses all people equally.

Further important terminology and measures are available in the FAU [*Awareness Glossary*](#).



Be aware!

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a culture of respect at FAU!**