

AFCOOP's Safer Spaces Committee

Based on an open call for participation, AFCOOP formed a new committee of staff, board, members and people from the community to look at our existing policy for sexual harassment and discrimination and design a new one.

We want our new policy to be accessible, inclusive and comprehensive. This will take time and education and we welcome member's input at all stages. To facilitate this dialogue, we will be connecting often with updates such as this.

Meeting #1 - All About Asking Questions January 2018

We started by looking at AFCOOP's Current Sexual Harassment Policy, created in 2007. We broke the policy down into sections and discussed the language used, who it addresses and who should be included. We asked - what is missing? And we considered where it applies and where it should apply.

Then we talked about what we want our new document to include. Some of the things we came up with include:

- Safer spaces mandate
- Comprehensive list of who the policy addresses (eg. Not just staff, also members and people who use our resources)
- Section of clear definitions
- Step-by-step procedures on addressing issues brought forward and a timeline for those actions
- List of several contacts for safe disclosure (staff/Board members)

We discussed what AFCOOP as a Co-op can actually do in terms of repercussions:

- Revoke membership
- Deny access / equipment / opportunities at AFCOOP
- Is there a scenario where someone could get those privileges back?

Then we asked how will we implement the new policy?

- Should new members have to sign policy as part of membership?
- Should we host orientation seminars for new members that include a review of the policy?

And finally we assigned ourselves homework for next meeting:

- Looking at Human Rights code
- Researching the policies of other arts organizations and organizations
- Review current definitions of harassment/consent
- Brainstorm hypothetical scenarios and how our policy could address them

- Schedule a meeting with South House to ensure that we were moving in the right direction and for additional suggestions.