

Preventing Gender-Based and Sexual Violence in nightlife environments

+ Some questions to ask yourself before organizing an event

1. Internal communication

- Have I drafted a policy defining the values of the venue/collective, the behaviors that are tolerated or not, and who to turn to in case of internal violence? (cf. example:)
- Are the staff (employees/volunteers/security) aware of these values? Were they consulted in the drafting process?
- Is there a protocol for dealing with problematic situations that everyone knows about? (e.g., Who is responsible for what: Who is responsible for removing the abuser? Who is responsible for removing the aggressor? for getting the victim to safety? Where? Who contacts the competent relays?)
 - Has the BBNF protocol been adapted to the venue according to its location, DNA, audience ...?

If you want inspiration from other policies, please reach out to Brussels By Night. But it has to come from your core values and a long-term reflection on the topic.

See also and transfer to each member of the staff: [Awareness video on SGBV](#) (subtitled in English) / chemical submission and recommendations for Horeca workers

2. External communication

- Is the public aware of the values of the venue/collective and what behaviors are not tolerated? Is it clear to the public where to go if they have any issue ?
- Do the visuals used to communicate about my event reflect the values of my party? (Avoid hypersexualizing part of the public, suggestive pictures, free entrance/drinks for women...)
- What wording do I use in my external communication? (Focus on positive communication and inclusive language. Avoid sexist and discriminatory language)
- Is the public aware that my event is committed to fighting against gender-based and sexual violence? Is the external communication visible? (example: visuals against harassment on social networks, welcome speech at the entrance on the non-tolerated behaviours, communication to the public that they can come to you in case of problem, posters in the venue/flyers ...)

→ Strategic points on site to communicate: entrance, bar, restrooms (where the public is static).

3. Space, signage, lighting

- Does my event venue have clear signage (entrances/exits, restrooms, cloakroom, water point).
- Is there a free and easily accessible water point as well as a stock of earplugs for Category 3 noise level venues?
- Do I have a gauge that allows the public to breathe and be comfortable? Are audience movements smooth to reduce areas where people may be stuck?
- Is my event venue adequately lit? Where are the dark, hidden corners that can be places where aggressions take place? What can I put in place to avoid them?
- Where is the bar located? Do the bartenders/barmaids have a view of the entire space from the bar? If not, what can be done to ensure that the areas that are not visible are not used for committing a crime?
- Does my event have a quiet place to take victims and/or overly intoxicated people? If not, where are these people taken?
- Are the restrooms properly lit and in a high traffic area? If the restrooms are gender neutral, has this been communicated to all staff?
- Are there harm reduction materials (internal or external condoms, snuff kits, ...)?

4. Team

- Is my team mixed (in terms of race, gender...)?
- Is there a Harm Reduction Officer/Expert in the team who leads the harm reduction and SGBV prevention? This person should be known to and approved by the staff and trained to prevent and respond to possible discriminatory and/or violent situations. This person is in contact with the sexual assault centre.
- Does my team know how to recognize problematic behaviour and how to intervene?
- Does the staff recognise the different forms of discrimination and SGBV (with or without contact, verbal, psychological, visual, harassment), and know how to intervene if they see gender-based violence or any type of discrimination?
- Who is trained in the 5Ds? (Ideally, all staff receive a briefing at the beginning of the evening - see below)
- Are the staff and security guards trained to identify sexist, sexual, LGBTQIA+phobic, racist aggressions? (cf.: training given by the Sacha Plan)

- Who is responsible for making a decision regarding a dangerous situation? Have the roles been established?
- If I have a care / awareness team: are these people known within the teams and identifiable by the public (armband, badge, T-shirt)?

5. Evaluation

- Does the public have a space to give feedback on the organization, the devices put in place and/or the situations of violence/discrimination that may have occurred (email address, questionnaire, exchange time, call for testimonies)?
- Do you keep a record of staff interventions during the evening and what was done in order to evaluate whether the protocol is applied correctly and to establish good practices? Is this document known and accessible to all staff?
- Debriefing with staff and/or volunteers: What worked? What did not work? What could be improved?

+ Individual assistance

1. The 5Ds

(source: Right to Be - Hollaback!)

Distract

This is about acting indirectly to stop the aggression or to prevent the situation from escalating, by engaging in a conversation or finding a way to divert the attention of the perpetrator.

→ Ask for the time, information, ...

→ Pretending to know the person, diverting attention by reporting an event nearby, ...

→ Using authority status:

"I work for the festival - can I offer you some water?"

"I think there's been a mistake with the order, can I offer you a new drink?"

"Excuse me, can I speak to you for a moment?"

Delegate

Identify a colleague/witness, point out the incident and ask them for assistance. You are not taking on the problem situation alone.

→ Speak directly to someone nearby. E.g. "You! Can you help me...". (Be careful to be aware of the person's consent).

Document

This can be very useful if the victim decides to file a complaint and wants to provide evidence. Beware, however, of image rights issues. It is forbidden to publish videos or photos on social networks without the person's consent. It also poses a risk of escalating into violence.

Direct

Draw attention to the situation by challenging the harasser. This should be a last resort, when necessary to avoid violence, and if you feel safe enough to do so. Your safety and the safety of the victim come first. Tell the harasser that what he/she is doing is not acceptable and ask them to stop immediately. Avoid getting into an argument with the harasser to prevent the situation from escalating into violence.

Dialogue

Calmly discuss the situation with the victim to reassure them ("Can I sit next to you? Do you want me to ask for help? Do you want to get out of here?") Listen. Respect their choices.

2. Receiving a victim of sexual violence: active listening

- I. **Believe**
- II. **No victim-blaming**
- III. **Let them guide you**

Listen, actively: Focus on the person and fight the natural reflex to immediately look for solutions. Do not try to reassure the person by comparison. "I know someone who...", "If I were you, I would...".

Start from the person's needs. Do not presuppose, do not push the person to do things that they do not ask for.

It is important to give back what has been taken away from them (their consent). Give them the power to choose:

"I see you are cold; do you want to put on a jumper?"

"There is nothing compulsory, but do you want me to call your friends?"

Always ask for consent.

3. What to do in case of chemical submission or suspicion thereof

How to react if a person is suddenly drowsy, euphoric or aggressive for no reason?

→ Do not leave them alone

→ Take them to a quieter place and reassure them, see if their condition improves

→ If their condition does not improve, call 112: specify that it is a case of suspected chemical submission and ask for toxicological tests (urine and blood) - if suspicious glasses/bottles they can be taken too

→ **Do this as quickly as possible as the detection of certain products is limited in time!**

→ If there is a suspicion of sexual assault: contact the Sexual Assault Center as soon as possible.