



Safer Spaces Guidelines

North Van Arts' mandate is to enable emerging and professional artists in all disciplines, to bridge cultures, and to build strong and healthy communities through the arts.

In order to fulfill our mandate and ensure that all members of our community feel welcome and able to fully participate in our organization, we are committed to creating safer spaces in all of North Van Arts' activities: this includes Cityscape Community ArtSpace, Maplewood House, online and on all social media platforms, and in all North Van Arts events and programming.

A safer space is a space that strives to hold room for all individuals to be able to exist and to participate in the fullness of who they are, without fear of discrimination, judgement, harassment or other forms of violence. We recognize that we may not be able to create a space that is absolutely safe for all people; we therefore aim to create safer spaces, where all participants are keeping in mind the safety of those with whom they are sharing the space. Mindfulness, attention, self-awareness, and openness are integral to creating a safer space.

North Van Arts values the opinions, beliefs, and values of our entire community, and aims to create a space where everyone is heard and feels able to engage in conversation. We aim to create a space that is open to a variety and diversity of perspectives, even when they challenge our own. However, racism, ageism, sexism, hetero-sexism, homophobia, transphobia, transmisogyny, misogynoir, ableism, classism, patriarchal views, intolerance of religious beliefs, or any other behaviour or language that perpetuates oppression and denies or questions basic human rights will not be tolerated. Similarly, language or behaviour that denies or questions the existence of these or any systems and forces of oppression will be challenged and will not be tolerated.

North Van Arts' Safer Spaces Guidelines:

- 1) Respect others' physical and emotional boundaries.
- 2) Respect others' identities and backgrounds, including pronouns and names.
- 3) Do not assume or make judgments on anyone's gender identity, sexuality, survivor status, health status, economic status, religion, background, beliefs, opinions, etc.
- 4) Respect others' privacy, and do not assume a right to ask personal questions.
- 5) Do not expect an individual to speak on behalf of their entire identity group or demographic.
- 6) When interacting with an individual whose identity, background, status, or religion is different from your own, do not assume that they have the capacity or time to educate you; if you have questions, aim to do your own



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research, or find an appropriate space to bring them up, such as at an organized Q&A.

- 7) Be aware that your actions and words may have unintended effects on other people, and that their emotional response is valid, regardless of your intentions.
- 8) Be aware of how much space you are taking up (how much you are speaking, participating, or in other ways engaging), and make sure everyone has a chance to be seen and heard.
- 9) Try to use accessible language: clear, uncomplicated language that avoids acronyms or jargon is best. Try to explain any references or acronyms that you might use.
- 10) Give content warnings if you are going to discuss something that may be upsetting or triggering to someone. Remember that you never know someone's full story, and what might be upsetting for them to hear or witness. Allow openings for someone to leave a conversation or space if the topic might be triggering or upsetting.
- 11) Assume positive intent. If someone does or says something that crosses a boundary, respond as you are able and as is comfortable for you, but do not assume that they intend harm.
- 12) Take care of your own safety. If you need to seek support, step away, re-iterate boundaries, or in any other way protect your safety, feel free to do so, and to refer to these guidelines. You may also seek support from members of North Van Arts' staff.
- 13) If you witness abusive or inappropriate behaviour, please alert a facilitator or member of staff.
- 14) Engage in active witnessing. Tools for bystander intervention and active witnessing are posted around the office, or can be explored [here](#).
- 15) Take action to prevent or mitigate harm. If you anticipate a situation in which harm may occur, please do what you can to take steps to address this concern. This can include alerting a facilitator or member of staff, or, if it is safe for you to do so, engage in active witnessing using tools for [bystander intervention](#).
- 16) Remember: we are all learning!

This Safer Space Policy was informed by the [Black Futures Now policy](#), [LGBT Foundation policy](#), and the [Mental Health Commission of Canada policy](#).