

FOR
PROMOTERS,
COLLECTIVES
AND EVENT
ORGANISERS

Organising Safer Events

A toolkit for your night



FOR SAFER
NIGHTLIFE



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Why does this matter?

When the rave is at its best, it can be a space of joy, freedom, and transformation. *Safety* matters in all nightlife communities, but it can mean something different to each person on the dancefloor.

While progress is ongoing, the club scene is still far from utopian. Issues like sexually predatory behaviour, racist and transphobic discrimination, and spiking are all too common. We believe that every club, party, and promoter can develop better skills and systems needed to address these issues.

Creating a truly inclusive and safe environment requires continuous effort and collaboration with your host venues, artists, and of course your attendees.

This toolkit has been made to support grassroots promoters and event organisers who want to put their values into practice. We've focussed on three areas: understanding, responding well and prevention.

Sexual violence in nightlife

A simple definition of sexual violence is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or degrading environment. It can be in the form of words or actions that make someone feel uncomfortable. It looks like:

following • staring • leering • inappropriate 'jokes' • shaming • creepy comments • flashing • not taking 'no' for an answer • comments or actions that target someone's (actual or perceived) sexuality • taking photos or buying drinks without consent • predatory behaviour • targeting drunk or high people • catcalling • spiking

Sexual assault is when things get physical.

We're talking about the sexual touching of one person by another without a reasonable belief in their consent. In the club this looks like groping, grabbing or rubbing up against someone, or touching any part of their body in a sexualised way.

Who does it happen to?

Sexual violence can affect anyone, but women and LGBTQ+ individuals are disproportionately targeted, with perpetrators predominantly being men. This stems from power dynamics present in wider society.

Impact, Intent, Consent

A person can consent only when they are free to choose and have the capacity to do so.

Alcohol and drugs *can* play a role in reducing or removing someone's capacity to consent to something sexual, although this is unique to each person. If someone feels threatened, pressured, or scared, they are not able to consent to anything sexual.

It's also important to distinguish between impact and intent.

- **Intent:** what we meant to do or communicate
- **Impact:** how our words or actions actually affect the other person

A targeted person should feel supported and listened to, regardless of whether the harm caused was intentional.

What might stop someone from coming forward?

There are many barriers to seeking support after experiencing sexual violence at an event, including:

- Fear of not being believed or fear of being blamed
- Fear of experiencing discrimination when reporting
- Not sure who to speak to or can't find anyone
- Fear of escalation, i.e. what if the harassment gets worse
- Fear of losing job (if working) or social status
- Unsure whether the incident is 'serious enough' to share
- Fear of being seen as 'the problem,' 'vulnerable' or 'too sensitive'

Any one of these barriers, or a combination, can be the difference between you or your team hearing about an issue you can help resolve, or not finding out and being unable to prevent further harm.

The next part of the toolkit looks at the many practical ways you can reduce or remove these kinds of barriers.

Removing barriers

Create an environment where people feel able to seek support with the following steps...

1 *Maintain and build a diverse team with a range of qualities and skills*

Who is most comfortable with confrontation, or can support with de-escalation. What are they most worried about? Where are they strongest?

2 *Maintain a friendly presence at the door and on the dancefloor*

Encourage reporting of any issue, no matter how minor. This creates a culture that deters potential perpetrators.

3 *Establish first aid and water points*

Clearly marked locations for water and first aid can encourage sharing and taking care of each other.

4 *Assign quieter areas*

Identify spaces in the venue before your event that individuals will be able to report concerns and be heard properly.

Safer Spaces policies in practice

Let's start with some definitions...

- Your '**policy**' is a document laying out your approach to safety
- Your '**procedure**' is the step-by-step instructions on **how** to enact this approach

You need both, plus a simple way of summarising your approach for attendees to know about, which we call a '**safety statement**'

A policy and procedure on safety and sexual violence needs to cover:

- What you expect from your own team
- Any behaviours which will **always** result in ejection
- Your approach to post-event support

Your Safety Statement

Different to a policy, this basic messages addresses your attendees in simple language, making three things clear:

- inappropriate behaviour has consequences
- reporting is encouraged
- those who speak up will be supported

A useful safety statement for your event will:

- ☐ Use a design and font that's easy to read in low light.
- ☐ Name what's expected of attendees.
- ☐ Ideally avoid long lists of '-isms' and '-phobias', which can be interpreted differently.
- ☐ Include a brief overview of your event values e.g. the communities you prioritise e.g. a night by and for queer people of colour.
- ☐ Clear options for who to ask for help. e.g 'look for people with red shirts'.
- ☐ A way to share experiences afterwards, e.g. a WhatsApp account, Instagram or email.
- ☐ Appear on online ticketing platforms, social media, email mailouts.

Some events like to talk to each attendee through the safety statement at the door. If you decide to do this, make sure you have enough staff to make it work.

Drugs and alcohol harm reduction

Let's be real: drugs are often part of nightlife, and pretending they aren't can increase risk of harmful choices, leading to overdose or worse.

Whatever the law says where you are, every event organiser (and venue!) has a duty of care to be aware of how drugs including alcohol and their effects may show up in your space, and plan accordingly. This is not the same as 'encouraging' drug use. The best way to do this is to take a *harm reduction* approach.

One example of a harm reduction practice is placing individual straws in your bathrooms, which help to reduce risk of hepatitis transmission if attendees are snorting substances.

A handy checklist

- ☐ A named person on the welfare, venue or security team is trained to recognise and respond to a potential overdose, or know who else to ask in an emergency.
- ☐ A quiet or safe space for attendees feeling overwhelmed or over-intoxicated has been identified.
- ☐ Harm reduction tools are available: alcohol wipes, snorting straws, pipettes, test strips, condoms.
- ☐ Printed information on the specific risks of mixing drugs has been made available.

For guidance on language and avoiding stigma, check in with your local harm reduction organisations or the Good Night Out toolkit at saferstates.info for more information.

What makes a good chill-out space?

Giving attendees room to take a breather is a safety and wellbeing strategy, providing a middle ground between the dance floor and leaving the club while in a vulnerable state.

☐ **Comfy Seating**

Couches, bean bags, or soft benches if available. Bodies need to feel supported, not just leant against a wall.

☐ **Lighting**

Avoid strobes or flashing lights, so soft LEDs, gentle neon or fairy lights.

☐ **Low-Key Music**

At a volume low enough for people to speak at normal volume, as total silence after the volume of the dancefloor can be overwhelming.

☐ **Fresh Air & cooling**

Let that sweat dry! Fans, A/C, or outdoor space if possible make a huge difference.

☐ **Water**

A free water station is a must. Consider coconut water, juice, or even herbal teas as a bonus for extra hydration.

☐ **Harm Reduction Supplies**

Think earplugs, clean supplies, electrolytes, condoms, test kits if available, plus a few basic first-aid items.

☐ **Privacy & Vibes**

A little away from the dancefloor without being too isolated is ideal.

☐ **Friendly & Safe**

Your team should be assigned to the chill space or quieter area.

Briefing a team

For venue team

- ☐ Provide written copies of your policy and procedure during the booking process.
- ☐ Find out if and when a venue is obliged to call the police in the case of criminal behaviour, so you can plan accordingly.
- ☐ Even when a person may have been the victim of a potential crime, they are not legally obligated to speak to the police on the night.

For welfare

- ☐ Ensure their approach is centred on being Friendly, Encouraging, Supportive and Discreet.
- ☐ Clarify that their role is to intervene in a safe and de-escalatory way, to monitor and, when needed, to take action.

- ☐ Ensure they agree that they do not need to be 100% sure of what is transpiring and what relationships exist between specific audience members to check-in and intervene in a situation if you have any concerns at all.

For security team

- ☐ Agree on whether searches will be conducted, and offer an amnesty bin so attendees are not tempted to overdose in the queue.
- ☐ Gender-based searches can be invasive and presumptuous, especially for trans and non-binary individuals. Ensure security provide options if searches are mandatory.
- ☐ Define the ejection threshold (which behaviours will result in).
- ☐ Agree in advance who (Security, Promoter or Venue Manager) makes the final decision on the night in the case of conflict of interest.

Safety checklist

Pre-event

- ☐ Bookings and lineup are representative and diverse.
- ☐ Artists are aware of your policy and that they and their crew are also subject to it.
- ☐ Marketing and socials refer to your safety statement in every post.
- ☐ Policy and approach communicated with venue, welfare, security.

On-the-day

- ☐ Time set aside for pre-event meeting of your team, venue, welfare and security.
- ☐ Relevant posters and signage is hanging in correct places.
- ☐ Harm reduction supplies are stocked up.

During event

- ☐ Team members rotate positions regularly with a method of being in touch if event takes place in a larger space or across different floors e.g. radio, Telegram group.
- ☐ Check-ins on any intoxicated attendees.
- ☐ Attendees given option safer, quieter space to chat.
- ☐ Keep a record of any incidents and your response to them.

Post-event

- ☐ Debrief call between venue, team and security if possible.
- ☐ Longer debrief on what worked and lessons learnt.
- ☐ Send out request for feedback to your attendees.
- ☐ Implement changes!

Further best practice recommendations...

Travel

Can you set aside or fundraise for a taxi fund? This supports attendees who've been harassed, become unwell or are otherwise too intoxicated to get home safely. Public transport can be especially unsafe for marginalised people.

Encourage Consent Culture

Assess how well your bookings, lineups, design, marketing visuals and language support a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

Champion Access for All

Share access info about your chosen space in advance of the event to help disabled attendees plan. Check out the resources at UK-based disability justice organisation attitudeiseverything.org.uk.

Provide a gender-neutral bathroom.

See toilets.goodnightoutcampaign.org for more information on what to offer and how.

Who else can support?

As event organisers committed to safety, you're already doing a lot!

Our bodies and minds can hold traumatic impacts after serious incidents, which need specialist support to work through.

At **Good Night Out Campaign** we support nightlife organisations to end sexual violence through specialist training programmes and an accreditation programme.

When you or your attendees need practical, legal, and emotional support, they can connect with following organisations:

 **International Support Services**

Who are we?

Good Night Out Campaign

Good Night Out is the campaign for safer nightlife. We're a training organisation working worldwide, with ten years of experience supporting everyone from super clubs to tiny collectives to deal with, tackle and prevent gender-based violence and all forms of harm.

Resident Advisor


Founded in 2001, Resident Advisor is one of the world's longest-running music media brands and a cornerstone of the dance, electronic and DJ ecosystem. As an independent company run by devoted dance music enthusiasts, RA is committed to connecting hyper-niche local scenes with the global electronic music community.


**Good Night Out
Campaign is on a
mission for safer
nightlife. We believe
nights out should
be about fun and
freedom, not fear.**





**FOR SAFER
NIGHTLIFE**

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