

## Commitment to Compassion

Beyond Equality is an organisation that exists to challenge men and boys to do better by women, girls and non-binary people, and by each other. To do this, Beyond Equality holds spaces for learning, questioning and personal and collective transformation.

In the spirit of this, we have to hold ourselves as an organisation to values and behaviours that encourage and facilitate kindness, compassion and growth.

For growth to happen, we must enable openness and honesty, and this vulnerability must be met and held safely. With that in mind, Beyond Equality aims to create respectful, understanding and kind spaces where people feel able to express themselves, share their experiences and ask questions without fear of reprisal or humiliation.

Beyond Equality is a diverse group. Some of us experience different kinds of oppression & violence at the same time, including sexism, racism, disableism, poverty, transphobia, homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia and antisemitism, as well as others. These oppressions are not separate from each other, which can be exhausting and painful. We are working to create a community that recognises and challenges the oppression & exploitation that some of us are harmed by and some of us benefit from.

**We have high expectations of how we behave towards each other in our workshops, meetings, trainings and social spaces:**

1. **Learning;** we are all here to learn together and from each other, and we all come from different intellectual and academic backgrounds. Our commitment to learning (and unlearning) is lifelong, moves at different paces, and none of us have arrived. As in our workshops, all Beyond Equality spaces should hold honest conversations where people are free to change their minds.

We exist in a world where knowledge and intellectualism can be weaponised and used oppressively. We commit to dismantling these practices.

2. **Be aware of your privileges;** including less obvious or invisible hierarchies. Think about how your words, opinions and feelings are influenced and who they might exclude or harm. If we are not here to do this work in ourselves, or believe that this work has already been done, we must question our motivations for being here.
3. **Calling in;** calling in is always an opportunity for learning, building and strengthening our community. We are all complicit in systemic harms, and if you have acted or spoken harmfully, even if unintentionally, someone will bring this up with you.

If you feel moved to (and resourced to) call someone in for harmful behaviour, try to do this compassionately, one-to-one or ideally with a third person you feel comfortable to do this with.

Calling someone in takes emotional energy, so if you are being called in, respect that by

listening and being with what they are saying, even if you think they may be wrong. Responding non-defensively, and with acknowledgment, is half of the remedy. Don't try to absolve yourself of responsibility, just listen.

4. **Consent**; before you touch anyone or discuss sensitive topics, ask if they are comfortable with that and check if they have the time and energy to have that conversation. Don't assume your physical & emotional boundaries are the same as other people's.
5. **Labour**; the current Beyond Equality operating model involves two large volunteer-based projects, which have long been the heart of the organisation. Everyone's time and commitment is deeply valued and appreciated. Please contribute whatever you can; this will be different for everyone and that's fine. All of us find value, purpose and resonance in this community and its vision. For many of us, the depth of meaning we find in this work is not necessarily represented by the amount of time we have to give.

Please show appreciation for the hard work of others and be considerate when you offer criticism.

6. **Social**; like other communities we build social relationships outside of meetings and workshops. We commit to compassion wherever we are together, this includes ensuring that spaces are accessible to people with disabilities and we create opportunities to socialise without alcohol. You are not expected to participate in social events.
7. **Community Accountability**; we all belong here, and nobody is disposable. We strive to remember why we have found ourselves in a community with one another, despite differences and disagreement. It is our collective responsibility to find ways to heal, learn and move forward together.

Our community involves people of many genders, a large part of whom are men. Part of being in community, counter-culturally as men, is holding space for vulnerability. We will make mistakes, we will hurt each other, but how we heal from this and how we handle it presents us with an opportunity to model the values that we promote.

When we work together in this radical and transformative way, we are creating the change we wish to see in the world.

This document is inspired by Sisters Uncut's Safer Spaces agreement, in our commitment to learning from and being led by intersectional feminism. Sisters Uncut are a grassroots intersectional feminist movement against gender-based violence, austerity and prisons.