



2281 Brunswick St.
Halifax, NS B3K 2Y9
Tel: 902-429-5249
Fax: 902-423-7735
youthproject@youthproject.ns.ca
www.youthproject.ns.ca

Thursday, April 9, 2020

Online Programming Policy/ Procedure in Response to COVID-19

Zero Tolerance Policy / Community Standards

To be posted and read before/during every program

The Youth Project is a non-profit organization that works to make Nova Scotia a happier and safer place for 2SLGBTQ+ youth through Education, Programming, and Support.

During this time of physical distancing, we are working to create safe and inclusive online spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

On all platforms, we will not tolerate any harassment, disruptive behaviour, (cyber)bullying, or discrimination of any kind (included, but not limited to, racism, sexism, queerphobia, transphobia, ableism, fatphobia, classism) and have the right to remove participants creating an unsafe space.

We understand that everyone is dealing with various realities of mental health especially during this hard time. As we are operating an online platform, it can be difficult to gauge people's immediate needs, or support folks thoroughly, if they are experiencing re-traumatizing, activation, or being triggered in this setting. To mitigate this, we are asking that folks do not share specific details around their realities of, including, but not limited to, self-harm, substance use, realities of trauma (sexual, emotional, physical), and that they talk about those experiences more generally.

An example of this, "substance use has been helpful during my time of isolation", but to not share specifics of use such as amount, type of substance, frequency.

Substance Use

The Youth Project's Community Standards applies here where we are attempting to facilitate a safer space for everyone and will not restrict use of substances, but ask that use is not visible on camera, and that they follow community standards. In the case that a participant's ability to follow community standards is impacted by using, they will be asked to leave the session.



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If you are looking for a digital/online resource specific to substance use/ support for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, **@pieces.to.pathways** is a peer-led initiative offering Canada's only substance use support program for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth (ages 16-29). All of their staff are queer and/or trans-identified and have their own experiences of substance use and recovery.

Best Practices / Conflict Mediation and Navigation

There will always be two people facilitating online programming and workshops to ensure that while one person is facilitating the workshop/activity, the other person can monitor the chat and mediate conflict.

Facilitators will set ground rules and utilize functions in online platforms (raise hand, yes/no, reactions) so that folks have equitable opportunity to speak and so no one is speaking over / interrupting each other. If someone is interrupted, the facilitator will agree to use the word “oops”, or another agreed upon word, to remind someone to let the speaker finish their thought.

We are all coming to this with a variety of journey's and experiences and it's okay if our opinions are in opposition. Having differing opinions is a beautiful part of our community and allows for fullness and richness. We are excited to hold space for folks to talk about their differing opinions so long as participants are respectful and caring of each other in those conversations and follow our community standards. In a moment where a differential of opinion impacts a person's identity or sense of self, the facilitator will see this as a teaching moment and learning opportunity to gently reaffirm the identity and provide some education, framework, or resources.

At the beginning of each program there will be an infographic shared of community standards and the facilitator will screen share and outline the details of our infographic community standards resource (seen above). Information about the community standards will be available visually on our social media and website.

Participants will thumbs up react or verbally agree to community standards before any program starts.

Navigating Harmful or Discriminatory Online Interactions

If someone says/ types something harmful or discriminatory, there will be a reinstating of community standards (a reminder in the chat and verbally). If it happens again, there will be



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immediate removal from the virtual space. Immediate removals, without a warning, are as follows: slurs, threats, violence, direct invalidation of someone's identity.

If something harmful or discriminatory happens during online programming, the facilitator will acknowledge that it happened and check in with the group. On a case-by-case basis, the facilitator will make a decision on what the group will need to move through and on in a healthy, and affirming, way.

We are so excited that these online platforms allow participants the opportunity to make connections, private message, and nurture meaningful relationships, especially during COVID-19 social distancing. We encourage folks to connect in ways that feel comfortable to them and are hopeful that these programs will broaden your social networks. Of course, we also have to consider participants using direct messaging in a way that could be potentially uncomfortable and harmful.

If you are experiencing direct messaging from another participant that feels threatening or discriminatory, please contact a facilitator privately and they will take measures to ensure that you feel safe in our online programming (measures include, but are not limited to, gentle reminder to the group of the community standards, asking the person to stop, removing the person from the program).

If more than one participant is experiencing uncomfortable or threatening private messages and comes forward, we will turn off private messaging for the duration of the program (this can happen on zoom but not on instagram).

Coordinating Attendance

For an instagram live feed, anyone and any number of youth are able to depend as long as they follow the community standards. For zoom programming (Transformers, Non-Binary Hangout, Gender Creative Kids), youth are encouraged to sign up through the Youth Project instagram or via email: skye@youthproject.ns.ca with their contact information so that staff can send the zoom link. Parents, guardians, loved ones are encouraged to sign up for Parents Night programming via email: carmel@youthproject.ns.ca. Transformers, Non-Binary Hangout, and Gender Creative Kids will have a maximum registration of 10 participants. If there is further significant interest another time will be made to host the participants who could not attend due to space.