



SAFER SPACE GUIDELINES

SAFER SPACE DEFINITION

A **safe space** is: “a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm” (Oxford Dictionary).

BUT WHAT IS A SAFER SPACE?

A **safer space** is a *supportive, non-threatening environment where all participants can feel comfortable to express themselves and share experiences without fear of discrimination or reprisal.*

We prefer the term “safer space” to “safe space” because we cannot guarantee that a space will be safe for everyone with certainty. Indeed, the feeling of safety is personal, not everyone will feel safe under the same conditions.

With safer space policies, we aim to create practices that make people feel safe and take responsibility for unpleasant situations. We also aim to create measures that can be taken to improve unpleasant situations instead of simply tolerating them. We want to create an environment, as safe as possible, free of discrimination and harassment, where diversity is respected. We want to describe, through these guidelines, what kind of behaviour is expected and desirable in our events and other activities.

SAFER SPACE PRINCIPLES

- **Be respectful:** respect others’ physical and emotional boundaries, others’ experiences, religion or beliefs, identities, and backgrounds, including pronouns and names.
- **Ensure confidentiality and privacy:** do not take pictures, videos of others without their consent. Don’t share others’ stories and experiences to external people, without their consent.
- **Do not make assumptions or generalisations:** don’t assume or make judgments on anyone’s gender identity, sexual preference, health status, economic status, religion, background, beliefs, opinions, etc. Assumptions can limit our understanding of a person. By not making assumptions, you can create a space for critical and inclusive conversations to occur with those around you.
- **Be aware of your own privilege** and how your actions can influence others.
- **Be aware** that your actions and words may have unintended effects on other people and that their feelings are valid, regardless of your intentions.
- **Be open and tolerant:** we are all learning and deconstructing internalized ideas. Acting sensitively is not innate. Be open to receiving feedback and giving some gently and respectfully when a behaviour is considered as problematic or an offensive or misrepresentative term is used. Do not assume the person that misbehaved or used this term intended harm.



- **Be understanding:** we don't have the same language skills or same ways of communicating. Therefore we will try to communicate in a way that everyone understands and we will help each other to understand and be understood.
- **Listen:** Avoid raising your voice, interrupting, or talking over anyone else. Avoid speaking on behalf of others.
- **Take care of your own safety and needs:** If you need to step out, feel free to do so. Participate at the level you feel comfortable with. If you feel unsafe, let the facilitator or organizer know.
- **Get involved:** any form of discrimination, harassment, or aggression (even micro-ones) are not tolerated. If you witness any abusive or inappropriate behaviour, let the event organiser know.

IN CASE OF RACISM, HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

If you experience or witness racism, harassment, discrimination, or other inappropriate behaviour, please inform the **event organisers**.

If you want to get in touch about a situation later, please get in touch with:

- Any member of our team,
- Familia's **Executive director** Elina HELMANEN, by phone: 050 433 5411 or by email: elina.helmanen@familia.fi
- Familia's **board's member:** Alec THURNHAM, by email: alecthurnham@hotmail.co.uk

WHEN YOU CONTACT ONE OF FAMILIA'S REPRESENTATIVE:

1. The contact person must listen to you without judging.
2. The contact person is under an obligation of confidentiality. The discussion will therefore remain confidential if you wish.
3. The contact person will never take any action without your consent.

WITH YOUR CONSENT, THE CONTACT PERSON MAY:

1. Contact the parties involved in the situation and discuss what has happened.
2. Arrange a discussion as safe as possible, between the parties.
3. Give some support information (like various support services: telephone services, ...).

IN CASE THE SITUATION CAN'T BE RESOLVED:

1. The contact person can refer to Familia's Executive Director or member of the board to decide on possible disciplinary measures.
2. Possible measures can be taken to make the space safer (ex: removing the people from a group).
3. In extreme cases, the person who acted inappropriately can be banned from future events or groups.



IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

ANTI-RACISM

Anti-racism is a process of actively identifying and opposing racism (= *unfair or harmful treatment of people based on their race*).

The goal of anti-racism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions. It is about taking steps to eliminate racism at the individual, institutional, and structural levels, in order to promote racial justice and equality.

DISABILITY

A person with a disability is a person who may need supportive measures to cope with work or workplace conditions (e.g., assistive devices). Disability results from the difficulties of interaction between individuals with a health condition with personal and environmental factors (e.g., negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social support).

DIVERSITY

Aspects of diversity include age, gender, disability, health status, ethnic origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, and sexual orientation as well as differences in people's education, experience, skills, work habits, personalities, and values.

Therefore, diversity refers to variety and to the fact that society is composed of different individuals and groups with different background. However, programs declaring diversity are not the same thing as justice or inclusion. Diversity may be discussed without anything being changed to institutional and structural systems that produce and maintain injustice.

EQUALITY

Equality means that all people are equal regardless of their gender, age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion or belief, opinion, disability, health, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY SPACE

A safe space to answer Families' needs, such as a quiet space, a changing/feeding area, place to play, exchange, and to be supported.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

The Constitution of Finland guarantees freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, which means that everyone can choose their own religion and practise it. Everyone should be respectful of others' choice to belong to a religious community or not.

At Familia, the important principle is to respect each other and not to impose our beliefs on anyone. Therefore, you can wear signs of religions in outward appearance. It is possible to arrange a place for praying if an employee expresses this need.



Because cultural diversity is important for us, different important celebrations are respected and celebrate by us, and we share our wishes for all of them.

GENDER MINORITIES/GENDER DIVERSITY

The term gender minority refers to people whose gender scope (biological, anatomical, social, mental and/or legal) cannot uniformly be defined as male or female. Gender minorities can be divided into two main categories: trans people and intersexual people. Trans people include transvestite, transsexual, transgender, and genderqueer people. Gender is a very diverse human attribute. Each of us perceives our own gender differently, whether it is womanhood, manhood or something else. Thus, gender diversity is not a term depicting gender minorities only. We should therefore refer to gender diversity rather than minorities.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is behaviour that infringes the dignity and integrity of an individual or a group of people by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment is defined as verbal, non-verbal or physical unwanted conduct of a sexual nature by which a person's psychological or physical integrity is violated intentionally or factually, in particular by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere.

HETERONORMATIVITY

Heteronormativity is a concept referring to two different genders that are drawn to each other. Heteronormativity goes hand in hand with the gender norm, CIS norm. Cisnormativity refers to the presumption that people are either male or female and that a person's physical birth sex corresponds to the experience of the person's own gender.

INAPPROPRIATE TREATMENT

Inappropriate treatment is behaviour that goes against general good manners. The line between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is defined by workplace personnel. If someone finds "risqué humour" offensive, others need to stop it. Shouting, ranting, and raving or talking about other people's personal characteristics have no place in the work community, either.

INCLUSIVE SPACE

An inclusive space is often seen as a "space for all". It suggests that everyone should feel welcomed, included, and not discriminated against by their gender, age, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural background, socioeconomic status and/or personal values when being in this space. It's a safe space for all.

INCLUSIVITY

Inclusivity is the act of including all types of people, things or ideas and treating them all fairly and equally. It means providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might



otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those having physical or mental disabilities or belonging to other minority groups. (Cambridge dictionary and Oxford Languages definition)

INTERCULTURAL FAMILIES

Intercultural families are families in which at least one family member has a different cultural background:

- one partner or both not born in Finland, or with different cultural backgrounds,
- a child or children raised by a parent(s) with different cultural backgrounds.

LGBTIQ+

The letter combination LGBTI or LGBTIQ+ refers to sexual and gender minorities. The letter “L” stands for lesbian, “G” stands for gay, “B” stands for bisexual, “T” stands for transgender, “I” stands for intersexual, and “Q” stands for queer. The '+' represents minority gender identities and sexualities not explicitly included in the term LGBTIQ.

An LGBTIQ+ sensitive event acknowledges and takes account of the varying needs of sexual and gender minorities and LGBTIQ+ families, for example when selecting material, event content and customer service.

LIMITED MOBILITY

The capability of a person with limited mobility to move and/or function independently has been permanently or temporarily weakened due to an illness, injury, or some other reason. The environment can also be considered to have limited mobility rather than people. For example, a building or service that is unsafe, dysfunctional, or unpleasant causes limitations to mobility.

NEURODIVERSITY

A term representing individuals who cognitively process differently than what society considers the norm. It describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one “right” way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

POC (PEOPLE OF COLOR)

POC is a political or social (not biological) identity for people who have been racialized as non-whites. The term is used to bring out the fact that persons belonging to many different groups experience racism.

POC entails people who identify themselves as black or brown but is not synonymous with them. Many racialized people use the term, but it is less familiar in mainstream discussions. There is no distinct Finnish translation for the term.



QUEER

Queer theory starts from the hypothesis that gender and sexuality are culturally produced and historically and locally changing identities and constructions. Nowadays, the queer concept is also more widely used as a synonym for sexual and gender minorities or to depict everything that is not heteronormative or gender normative.

