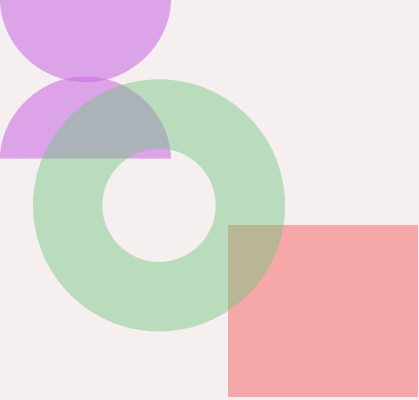


POLICY FOR A SAFE SPACE FREE OF AGGRESSIONS



What is this document and why is it needed?

The cis-hetero-patriarchal (*see notes 1,2,3*) system, the hierarchies and the relations of power and oppression that it brings with it, cross all spheres of our lives, and are present even in supposedly anti-authoritarian and liberated spaces. We understand that these violences, as systemic, must be addressed jointly, and it is necessary to collectively assume the responsibility of ensuring that they have no place in our Social Solidarity Economy organizations.

This protocol aims to support those who want to build a shared space of safety and trust for all people and intends to be a tool for individual and collective (self-)defense against the different oppressions and/or aggressions of the system that manifest in our workspaces and inside our organisations. It arises from the need for collective self-education and self-protection, and seeks, through mutual support, to put an end to the normalization of aggressions and the complicity of silence. It also aims to create dialogue among all people

A safe space for all is one in which people are free to express themselves, relate, coexist and act as they want, when they want and with whom they want without facing risk of violence or persecution based on their gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, class, identity, immigration status, geographic origin, age, religion, neurofunctional diversity, etc.

In this sense, ***we do not tolerate sexist (4), racist (5), classist (6), LGTBIQ-phobic (7), xenophobic (8), speciesist (9), ableist (10) aggressions, or any form of aggression or domination.*** This document is a first step of the many that must be taken until our organizations and spaces are truly free. Therefore, we do not understand it as a static document. It is the result of a process that shall be continuously adapted according to specific contexts, spaces and times, and to the knowledge that we acquire.

What is an aggression?

An aggression is an abuse of power by one person towards another, it is not a conflict or a misunderstanding. It occurs when someone feels aggrieved. Each person has his or her limits according to his or her life experiences. It is not legitimate to question other people's limits.

We can all become aggressors at some point and overstep someone's boundaries. We must not forget that we have been educated in a system that promotes inequality and in which diverse forms of oppression and violence are naturalized. Aggressions can be reproduced between known and unknown people, between fellow militants, and inside collectives and organisations. We understand that the patriarchal system grants a privilege to male-cis-white socialization, and we understand that aggressions occur are most acutely against women, racialized bodies and other non-hegemonic

gender identities. This does not mean that all men exercise the power that the system has given them, but it does mean that they may believe they have the right to do so. Whether in a family or community context, in party scenes or in work spaces, absolutely nothing justifies an aggression, not the wardrobe, not the looks, not the hierarchies, nor, of course, the use of alcohol or drugs.

An aggression can be physical or not, and includes offensive or unpleasant comments, verbal abuse, insults, mockery, derogatory remarks... and everything that has to do with diminishing or ridiculing the other person. It also includes unwelcome forms of physical contact, and jokes or display of sexist, racist, Lgtbiq-phobic, etc. symbols. We

are talking about oppressive logics that dictate forms of domination of some people over others, so all parties are affected and need to reflect and deconstruct their conceptions.

In work and organisational contexts, an authoritarian and patriarchal organizational culture is, for example, one that promotes a competitive environment, work overload and excessive pressure to meet deadlines. This culture is also expressed when certain comments or actions are underestimated or ignored (e.g., not giving space or belittling people who try to consciously define boundaries between work and personal life), when some people have more time to expose their ideas than others, and when feelings are not allowed to be shared and only rational arguments are taken as valid. Other examples include no transparency or horizontality in the decision-making processes, assigning tasks to a person based on sexist/racist prejudices, not promoting spaces and time for care and reproductive work (e.g., preparing food, cleaning and arranging spaces, providing logistical as well as emotional support are tasks always ensured by the same people). The lack of care in the use of language, and in the production of graphic and written material (pictures, articles, magazines, emails, etc.) of a sexist, racist, lgtbiq-phobic, etc. nature are also examples of aggressions...

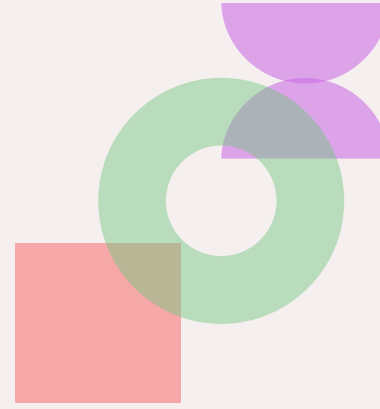
Finally, it's important to understand that people who suffer aggressions are not "victims", but active subjects with their own capacity for decision and interaction. Although this document arises as a transversal collective tool to take care of our work spaces, we must always act with the consent of the person who has felt attacked, listening and respecting their personal and political decision.

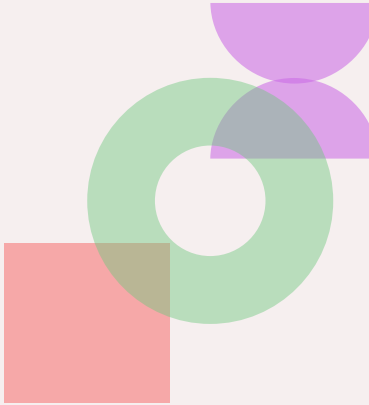
Action protocol to prevent different forms of oppression, face an aggression and promote safer work spaces

Prevention (before)

It is essential that in our organizations we promote an internal and external discourse markedly Feminist and that its principles and proposals are present in a transversal way in our projects, meetings, gatherings and activities, in order to move towards effective equality. Among other things we propose:

- Doing a self-diagnosis (see note 11) in your organisation to identify which kind of aggressions and/or oppressions might be taking place in your work spaces;



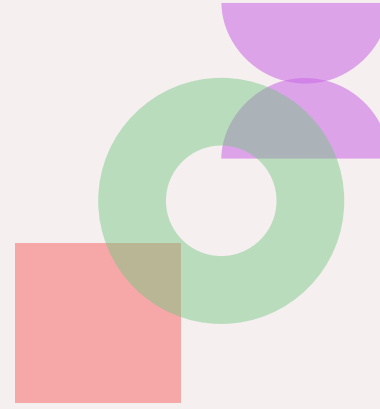
- 
- Adopting, disseminating, and publicly assuming a commitment with this protocol against sexist aggressions (following this exact proposal and/or including adaptations to suit different contexts/realities);
 - Establishing priorities, programming activities and distributing the space of speech and expression with a feminist perspective;
 - Using inclusive language (*see note 13*) in the external and internal communication;
 - Assessing the pronouns of each person and not assuming anyone's identity (e.g., asking each person how he/she/they desires to be treated);
 - Implementing regular awareness-raising and training activities in gender issues for workers and activists (*see note 14*);
 - Providing mechanisms and documents to disseminate good practices.

Action in the face of an aggression

As mentioned above, this protocol constitutes a collective and organized response to aggressions, striving for a constructive approach and moving away from any kind of punitivism. It proposes the following:

- When an aggression is identified, talk to the person which suffered the aggression and ask him/her/they if she/he/they wants a collective response. If the aggrieved person does not want to give any response, we respect her/his/their decision and tell her/him/they where to find us in case of need;
- In case the person wants a collective response, we report the aggression to a member of the Feminist Care Commission and accompany the aggrieved person. The person who initiated the aggression is informed of how her/his behaviour has affected the person who felt assaulted and is invited to recognize, apologise and correct this behaviour;
- The Feminist Care Commission will be permanently present in the entity and will deal with the aggressions, at the same time being responsible for implementing the protocol, organising the various awareness-raising activities and overseeing the organisation's internal and external communications.

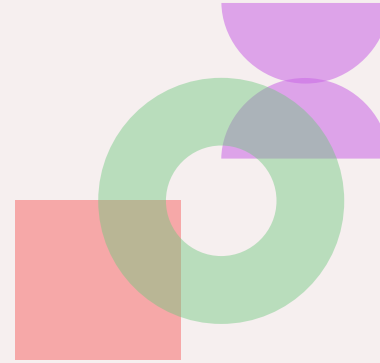
We thank all the people, organizations of the Social and Solidarity Economy and collectives that have contributed and helped to consolidate this protocol. Also to the comrades that we have been meeting throughout the years in the streets, in the work spaces, in the trips, in the projects, in the assemblies, in the social centres, etc. It is from this collective intelligence that we have been able to write this protocol.



TERMINOLOGY

- **(1) Cisgender or cis** - person whose gender identity corresponds to the gender or sex assigned at birth, as opposed to transgender.
- **(2) Heterosexual or hetero** - person who feels attracted affectively and/or sexually to people identified with a gender or sex different from their own.
- **(3) Patriarchy** - social system in which inequalities of power persist and are translated into male superiority in all aspects of social organisation; realising that male dominance is greater when it is a heterosexual and cisgender man, we speak of a cis-hetero-patriarchal system.
- **(4) Sexism** - discrimination based on the gender or sex of a person, assuming that one is superior to the other.
- **(5) Racism** - discrimination based on social perceptions based on biological differences between people, considering that some people should be classified as inherently superior or inferior based on their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group.
- **(6) Classism** - discrimination based on a person's social class, assuming that some are superior to others.
- **(7) LGBTIQphobia** - discrimination against any type of person who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or other non-binary identities.
- **(8) Xenophobia** - fear, aversion or profound antipathy towards persons perceived as being outside a community, society or nation, often categorized as strangers or foreigners.
- **(9) Speciesism** - the view that one species, in this case humans, have every right to exploit, enslave and kill other species of animals because these are considered inferior.
- **(10) Ableism:** form of discrimination or social prejudice against persons who are perceived to have disabilities.

TOOLS TO PROMOTE SAFER SPACES IN OUR ORGANIZATIONS:



(11) SELF-DIAGNOSIS FOR ORGANISATIONS

Why we need this?

Given patriarchal influence in today's society, it is very likely that (social solidarity) organisations are imbued with its values. For that reason, changing the "organisational culture" and transforming it into a feminist and truly caring environment is an often overlooked but crucial part of maintaining good relationships and building a safer and friendly work environment.

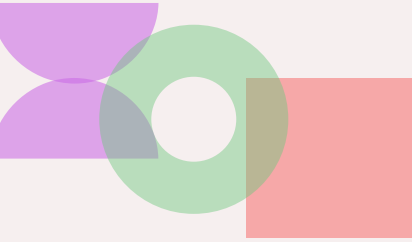
To achieve this transformation in our workplaces, a great deal of reflection, commitment and review is needed. We must bear in mind that the patriarchal values that we are trying to address are structural and part of a complex system, that is, they are part of the whole system (from the political, to the social, economic, cultural, etc.). Therefore, it is not an easy task. Achieving change is not only a matter of will, but also of time and resources.

This document is intended as a starting point to build that space for feminist work and care that is so necessary. It is a set of tips, resources and questions that you can ask yourself individually and collectively within your organisation in order to diagnose and move towards a better organisational culture.

Questioning our practices:

From the point of view of the organisation:

1. Are workers in your organisation aware of the issues of gender equality, sexism and antirracism?
2. Do you have data to monitor the evolution of parity in your organisation?
3. Have you launched any internal campaigns to combat gender stereotypes, sexism and racism in your organisation? If yes, have you set up a feminist commission in your organisation?
4. Have you put in place recruitment processes to limit gender, sexist and racist bias? If so, how and what were the mechanisms?
5. Do you have a communication plan to encourage women, and no-binary identities to get involved in local and national representative bodies?
6. Do you encourage the detection and promotion of female/ other identities talent?
7. Do you organise feminist training programmes?
8. Do you ensure equality in promotions and bonus allocation?
9. Do you have training in wage negotiations with a gender vision?
10. Do you promote smartworking and flexible working hours?



11. Do you provide childcare facilities or arrangements to facilitate childcare for workers?

12. Do you encourage the taking of paternity leave?

13. Do you offer your employees on precarious or part-time contracts the same benefits as others?

14. Does your organisation take into account that conflicts are important, allocating space, time and resources to address them?

15. As an organisation, do you have a mechanism for team members to communicate that they have suffered sexual or gender-based harassment?

16. Do you use inclusive language in both external and internal communication?

78. Are reproductive tasks included in job descriptions?

18. Are there organisational tasks that no one takes on and always fall on the same person (e.g. taking minutes in a meeting, answering the phone, opening the door, preparing the meeting spaces, printing, etc.)?

From a more personal perspective:

19. Do I feel safe and protected in my work context in terms of gender, sexism and racism?

20. Do I feel my work is valued?

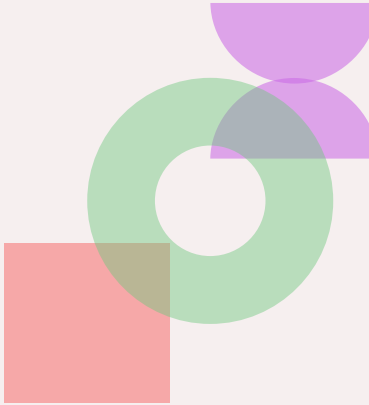
21. Did I experience any kind of work-agression?

22. To whom do I turn in case I feel uncomfortable in my work context?

(12) CARE ASSEMBLIES

Our organizations must promote the well-being and care of the people who work there through the implementation of internal dynamics that ensure the construction of democratic, cohesive and motivated work teams. First of all, ensuring the care of people implies incorporating conflict and violence prevention and management mechanisms, contemplating diversity, and establishing and managing listening, dialogue and consensus mechanisms (2019, Atienza et al). In this sense, one strategy to consider is the creation of Care Assemblies (CA). These are a space/time for meeting and sharing in which the expression of feelings and the questioning of machismo are the main objectives through strategies of mutual support, i.e. active listening, horizontal dialogue and respect and emotional support among equals.

The group can decide whether to integrate cis men or to make these spaces non-mixed moments. Based on the experience of RedPES and RIPESS during the 4 Care Work Environment project, the CA have two main objectives:



1) Broadening collective awareness about sexism (and its links with other mechanisms of oppression such as racism, classism, ableism, etc.): Taking into account that the power relations and privileges promoted by the system condition all people, all can benefit from exercises of deconstruction and from acquiring a critical consciousness vis-à-vis the processes of subordination and violence to which they are subjected (or to which they subject others) and which have long been normalized and devalued. Thus, creating a CA could be as it was for some of the women, a space for sharing situations of violence (more or less serious/explicit) that they have experienced over time, allowing them to validate the feelings and thoughts that had been kept to themselves until then. Listening to the examples of others developed the sensibility to identify violent attitudes and behaviours, which can be more or less subtle. It also permitted to recognise as violent some situations that were previously not identified as such, due to the person's isolation. We observed that the sharings in CA promoted the deconstruction of the internalized ideas and feelings that were uncritically imposed by the system in which we live, and that the presence in a Feminist collective is indispensable for this awareness.

2) To guarantee a space/time for the expression of feelings and mutual support

To have a space for sharing feelings, besides being a counter-hegemonic movement against the productivist, mercantilist and dehumanized character promoted by the patriarchal, colonialist and capitalist societies in which we live, allows us to create proximity and union among people. The sharing of their vulnerability creates cohesion, and the feeling of solidarity in the group repairs their self-esteem, and increases their ability to adapt and defend themselves from the environment in which we live. Knowing that there is a space to which we can turn at any moment is extremely structuring from a psychological point of view and counteracts the fear and the isolated and individualistic logic promoted by the system. Finally, it remains to be said that this mutual support is a starting point for individual empowerment and that this can reverberate into a collective struggle that subsequently brings a new deepening of consciousness and the strengthening of empowerment, and so on.

To facilitate an adequate and meaningful participation in these CA, according to (idem) it helps to pay attention to the following:

- That they are periodic and are well planned; the periodicity allows to legitimize these instances as decisive spaces and understand the importance of participating in them.
- Take care of the methodological and material conditions of these assemblies to guarantee comfort, trust and an equitable and quality participation. Having a facilitator allows one to mediate the interventions, avoiding possible monopolies, and to be attentive to the ideas, feelings, needs, and requests of all the participants, among others. It is also important to establish a start and end time, and to estimate the times it takes to fulfill each topic.

The potential of a CA lies in it being a space/time for care, that is different from other work meetings with a productive purpose. The CA are above all a Care moment. Being aware of how this productive pressure operates in us, and being creative in proposing alternative ways to be together, is a key element in deconstructing the capitalist logic that has been internalised in us.

(13) USING INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The language we use is extremely important because with it we not only name, but also define the society around us. Language is powerful and dynamic, not static, and it belongs to those of us who speak it not to the great thinkers of language. We are completely free to transform it to make more egalitarian societies.

"What is not named does not exist" said Steiner, but who has the power to name? Language has not been made on its own, but has been defined by specific people who have decided which genders are to be used at any given moment, which is generic, etc. These people have been mostly male, white, heterosexual, which reflects the androcentric sense of our languages.

In recent years, specific tools have emerged to guide us on how to incorporate inclusive language in workplaces, schools, the media and other settings. Here you can consult some of these guides that, in different languages, explain how to make a non-sexist use of language finding alternatives to the generic masculine, how not to fall into binarisms (man/woman) understanding that there are other identities and that it is essential to make an appropriate use of pronouns (she/he/them) without assuming anyone's identity.

[Consult these inclusive language guides in different languages:](#)

[ENGLISH](#) | [PORTUGUÊS](#) | [FRANÇAIS](#) | [CASTELLANO](#)

(14) TIPS TO CREATE SAFER MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES

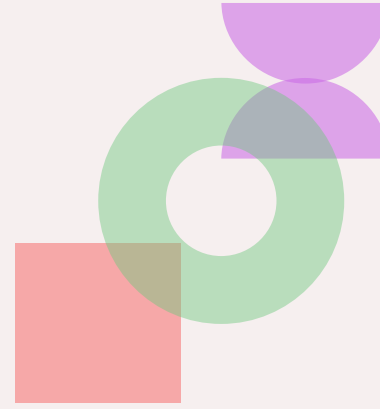
In all work spaces, and in workshops, talks or group activities it is essential to create a safe space for all the people who are going to participate in it. For this, and especially when talking about self-care, we believe it is important to recognise the importance of devoting time (and other resources) to make it happen in meaningful and effective ways. Moreover, creating a safe space is a multi-layered process that must be maintained throughout the duration of the activity.

Before the activity:

- The working spaces should be safe, welcoming and comfortable, allowing participants to relax, encouraging their participation and creating a climate of solidarity and trust. This could include sitting in a circle* and brightening up the space.
- Always ask in advance if the participants have particular seating preferences. Keep in mind that some people may be uncomfortable in admitting physical challenges that could affect their comfort, such as hearing challenges, back problems, difficulty in sitting for long periods.

* We believe that the arrangement of space has a political basis and that seating arrangements are important. In most traditional workshops, participants sit behind tables or at desks, in rows without seeing each other, and the workshop leader stands at the front in a more hierarchical position. It is important to break the formality of traditional workshop spaces that can foster disconnection between people and stifle participants' ability to fully engage in the space. Our education, and our workshops connected to SSE, must be able to analyze and question power. Sitting in a circle, and everyone on the same level, is a good way to do this.

- Look at the room and note considerations such as ventilation and accessibility for all participants.
- Ideally the space should have inside and outside areas, and always have separate meeting areas for the breaks. All areas should be accessible for people with disabilities.
- Prepare a consent form – to use quotes, photos, visuals and audio generated in the process - that participants can sign.



During the activity:

- Communicate to all participants that this is a safe space free of aggressions and discriminatory attitudes of all kinds (sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, speciesist, etc.).
- Start the session with a round of names and pronouns (i.e., she/her, he/him or they/them), so that everyone can get to know each other and so that no one's identity is assumed.
- Use inclusive language.
- Choose an accessible format, ask yourself if, for example, the participants are familiar with the technology you are going to use in the session . Make sure that everybody can hear and see the content layout, design and colours that should be appealing, visible and understandable to all. Try to be aware of the of accessibility issues participants might face.
- Try to remember that receiving feedback—especially critical feedback—is an opportunity to learn more and continuously improve.

After the activity:

- Ensure that constant is checked to use quotes/visuals/audio in reports and on social media.
- Offer help and talk individually to participants who may have been affected by/during the process.
- Ensure that any materials agreed to be shared with participants are shared in a comprehensible way.