



Fringe Theatre Safer Spaces Program

Updated: July 24, 2023

OVERVIEW

When you fringe with us, you join and are upheld by a community that is vibrant, diverse, inclusive, welcoming, and safe.

We believe in safer spaces that celebrate creative risk. We are a home for brave conversations. We work hard to keep our Festival, venue, and events safe. We want to ensure everyone feels physically and emotionally safe and enthusiastically welcomed. But we need the help of our community to make that possible. Together, we can create safer spaces where all fringers feel valued.

Our staff and volunteers are a large and caring team comprised of individuals who bring different skills, experience, and understanding to our organization. We are all committed to upholding safer spaces.

We believe EVERYONE has the right to fringe in safer spaces where they are welcome and respected. We believe in and support people who have experienced harassment, violence, or discrimination.

Enclosed find information on our Safer Spaces program, including:

- Definitions;
- Message of Welcome;
- Code of Conduct;
- Anti-Harassment, Violence, and Discrimination Policy;
- Safer Spaces Initiatives;
- Our Safer Spaces Pledge;
- Artistic Expression in Safer Spaces;
- Reporting a Disclosure or Complaint; and
- Accessing Support.

DEFINITIONS

- **Fringer(s):** Any person who comes on site to the Fringe Theatre Arts Barns, the Edmonton International Fringe™ Theatre Festival grounds or partnering venue, or who represents and/or participates in a Fringe Theatre produced event. This includes but is not limited to attendees, patrons, sponsors, donors, vendors, renters, performers, crew members, volunteers, and staff.
- **Consent:** A freely given, ongoing, active, and clear-minded agreement to engage in the activity in question. Agreement or a “yes” that is obtained through pressure, coercion, force, or threats, or by taking advantage of intoxication, impairment, or incapacity is not freely given consent. Silence or ambiguity do not constitute consent. Additionally, there is no consent when:
 - it is given by someone else;
 - the person is unconscious, sleeping, or lacks the capacity to consent;
 - it was obtained through the abuse of a position of power, trust, or authority;
 - the person does not indicate “yes,” says “no,” or implies “no” through words or behaviours; and
 - the person changes their mind and withdraws their consent.
 - it is the responsibility of the person/people pursuing an activity to ensure consent from the other, and to recognize that consent can be withdrawn at any time.
- **Verbal Disclosure:** A verbal report by any person to a member of the Fringe Theatre Safer Spaces Committee that they have experienced abuse, harassment, or misconduct. Fringe Theatre may initiate an investigation and resolution process and will honour any requests for anonymity by the person making the report.
- **Written Disclosure:** A written report or statement alleging abuse, harassment, or misconduct by any person to a Fringe Theatre staff under the Fringe Theatre Safer Spaces process for the purpose of initiating an investigation and resolution process.
- **Discrimination:** A distinction, whether intentional or not, based on a characteristic or perceived characteristic that has the effect of imposing on an individual or group of individuals burdens, obligations or disadvantages that are not imposed on others, or of withholding or limiting access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other individuals in society.
- **Harassment:** Conduct or comment, either one time or repeating, that:
 - is demeaning, intimidating, threatening, or abusive;
 - causes offence and should have reasonably been expected to offend;
 - serves no legitimate purpose for the environment;
 - is a reprisal or threat of reprisal against an individual for rejecting a solicitation or advance; and
 - undermines authority or respect in the environment, limits opportunities for advancement, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Harassment includes conduct or comments, or the creation of a negative psychological and/or emotional environment that humiliates, excludes, or isolates an individual or group by focusing on their race, colour, place of origin, gender, age, marital status, religious beliefs, citizenship, mental and physical abilities, sexual orientation, or any other prohibited grounds within the Alberta Human Rights Act.

Harassment also includes bullying, which is a form of aggression that may include physical, verbal, or emotional abuse. It can include persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behavior, abuse of power, and/or unfair sanctions which make the individual feel threatened, humiliated, and/or vulnerable.

- **Sexual Violence:** Any sexual act or act of a sexual nature, or act targeting sexuality, whether physical or psychological, committed without consent. This includes, but is not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, distribution of intimate images, inducing intoxication, impairment or incapacity for the purpose of making another person vulnerable to non-consensual sexual activity, and other analogous conduct.
- **Sexual Assault:** Any form of sexual contact without consent. This can include unwanted or forced kissing, fondling, grabbing, touching, vaginal or anal penetration, or oral sexual contact.
- **Solicitation:** Any comment, behaviour, or act that can be perceived as soliciting sexual favours, or placing sexual conditions onto any person's involvement in an activity, event, promotion, or employment (paid or unpaid) opportunity.
- **Retaliation:** Taking, attempting to take, or threatening to take any adverse action or retribution of any kind against anyone involved in a report of harassment, abuse, or misconduct process. This includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, pressuring, harassment made in person, electronically, or through third parties.

MESSAGE OF WELCOME

Tatawaw: welcome, there is room. The future of theatre in Treaty 6 is equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible.

Fringe Theatre stands, gathers, creates, celebrates, and works on the lands of the Papaschase Cree. This is Treaty 6 territory. We are beneficiaries of this Treaty of peace and friendship. Today and every day we consider our responsibility as Treaty people.

In that spirit, we extend our hands and hearts to the Indigenous nations of the Cree, as well as the Nakota, Blackfoot, Dene, Saulteaux, and Metis who have made Edmonton their home long before the building of our city – and to all Indigenous people who continue to make this city their home.

We embrace the teachings of Tatawaw, a Nehiyawewin phrase meaning Welcome, there is room. In our house, everyone is welcome. Together, we are allies. We are neighbours. We are friends. We celebrate all we have been given and honour our relationships and shared connections by paying forward all that we can.

We invite you to join us in this work by extending respect and kindness to everyone you meet, supporting them in their unique artistic journey.

Come share your story with us. Tatawaw.

CODE OF CONDUCT

We ask all Fringers to adhere to and champion the following code of conduct, including any person who visits the Fringe Theatre Arts Barns, the Edmonton International Fringe™ Theatre Festival grounds or Festival partnering venue, the Fringe Grounds Cafe, and/or who represents and/or participates in a Fringe Theatre produced event.

Fringers will not participate in or condone activities that discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, place of origin, gender, age, marital status, religious beliefs, citizenship, mental and physical abilities, sexual orientation, or any other prohibited grounds within the Alberta Human Rights Act.

Additionally, you will maintain Fringe Theatre, the Fringe Theatre Arts Barns, the Edmonton International Fringe™ Theatre Festival, and all events produced by Fringe Theatre as a safe place by:

- Maintaining positive, respectful relationships with fellow community members;
- Acting with honesty and integrity, declining to participate in or condone any activities that may be considered unethical or illegal;
- Avoiding participating in or condoning activities that may put people in harm's way or risk their physical, emotional, or mental wellbeing;
- Practicing active consent when engaging in activities with others;
- Supporting people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination, with the option to report any incidents of bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination, or abuse that you witness when you are able;
- Not participating in or condoning activities that may be bullying, non-consensual, discriminatory, harassing, or violent in nature; and
- Maintaining a drug and tobacco-free environment by not utilizing such products on site.

Violation of this Code of Conduct may result in being removed from the grounds, and/or banned from participating in future activities related to Fringe Theatre or the Fringe Theatre Arts Barns.

ANTI-HARASSMENT, VIOLENCE, & DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Overview

We are committed to a respectful, safe environment free from harassment, violence, discrimination, bullying, abuse, and solicitation. All fringers are to be treated with respect and dignity. We provide opportunities for everyone to contribute and participate in all events and activities whenever possible.

Fringe is for everyone, and everyone is fringing. Activities or behaviors that discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, place of origin, gender, age, marital status, religious beliefs, citizenship, mental and physical abilities, sexual orientation, or any other prohibited grounds within the Alberta Human Rights Act will not be tolerated. You are welcome here when you engage with and uphold other fringers in a respectful, inclusive, welcoming, and safe way.

Strategy

We implement a comprehensive and evolving strategy to create and uphold safer spaces including:

- Promote positive, safe, and respectful standards and expectations for conduct;
- Provide training and education related to the prevention of harassment, violence, and discrimination, including bystander best practices;
- Audit organizational site, processes, and procedures regularly to identify and remove barriers that inhibit a person's ability to engage safely and respectfully;
- Adopt practices that protect, respect, and support people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination;
- Provide an effective and fair procedure for investigating complaints; and
- Strives to find a resolution that includes the needs of the people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination.

Offensive Attire

Community members are encouraged to be thoughtful about the attire they wear. Attire containing offensive images or words, such as hate symbols or culturally appropriative attire, is not tolerated at Fringe Theatre events or property.

Reporting

It is the responsibility of a director, manager, or any Safer Spaces Committee member within the organization supervising one or more employees/volunteers/artists to take immediate and appropriate action, reporting, and following up with any incident of harassment, violence, discrimination, bullying, or abuse that is witnessed, disclosed, or submitted. Every report must be followed up in a timely manner using the process outlined by Fringe Theatre (reporting process and guidelines outlined on page 6).

Violation of Policy

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to immediate removal from the site or event, banning from future participation in Fringe Theatre produced events or property, and/or termination of employment or position within the organization.

SAFER SPACE INITIATIVES

The following is a growing list of our initiatives to help build safer spaces.

Indigenous Innovation

Tatawaw: welcome, there is room. In mindful consultation with Indigenous leaders and artists, we are building a sustainable Innovation Program that:

- Elevates Indigenous voices and stories;
- Centers Indigenous practice; and
- Develops tools for change to support the decolonization of theatre practice.

[Read more here.](#)

Safe Walks

We are available to provide a safe escort to or from any vehicle, venue, or public transportation location within two blocks of the Festival site or Fringe Theatre Arts Barns any time an event is on. Please ask a staff or volunteer if you would like a Safe Walk escort.

Accessibility

We make every effort to ensure all fringers have equal access to the building and the events within it.

Building Accessibility

- The main entrance of the Fringe Theatre Arts Barns has powered door-openers, and all entrances are wheelchair accessible. All venues and washrooms within the building are wheelchair accessible.
- Within the Fringe Grounds Cafe, we offer a variety of seat styles, including those with a wider chair design, armless chairs, and both lower and higher chairs. If you'd like a different chair, feel free to ask our staff and we'd be happy to find an alternative. We do not have fixed tables, so you are welcome to adjust the seating and table configuration for your needs.
- Within our theatre spaces, armless chairs are available upon request.

Programming Accessibility

- All three theatre venues in the Fringe Theatre Arts Barns are equipped with T-coil hearing loops and are freely available to borrow from the Box Office;
- Fringe holds ASL (American Sign Language) interpreted performances for certain events in the Season;

- The Season also presents relaxed performances. Production elements such as lights and sounds are dampened to reduce sensory stimulation. Audience is welcome to come and go from the theatre and/or move in their seats to accommodate their own comfort;
- Fringe can connect community artists and rental clients with accessibility consultation for their events when requested.

Ticketing Accessibility

Theatre is an exchange. A living, breathing story shared among people. At Fringe Theatre, we believe in the power of story. We believe everyone has something to contribute. And we believe in making theatre accessible to everyone.

- Offer What you Will tickets are available for EVERY Fringe Theatre Season & Spotlight show. You may offer any dollar amount you're able to contribute, or you can offer other non-monetary ways of showing respect and mutual investment, such as tobacco, your own art, or a donation you feel the artist(s) will benefit from. No one will be turned away.
- When purchasing tickets, you may submit your accessibility needs, so the Fringe team can prepare ahead of time to support you in your experience.

Washrooms

- Gender inclusive, stalled washrooms are available in the Fringe Theatre Arts Barns south of the Studio Theatre and in the Backstage Theatre;
- Gendered washrooms are available in the Westbury Theatre Lobby; and
- During the Festival, all site portable toilets are single stall, all-gender.

Pronoun Pins

Pronoun pins are available for free at the Box Office all year round. Every fringer is invited to wear a pin to help other community members call one another by our pronouns.

Commitments

We believe representation within our organization will lead to greater equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility in our community. We ongoingly engage in the work to make Fringe a safer space for brave conversations and artistic risk, including upholding:

- [Our Safer Spaces program](#);
- [An Anti-Racism Commitment](#); and
- [A 35//50 commitment](#)/.

Fringe Learn

Fringe Learn is an online learning platform built to prepare, inform, and empower our community. Stories teach. Stories start brave conversations. Our courses are intentionally story-based and artistically driven. This interactive tool supports our year-round training and orientation efforts. Course offerings include courses specific to Fringe Theatre, but also offer training and professional development courses relevant circuit- and industry-wide. Online delivery allows our learners access to training independently, in advance, from any location, with accessibility built in mind from the start. Current courses include Creating a Culture of Consent, Festival Volunteer Training, and Festival staff onboarding. We are in the process of building an Anti-Racism 101 Training course.

Staff & Volunteer Training

Staff and volunteers are provided opportunity to engage with annual consent, anti-oppression, and bystander awareness training. Additionally, staff receive ongoing training throughout the year. These sessions offer staff and volunteers practical skills to recognize when and how to help when witnessing harassment, as well as how to support people who have experienced sexual violence.

OUR SAFER SPACE PLEDGE

We're happy you're here, fringer. You belong here. When you fringe with us, you join a community that is vibrant, diverse, inclusive, welcoming, and safe.

We believe in creating safer spaces that celebrate creative risk, and we're committed to creating safer spaces where community thrives. We're all in this together – thanks for being awesome.

Creating a safer space requires the commitment, accountability, and support from each person in our community. Below is our pledge making the Fringe Theatre Arts Barns and the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival safer spaces. We invite you to please join us in this commitment!

We commit to helping maintain a safe space that is inclusive to all, and will:

- Be mindful that our community is on Treaty Six land, and as such we are all Treaty persons;
- Walk side by side with our Indigenous leaders, teachers, elders, and community members as we learn to respond to the call for reconciliation in meaningful, intentional, and patient ways;
- Identify gaps and barriers in organizational knowledge;
- Take an active role in maintaining a safe and inclusive space that embraces all forms of diversity;
- Give individuals and groups who are speaking or performing our attention and respect;
- Assume a positive intent from others and listen and learn when the impact of our actions may not match our intent;
- Respect other's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual boundaries;
- Seek out support when we are in need;
- Be mindful of routes, facilities, and spaces that are designated for persons needing accessibility accommodations and avoid utilizing or blocking them;
- Use a person's pronouns;
- Use inclusive language and listen and learn when language used may have been exclusive;
- Use respectful language and a calm tone when communicating with others; and
- Engage in conversations about making our spaces more inclusive.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN SAFER SPACES

Freedom of artistic expression is a vital component of Fringe. We strongly support the spirit of the Fringe Festival by providing artists opportunities to showcase their work without jury or censor. We support artists and the choices they make on stage.

Theatre Artists

Artistic content may sometimes include language, characters, situations, and other elements that may be perceived as inappropriate, offensive, or triggering. By purchasing a ticket, audiences are opting to participate in a theatrical experience, including a diverse exploration of stories, vantage points, and delivery.

Artists may not extend this artistic policy beyond a performance. At no time may artistic expression or freedom violate any local, provincial, or federal law.

When possible, each show or event produced by Fringe Theatre provides content warnings and ratings, such as “Parental Guidance suggested,” noting the audience that may be best suited for a performance. Please note: during Festival, ratings are self identified by Artists.

Reports related to misconduct occurring during a performance or in relationship to the marketing and publicity of a show will be investigated with an understanding of the context and social cues.

Street Performers/Outdoor Artists

Street performances and busking are intended for entertainment of public audiences. Show content is held to a family friendly standard. While the content of a show may push boundaries or mildly offend, we do not tolerate discrimination or harassment within the context of a street performance.

REPORTING A DISCLOSURE OR COMPLAINT

We recognize the difference between a person disclosing information and a person filing a complaint. We respect their right to make their own decision regarding how they choose to report an incident. If public safety is a concern, we may initiate an investigation and will work closely with the person who reported the information, following their wishes as closely as we reasonably can.

Reporting

Below are the ways a person may notify Fringe Theatre of an incident and file a report.

Online Submission

Any person may file a report by completing our online submission form located at fringetheatre.ca/saferspaces.

The form outlines who will receive and read the submission, as well as options for submitting anonymously. Additionally, the person can choose whether they are disclosing information or filing a formal complaint.

Personal Statement

Any person may make a personal statement to Fringe Safer Spaces Committee Members or Security. The staff/security will walk the person through any steps required to submit a personal statement, such as whether they wish to remain anonymous, and whether they are choosing to disclose information or file a formal complaint.

Email

Any person may submit an email to our Safer Spaces committee by emailing saferspaces@fringetheatre.ca.

Please note that anonymous disclosures limit our ability to conduct a thorough investigation.

Processing a Disclosure or Complaint

A dedicated committee of Fringe Staff representatives who have been trained by third party subject matter experts in the fields of sexual violence prevention and response, by-stander training, anti-oppression, theatrical intimacy, and crisis communications. The year-round Safer Spaces Committee is

served by Megan Dart (Executive Director), Murray Utas (Artistic Director), Erin Voaklander (Director of Development), Shima Robinson (Outreach and Learning Manager). The Festival Safer Spaces Committee is served by Megan Dart (Executive Director), Murray Utas (Artistic Director), Erin Voaklander (Director of Development), Shima Robinson (Outreach and Learning Manager), Brooke Leifso (Accessibility Coordinator), and when needed Jessica Peverett (HR Manager). At times and when necessary, the Fringe Theatre Safer Spaces Committee may expand to include members of the Board of Directors, professional service representatives such as crisis counsellors, Indigenous leaders such as Elders, or other relevant community connections that might soundly, conscientiously, and kindly direct the response process from a place of care and concern.

We are not, however, professional counselors, social service responders, or mental health providers. We commit to connecting you to professional resources should you want or need them. If you need professional help or support, please access the community crisis resources listed below.

All efforts will be made to review any report within 48 hours of filing. You may also directly email any one of these individuals to submit a report.

Those persons providing their contact information or filing a formal complaint will receive follow up. Personal statements will be attended by a minimum two Fringe Theatre staff for reasons of safety and transparency.

Complaints or disclosures will be taken seriously and investigated to the extent that is reasonably practicable, using the following guidelines:

- Actions assume belief in people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination;
- Provide support and resources to persons who have experienced or been affected by the incident;
- To the best of our ability, ensure the safety and privacy of those affected by the incident;
- Respect and follow the reasonable wishes of the person who experienced assuming no others are in immediate danger;
- When necessary, create a plan for investigation and/or adjudication in collaboration with Fringe Theatre leadership, the person disclosing, and with respect for people who have been affected.
- When necessary, impose interim measures; and
- Always strive to find a resolution that includes the needs of the people who have been affected.

Fringe Theatre may consult senior management and staff, Fringe Theatre Adventures Board of Directors, representatives from community partners (such as the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton), and professional experts (such as doctors, psychologists, and lawyers), and/or in some cases, and only if absolutely necessary and/or requested by the survivor, police or emergency services. In these instances, we will strive to maintain confidentiality and anonymity as we are able.

Substantiated Reports

Substantiated reports are defined as being reasonably authenticated by Fringe Theatre.

If a report is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, as decided by Fringe Theatre. This may include, but is not limited to, formal reprimand, suspension, demotion, dismissal, removal

and/or banning from events, activities, employment, or property. Substantiated reports may or may not include engaging local authorities and/or legal action.

Additionally, Fringe Theatre may offer steps towards accountability to people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination, including but not limited to, an oral or written apology or compensation for lost wages or lost benefits.

Both parties to the incident will be advised, in writing, of the decision.

If either party to an incident believes that the report is not being handled in accordance with this policy, they may contact the Executive Director or the Artistic Director. Persons may also file a discrimination complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Resolutions

Interim measures may be imposed on a person alleged to have committed an infraction. The purpose of this is to ensure personal safety, discourage or prevent further infractions, protect confidentiality, and to preserve our ability to conduct a thorough investigation. Interim measures must be appropriate and proportionate to the seriousness of the alleged conduct, and as minimally restrictive as possible to achieve their purpose. This may include, but is not limited to removal from events, activities, or the premises for a period.

Informal resolutions may also be sought as a course of action. An informal resolution allows the participants a greater measure of control in the process and in the outcomes by having all parties:

- agree to a resolution;
- document the resolution in writing; and
- sign the resolution, demonstrating their ownership for the self-enforced agreement.

Lastly, a formal resolution may be engaged. This may be sought at any time, including if an informal resolution fails.

Privacy & Confidentiality

All parties to an incident are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all other parties involved, limiting the discussion related to the incident to those that need to know.

ACCESSING SUPPORT

Every person's journey to recovery and wellness looks different. We allow people who have experienced or disclosed harassment, violence, or discrimination to shape that journey, providing support as we are able. Below are a few resources that may be helpful. Find a complete list of resources on our website here: <https://www.fringetheatre.ca/saferspace/resources/>.

If you are in immediate danger, dial 911.

Because of systemic and institutional imbalances of power, you may not feel comfortable or welcome accessing one or more of these crisis resources. We encourage you to seek help from friends and family, a community leader, or a trusted person in your faith or field.

- **Edmonton Police Services:** 780-423-4567
- **Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE):**
 - Support & Information Line: 780-423-4121 (9am – 9pm)
 - Alberta’s One Line for Sexual Violence: 1-866-403-8000 (9am-9pm. Toll-free long distance and non-English support available)
 - Access chat at sace.ca
- **Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre (CASASC):**
 - 24-hour Crisis Line: call or text 1-866-956-1099
- **Sexual Assault Response Team (SART):** can be accessed through any emergency room in the city by checking in with the Triage Nurse and asking to see a Sexual Assault Response Team (or SART) nurse.
- **Alberta:** 2-1-1
- **24/7 Distress Line:** 780-482-HELP (4357)
- **Mental Health Help Line:** 1-877-303-2642
- **First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line:** 1-855-242-3310
- **Family Violence Help Line:** 780-310-1818
- **Kids Help Phone:** 1-800-668-6868
- **Child Abuse Hotline:** 1-800-387-KIDS (5437)
- **Children’s Mental Health Crisis Services:** 780-427-4491
- **Free Walk-In Counseling:** dropinyeg.ca