

# How to: Awareness

*No place for  
discrimination &  
violence!*



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# warning trigger

This brochure is about discrimination and (sexualized) violence. Experiences are not described in detail, but examples may be given and situations will be named as such. This could potentially trigger memories of own experiences and the evoke the feelings associated with them. As you read, you may become aware of new aspects of your own experience and possibly recognize violence as such for the first time.

Please consider what can be helpful to you in that case and take care of yourself. It might be a good idea to put down the brochure and engage in another activity such as talking to a person you trust. To continue reading and delving deeper into the topics discussed is just as valid.



If you notice something you would like for us to change, please give us feedback or express criticism through our dedicated email: [awareness@astafu.de](mailto:awareness@astafu.de).

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# **1. Introduction**

This brochure is intended to serve as a basic introduction for students and university groups to raise awareness of awareness work and clarify its importance.

As your AStA, we believe that addressing how to create the most respectful and safe environment possible for everyone should be the bare minimum. Shared spaces should be designed so that everyone can feel comfortable and their **experiences are being valued and recognized**. This brochure is intended to help convey the principles and practices of awareness work as low-threshold as possible and to promote collective responsibility in dealing with each other. However, this brochure is designed to be an **introduction**. We therefore make no claim to completeness (seriously, this brochure is anything but complete, if you actually want to do awareness work, definitely go beyond this as a team and think about your awareness concept).



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## Definition of awareness

Awareness refers to being aware of **needs, boundaries and experiences** of other people. So it's basically about creating a culture of respect and sensitivity in which discrimination and (sexualized) violence have no place.

Awareness work is important because it helps to create a safer environment in which as many voices as possible are heard and in which **those affected can find support**. It promotes solidarity and encourages everyone to actively take responsibility to ensure respectful coexistence. Through awareness, existing problems can be responded to and preventive action can be taken to promote a more positive and inclusive environment.

This brochure is intended to help you understand the basics of awareness work and develop practical approaches to implement it in your own environment.

## 2. Basics of awareness work

### Collective responsibility

Collective responsibility means that everyone has a shared responsibility to create the most respectful and safe environment possible. It's not just about a few caring for the well-being of others, but about **everyone actively contributing** to it. In a university context, this means that we support each other, pay attention to each other and advocate for everyone's interests.

Everyone has different experiences and perspectives. It would be absurd to pretend that discrimination and attacks do not take place at our university and in our communities, because they do. It is therefore important to take joint measures to counteract this. This means that we do not look the other way, but that we actively **intervene and help when people need and want our support**. This also means being willing to listen, learn and grow.

## Diversity (in the awareness team)

Diversity is a key aspect when it comes to creating a more respectful and inclusive environment at and outside of our university. (University) communities consist of people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. This **diversity is crucial** for awareness work.



A diverse awareness team can bring in different perspectives and experiences that are important for raising awareness and supporting those affected by discrimination and (sexualized) violence.

It is important that the team not only reflects the diversity of the university, but also actively works to reduce **barriers to collaboration**. This also means that people who are themselves affected by discrimination are **not just viewed as “experts” on their own form of discrimination**. Rather, they should be recognized as equal members of the team who bring in valuable perspectives and experiences. To form an effective awareness team, care should also be taken to ensure that team members work in teams of two to respect **personal boundaries and provide mutual support**.

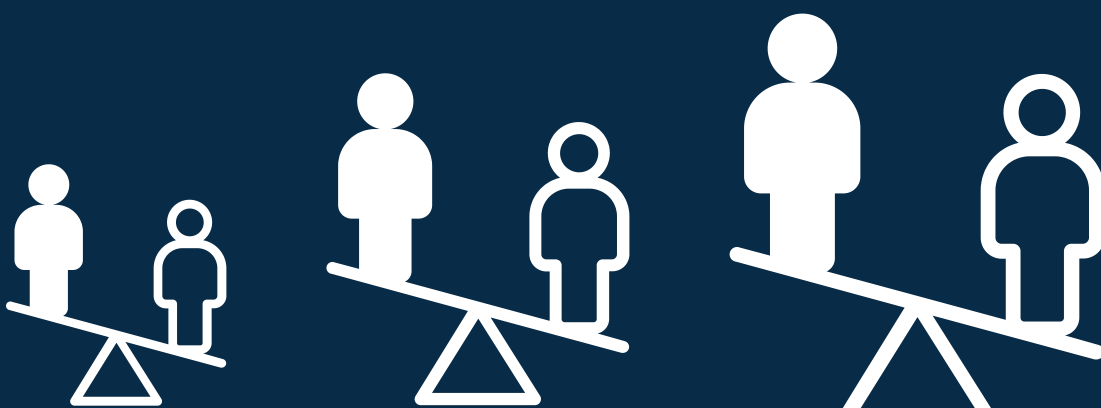


It is also important that the **size of the team** is appropriate in order to keep an eye on the self-care of the members (usual guideline: 2-3 awareness people per 100 people). Shifts should not be too long to ensure that all team members are able to perform their duties well and **do not overwhelm themselves**.

### 3. Types of discrimination

#### Levels of discrimination

**D**iscrimination is a complex phenomenon that affects our society at various levels. It arises not only through individual behavior, but is often **reinforced and maintained by social and structural mechanisms**.

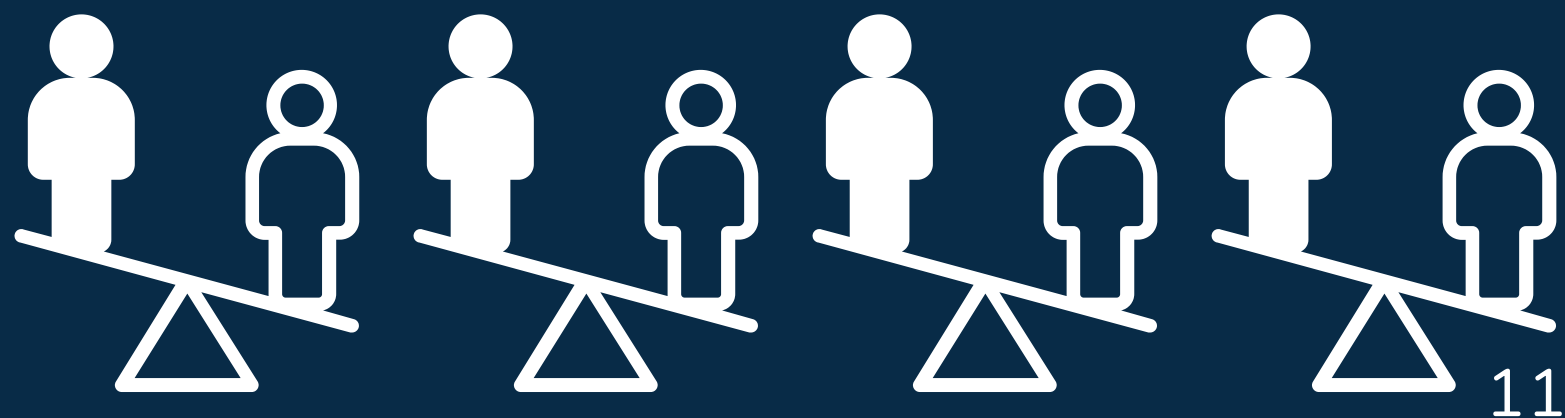


- **Individual discrimination:** This form of discrimination describes prejudices and discriminatory **behavior of individuals towards others**. This is often expressed through personal attitudes, stereotypes or conscious and unconscious prejudices against certain groups. Individual discrimination can occur, for example, in the form of derogatory comments, microaggressions or explicit disadvantages.
- **Social Discrimination:** Social discrimination is deeply rooted in the norms, values and social roles that are **considered “normal” within a culture or community**. It is reflected in the way certain groups are often viewed as “different” or “lesser.” This type of discrimination is evident in media, education, language and public opinion and can influence the thoughts and actions of an entire society.



- Structural discrimination: Structural discrimination is the most profound and elusive form of discrimination because it is **reinforced by institutional and systemic conditions**. Laws, political structures, education systems and the labor market often contain unspoken but effective mechanisms that disadvantage and exclude certain population groups.

Each of these levels contributes to the maintenance of inequality and is often difficult to separate in their effects for those affected. However, understanding these levels helps us to perceive discrimination in all its complexity and to take more targeted action against it.



# Overview on different types of discrimination

Discrimination can occur in many different forms, each with specific characteristics and individual effects on the people affected, individual experiences may vary a lot.

- **Racism:** Racism is discrimination against people based on their **ethnic origin or skin color**. This form of discrimination can manifest itself in open attacks, structural inequalities, institutionalized practices, collusion of intelligence/qualifications, ignorance and much more.
- **Sexism:** Sexism refers to **gender-based discrimination**. FLINTA: people are often affected by sexist attacks, which manifest themselves in the form of harassment, (sexualized) violence or unequal treatment.



- **Queer and Transphobia:** Queer and transphobia refers to the discrimination and devaluation of people because of their **queer identity**. This form of discrimination can manifest itself in verbal attacks, physical violence or the rejection of LGBTQIA+ people in social and professional contexts. They can also occur in social norms (e.g. in everyday and institutional contexts) that privilege heteronormative ideas. Queer: or trans: people can be queer:- or trans: hostile towards other people as well.
- **Ableism:** Ableism is discrimination against people on the basis of **disabilities or chronic illnesses**. This form of discrimination is based on the assumption that people with disabilities are worth less or should not have equal access to resources and opportunities. Ableism can be visible in both individual attitudes and structural barriers.



- **Classism:** Classism refers to discrimination based on a person's **social or economic background**. People are often disadvantaged because of these differences, for example in access to education, healthcare and other resources.
- **Age discrimination:** This form of discrimination affects people **based on their age**, whether you discriminate older or younger people. Age discrimination can manifest itself in prejudices, stereotypes and unequal treatment.
- **Anti-Semitism:** Anti-Semitism is the discrimination and devaluation of **Jewish people**. This form of discrimination is expressed, among other things, in prejudices, stereotypes, conspiracy theories and violent attacks



- **Religious discrimination:** Religious discrimination refers to discrimination against people based on their **religious beliefs or affiliation**. This form of discrimination can manifest itself in open hostility, social exclusion, institutional discrimination and stereotyping. Those affected might be verbally or physically attacked, excluded from social groups or disadvantaged by discriminatory laws because of their religion.

## Intersectionality

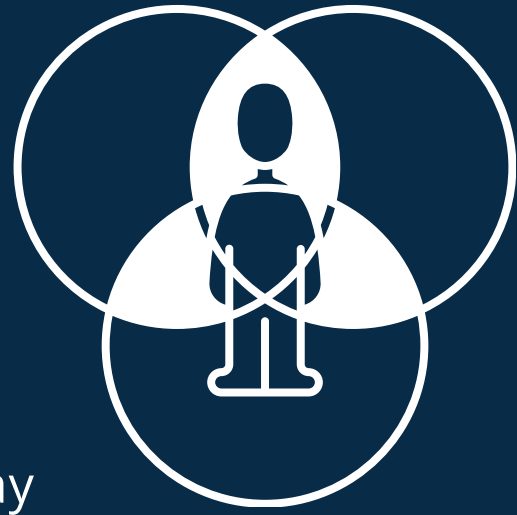
The concept of “intersectionality” refers to how different **forms of discrimination** (such as racism, sexism, classism, etc.) **intersect and work together**. It emphasizes that the experiences of people belonging to multiple marginalized groups cannot simply be viewed as additive discrimination.



Instead, the **complex interactions** of these identities and forms of discrimination needs to be understood.

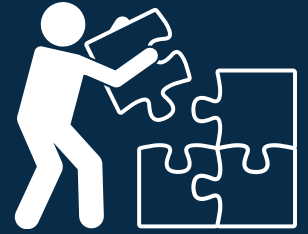
For example, FLINTA: People of color

often experience discrimination in a way that cannot be summed up from racism and sexism, but is more complex (-> Kimberlé Crenshaw).



In social discourses, marginalized groups are often **played off against each other**, which can lead to a fragmentation of solidarity. This tactic is often used to maintain balances of power by **diverting attention from shared struggles**. Instead of uniting against structural inequalities, groups are placed in competition with one another, weakening efforts toward equality and justice. It is important to recognize these dynamics and promote an **inclusive movement** that recognizes and respects our diversity of experiences and struggles.

# 4. Awareness structures at universities



## Building an awareness team

An effective awareness team at our universities should be diverse in order to **integrate different perspectives and experiences.**

Important aspects of the structure include:

- **Diversity of Members:** The team should include members from different social, cultural and academic backgrounds to represent a wide range of experiences and perspectives.
- **Training and awareness:** Ideally, team members should be regularly trained on topics such as discrimination, intersectionality and awareness work in order to develop an in depth understanding of the challenges and needs of various marginalized groups.

- **Inclusion of those affected:** It is important that people affected by discrimination are actively involved in the design and implementation of awareness measures. Their perspectives are crucial to developing effective strategies.
- **Collaboration with the event organizer:** For specific events, the organizer should work as closely as possible with the awareness team. This includes spreading the shared values and informing everyone present that there is an awareness team and how to reach it. Ideally, this should also happen before the event, for example via social media as well as at the entrance.
- **Regular evaluation:** The effectiveness of awareness work should be regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure that the needs of students are adequately taken into account. Feedback is essential here.



## Roles and responsibilities



- **Act preventively:** The team should proactively know where in their own organization as well as during events violence is most likely to happen in order to counteract this.
- **Offer support:** The awareness team offers support for those affected in order to regain their ability to act and strengthen a subjective sense of security. This includes the fact that the awareness team guarantees that it can actually provide this support (e.g. awareness shifts are only worked sober).
- **Training:** Regular training is necessary to promote an understanding of various forms of discrimination and (sexualized) violence at a structural and interpersonal level.

- **Documentation and feedback:** The team should implement a defined feedback process to continuously evaluate and develop the awareness work (ideally you should find a way to make this feedback process anonymous)
- **Clear responsibilities:** There should be clarity about who will take care of which aspects in order to improve the current situation.
- **Transparency and reliability:** Your values and awareness concept should be publicly visible in order to create trust and make it clear to those affected where they can get support.
- **External expertise:** The inclusion of external experts from different perspectives of those affected and local structures can enrich and support the work of the awareness team (awareness organizations in Berlin & support structures).



# 5. Communication and transparency

## Values and attitude

- Values such as **respect and solidarity** should be practiced on every level of our university. It is important that everyone involved supports the principles of awareness work and **actively promotes respectful cooperation.**
- **Communication** should aim to ensure that awareness is not perceived as a system of bans and restrictions, but rather as an **approach that promotes sensitive cooperation to benefit everyone.**
- **Transparency** is crucial so that those affected understand where they can receive support. Your values and awareness concept should be **publicly available in order to create trust.**

## Information for students

- Information about the awareness team and its work should be **communicated through various channels**, such as flyers, posters and information spots during events.
- These materials should be **available in multiple languages** to reach a broader audience.
- It is important that students are **informed about the structure** and responsibilities of the awareness team, including the perspectives represented on the team and the manner in which support is offered.
- **Public announcements** before and during events can also be used to increase the awareness team's visibility and inform students of available resources.



## 6. Intervention

### What should you do in the event of an incident?

- In the event of an incident, affected individuals should know that they are **not alone and support is available** to them. The team should communicate clearly how and where those affected can request support, whether through personal contact or through information materials provided.
- The awareness team should have a **crisis intervention strategy** that provides those affected with clear steps they can take. This includes allowing them to be in a **safer space**, share their experiences and enlist the support of the team. It is important that those affected know that their experiences are **taken seriously** and that they have full **control over how the situation progresses**.



- Team members should be prepared to accompany affected individuals by helping them understand their options and **make decisions that meet their needs.**

This may also include the opportunity to seek external support, such as psychological counseling or legal help, if desired. If this happens, we can point out **external support offers.**

However, it should initially be clearly communicated that when the event ends, our responsibility usually also ends.

## Active listening and support

A central aspect of crisis intervention is active listening. The awareness team should create a space where affected individuals feel safe to share their experiences. This means, among other things, that team members show **solidarity with those affected** and do not question the experience described.

- The people affected should **retain the power to define their experiences**, which means that they decide for themselves how they perceive the situation and what support they need.

For example, it can be helpful to adopt the terms a person uses to describe their situation and remain calm.

- The aim of the support provided by the awareness team is to help those affected **regain their ability to act**. This is done by increasing their self-confidence and offering them options that enable them to make informed decisions.

The team should encourage those affected to clearly **communicate their wants and needs** and ensure that these are being respected.



- Additionally, the team should be prepared to provide emotional support by giving those affected **space to express and process their feelings.**

This can be done through conversations, offering resources, or simply having an understanding person present.

- It is important that team members are aware of their own emotions and also seek support themselves in order to be able to help effectively.

Especially in situations that are **too personal for you** (this can occur, for example, when you directly remember incidents you have experienced yourself), it should always be an option to **refer the person currently affected to another person on the awareness team.**



# 7. Prevention and education

## Workshops and training

- In order to raise awareness of discrimination and (sexualized) violence, workshops and training should be offered **regularly**. These events can cover topics such as sexual violence, power relations, and forms of discrimination (the **AStA Awareness Office** is available to be contacted for these types of workshops).  
The aim is to develop a common understanding of these topics and to enable participants to react appropriately in specific situations.
- The training courses should be designed to be **interactive** in order to actively involve participants and give them the opportunity to contribute their own experiences and perspectives. This not only promotes learning, but also increases awareness of the experiences of others.

- It is important that training is not a one-off but is seen as an **ongoing process** that is regularly updated and adapted to meet people's (possibly) changing needs.

## Ressources and materials

- Resources and materials should be provided to **support awareness and education**. This includes recommendations for further literature that deals with topics such as discrimination, violence prevention and empowerment.

Books, articles and studies can help participants develop a deeper understanding of the topic.



- Additionally, **online resources and training** opportunities should be made available. This can take the form of webinars, online courses or digital information materials that are accessible at any time. Such resources allow participants to learn and engage with the topics at their own pace.
- It also makes sense to create flyers (such as this ;) ) and information sheets that contain **important information about contact points, advice and support options**. These materials should be distributed in central locations to ensure they are accessible to everyone.



## 8. Contacts

Aside from the awareness team being personally approachable, the rest of the **people on site should also be able to refer to the awareness team.**

Additionally helpful, the communication of a **specific code word** can be a good tool to make the awareness offer even lower-threshold (e.g. the sentence “Is Cleo working today?” as a synonym for “I would like support, but I don't feel comfortable sharing more details at the moment”)

### What does the AStA offer?

**Awareness point:** This is not a contact point for specific incidents, but is intended to **generally support university groups**, FSIs and students in developing their own awareness concepts.

- However, the awareness office also offers internal workshops on the topic of awareness as required. **Contact: [awareness@astafu.de](mailto:awareness@astafu.de)**

### **AStA Website:**

- First drafts for awareness concepts for FSIs and university groups (including more specific concepts or parties and first-year trips)
- Templates that are intended to point out the awareness concept at individual events (in German and English)
- An initial overview of possible contact points with support offers for those affected
- This brochure in digital form (also in English)
- An overview of right-wing symbols and codes

>what we got so far<



## 9. Glossary

- **Agency:** A person's ability to make decisions and act in their own interests. When supporting those affected, it is important to strengthen their ability to act in order to promote self-determination.
- **Anti-racist language:** A conscious use of language that avoids discrimination and prejudice based on skin color or ethnicity and instead promotes respect and inclusion.
- **Awareness:** An awareness of social inequalities, discrimination and power relations that aims to promote respectful and sensitive interaction.
- **Care work:** The often unpaid or low-paid work carried out in supporting those affected and maintaining safe spaces. This work is often carried out by FLINTA: people.

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- **Crisis Intervention:** Immediate support for individuals who have experienced a crisis or assault. This can include emotional support, information and resources.
- **Discrimination:** Unequal treatment of people based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability. Awareness work aims to recognize and combat discrimination.
- **Empowerment:** The process by which individuals regain a sense of control over their own lives and strengthen their abilities for self-determination.
- **FLINTA::** An acronym that stands for women, lesbian, inter, non-binary, trans: and agender people.
- **Power relations:** The social structures that determine how power is distributed in a society. Awareness work aims to reflect and change these conditions.

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- **Power to define:** The concept of the affected person having control over the definition of their own experiences contrasts with existing legal systems in which affected individuals often have to justify their experiences.
- **Safer Space:** A space designed to be safer for marginalized groups. This includes measures to avoid discrimination and violence and the creation a supportive environment. A totally Safe Space cannot be guaranteed. Therefore the term Safer Space is preferred.
- **Subjective safety:** A person's individual sense of safety in a particular space or context. Awareness work aims to strengthen this feeling.
- **Trauma:** Psychological and emotional reactions to stressful or painful experiences. In awareness work, it is important to understand and consider the effects of trauma on those affected.

# 10. Further resources/ contact points

## 1. *General anti-discrimination structures*

### a. **Anti-Discrimination Network Berlin (ADNB)**

The network offers support for all people who have experienced discrimination. The focus here is on discrimination based on **ethnic origin or religion** (focus: people with migration and/or refugee experiences).

> Legal support, psychosocial advice

Website: <https://www.tbb-berlin.de/Projekte/adnb>

### b. **Reach Out Berlin**

ReachOut supports victims of **racist, right-wing or anti-Semitic violence**.

> Psychosocial advice, accompaniment to offices and court proceedings, public relations.

Website: ReachOut Berlin



## *2. Advice centers for gender-specific (sexual) violence*

These agencies provide support for people of all genders, including masc and masc-presenting people, who have experienced gender-based violence or assault.

### **a. Wildwasser Berlin e.V.**

Contact point aiming to support FLINTA: people who have experienced sexual violence.

> Advice, crisis intervention, therapeutic support.

Website: Wildwasser Berlin

### **b. Tauwetter e.V.**

Tauwetter is a contact point for men and masc-presenting people who have experienced sexual violence.

> Individual counseling, self-help groups, crisis intervention.

Website: Tauwetter Berlin



### *3. Queer and FLINTAs: specific contact points*

#### **a. Queer Leben**

Queer Leben (Queer life) offers advice and therapy for the entire LGBTQIA+ community.

> Advice on coming out, psychosocial support, couples counseling.

Website: Queer Life

#### **b. GLADT e.V.**

GLADT is aimed at BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), queer people and people with experiences of migration. They offer advice in different languages and work intersectionally.

> Psychosocial advice, empowerment workshops, legal support.

Website: GLADT e.V.

### *4. Anti-racist networks*

#### **a. Each One Teach One (EOTO) e.V.**

EOTO is an association that supports black people in Berlin.



Educational offerings, empowerment workshops and advice.

Website: Each One Teach One

## **b. KOP – Campaign for those affected by racist police violence**

KOP supports all people who have experienced racist police violence. They offer legal advice and accompany those affected through the legal process.

> Legal advice, public relations, documentation of cases.

Website: KOP Berlin

