

Awareness Concept & Info

Systemchange Camp Hamburg 2022

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1. Introduction

Great to have you at Systemchange Camp Hamburg 2022 - we hope that you and everyone at the camp have a great time! In this awareness concept you will find texts that should enable you to deal with topics around awareness, discrimination, togetherness at the camp and beyond. At the same time, we would like to inform you about our work as the awareness team at the camp. We try to include as many aspects as possible - nevertheless, this topic can of course never be presented in its entirety in such a concept. We are therefore happy about criticism and feedback and hope you enjoy reading!

Note on our language: Awareness is a complex topic, and due to limited time we could not quite meet our requirements to stick to easy language. Please feel free to contact us if anything is unclear.

2. Our understanding of awareness

The term "awareness" means (in a broad sense) "to be aware, to be informed, to be sensitized to certain problems". We live in a society that is characterized by unequal power relations. People have advantages (privileges) and disadvantages (discriminates) based on certain characteristics - whether exercised intentionally or unconsciously. No human being is free of prejudice and discrimination in dealing with others. Therefore, conscious reflection on this must occur with each individual (Critical Self-Reflection).

Awareness is a concept that opposes all forms of discrimination, violence and boundary violation. Behavior that injures others or violates their boundaries, such as sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, classist or comparable assaults, will not be tolerated at the System Change Camp.

This means that awareness as a political practice must not only focus on interpersonal relationships, but also on social structures that promote or enforce discrimination and violence. Accordingly, the goal of awareness is to uncover and unlearn internalized ways of thinking and acting that have a discriminatory or transgressive effect and recreate power structures, while at the same time showing solidarity with those affected.

What this means for our work as an awareness team at the camp can be found under 4.

3. How can I contribute to awareness?

You have already taken a first important step by reading this awareness concept :)

Awareness as an approach to critical (self-)reflection and affected person support at the camp means for us that we all have the responsibility to work on ourselves and to question our own ways of thinking. For that, we've written a few sections here on relevant topics around discrimination and dominance that are far from complete, but can provide a good starting point. If you are unsure about any of the topics mentioned here, or need support or information, please feel free to contact us in the awareness tent.

3.1 Privileges, hierarchies & share of the conversation

Our world today and all areas of society are significantly shaped by unequal power relations. These operate constantly and everywhere on institutional (e.g. laws, labor market), interpersonal (e.g. exclusion, sexual harassment) and ideological levels (e.g. norms, values, culture). There are people whose particular privileges place them in a more powerful position relative to less privileged people. Examples of privileged positioning may include: white, male, heterosexual, rich, knowledge of national languages, "Western" citizenships, academic education and so on.

While having privileges does not necessarily mean actively engaging in discriminatory behavior. However, they can contribute to putting other people at a disadvantage. Often, we are only partially aware of our privileges, which makes it difficult to interact in a way that is sensitive to discrimination.

So, examine your socialization and your own positioning in society - especially in those areas where you have privilege - so that through this awareness you can be more mindful and are more able to act in discriminatory situations. We have all been confronted with generalizing prejudices in our lives. Develop mindfulness of how you reproduce these biases and be sensitive to different levels of knowledge in conversations. Your socialization also plays a role in how you behave (habitus) and how you speak. Therefore, reflect on your dominance or reticence in group situations. Let others speak, listen and respond to others. Be careful not to let your speaking portions get out of hand. Preferably use first-person statements when naming your feelings and needs, e.g.: "XY's statement hurt me. I feel the need to talk to you about this situation / I need peace or distance.". Avoid phrases already interpreted by you, such as, "Your behavior sucks."

3.2 Brave Spaces - Being Responsible for Yourself

We want to support creating Brave Spaces together. For us, this means spaces where we can be fully present: as people who have needs, who have the right to not be perfect, to start somewhere and learn, who call each other to more truth and love, who carry wounds and have caused wounds. Spaces where we know that honesty and openness are celebrated, where we support the voices that still need to be heard better, and where mistakes become occasions for learning - because we can openly address mistakes and take responsibility for our own. Spaces where we are not afraid of conflict and do not let it grow - silently or openly - beyond our capacity.

In all issues around awareness, none of us are perfect: misgendering can happen to all of us, we all occasionally misuse words, we all sometimes work beyond our capacities, don't see the needs of others or unintentionally cross boundaries. The question is - how do we deal with it when it is pointed out to us?

When others point out mistakes to you, don't get defensive right away. Take a moment, breathe deeply, and consider that the person is addressing you, is usually also a sign of trust. They trust you to be able to deal with the criticism and to change - even if this may not be reflected in their voice tone. Pay attention to your body, especially if the criticism was harsh and hurtful. You (or the other person) may be triggered - this often happens. If so, it is often good to wait to respond until you are calmer. Allow yourself the time you need, often some exercise helps. If you can't or don't want to respond right away, it usually helps to communicate when you can come back to the topic: For example, "Okay, thank you for telling me. I need a moment to process this. Can I talk to you about it again in half an hour?". At the same time, it's helpful not to expect the person who addressed you, to have the time or energy to engage with you further. In such cases, feel free to contact the awareness team.

The following questions can help you get a sense of whether we are succeeding in creating a Brave Space:

- Are we really listening to each other?
- Which voices are better heard, and which are not yet heard enough?
- Are there needs that are not being seen or heard enough?
- Are people hesitant or afraid to address mistakes - or to make mistakes?
- Are there simmering conflicts, assumptions, or group dynamics that need to come to light before they lead to hurt?
- Is there a culture where people intervene in hurtful situations? Is this encouraged?
- Do we avoid becoming defensive?
- Are we more likely to celebrate learning successes or punish mistakes?
- Do we maintain a systemic view of violent power processes, even when they appear as individual assaults?
- Do we overload the trust that exists in the group?
- Do we pay attention to our safety agreements?
- Is there an awareness that no one is perfect at facilitating such processes and that problems may not always be resolved as we would like (e.g., resource persons may also be overwhelmed)?

Source: An Invitation to Brave Space, by Micky ScottBey Jones, in: Adrienne Maree Brown, Holding Change (AK Press, 2021).

3.3 Be there for others and for yourself

If you sense that a person is not doing well or is uncomfortable, approach the person and inquire if support is wanted or if something is needed. Try to create a space where unspoken things, such as worries or fears, can be addressed or where people are given the opportunity to withdraw. Take the

pressure out of situations as much as possible and be empathetic with the people around you. Also be mindful of your own capacities. If you do not feel able to support others at the moment, rather support yourself by pointing out your impressions to other people and asking them to ask.

3.4 No Means No: Set & Acknowledge Boundaries

Be aware, anticipate and respect other people's boundaries. This is especially true in situations where you have difficulty assessing the needs of the other person. If you are unsure about another person's boundaries, ask. Don't insist on justifications or rationales but accept the needs of those around you as they are presented. You know your body best. Don't let other people tell you how you feel. Remember that you behave differently in intoxicated situations and know your own limits.

3.5 Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation can manifest itself in many ways. Basically, it is the unreflected adoption of cultural elements from socially disadvantaged groups by socially privileged groups. Often, these cultural elements are originally resistant, in the sense that they turn against the prevailing system. Accordingly, they are often associated with social repression. It happens again and again that people from privileged groups appropriate these practices for their own interests and/or for commercialization and profit, often without an understanding of the history behind them. The benefits they experience as a result are unfair to the people who cultivated and kept these practices alive under colonial and racist systems. Respect for these people requires that we confront the history of a cultural element and draw consequences from it. What that means in concrete terms can look very different.

One example of cultural appropriation is white locks, i.e. white people wearing so-called "dreadlocks," which can lead to BIPOC being triggered by them. We therefore challenge white people with this hairstyle to address white locks and other cultural appropriation. This includes, for example, wearing kimonos, bindis, warbonnets, other Afro-diasporic hairstyles, the kufiya, or certain tattoos or indigenous face paint. We do not specify what personal approach they take to this. Information on this can be found here, for example:

- <https://www.ende-gelaende.org/news/antirassistische-infomail-3/>
- <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/07/white-people-black-hairstyles/>
- <https://medium.com/@overtake/are-dreadlocks-cultural-appropriation-b2489a271601>

We all have a responsibility to establish anti-racist practices on the camp. When white people approach other white people about problematic behavior, we request there to always be a favourable and respectful interaction in order to facilitate learning processes. In such situations, white saviorism can occur, which is the advocacy of white people on behalf of people affected by racism in order to foreground their own ally status. Therefore, always be aware of your own motivation for addressing something. BIPOC that address cultural appropriation are not oversensitive, as these behaviors are often a sign of power in white people, which we reflect on and challenge.

We are aware that Cultural Appropriation is not the only way racism can manifest itself on camp. We would like to invite you to engage with other racist behaviors and structures as well. For example, here is a short introductory text on White Supremacy Culture:

- https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/museums/files/White_Supremacy_Culture.pdf

3.6 Classism

Classism is a form of structural discrimination based on social origin. Social origin is influenced by the possession of different forms of capital, for example, economic, social or cultural capital.

What is recognized as respective capital is determined by privileged people (those who possess this capital) and is subject to a bourgeois (classist) perspective. People who come from precarious backgrounds or whose behavior, or language do not conform to classist expectations experience devaluation in this process, while people with a middle/upper-class background tend to be affirmed and empowered.

In an environment like the climate justice movement, which tends to be dominated by middle/upper-class socialized people, this can lead, for example, to affected individuals feeling uncomfortable, insecure, or out of place, limiting their speech patterns, taking on unwanted tasks, or even avoiding participation.

For the camp, this means, for example, not assuming that everyone has enough money to be here in a relaxed way, not taking knowledge of academic or scene language for granted and explaining it if necessary, and also being aware of one's own positioning (and ideally also the positioning of others) and questioning it critically.

3.7 Gender and gender-appropriate language

We have learned to assign a sex or gender (such as "non-binary", "male", "female", ...) to others based on external characteristics in a split second. However, a person's gender is a complex context that is not determined by externals and often leads to incorrect assignments. It can be a very painful experience to be assigned the wrong gender. The establishment of the binary gender system that prevails today is one of the definitive tools of colonialism and patriarchy. The claim to assign a gender to other people has a long history of exploitation and violence. In German and many other languages, the "generic masculine" continues to be common practice, meaning that masculine address is assumed to be generally appropriate for all. This, too, contributes to making non-male persons less visible.

A good principle here is: You don't look at others for their gender. To avoid accidentally or negligently assigning the wrong gender to others, the following measures can help: Use the pronouns a person wants ("he," "she," "they," ...). If you are unsure, you can always resort to gender-neutral phrasing: "That person over there ..." instead of "Him over there...". Depending on your relationship of trust, asking for the pronoun can also be an option - but note that in individual cases you could also unintentionally put people under pressure to come out. Also, when addressing groups, a gender-neutral formulation is almost always the right choice: "Hello everyone..." instead of "Dear ladies and gentlemen...".

Gender and especially transition is currently staged by the right as a political battlefield. Note, therefore, that many terms sold to us as "normal" approaches to talking about gender also function as codes in other contexts: For example, talk of "biological" or "natural" gender can be used to underhand extreme ideological positions, or even to purposefully steer the conversation in a direction that allows shoulder-to-shoulder opposition to trans people.

3.8 No Shirt, No Camp

Please dress appropriately. Be in solidarity with people who cannot or do not want to show their upper body and keep your upper body covered even in warm temperatures. Keep in mind that nudity can trigger people. Touching sitting or lying surfaces with bare skin can also be perceived as unhygienic. If you are breastfeeding or are responsible for other people (e.g. children), you can decide situationally to what extent this rule applies to you.

3.9 Drug use

Pay attention to other people around you and make sure that they do not feel disturbed by your consumption. Consider possible smoke and related odors that may be perceived as unpleasant by some people. Use ashtrays and dispose of litter appropriately. Come to the action rested and sober. Other people are relying on you! Know your limit.

3.10 Sound, Photo & Film

Camp:

- In general, the SystemChangeCamp is a public gathering and should be accompanied by our own and external press.
- We try to sensitize the media regarding the security needs of activists, low-discrimination imagery and privacy.
- We would like to see silent, physically related or verbal consent obtained for close-ups of any camp participants.
- In general, it can be assumed that after filming/photographing has taken place, these recordings could be published.
- As individuals, you have the right to object to a recording at any time. Should you need assistance with this please feel free to contact us.

Special regulations:

- When filming in closed event tents, all people being captured on it must be informed in advance and asked for their permission. If the tents are open in the front, we still ask that they be handled sensitively. If there is a livestream of the event, it is important to inform everyone about it at the beginning of the event.
- The awareness tent, the BIPOC Safer Space & the tent of the contact group for people affected by sexualized violence, as well as any other explicit places of retreat, should not be photographed/filmed per se. Toilet or hygiene areas also fall under this regulation.
- When recording on the sleeping area, all people who are captured on it must be informed in advance and asked for their permission. Overall shots from outside the sleeping area, onto the sleeping area, are exempt. The private interior of tents should not be photographed anyhow.

4 The Awareness Team at the Camp

4.1 Our basic attitude

We want the camp to be a discrimination-sensitive space (Brave Space) and for all participants to feel comfortable and safe.

When people see their boundaries violated and what behavior is experienced as violence can vary greatly. The right to decide when something is considered violent or assaultive rests with the person affected by it (power of definition). We do not question what is experienced. We see the role of awareness at the camp as empathic and partisan support (solidarity with the affected and partisanship). In the sense of empowerment, we try to strengthen those affected to develop their own action strategies in dealing with discrimination, which enable them to reappropriate the situation. The point is to overcome the feeling of powerlessness and being at the mercy of others, and that personal boundaries - no matter where they lie - are perfectly acceptable. In the process, everything that is entrusted to us remains between us. The focus is on concrete support for the person concerned according to their needs.

We work together to find a solution that the affected person can feel comfortable with. Nothing will happen without the clear consent of the person concerned.

At this point we would like to point out that we as an awareness team do not have experience and knowledge in all discrimination situations. We have the claim to dismantle existing hierarchies in our own contexts and to dissolve discriminatory structures. We gratefully and reflectively accept knowledge that we do not yet have (constructive error culture).

Stress and pressure often cause us to fall back into habitual patterns. To prevent this, we pay attention to our own capacities and communicate them clearly and as early as possible. We prefer to do a little less than to go beyond our resources (self-care). We do not expect perfection from ourselves, just as we do not expect perfection from anyone else.

Thus, we want to create a space that empowers everyone at the camp through critical self-reflection to actively contribute to the prevention of discriminatory, transgressive, and violent behavior, as well as be a point of contact for those affected by these very patterns.

4.2 Support in crisis's

If you need support or somebody to listen to you and your reference group is not available or maybe not the right contact persons, we want to be there for you if possible. Our approach is to remain focused on your concerns, you are right for the time being and we try to support you in your most urgent needs – whatever they are. We will contact other people only to the extent that you request.

Should it be necessary to make further decisions in emergencies and to exclude people from certain rooms, for example, we will arrange contact with the respective mandated groups. We as an awareness team have no sanctioning power ourselves. Within the camp there will be a Deli meeting of all structures every morning. If you demand consequences for the perpetrator(s) due to strongly transgressive behavior such as violence, we will take this demand to the Deli Plenum in a partisan way. The final decision on whether to impose sanctions rests there.

Sometimes we are not the right contact persons - be it because of a lack of expertise, our own privilege or because we lack the emotional resources. In these cases we will try to help you to get support elsewhere: We can put you in contact with specialists and keep a direct line to AntiRa-, FLINTA*- and OutOfAction-groups on the camp.

4.3 Awareness tent & how to reach us

The location of the awareness tent will be communicated at the info point. The awareness tent has several functions. It serves as a first point of contact for all people who have had discriminatory or transgressive experiences and want support, in whatever form. For this purpose, there will also be a place to retreat. Furthermore, the awareness tent serves as a contact point for all people who want to deal with the topic of awareness, e.g. have questions or uncertainties, or also have impulses for a conscious cooperation at the camp.

The tent will be occupied from 9:00 to 21:00. You can recognize people who are doing an awareness shift by their pink armband. Outside these hours or if you are not able to come to the tent, you can reach us by phone, the Number will be on the awareness flyers at all Important Points. For topics without time urgency, you can also mail us at campawareness2022@riseup.net.

4.4 Presence in plenums

If we have free capacities, we will try to show presence in plenums. You are also welcomed to approach us if you feel that you could use our support in the plenary. We would then at least sit in as silent listeners - which role we can take over beyond that, we must discuss in advance in each individual case.

4.5 Feedback

Even awareness persons make mistakes and the structures we have thought about here are not perfect and can be improved. Therefore, we are looking forward to feedback, wishes, needs etc. from the movement. We can't guarantee that we will be able to fulfill them on site, but we will definitely take them with us and discuss them in the reflection period at the latest.

Feedback can be left in the awareness tent, given verbally to awareness people (if they have capacity) or sent to us by mail. Feedback can also be put in our mailbox at the info point. We discuss the feedback at our daily internal awareness plenaries, collect it, and make it available to the movement along with our learning experiences after the camp, e.g. via the EG & System Change Camp email distribution lists.

5. Connections with other groups

5.1 Antira (anti racism) at the Camp

This year there will again be a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) SaferSpace, organized among others by the Antira-AG Berlin. The Antira-AG will be on site with an info tent next to the awareness tent and will provide a shuttle for BIPOC. You can reach us at the support number 015206706605. We would like all participants to have read the "Instructions for an anti-racist approach in the Ende Gelände action 2022 in Hamburg", which are available on the EG website or on site at the Antira tent.

5.2 Contact group for persons affected by sexualized violence

The contact group supports affected persons in the sense of solidary partisanship and tries to restore their power to act. In doing so, the contact group acts according to the principles of transformative justice and is prepared to accompany longer support processes. The working method is described in detail in the new guidelines for dealing with sexualized violence in EC. This will be available in the Awareness Tent and is also available online on the EG website. Our FLINTA* mail address ansprechgruppe_flinta@ende-gelaende.org can be contacted by affected FLINTA*, and the mail address is exclusively maintained by FLINTA* persons. On the camp the contact group works closely together with the awareness group, supports the awareness shifts and is also contactable in the awareness tent.

You can also reach us directly by phone: +49 157 898 069 50.

5.3 Out of Action Care

The out of Action Group will be holding Info Sessions on Wednesday and Sunday. More Infos at the camp.

5.4 Morning Deli Plenaries

When decisions become necessary that we on the Awareness Team cannot or do not want to make for everyone, we turn to the Deli Plenums on camp. An example of this would be in emergency sanctions (see under "Support in Crisis").