

Basic rules for respectful
interaction

Values compass



Introduction to the Values Compass

This year's conference is themed "Caring for the Future: Why Psychosocial Work is Essential for Social Cohesion." In a time of growing social tensions and increasing uncertainty, we aim to create spaces where mutual care, solidarity, and respectful interaction are fostered. The conference aims to be a place where diversity is valued, vulnerability is acknowledged, and collaborative action is enabled.

To ensure that this concern is not only evident in our themes but also in our interactions, we are establishing common agreements on principles and rules of conduct for BAfF e. V. events with this Values Compass. Our goal is to create the safest and most respectful space possible for all participants and ensure that discrimination, harassment, or exclusion are not tolerated.

Attitude and practice as part of the conference

As an organization, we are committed to upholding human rights. We focus on the right to life, physical integrity, and access to protection, support, and health—especially for people seeking refuge in Germany.

We understand psychosocial work as a socially relevant practice that actively promotes solidarity, participation, and social justice. We advocate for a shared responsibility of all sectors of society toward refugees and those exposed to structural exclusion, discrimination, or violence. This responsibility

does not end at professional or institutional boundaries—it demands our individual thinking, our individual actions, and our individual attitudes.

At the same time, we recognize that we, too, are part of social power relations. Our perspectives, decisions, and working methods are shaped by our own socialization, institutional structures, and social norms. We are in an ongoing process of critically reflecting on and further developing our attitudes and practices with regard to diversity, participation, and discrimination-sensitive action.

As organizers, we know that discrimination and exclusion can occur even in well-intentioned or professional contexts – sometimes unintentionally, but still effectively. Therefore, we strive to create spaces where contradictions can be visible, learning is possible, and change can be shaped together. We acknowledge the perspectives of people who experience discrimination and respect their right to interpret the incidents they experience. It is crucial to give credence to these experiences – even when they are disconcerting or challenging.

For us, this path reflects our sense of responsibility – it's not a final destination, but an ongoing process. This year, we are being supported by external process facilitation to develop a Code of Conduct as part of a long-term Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) process that remains flexible and can adapt sustainably to our experiences and organizational developments. Feedback, perspectives, and suggestions from participants are very valuable for this learning process and are expressly welcome.

In this sense, we see this year's conference not only as a professional exchange, but also as a sociopolitical space – a place where social responsibility can be shared, self-reflection encouraged, and solidarity-based action tested.

Validity and applicability

The Values Compass is a voluntary commitment by the organizers and employees of BAfF e. V. At the same time, we call on all participants and contributors to respect and implement the formulated principles.

The Compass of Values is a shared commitment – for us as organizers, as well as for all participants and contributors. We strive for a climate of openness and respect – and we take responsibility when this is threatened. Should boundaries be crossed, we reserve the right to take measures to protect everyone involved – up to and including exclusion from the event.

Basic rules for respectful interaction

Mindful and discrimination-critical conversation behavior

1. We speak to each other respectfully and pay attention to our choice of words.
2. We accommodate different language levels, perspectives, and levels of experience. This means we actively listen, let others finish speaking, and strive to speak clearly and approachably.
3. We ensure a balanced speaking time so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute – regardless of language, previous knowledge or speaking style.
4. We recognize that communication can be different for neurotypical and neurodivergent people. We respect these differences and create space for everyone to express themselves in their own way. Mindfulness and respect are central to this.

Dealing with personal experiences and confidentiality

1. We only share personal experiences with your explicit consent. Content from protected spaces (e.g., personal conversations) remains there.
2. We act according to the “Chatham House Rule”: Content from inputs, panels and public discussions may be shared – but personal quotes or experiences may only be shared with the express consent of the person concerned.
3. We treat the contents of confidential conversations with the utmost care and only pass them on with the express consent of the person concerned.*1

Discrimination-sensitive language

1. We strive to use language that is respectful, inclusive and gender-sensitive.
2. We respect the names and pronouns chosen by people and use them naturally and respectfully.

Discrimination has no place

1. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination, including any form of racism, anti-Muslim racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, ableism, queerphobia, transphobia, lookism, classism, or any other form of discrimination—whether overt or subtle.
2. This also explicitly applies to supposedly “humorous” or “not meant that way” statements or actions.
3. We identify discrimination as a structural problem: it does not only arise from individual behavior, but is deeply rooted in social structures and power relations.
4. We recognize that racism affects people who are socially racialized and disadvantaged – white people are privileged in these power relations.

Taking the perspectives of those affected seriously

1. We take it seriously when people report discrimination or violations of boundaries – what matters is the effect, not the intention.
2. We respect that speaking out about discrimination requires courage and serve to protect, bring visibility and change – not to provoke.
3. We listen, do not question, and treat people with respect when they raise the issue of discrimination.

Self-reflection instead of defense

1. We recognize that we can all make mistakes. What matters is how we deal with them.
2. We are open to feedback and ready to learn from it.
3. We do not tolerate appropriation of those affected.
4. We do not expect those affected to share their experiences or provide information.
5. We take responsibility for our own learning.
6. We can contact the awareness team if we have any questions.

Retreat room (Rückzugsraum)

1. We can use the retreat room when we need peace and quiet, feel overwhelmed, want to gain distance, or seek a safe place. Support is available at any time, but we can also use the room on our own if we wish.
2. We use retreat room responsibly.

Emotions have space

1. We pay attention to emotional stress, especially in conversations about topics such as flight, violence or racism.
2. We do not evaluate or relativize personal reports.

Photos and videos

1. Anyone wishing to make or publish recordings must obtain express consent beforehand.
2. Red dots on name tags mean: no photos/videos.

Documentation with responsibility:

1. Participants may take photos of the podium or speakers – not of the audience or protected spaces.

Support from the Awareness Team

This conference is supported by an awareness team that is available at any time – for example, if you experience discrimination, boundary violations, abusive behavior, or if you feel uncomfortable for any reason. The organizing team is available to support you as well.

Retreat room and Awareness Team

We offer a retreat room during the event, which is open to all participants—a safe space to relax, gain some distance, or gather oneself. The awareness team will be present as a contact person and attentive to the needs of those in the room. Support is available at any time—but only if expressly requested.

Terminology: Forms of discrimination

In a non-hierarchical count and not conclusive.

Racism: A structural power relationship that hierarchizes people along racialized categories and systematically privileges white people. Racism operates historically and institutionally—regardless of individual intent.

Anti-Black racism: Racism that devalues, dehumanizes, and structurally disadvantages Black people based on their skin color. It is deeply intertwined with colonial history, slavery, and current power relations.

Antigypsyism: A form of racism that systematically devalues, excludes, and criminalizes Sinti and Roma. Antigypsyism has historical, media, and institutional effects—often through stereotypical images such as "poverty," "criminality," and/or "nomadicism."

Anti-Muslim racism: Often a form of racism that generally devalues, criminalizes, or constructs Muslims or people perceived as Muslim (e.g. because of skin color, origin, headscarf) as "foreign" – often linked to colonial and security policy narratives.

Antisemitism: Hostility towards Jews based on centuries-old, often religiously and racially charged prejudices – for example, in the form of conspiracy theories, attributions of guilt, or collective responsibility.

Cultural imperialism: The attempt to assert one culture as superior and universal, while devaluing or suppressing other cultures. This is particularly evident in Western dominance, which is often viewed as the global standard and marginalizes non-Western, including postcolonial and Eastern European, knowledge systems and ways of life. Cultural imperialism operates through the imposition of Western norms, values, and practices, often crowding out the diversity of other cultures.

Sexism: Discrimination based on (assigned) gender, usually to the detriment of FLINTA* (women, lesbians, inter, non-binary, trans and agender people), supported by patriarchal power relations.

Queerphobia: Discrimination against people who do not live heterosexually or do not conform to cisgender norms – targets ways of life beyond the binary and heteronormative order.

Transphobia: Specific form of queerphobia directed against trans*, non-binary or gender non-conforming people – manifested in disregard for identities, exclusion, pathologization or violence.

Ableism: Devaluation and exclusion of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses, based on the assumption of a "normal" body or mind – deeply interwoven with productivity and performance logics.

Neurodivergence: Neurodivergence refers to neurological functioning that deviates from the "neurotypical" norm—for example, in the case of autism, ADHD, or dyslexia. Neurodivergent people often experience discrimination because their ways of thinking and perceiving are viewed as "deviant" or less valuable, which makes their inclusion and participation in society more difficult.

Lookism: Discrimination based on physical appearance, especially body shape, size or attractiveness – is based on societal beauty norms and leads to social exclusion and structural barriers.

Sizeism / Fat shaming: Discrimination against people based on their body weight or size, especially overweight or obese – leads to stigmatization and disadvantage in areas such as health and social interactions.

Classism: Discrimination based on social origin or position – particularly affects people from poverty-stricken or non-academic backgrounds and has an impact on education, language, habitus or access to resources.

Ageism: Devaluation or exclusion of people solely on the basis of their age – affects both young and old people, for example through stereotypical ideas about performance, competence or need.

Disclaimer

- The awareness team will do everything within its power to support people during the event and respond appropriately to incidents.
- It cannot guarantee complete protection, legal consequences or the complete resolution of every incident.
- The work of the Awareness Team does not replace police investigations, medical assistance, psychological support or legal advice.
- All measures are taken to the best of our knowledge and belief, voluntarily and without legal obligation.
- Incidents are documented anonymously. In cases involving criminal offenses, we reserve the right to involve the event management or—in particularly serious cases—the relevant authorities.

*1 In cases of acute danger, the team may be obliged to inform other parties (e.g. organizers, security services or police).