

Safer Space Policy, Santropol Roulant

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(I) Statement of Intent

Community engagement and valuing people as gifts are principles at the heart of Santropol Roulant. These key values depend on cultivating a sense of belonging in our space, as well as honouring and respecting each member in their difference and nuance. Honoring each individual means protecting their integrity and ensuring that their dignity is respected and preserved at all times. Santropol Roulant places responsibility on all of its members to preserve a safer space, and seeks to create an environment of continual reflection on the ways that one's behaviour can impact others. As a result, Santropol Roulant's safer space policy attempts to educate, foster safe space and create an environment without harassment¹.

Santropol Roulant is a learning space that also values personal growth, curiosity and play as essential to its dynamism and productivity; it is a space where conflict may exist and discomfort may be occasionally present. All members participating in the space must be open to understanding the role that their behaviour has on others. No one should be personally attacked for their words or actions, however one's words or actions may be critiqued insofar as they relate to harassment, bullying, or discrimination that jeopardize our commitment to safer space. Being a part of a diverse community requires everyone to monitor themselves, remain open and curious about others and seek to understand how others define respect, making every effort to accommodate them in order to preserve individual dignity.

This policy is written on the premise that, in general, people are drawn to our work with good intentions and a spirit of inclusion. This policy recognizes the difference between good will and a refusal to acknowledge and repair harm. We want those who share in our values of inclusion to develop a greater understanding, and to learn and find ways to engage with our work that does not unintentionally disrespect, diminish or harm others. This policy asks that people look inward even when they have good intentions, and to remain open to learning about how they can best contribute to the aims of this policy: ensuring a space for our community free of disrespect, discrimination and harassment.

¹ For definitions of harassment found on [page 3](#)

(II) Definitions

Staff Members

Staff are defined as current employees of Santropol Roulant, including full and part-time, casual, contract, work shares, permanent and temporary employees.

General Members

Members are defined as all participants in Santropol's activities as outlined in our bylaws, and include staff in addition to volunteers (for any activity), clients (in any of our programs) and donors. This policy also applies to visitors, such as tour participants, delivery personnel or technicians.

Committee Members

Committee Members are defined as those who have been named in this policy or nominated and selected by the committee to take part in the Committee on Safer Space at Santropol Roulant. The committee on harassment will be composed of the following members:

- The Director of Human Resources, and in their lieu, the Executive Director
- A member from the Board of Directors
- A permanent member of staff

The committee shall also create space for members at large and visiting members to take part in the committee's work. Other members of the committee can be named and appointed including:

- A representative from the Board of Directors
- A permanent member of staff
- Temporary staff of the roulant (interns or contract workers)
- Community members (volunteers, donors or clients)

Those wishing to take part in the committee should demonstrate the following:

- Commitment to the principles of non-harassment and non-discrimination
- Knowledge of and interest in policy, law and conflict resolution
- Enthusiasm to receive training and engage members on issues of inclusion and safer space

Harassment

Harassment is defined as offending or humiliating someone physically or verbally; threatening or intimidating someone; or making discriminatory or unwelcome jokes or comments about someone's race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, marital status, family status, socioeconomic status, physical or psychological

disability or pardoned conviction. Harassment can occur in person, however it can also take place online, through email, text and social media.

Psychological Harassment

Psychological harassment is defined as comments, gestures or behaviour that is vexatious, hostile, unwanted and repetitive in nature, and that affects a person's dignity and integrity. Vexatious behaviour is humiliating, offensive or abusive for the person on the receiving end. It injures the person's self-esteem and causes them anguish. It exceeds what a reasonable person considers appropriate within the context of their relations with others. Considered on its own, a verbal comment, a gesture or a behaviour may seem innocent however it is the accumulation of numerous gestures when taken together can constitute psychological harassment. However a serious isolated act could be considered harassment. Examples of psychological harassment may include mocking, teasing, insulting or intentionally annoying behaviors.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is defined as offensive or humiliating behaviour that is related to a person's sex or gender; behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, unwelcome, hostile or offensive environment; or behaviour of a sexual nature that could reasonably be thought to put sexual conditions on a person's job, volunteering opportunity, access to services or organizational membership. Sexual harassment is also defined as unrelenting invitations, gestures, looks or behavior in spite of an established lack of consent or interest; they could be considered harassment even if the victim did not clearly express their refusal. Sexual harassment harms a sense of bodily autonomy, freedom from inappropriate intrusions into personal space, comments on people's bodies or body parts, uninvited touching, unwanted allusions and innuendo to sex and sexuality, and any other intrusion or suggestion about a person intended to coerce, objectify, or silence. This policy also groups transphobic harassment under sexual harassment: intentionally misgendering, transphobic language, intrusive questions meant to humiliate or other, as well as sexual harassment that targets trans and non-binary persons specifically are instances of sexual harassment as defined by this policy.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as a deliberate act to hurt, insult or threaten another person. There is often an imbalance of power in the situation, such as senior members exerting hurtful or coercive influence over new staff, volunteers, donors or clients. Bullies exert control over other people either by intimidating them, harassing them, threatening them or humiliating them. Bullying is also of a repeated, intentional and malicious nature and is often ongoing. While the tactics may vary from incident to incident, bullying targets the same people over and over with the purpose of hurting or diminishing them in some way. Bullying also poses a threat of serious emotional or

physical harm, and includes sabotaging work, withholding key information, targeting, gossiping, pestering, spying, stalking or tampering with an individual's personal effects.

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as unfair or preferential treatment, in any of its activities or operations, in regards to race, colour, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services or opportunities. Intentionally discriminating against someone constitutes harassment as defined by this policy.

Microaggressions

A microaggression is a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group which faces discrimination as defined above. Microaggressions are regularly experienced by members of marginalized groups, and these contribute to a hostile environment for those who are victims of it. Regular and repeated microaggressions, in spite of being unintentional, subtle or indirect may constitute psychological harassment, especially once they have been named and still continue to happen. All members are expected to be open to learn what constitutes a microaggression and be open to learning and changing words, gestures or actions identified as such.

Safer Space

A safe space is a place where all within it can comfortably express themselves, and take care of those around them without fear. Safer spaces cannot simply be achieved once and for all. Cultivating a safer space is an ongoing process and a daily responsibility of the entire Santropol Roulant community. It is a standard we must all uphold together by identifying risks, and speaking out even when we are not personally involved, offended and targeted. By looking out for ourselves and one another from a place of care, we create a culture for accountability, maintain a spirit of care, and build a stronger community.

Conflict

Conflict is defined as mutually competitive or opposing action or engagement. Normative conflict exists in situations where people have different ideas, strategies or expectations for how things should be done. This can include disagreements, arguments, debates, and refusals to engage between two people, or two or more groups of people. When a conflict occurs, both people involved have the same range of influence. Conflict also occurs in a climate that is mutually respectful and in good faith even though there is disagreement about a given course of action.

Conflict may also emerge between supervisors and those they are supervising, such as between directors and other staff, managers and those they supervise, volunteers and those coordinating them, between clients or customers and coordination staff, and between staff and collective members. Examples of conflict can emerge in situations regarding adherence to

policy, performance standards, presence, health and safety, contract obligation, as well as related to the coordination of job descriptions and functions.

Conflict is not synonymous with harassment, but can feel threatening especially to individuals that dislike conflict. All members of Santropol Roulant are invited to reflect on the difference between harassment and the conflict that emerges where differences exist and cause frustration, uncertainty and disagreement. Conflict can be uncomfortable, however, it can also be a source of creative solutions, clear objectives and the opportunity to better collaborate.

Conflict has indicators that distinguish it from harassment. When individuals experience conflict, they are likely to experience remorse and take responsibility for their actions; they may want to solve the problem so that they can continue working, volunteering, contributing or engaging with our shared projects; they may be intent on finding some type of solution or agreement so that the relationship can be restored again. Conflict happens occasionally and in most cases will not be serious or emotionally damaging to either person.

(III) Application and Objectives

Harassment in any form is not tolerated at Santropol Roulant, and all organizational members above are bound to respect this policy. Harassment includes bullying, psychological, sexual or discriminatory harassment as defined above. Any member found to have harassed another individual may be subject to disciplinary action. This includes any member who: interferes with the resolution of a harassment complaint; retaliates against an individual for filing a harassment complaint; or files a harassment complaint in bad faith with the intention to cause harm to any other member. This policy applies to all behaviour that is in some way connected to any activity of Santropol Roulant, on its premises downtown or at the farm in Senneville and including but not limited to off-site meetings, training, retreats, events, deliveries, and other related activities.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All parties involved in a harassment complaint or reporting process are held to respect the privacy and confidentiality of all other parties involved, and therefore must limit the discussion of a harassment complaint to those directly involved in the complaint process. Santropol Roulant and all individuals involved in the harassment complaint process will comply with all requirements of the Privacy Act to protect the personal information of all parties involved.

Anonymity

The committee acknowledges the discomfort and fear associated with making a complaint of harassment against another community member, however harassment complaints cannot be filed anonymously.

Our community is quite small and most members know one another well. Because of the scale of our organization, harassment complaints once filed risk indirectly disclosing the identities of the parties (for example in substantiated complaints). There may also be instances where the complaint, if once investigated is deemed true, would require immediate and definitive action from the committee, especially if the event or situation presents a risk to other members of the community. Finally, anonymous complaints or reports that are not linked to any person (witness, victim, accused) are challenging to investigate. Complaints filed against someone without allowing them the opportunity to know their accuser, as well as what they are being accused is neither fair nor just, as all members have a right to safe space free from gossip and bullying. This said, the policy is written with a focus on accommodating victims of harassment wherever possible.

Starting a Conversation

All members are encouraged to use their bystander status to support or speak up for people who are experiencing harassment, bullying or discrimination. While not every member will feel safe to comment or intervene for a variety of factors, reporting to the Committee can alleviate the pressure of directly intervening in a situation out of discomfort while respecting others' privacy. The responsibility of reporting should be equally borne by witnesses, bystanders and those experiencing harassment. Members should not feel they are policing others by reporting, rather that they are contributing to the health and sustainability of our community in creating a safer space.

Maintaining Accountability through Incident Reporting

Reporting incidents to the Safer Space Committee will not necessarily trigger an investigation. Reporting will allow the Committee to monitor incidents, offer guidance and intervene where necessary. The Committee will work with members of the community who have been mentioned in multiple reports by "calling them in," instead of "calling them out" to preserve their dignity. In order to grow together, the Committee will seek to work with members who are unintentionally harassing, bullying or discriminating, and hold intentional behaviour accountable.

Membership Responsibilities and Expectations

Santropol Roulant is responsible for: providing all members a harassment-free and safer space. To this end, there is a standing committee in place: the Committee on Safer Space, headed by the Human Resources Director at Santropol Roulant.

Under the guidance of the Human Resources Director, the Committee on Safer Space is responsible for the following duties:

- To promote safer space as defined by this policy.
- To review and update the policy on a regular basis in accordance with the Act respecting Labour Standards in Québec; in the interest of a healthy and safe working environment

for all organizational members; and to ensure that this policy meets the needs of the organization.

- To provide support and guidance to members with questions or concerns about the policy.
- To educate all members on issues related to harassment in its many forms, as well as bullying and discrimination.
- To develop strategies, tools and communication materials that promote the creation of a safer and inclusive space for all of our community members.
- To receive and investigate reports and complaints about harassment.
- To guide parties through the processes outlined in the policy.
- To make determinations and, in the instance of substantiated claims, determine appropriate remedies and corrective action.
- To ensure that this policy is applied in a timely, consistent and confidential manner.

All members of the organization are responsible for: treating others with respect in the workplace; reporting harassment to the Committee on Safer Space; cooperating with a harassment investigation; and respecting the confidentiality related to the investigation process.

Staff and board members of the organization have additional responsibilities: fostering a harassment-free work environment and setting an example about appropriate behaviour in so far as this policy is concerned; communicating the process for investigating and resolving harassment complaints made by staff and other members; responding to harassment situations immediately upon becoming aware of them, whether or not a harassment complaint has been made; complying with actions during a harassment investigation by the Committee, including separating the parties of the harassment complaint, when appropriate; and ensuring harassment situations are dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner. Staff and board members are held to the highest standards for ensuring a safer space, and as such we have a zero tolerance policy for staff and board members for harassment, bullying or discrimination. Transgressions from staff or board members will result in the swiftest and most serious consequences defined by this policy for violations.

All members can expect: to be treated with respect in all of Santropol Roulant's spaces and activities; that reported harassment will be dealt with in a timely, confidential and effective manner; to have their rights to a fair process and to confidentiality respected during a harassment investigation; and to be protected against retaliation for reporting harassment or cooperating with a harassment investigation; to sign their written consent adhering them to the contents of this policy and commitment to making a safer space.

(IV) Harassment Complaint Procedure

Complaint Process & Timeline

Filing Complaints

Complaints should be made as soon as possible, but no later than within one year of the last incident of perceived harassment, unless there are circumstances that prevent someone from doing so. Delays of reporting may lead to missing or unknown information, as well as difficulty locating witnesses or accused offenders. Santropol Roulant will accommodate delays in reporting, especially in cases where victims of violence and harassment do not report due to factors such as shame, trauma or fear of reprisals.

Autonomous, Parallel Process

Victims of harassment may choose to go to the police with a complaint. In spite of the outcome of that external process, community members may choose to file a complaint in parallel internally, or not. The complaint process is also autonomous from any recourse offered externally. For example, the police may fail to substantiate a complaint; however this decision does not supersede or belie the possibility of victims filing a complaint under this policy based on definitions as outlined above.

Mediation and Investigation

All parties implicated in a complaint process will be notified that the Committee on Safer Space has begun a review of the case within 5 business days of receiving the report. Every effort will be made to resolve harassment complaints within thirty days. In some instances, deliberation may take more time in which case the committee will notify both parties of the length and reason for the delay. Wherever appropriate and possible, the parties to the complaint will be offered mediation prior to proceeding with a harassment investigation. If mediation is deemed inappropriate by either party, or if the claim of harassment is serious, flagrant or deemed such without question, a harassment investigation will be conducted immediately. If either party to a harassment complaint believes that the complaint is not being handled in accordance with the process outlined in this policy, they are within their right to contact the Board of Directors.

Filing a Complaint

Any member of Santropol Roulant may lodge a harassment complaint by contacting the committee at saferspace@santropolroulant.org, or addressing one of the members of the committee listed in the appendices. The complaint may be verbal or in writing. If the complaint is made verbally, the committee member contacted will record the details provided by the member. The member issuing the complaint should be prepared to provide details such as what

happened; when it happened; where it happened; how often and who else was present (if applicable).

The committee is responsible to inform the person against whom the harassment complaint has been made, in writing. The letter will also provide details of the allegations that have been made against them. The committee must confirm the reception of the written complaint which may require contacting the person by phone or speaking to them in person.

Mediation

Mediation allows both parties to discuss and come to greater understanding of intentions, to clarify miscommunication and to state desired outcomes in a safer and facilitated environment. However mediation is both voluntary and confidential. It is intended to assist the parties to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution to the harassment complaint. The mediator will be a neutral person who is not a member of the Committee on Safer Space, as this committee will investigate the complaint, provided mediation does not resolve it sufficiently. Each party to the complaint has the right to be accompanied, and assisted, during mediation by a person of their choosing in addition to the neutral third party facilitating the process.

Victim Accommodation

In instances where a harassment complaint is lodged, the committee will make every effort to include the victim to the greatest extent possible to preserve an environment of safety. This includes how and when we disclose the identity of offenders in substantiated claims, how we determine the consequences, and other accommodations to facilitate the process to enhance comfort and safety insofar as is possible. The committee acknowledges that unsubstantiated claims often lead to backlash, gossip and discomfort; as such, the committee is staked on minimizing these effects, in an effort to support members who experience harm.

Investigation

All complaint investigations will be handled by the Committee on Harassment, in consultation with government, legal, or external resources if deemed necessary. In some cases, an external consultant or third-party investigator may be brought on for this purpose. The investigator will interview the complainant, the accused and any witnesses that have been identified. All people who are interviewed will have the right to review their statement, as recorded by the investigator, to ensure its accuracy.

The investigator will prepare a report that will include:

- a description of the allegations;
- the response of the person the complaint was made against;
- a summary of information learned from witnesses (if applicable);
- and a decision about whether, on a balance of probabilities, harassment did occur.

This report will be composed by or submitted to the Director of Human Resources and the Committee on Harassment. Both parties to the complaint will be given a copy of the report. In the case of unsubstantiated claims, all investigations will cease.

Substantiated Complaints

If a harassment complaint is substantiated, the Committee on Harassment will decide on an appropriate course of action after consulting with the victim. The severity of response will be based on the complexity of the case, the duration of the harassment, the intentions and cooperation of the offending party or parties, the vulnerability of the parties in relationship to one another, the desired outcome of the harmed party or parties, and the number of individuals involved.

Remedies and corrective actions for the community member who was harassed may include:

- An oral or written apology;
- A plan, or course of action to repair harm or change behaviour;
- An admonishment: an official letter of reprimand;
- A “no contact” or “no communication” directive;
- A short suspension
- Suspension of membership or, in the case of staff, dismissal

Both parties will be advised in writing of the outcome of the decision regarding remedies, corrective actions and their respective timelines.

Appeals

Any member who is not satisfied with the outcome of the harassment complaint process may file a discrimination complaint with the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse.

Communication of Case Outcomes

In the instance of substantiated claims, the Committee will be responsible for sharing information with the broader community on substantiated claims in a manner that preserves the anonymity of the claimant, while respecting the confidentiality of the nature of the case. The name of the accused may be shared in the interest of both the community’s and the victim’s safety, as well as in an effort to maintain transparency and accountability of the committee’s work.

In the instance of unsubstantiated claims, the committee will be responsible for sharing information and the decision of the committee with both parties in a manner that preserves the anonymity of the claimant, while respecting the confidentiality of the nature of the case.

(VII) Policy Review

Santropol Roulant will review this policy and procedures on an annual basis, or as required, and will make necessary adjustments. All changes are subject to board approval as outlined in our bylaws. Inquiries about the policy, as well as feedback or concerns can be made with any member of the committee or by messaging saferspaces@santropolroulant.org.

(V) Appendices