

ANTI-OPPRESSION POLICY

(Note: This policy is inspired by and based on the anti-oppression and safe spaces policy created by the People for Equality and Relief in Lanka, or PEARL. We are indebted to the work put in by PEARL in their original policy, which can be found [here](#).)

WHAT IS ANTI-OPPRESSION?

Anti-Oppression practice requires “actively challenging and removing ***oppression*** perpetuated by power inequalities in society, both ***systemic oppression*** and ***individual expressions*** of oppression” ([CCR, 2009](#)).

WHAT IS A SAFER SPACE?

“A safer space is a supportive, non-threatening environment that encourages open-mindedness, respect, a willingness to learn from others, as well as physical and mental safety” ([Coalition for Safer Spaces, 2010](#)).

Such definition also includes, open dialogue in a manner that allows various opinions to be expressed without the fear attack. Furthermore, a safer space requires participants to be critical of the power structures that affect our everyday lives. Finally a safer space strives to respect and understand survivors’ specific needs. Everyone who enters a safer space has a responsibility to uphold the values of the space ([Coalition for Safer Spaces, 2010](#)). Below are several rules of conduct that all the participants must aim to abide by.

CREATING A SAFER SPACE: RULES OF CONDUCT

1. Our philosophy of anti-oppression entails actively challenging all forms of oppression and structural inequalities.
2. Our platform incorporates this anti-oppressive philosophy into all our functioning, including prioritizing mentees from oppressed social groups for our program, in our hiring of interns/designers/any other work profile, and creating networks and resources to fight inequality of social capital.

3. We aim to create many channels where mentees can share any concerns or experiences with oppression such as grievance forms, listening circles, guided discussions, and will take prompt action in any reported case.
4. The platform has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of oppression or discrimination, be it from a mentor or a mentee. This includes sexism, casteism, islamophobia, ableism, classism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, TERF/SWERF attitudes, and any other form of discrimination.
5. Purple Connect will strive to be a safe space, meaning that people's identities will always be respected, including pronouns and preferred names. Please use gender-neutral pronouns unless someone has explicitly mentioned their preferred pronouns to you. Whenever you are interacting with someone, we implore you to either ask for their pronouns, or simply use gender-neutral ones. We respect differing beliefs, as long as they are respectful towards others' identity, and this tolerance does not extend to intolerant beliefs.
6. Everyone's physical and emotional boundaries must always be respected.
7. You are responsible for your actions and the impact they have on others. We will evaluate complaints and grievances based on impact and not the intent.
8. Please remember: hate speech is not part of free speech.

The staff at Purple Connect are empowered to enforce these rules. If you cannot abide by the guidelines mentioned above, Purple Connect reserves the right to ask you to leave a space, stop your involvement, and/or rectify your behaviour.

If you experience harassment, abuse, or sexual assault, or if a perpetrator of sexual violence is interfering with your participation or presence at any Purple Connect related space, please approach us via call or email or whatsapp. We are here to help with any conflicts arising from the violation of our policies.

Appendix: Glossary

ABLEISM: Discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities with the belief that “typical” abilities are superior ([Olson, 2019](#)).

AGEISM: A socially constructed perception of older persons based on negative attitudes and stereotypes about aging and a tendency to structure society based on an assumption that everyone is young — failing to respond appropriately to the real needs of older persons ([OHRC, n.d.a.](#)).

ANTI-BLACK RACISM: “Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping or discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization” ([Centennial College, n.d.](#)). Furthermore, anti-blackness is a theoretical framework that emphasizes society’s inability to recognize black humanity ([Ross, 2020](#)).

ANTI-SEMITISM: Hostility or discrimination against Jewish people as a religious, ethnic or racial group ([Merriam-Webster, 2020.](#)).

BIGOTRY: Intolerance towards those who hold different beliefs and opinions from oneself ([Lexico, 2020](#)).

CASTEISM: Prejudice or antagonism directed at someone of a different caste or an oppressed caste ([Lexico, 2020](#)).

CLASSISM: Classism is when someone is treated differently—better or worse—because of their class or perceived class. Where “class” is defined as a relative social rank determined by income, wealth, education, status/position and power ([Class Action, n.d.](#)).

FATPHOBIA: The fear and dislike of fat people and the stigmatization of people with bigger bodies ([SRH Week, n.d.](#)).

GENDER IDENTITY: A person’s internal and individual experience of gender — their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex ([OHRC, n.d.b.](#)).

HOMOPHOBIA: Homophobia is “the fear, hatred, discomfort with, or mistrust of people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual” ([Planned Parenthood, n.d.a](#)).

INDIVIDUAL EXPRESSIONS [OF OPPRESSION]: The “demeaning and oppressive behaviour towards and treatment of a particular group or category of people, expressed through individual attitudes, beliefs and values” ([CCR, 2009](#)).

ISLAMOPHOBIA: A is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness ([Definition of Islamophobia, 2019](#)).

MISOGYNY: Feelings of hating women which involves a combination of hatred, dislike or mistrust of women as a whole ([Dictionary.com, n.d.a](#)).

OPPRESSION: “The use of power or privilege by a socially, politically, economically, culturally dominant group (or groups) to disempower (take away or reduce power), marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate one social group or category” ([CCR, 2009](#)).

RACISM: “Racism is an ideology that either directly or indirectly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others. It can be openly displayed in racial jokes and slurs or hate crimes but it can be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, these are unconsciously held and have become deeply embedded in systems and institutions that have evolved over time. Racism operates at a number of levels, in particular, individual, systemic and societal” ([OHRC, n.d.c](#)).

SEXISM: “Attitudes or behavior based on traditional stereotypes of gender roles, as well as discrimination or devaluation based on a person's sex or gender” ([Dictionary.com, n.d.b](#)).

SLUTSHAMING: Slut shaming is the deliberate effort to discredit people by associating them with sexual deviancy, especially sexual immodesty and promiscuity. Furthermore, as a form of social stigma, slut shaming involves creating categories of sexual normalcy and deviance ([Sweeney, 2017](#)).

SWERF RHETORIC: Sex Worker-Exclusionary Radical Feminist rhetoric refers to feminists who “support the empowering aims of radical feminism, but they don’t extend their support to sex workers, believing sex work, including pornography and prostitution, inevitably objectifies and oppresses women” ([Dictionary.com, n.d.c](#)).

TERF RHETORIC: Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist rhetoric refers to “feminists who exclude transgender women from their interpretation of feminism out of belief that they aren’t women, or that they reinforce sexist, binary roles” ([Dictionary.com, n.d.c](#))

SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION: “Consists of practices, policies, laws and standards that disadvantage a particular group or category of people” ([CCR, 2009](#)).

TONE-POLICING: Tone policing focuses on the emotion behind a message rather than the message itself and as a result protects privileged people and silence people who are hurting ([Hugs, 2015](#)).

TRANSPHOBIA: “Transphobia is the fear, hatred, disbelief, or mistrust of people who are transgender, thought to be transgender, or whose gender expression doesn’t conform to traditional gender roles” ([PlannedParenthood, n.d.b](#)).

TRIGGER WARNING: “ A statement at the start of a piece of writing, video, etc., alerting the reader or viewer to the fact that it contains potentially distressing material” ([Lexico, 2020](#)).

TRIGGERING: Something read, seen or heard which causes someone emotional distress, typically as a result of arousing feelings or memories associated with a particular traumatic experience ([Lexico, 2020](#)).
