



LILAC CARE GUIDELINES

Taking care of people who experience(d)
gender-based violence in large-scale festivals





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More information is available on the website <https://sexismfreenight.eu/>

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I. INTRODUCTION

Women, transgender and non-binary people who use drugs face specific risks and constraints when going out at night and attending festivals. For this reason, the consortium of Sexism Free Night had been working and developing approaches to promote inclusiveness and gender-responsiveness in the drug field.

This protocol is based in the insights and knowledge produced in the scope of the project, but also in the experience of harm reduction teams and collectives implementing psycare services in large-scale festivals.

In addition, the implementation of outreach responses to detect and respond to sexualized violence in large-scale events in Spain, and later in Portugal – Lilac Points, also guided and inspired the writing of this document.

However, even keeping the Lilac – the colour of feminism - to clearly identify the scope of this protocol, our proposal is not to create a new service in festivals, but instead to enlarge and expand the focus of intervention of existing harm reduction and psycare services. Instead of segregating intervention in the field of gender-based violence as another area of intervention in festivals, we believe that gender-responsiveness must be transversal to every service, and to every shift of harm reduction and psycare teams and collectives.

For several years, these services were in the front line of awareness and care responses provided to festivalgoers as well as of the creation of dialogue platforms with festivals organizers towards the implementation of environmental prevention approaches. In addition, psycare, psychedelic first aid or psychedelic emergency are concepts used to define a set of outreach care services aimed at sitting and support people experiencing emotional vulnerability or psychological crisis related with drug use or environmental factors (e.g. sensory overload related with visual and/or hearing stimulus, social anxiety due to overcrowding).

Psycare services rely on four main dimensions:

- a) The creation and management of a physical space/ infrastructure recognized as safe (protected, private, and deprived from some environmental stimulus as music or lights)
- b) A team of professionals and peers trained in harm reduction, psychological support, psychological first aid and sitting and able to provide care and non-judgmental support
- c) A referral network and protocols to deal with more severe psychological crisis or psychiatric acute situations.

In this sense, psycare services are already implementing physical, social and emotional safe spaces in large-scale festivals and events. For this reason, harm reduction and psycare services are key-stakeholders to involve towards the implementation of care policies and measures to deal with people who experience(d) gender-based violence and sexist discrimination in large-scale festivals.

This protocol was developed in the scope of the collaboration of Sexism Free Night with Kosmicare in the implementation of care practices targeting people who experience(d) gender-based violence in 5 large-scale festivals in 2022 in Portugal.

Through this collaboration, Kosmicare team included in all shifts professionals trained and prepared to support people who experience(d) situations of sexist microaggression, gender-based violence (e.g. sexual abuse, rape, intimate partner violence), or people who felt unsafe, anxious and afraid that something may happen to them (gendered fear of violence).

We expect this protocol to provide guidance to other harm reduction and psycare teams and collectives. Considering that we are still learning how to implement gender-based care in large-scale festivals, this is a work-in-progress protocol able to be improved and updated when needed.

¹ Gender-responsiveness means to recognize and react to the structural gender inequalities and unequal power relations, by paying attention to the unique needs of women and LGBTQIA+ people but also by considering and valuing their specific experiences and perspectives in the design, implementation and evaluation of practices and policies.

² Portuguese harm reduction NGO implementing full spectrum harm reduction measures and care practise targeting people who use drugs in nightlife and festival environments (awareness, psychological first aid, drug checking). Kosmicare also advocates for comprehensive and gender-responsive drug policies.

³ Queima das Fitas, NOS Primavera Sound, Arraial Lisboa Pride, Boom Festival and ZNA Gathering

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXIST DISCRIMINATION IN A NUTSHELL

Sexist violence is related to power imbalances resulting from the gendered and heteronormative hierarchy of society and culture. In a binary social context, masculine is the gender identity that traditionally owns the power, women have subaltern places in the private and public sphere, and gender and sexually diverse people (LGBTQIA+) tend to be seen as transgressive and are heavily penalized for not conforming to the dominant sex/gender structure.

Considering these power relations and gender oppression, women and LGBTQIA+ are disproportionately affected by physical, psychological and economical violence and men mainly perpetrate this. These are amplified by drug use in the public sphere (in this case, nightlife and festivals) since traditionally this was a male-exclusive behaviour, and even nowadays there are several myths and biases related to drug use that aggravate violence towards women and LGBTQIA+.

Drug stigma intersects with gender stereotypes creating specific risks and harms among women and LGBTQIA+. In this context, our work towards implementing gender-responsive approaches to care for people who use drugs is a health promotion and social commitment and a political statement.

In practical terms, and based on our experience, we created a typology of sexist violence that can be experienced and reported during the event. It is important that in the wide definition we are included the severe forms of sexist violence (e.g. rape) discrimination, microaggressions, and sexist violence experienced in the past but triggered during the event.

Sexualized violence/ rape with violence or coercion

Sexualized violence/ rape without physical violence or coercion (the person is unconscious or psychologically / physically unable to resist)

Sexual abuse (invasive intimate touches without penetration)

Sexual harassment

Verbal (e.g. sexist comments, insinuations)

Physical/ non-verbal (persecution, touches, groping)

Stalking

Intimate partner violence (date violence, domestic violence)

Verbal/ psychological

Physical/ non-verbal

Sexist discrimination due to the gender or sexual identity of the person (homophobia, lesbophobia, transphobia, or other forms of LGBTQIA+phobia)

Physical violence due to the gender or sexual identity of the person

Sexist or misogynist social humiliation (e.g. laughing, taking pictures to expose or make fun of someone)

LILAC CARE AT LARGE-SCALE FESTIVALS AND OTHER EVENTS

DEFINING LILAC CARE

Usually, the colour red is used to identify medical emergencies, so in this protocol, we use lilac as the reference colour to identify crises- related to sexism and gender-based violence. Considering this, in this protocol, we identify lilac care as the set of practices aimed at preventing, detecting and responding to sexism and gender-based violence in nightlife and festival environments. To implement lilac care, harm reduction teams need to have:

- a) a place/ infrastructure able to isolate, provide support and privacy to people who experienced violence;
- b) having people in the team trained in gender and able to support and take care of people who experience(d) gender-based violence.

BUILDING A LILAC POLICY

Before creating or implementing your protocol, firstly your team must clearly define your lilac policy. We recommend that a team implementing lilac care are committed to the following principles:

-Sexism, LGBTQI+phobia, racism and other forms of discrimination, oppression and power relations are unacceptable. This includes discrimination towards or from people who visit your services.

-Sexual harassment towards or from your guests is also unacceptable.

-Make it clear to the person who is harassing you and, in case you need, speak out and ask for the support of your peers

-If you see one of your peers being harassed, humiliated, or bothered by someone make something up to interrupt the situation

-If you see one of your peers harassing a guest, interrupt the situation and talk to your manager

-If your team are not ready/has the conditions to support people who experience(d) sexism or gender-based violence, don't advertise this specific care.

In this case, you can at least have a good referral network to provide the person with useful contacts.

-Your team is aware of and trained in gender topics and specific support to people who experience(d) violence. Include these topics in your training agendas to peers and professionals. You may involve professionals from rape crisis centres, gender-based support centres, LGBTQI+ collectives as trainers.

-If someone asks for support due to a situation of sexism, LGBTQI+phobia or sexualized violence call immediately someone who is experienced in gender-based support

-At least one person with this set of competence must be working every shift, and they need to be clearly identified

LILAC CARE AT LARGE-SCALE FESTIVALS AND OTHER EVENTS

LILAC GUIDELINES FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT AND CARE IN SEXISM-RELATED CRISIS

- Be sympathetic, hear what the person is telling you and believe her
- Trust your judgement. If you think the person is struggling, feeling threatened by someone, or scared, is because probably she is.
- Keep yourself vigilant and avoid victim blaming, overload of difficult questions or other potentially harmful verbal or non-verbal approaches
- Define keeper of your lilac protocol (depending on the dimension of the intervention, define one per shift or one per intervention) - one or more professionals with responsibility, with in-depth knowledge of the protocol that was assigned not only to provide care but to provide guidance and relevant information but also to supervise the demanding situations
- It can be useful to create a code word for this specific type of emergency/ support. You can use, for example, Lilac Care and immediately your team will know what to do or who to involve.
- Create a physical and emotionally safe space for the person
 - Invite the person to a more private area and offer her your unconditional acceptance and caring-presence
 - Inform the person about her rights - confidentiality, the right to tell you only what she wants, the right to decide...
 - Build trust and be aware of the basic needs of the person. Ask her if she needs something if she wants to drink water, if she wants to call a trustworthy friend...
 - Empower the person
 - “It’s not your fault”, “you deserve to be safe”, “sexism violence is a crime and the person to blame is the perpetrator”
 - The person has to feel she is under control and that she has the right to decide what she wants to do. Don’t insist on the person to fill and formally complain, and don’t take decisions over the person's will (even if you think you know what is best!)
 - In case the person is very anxious or experiencing a psychological crisis provide first care in this regard. Wait for the person to calm down, sleep, relax and build trust in your service... only then you can softly and carefully try to understand what happened
 - Is the person under the influence of drugs? If so, firstly be a caring presence and try to make the person feel safe, cared and understood. Wait for the person to rest and sober up to try to introduce more delicate questions. But respect her right to privacy and silence in case she is not ready to talk.
- Be aware of the context surrounding the person
 - Is the person alone in the event? Is the person with trustful friends? Is there something in the event that makes her afraid/ unsafe?
- Protect the confidentiality of the person you are supporting
 - Don’t talk randomly about the case even with your shift colleagues
 - Discuss the case only with the members of the “Lilac Team”

LILAC CARE AT LARGE-SCALE FESTIVALS AND OTHER EVENTS

-Is the perpetrator there?

- First of all, don't act if the situation is dangerous or tense. Ask for the support of the safety team and festival/ event organizers/ production team
- The priority of the intervention must be to provide care and protection to the person who experienced sexist discrimination or violence - take her from the situation
- Never act alone! If you have resources and if other people from your team can support you, approach the perpetrator and by using non-violent communication let the person know his behaviour is unacceptable and make him aware of the legal framework
- It's a public crime? Talk with the festival organizers and call the police

-In case of rape, give the (sober) person relevant information

- The possibility of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PPE) in the first 72h after the occurrence
If the person wants to know more about this, call the lilac protocol keeper
- The possibility of filling a formal complaint
Inform the person about the procedure to collect proof/evidence, in case she wants to complain (e.g. avoid taking a shower or discard clothes)
Does the person want to fill a formal complaint?
Call the lilac protocol keeper - this professional must be aware of the national law and complaint procedures and will be ready to empower the person to deal with the rudeness of the judicial system

-Does the person state she was spiked?

- First of all, deal with the psychological crisis
- Call a doctor at the outreach emergency service to evaluate the physical and psychological symptoms
- When the person is calmer and trusts in you and in your service, carefully ask her to tell you what happened
- Don't doubt the person but try to understand if the chemical vulnerability was related to voluntary drug use intersected with gendered fear and unsafety perception or if there was a strong possibility that someone spiked her
- If the person wants to complain, call the lilac protocol keeper

-Was the person victim of intimate partner violence during the event?

- Isolate the person and bring her to a physical, social and emotionally safe space
- In some countries domestic violence is a public crime - call the Lilac protocol keeper to provide the person with information about the national law. Nevertheless, as a team, it is possible to present a formal complaint
- Provide all the psychological care the person may need, empower her and inform her about her rights
- Create a safety plan with the person (e.g. moving around the event, leaving the event, returning home...)

LILAC CARE AT LARGE-SCALE FESTIVALS AND OTHER EVENTS

-Is the person triggered by past trauma?

-Provide trauma-informed care

Be sympathetic and try to explore the traumatic event

Try to decrease the anxiety or angst of the person – try a non-pharmacological approach, but call a psychiatrist in case you think the situation is difficult to manage

Normalize the reaction of the person – it's normal to feel self-blame, shame, guilt, anger, fear, sadness...

Deconstruct rape myths such as internalized guilt

Support the process of emotional expression

Verbal, or even non-verbal (movements, drawing...)

Explore and promote coping strategies (how to deal with the pain? How to accept that this situation happened to me? This event doesn't define me as a person...)

Inform about the relevance of (re)building a life project that includes the commitment to deal with past trauma

-Take care of your team

-Sexism and gender-based violence are structural and transversal. Some people from your team can feel triggered by the cases you may support. Provide them with individual or collective care and support.

USEFUL CONTACTS AND INTERNATIONAL REFERRAL NETWORK

Intimate partner violence/ domestic violence <https://www.hotpeachpages.net/europe/index.html>

Sexualized violence <https://www.rcne.com/>

Sources of help for survivors <https://www.rcne.com/links/sources-of-help-for-survivors/>

Sexism Free Night Network <https://sexismfreenight.eu/network/>

LGBTQIA+ support <https://www.ilga-europe.org/>

Or, give the person one of these contacts: sexismfreenight@gmail.com; consulta@kosmicare.org

Do you need training or consultancy in this area?

Write us at hello@sexismfreenigh.org and sexismfreenight@gmail.com

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