Safely in Events–
Social and Mental Safety

Laura Wathén

Helsinki University Student Union - HYY

26th of January 2018

Goals

- Give a selection of means through which you can make an organization event socially and mentally safe for the participants: Means and advice on how events will be enjoyable and nice to your members ☺

- Awaken thoughts on critically thinking of your own actions

- To give new insights

Discussion:

What is social/mental event safety?

What makes an event unsafe?
What kinds of situations make
people feel ill at ease? What
estranges people? What makes
you feel unwelcome?

What is social event safety

- Physical vs. Non-physical safety
- An aim that you won't (consciously or unconsciously due to carelessness) insult or cause discomfort to any participants
  NB! Failure is human and sometimes its impossible to think of absolutely everything

  → **always untangle situations and learn from them!**

Why are these principles needed?

- The point of social ground rules is that the members of your guild/community/organization feel welcome at events and through that **into the community** itself

The role of organization actives

- Have a large impact on the community!

- It is prudent to draft written instructions, approve them at a board meeting and communicate them publicly to the members
  - Helps remembering and following the instructions
  - Easier to review and reassess from time to time

- The instructions should be designed to fit your community→ most important is that they are enforced and not just written to "exist on paper"

Practical advice
BEFORE THE EVENT

- Implement a set of instructions to improve event safety and commit to a zero tolerance policy regarding harassment and bullying

- Feedback/Situation feedback form

- Think about the theme and the atmosphere of the event

- Write the event description in a manner that everyone feels welcome to the event

- Multilingual communication

- Accessibility information

  - Accessible space? Who can you contact?

DURING THE EVENT

- The role of toast/songmasters in ensuring a safe event

- The language used at the event

- Taking a stand and interfering in culture that is perceived inappropriate (e.g. heckling, songs and punishments)

- Organize a quiet space at the event (facilities willing)

- Designated security officer and visible info on who it is (noting it won't be the security guard or the first aid person)

- All organizers keep eyes & ears open (e.g. I know an organization where it is agreed that board members talk to five new people at each event)

AFTER THE EVENT

- Publish a feedback/situation feedback form at the event's social media event page
  Who reads these? What is the information used in?

- Host a feedback session with organizers

Discussion:

What principles presented in the presentation could you adopt into your own organization/guild?

Why those exact ones? How would you implement them? Any other principles that sprang to mind?

Thank you! ☺

Laura Wathén

Equality (society and university), health, sports and volunteers

laura.wathen@hyy.fi, +358 50 409 1383