

Digital Participation: Code of Conduct

This code has been created by the Museums Association (MA) to help us all create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive digital space and experience for everyone.

The MA's definition of inclusion is defined as 'a state of being and feeling valued, respected and supported' and this applies to all our digital engagement.

Working towards inclusion

As part of a drive towards more inclusive museums and practice we welcome diverse views and experiences and we expect and encourage our participants to:

- behave in a mutually respectful and thoughtful way; listening carefully to other people – **being kind and courteous and not bullying or using hate speech.**
- be mindful of how others might be feeling – **being sensitive to their needs and alert for cues that a person is uncomfortable** with content or a digital thread and respond appropriately by acknowledging their feelings and closing down the exchange.
- **respect others privacy**¹ – participating in a digital space requires mutual trust. Authentic, expressive discussions make digital participation great but may also be sensitive and private. **Content, views and images should not be shared outside the space, including screenshots.**

Discrimination and digital harassment

The MA recognises that certain people have experienced and still experience disproportionate discrimination and harassment. This is because of the way society responds to characteristics such as age, ethnicity, disability, gender, religion or belief and sexuality. These characteristics (among others) have been protected under the Equalities Act 2010.

In addition, certain people have benefited or continue to benefit from privilege, whether they are aware of it or not. Privilege means that people are less likely to face harassment – or be aware of it.

Some examples of digital harassment are:

- comments, posts, or tweets that minimise a person's lived experience, identity, or safety
- deliberate misgendering e.g. to purposely call a transgender woman 'him'
- continuing a digital conversation when someone has signalled that they are uncomfortable
- deliberate 'outing' of a person's identity without their consent e.g. making and stating assumptions about a person's sexuality
- unwelcome sexual attention
- deliberate intimidation or online stalking of any kind
- collection or distribution of harassing photography or recordings
- threats of violence.

Letting us know

If you experience or observe any of the above behaviour, please contact Tamsin Russell, our workforce development officer, at tamsin@museumsassociation.org

What happens next

The MA will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind. Where these behaviours or more specifically comments, posts or tweets contain discriminatory or harassing content the MA staff may undertake the following:

- Contact the participant and give feedback about their behaviour, re-iterating this Code and the consequences of non-adherence
- Remove the cited comment, post, or tweet
- If the behaviour continues the participant may have their access to the digital space removed

¹ <https://www.museumsassociation.org/about/privacy-notice>

- Anyone engaging in the behaviours outlined above may be subject to expulsion from MA membership. In addition, the MA will follow procedure for reporting hate crimes if they occur.

Attributions

This code has been updated in May 2020 but draws upon and is informed by the knowledge and expertise of: Theodore W Allen; American Alliance of Museums; Cambridge English Dictionary; Detroit: The Radical Education Project; WEB Dubois, 1935 *Black Reconstruction in America*; everydayfeminism.com; gov.uk; Lisa Kennedy, Emma MacNicol, Donata Miller; Museums Association Transformers alumni; NYC Revolutionary Youth Movement; Oxford English Dictionary

Definitions

Cisgender – denoting or relating to a person whose personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

Disclosure – the act of making something known. Only the individual concerned has the right to disclose things about themselves and their identity. People should not have disclosures made about them and they should not feel pressured to disclose things about themselves.

Identity – who a person is, or the qualities of that person that make them different from others.

Lived experience – a person’s first-hand experience. Widely used in social justice, mental health, health and homelessness settings as a way of recognising and acknowledging the expertise that comes from experiencing something directly.

Outing – public disclosure of an aspect of a person’s identity.

Privilege – a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group. Ideas around social and psychological privilege experienced by white people were written about in the 1930s by W. E. B. Du Bois and expanded into the idea of ‘White Skin Privilege’ during the American Civil Rights movement in the 1960s by Theodore W. Allen. It is used today as a way of thinking about how power operates in society. The idea that some people have more privilege than others is still the subject of debate almost 100 years after being introduced.

Social justice – the objective of creating a fair and equal society in which each individual matter, their rights are recognised and protected, and decisions are made in ways that are fair and honest.

Stalking – the Crown Prosecution Service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland defines the following behaviours as stalking, when part of a course of conduct (carried out repeatedly or with intent to harass):

- following a person
- contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means
- publishing a statement or any other material relating to or purporting to relate to a person or purporting to originate from a person
- monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of e-communication
- loitering in any place whether public or private
- interfering with any property in the possession of a person
- watching or spying on a person.

Transgender – denoting or relating to a person whose personal identity and gender does not correspond to their birth sex.