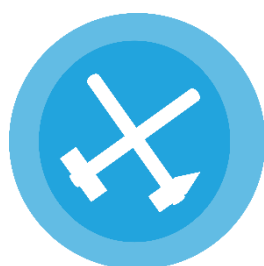


# RESPONSE GUIDE TO SEXUALISED VIOLENCE WITHIN ENDE GELÄNDE

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AN ONGOING DEBATE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CONTENT NOTIFICATION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>PREFACE</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>I. FOUNDATIONS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>II. INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALISED VIOLENCE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>III. SUMMARY OF ENDE GELÄNDE STRUCTURES FOR COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY</b> ....	<b>7</b>
<b>RESPONSE GROUP</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>SUPPORT GROUP</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>CONTACT GROUP</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>IV. HOW TO ACT IN SOLIDARITY? 4 PHASES OF SUPPORT AND RESTORING AGENCY</b> ....	<b>9</b>
<b>PHASE 1: CREATING AND SECURING A PROTECTIVE SPACE</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>PHASE 2: STABILISATION AND CLARIFICATION OF NEEDS OF THE AFFECTED PERSON</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>PHASE 3: RESTORING THE AFFECTED PERSON'S AGENCY &amp; SAFETY IN THE SOCIAL AND     POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>PHASE 4: COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY, UNDERMINING STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE &amp; POSSIBILITIES     FOR TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>V. TRANSFORMATIVE WORK WITH THE PERPETRATOR OF VIOLENCE</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>VI. GLOSSARY</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>VII. FURTHER READING</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>VIII. CONTACTING THE RESPONSE GROUP</b> .....	<b>12</b>

# CONTENT NOTIFICATION

This guide deals with discrimination and sexualised violence. Direct experiences and situations are not described in detail, but examples are given. Memories and feelings of one's own experience can be brought up when engaging with this guide. It is possible that new aspects of one's own experience are recognised while reading and that (sexualised) violence is perceived as such for the first time. It can be helpful to think about what and who can support one in this situation. For example, the guide can be put aside to do something completely different or to talk to a person. It can also be helpful to consciously read on and look deeper into the topic. Take care for yourself <3

## PREFACE

Translation as of August 2022, slightly updated from our first version published in July 2021

The response guide to sexualised violence within Ende Gelände (EG) was written by EG's response group ("Ansprechgruppe" in German), which has been preparing for its work since autumn 2020 and is now supporting people affected by sexualised violence and coordinating transformative justice processes. We are sharing this guide with you as an unfinished interim paper to help publicise the way we work. The interim paper is an initial guide to action that we intend to expand as our work progresses. Your criticism and further ideas for an EG guide are very welcome, so please contact us at [ansprechgruppe@ende-gelaende.org](mailto:ansprechgruppe@ende-gelaende.org). After discussions in the alliance and reflection on our work as a response group, we hope to be able to publish an extended guide soon. If you would like to support us in this process, we look forward to hearing from you.

## WHY A GUIDE?

Unfortunately, sexualised violence happens everywhere, including in left structures and also within Ende Gelände. EG decided to build structures against sexualised violence when a serious case of sexualised violence became public in the local group of Würzburg in 2020. Unfortunately, due to a lack of structures and expertise within EG, the support provided to the affected person was very chaotic at the time and it was also difficult to coordinate how to deal with the perpetrator. As a new response group in Ende Gelände, we hope to be able to better support people affected by sexualised violence in the future and want to be of easy access to them. We want to present our working methods and our intersectional analysis of sexualised violence to you in this guide. It is important to note that our guide is not an instruction manual: Not every recommendation for action has to make sense, be necessary or desirable

in a certain situation. The guide describes an ideal process. Every process is complex and deviates in some way from the ideal typical course. That is why we as a response group always work contextually.

## WHAT IS THE GUIDE?

The guide is a contribution to the discussion and debate on sexism and patriarchy and serves as a guideline for dealing with sexualised violence within EG. In consultation with the contact group of the interventionist left (iL), it became clear that it is important for EG to be able to act as quickly as possible without getting lost in theoretical digressions. Therefore, we decided to use the iL's guide, published in January 2020,<sup>1</sup> as a basis and adapt it to EG's structures. In the course of the writing, however, we have made many restructurings and additions, such as a focus on intersectionality, so that this guide is in part very different from the iL guide. Furthermore, we draw from the knowledge of many other groups or individuals, and especially knowledge from queer and B(I)PoC communities in the US, including: CARA, INCITE!, ignite! Collective, Transformative Justice Collective Berlin, Melanie Brazzell and Lola Olufemi. In order to make this guide as accessible as possible, we have decided against precise source citations in the text. However, we conclude the guide with an extensive collection of links and a reading list. In the course of this guide, we also introduce some terms that have a special meaning for us. When first mentioned, we write these terms in bold and try to make most of the terms understandable for the context. At the end of this guide there is a glossary that defines these terms in more detail. The glossary is unfortunately still incomplete in this interim guide.

## WHY AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION?

Ende Gelände is an international movement and so translating our guide to English one year after its first appearance was of high priority for us. Wherever activists from EG are based, we want to support each other. Moreover, we hope that our translation will be useful for groups in other countries as well and we are looking forward to interesting discussions with you. Please get in touch with us at any point.

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<sup>1</sup>The iL guide is available here: <https://interventionistische-linke.org/beitrag/il-leitfaden-veroeffentlich>

# I. FOUNDATIONS

## OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUALISED VIOLENCE

**Sexualised violence** happens everywhere: also in EG. This guideline is intended to be an initial guide for dealing with sexualised violence within EG. When we speak of sexualised violence, we mean acts with sexual connotations that undermine a person's sexual self-determination and integrity. Sexualised violence is not about the perpetrator's satisfaction of sexual pleasure, but about the exercise of power: sexuality is misused as a means to the end of exercising violence and power. The violence can express itself physically as well as psychologically and occur systematically. Furthermore, sexualised violence also includes voyeuristic assaults, such as secretly filming or observing. This guideline is therefore intended to apply to all incidents of violence that run along gender or constructed gender differences.<sup>2</sup> In this guide, we refer to people who are affected by sexualised violence as the **person affected**. In doing so, we decide against the term "victim", which is often used in a stigmatising way or as an insult (at least in German) and describes the person as incapable of acting.

We do not reduce interpersonal violence to an individual expression of illness or malice, but want to understand violence as socially constructed. It is important to locate sexualised violence within a patriarchal society, for which the term **rape culture** is crucial. Rape culture refers to a social climate in which sexualised violence is normalised and trivialised and in which affected persons are systematically blamed for what happened and their experiences are doubted. Victim blaming often takes place in order to protect the perpetrator of violence.

In the heterosexist mainstream discourse, a binary around sexualised violence is often constructed and maintained: "perpetrating violence - male / being affected - female". Although the overwhelming majority of violent assaults and forms of sexualised violence are perpetrated by cis-men, we find it problematic to understand the origin of sexualised violence in a universally male aggression. Because this would mark violence as exclusively male and thus make invisible that sexualised violence can also occur in non-heterosexual and queer contexts. For this reason, we use the gender-neutral term "perpetrator of violence" in this guide. The one-sided focus on cis-women as victims of sexualised violence also obscures the fact that queer people, non-binary people, trans-women, trans-men and cis-men are also affected by sexualised violence. Overcoming binaries is necessary to make these perspectives visible.

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<sup>2</sup>We understand gender as socially constructed.

## PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

The psychosocial consequences of sexualised violence are extensive and can vary greatly. For example, every form of sexualised violence can—but does not have to—lead to traumatisation (trauma). Traumatic situations are characterised by fear of violation of physical and/or psychological integrity up to fear of death and can lead to feelings of powerlessness and helplessness, whereby a person's coping strategies are not sufficient in such emergency situations and deep irritation up to dissociation (splitting off of memories or even entire personality parts) can occur. Traumatised people very often describe that after this experience of violence nothing is the same as before. People affected by sexualised violence can react with untypical behaviour in the period after a violent experience: For example, by withdrawing and avoiding social contacts and no longer appearing at plenary sessions in an activist context, no longer going to demos or withdrawing completely from political work. Those affected have to learn to deal with the experience of violence and its consequences; often with psychological consequences such as depression, self-harming behaviour, suicidal thoughts, anxiety and attachment disorders, eating disorders and disturbed behaviour towards sexuality. All too often, affected persons remain alone, ashamed of their own suffering and without (psychotherapeutic) support; because affected persons often experience that they are not believed or that their experience is relativised or played down. Due to the patriarchal logic of rape culture, many victims feel guilty, doubt their own perception, cannot find words for what they have experienced or simply do not dare to talk about it.

### **"SOLIDARITY-BASED PARTIALITY" AND "POWER TO DEFINE"**

As a feminist response to rape culture, the concept of **"power to define"**<sup>3</sup> ("Definitionsmacht" in German and related to "victim-centered approach") has been a breakthrough in bringing the perspective and needs of the person affected into focus. Power to define means that the person affected by sexualised violence has full authority over the definition of the experience of violence. In particular, power to define does not require the presentation of evidence, which is often based on the feelings and sensations of the person affected, because explaining the situation of violence can mean re-traumatising the person affected. However, power to define does not include power over consequences or sanctions against the person perpetrating violence—so the affected person does not have the "power to sanction". Furthermore, the concept of sanctioning power follows a punitive logic, which we reject. Instead of punishing, it is central for us to restore the power of action of the

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<sup>3</sup>The term "power to define" seems to be very particular to the German feminist discourse and might be unknown in the English-speaking discourse. However, it strongly resonates with concepts from the wider feminist standpoint theory where a patriarchal and colonial notion of objectivity is deconstructed to re-center the subjectivities and lived experiences of women, trans and non-binary folks. We decided to use this term in its direct translation from German because of its cultural significance in the German left and due to its high importance for our understanding of how to support and work with people affected by sexualised violence.

person affected and to start a process of **community accountability**. For example, we want to understand the (temporary) exclusion of the perpetrator of violence as the enforcement of a protective space for the person affected to restore agency and not as a sanction against the perpetrator. “**Solidarity-based partiality**”<sup>4</sup> (“solidarische Parteilichkeit” in German) is then understood as the necessary recognition of the power to define of the affected person within the community (e.g. the EG alliance). Solidarity-based partiality means being partial on the side of the person affected and not questioning their perception and experience. In addition, solidarity-based partiality takes into account that violence is not an “individual problem”, but is structurally anchored and reproduced by social factors that stabilise violence. In contrast to the neoliberal dogma, the responsibility for coping does not solely lie with the person affected. Thus, solidarity-based partiality is a conscious political stance to counter the social climate of rape culture.

## COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY IN EG

This guideline is intended to contribute to finding a common approach for dealing with the case of a sexualised assault on an activist in EG: The aim is to show solidarity with the person affected, to support and encourage them personally/politically and to offer them—as far as possible—a reliable protective space. Another goal is to create the conditions for the person affected to remain involved in our structures and to make it possible for them to continue to be active (if wanted). The aim is to restore the person's ability to act. All activists in EG have the responsibility to work towards these goals. As an alliance we want to support activists who are affected by sexualised violence with our care and resources. In doing so, it may (but does not have to) be necessary to offer support to the affected person in coping with everyday life or in decision-making processes. In this guide we want to introduce a concept of **Community Accountability** and **Transformative Justice** within EG. Our belief is that we in EG need to take responsibility together to support affected people and to fight for the **prevention** of sexualised violence.

## II. INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALISED VIOLENCE

After working with the anti-racist reflection sheet of the Antira AG Berlin,<sup>5</sup> the need for an intersectional analysis of sexualised violence became clear to us, the people from the EG response group. This chapter therefore opens up intersectional

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<sup>4</sup>Similarly, the term “solidarity-based partiality” plays a very central role in German feminist discourses, hence the direct translation.

<sup>5</sup><https://www.ende-gelaende.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EN-Guide-to-an-anti-racist-group-reflection.pdf>

perspectives in the context of sexualised violence with a focus on racism. It is important to note that the people in the response group are currently positioned exclusively as *white*.<sup>6</sup>

## INTERSECTIONALITY

In order to understand sexualised violence in the context of social relations of domination, we adopt an intersectional perspective in our political analysis of sexualised violence. Intersectionality means that people are exposed to different forms of discrimination or violence, such as racism, ableism or sexism, and that these can be intertwined. This results in specific forms of discrimination depending on the context. Violence and discrimination take place within a complex system of privilege and oppression in which people can be privileged and marginalised at the same time. Hence, a strict "perpetrator-victim relationship" often erases nuance. For our work, this means that we want to take into account that those affected can also experience violence along other axes than just a patriarchal power axis. Moreover, people who use violence can also be affected by other forms of violence and oppression.

## RACIST INSTRUMENTALISATION OF SEXUALISED VIOLENCE

For example, there is a danger that a case of sexualised violence is instrumentalised in a racist way in order to reproduce the social narrative of the migrant and racialised sexual offender. This happened, for example, in the aftermath of the "2015 New Year's Eve in Cologne", after which Black or (post-)migrant men were generally labelled as perpetrators of violence in media coverage. This demonisation follows a racist logic that understands sexualised violence as being imported from outside and only perpetrated by the constructed, hyper-masculine Other. We firmly want to counter this racist myth. Each racist externalisation of sexualised violence undermines a society-wide confrontation with the sexist conditions that enable violence and a corresponding accountability. The racist media coverage in the wake of the 2015 New Year's Eve in Cologne legitimised an explicitly racist legal reform in 2016, which established a legal "group paragraph" for accelerated deportations. Since then, refugees and migrants are even more strongly placed under general suspicion by the *white* dominant society and are exposed to increased **racial profiling**. Here, the racism of the German criminal justice system becomes clear: it embodies security for people who conform to the norm by criminalising and persecuting deviant people. This also means that people affected by sexualised

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<sup>6</sup>*White* or *whiteness*, like the term PoC, does not denote a biological characteristic, but a political and social construction. *Whiteness* refers to the dominant and privileged position in the power relationship of racism. It often remains unspoken and unnamed, although every discrimination includes both a discriminated and a privileged position.



violence who do not conform to the *white*, heterosexual and cisgender norm cannot rely on the protection of state institutions and police officers, as they are also systematically criminalised. Thus, individual violence is often closely linked to state and structural violence. Moreover, similar to the distorted media portrayal of perpetrators of violence, sexualised violence is also predominantly discussed publicly when *white* cis-women are affected. In contrast, women of colour as well as trans\* and inter\* folks are often denied access to support and public concern when affected by sexualised violence.

## **LEFT CRITIQUE OF THE POLICE**

For these reasons, we do not want to rely on the police and the criminal justice system in Germany, and we want to complement (or even replace) a “left” analysis of state, police and criminal justice critique with an abolitionist perspective. Abolitionist approaches have a centuries-old tradition and were developed by Black and enslaved people and later further thought by imprisoned people or people affected by violence through other punitive institutions (laws, police, camps, detention centers and other shelters, job centres, borders). They fight for the radical abolition of these violence-executing institutions and for the emergence of new structures. Abolitionist feminists reject that justice can be achieved through imprisonment, as it does not address the source of violence. Rather, they argue for a transformation of the circumstances and relationships that produce violence in order to achieve justice and security. Hence, abolition is not only about dismantling oppressive state structures but about imagining and building new worlds that are safe for all.

## **ORIGINS OF COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE**

Based on abolitionist perspectives, we want to work with the central concepts of Community Accountability and Transformative Justice. For this, it is important that we are aware of the genesis of these concepts: As a radical critique of police and the prison industrial complex in the US, they were developed primarily by FLINTA\*<sup>7</sup> of colour in the US to find a way of dealing with sexualised violence outside of a structurally racist criminal justice system. Thus, Community Accountability is a feminist and abolitionist practice developed as an alternative to the prison logic. The aim of such approaches is, on the one hand, to collectively support the person affected after concrete cases of violence. On the other hand, work is done with all those involved in order to stimulate a change in the behaviour of the person committing violence and to change the structures that enable violence in the long

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<sup>7</sup>The acronym “FLINTA\*” refers to people that identify as feminine, lesbian, inter-sexual, non-binary, trans or asexual. The term is used very commonly in the German left but perhaps less so internationally.

term. We are aware that these approaches cannot be transferred one-to-one to the context of EG and that there is a danger of *white-washing* or cultural appropriation. We want to think about this self-critically in our work and take it into account. Against this background, we present our concept for dealing with sexualised violence in Ende-Gelände-structures, based on Community Accountability and Transformative Justice concepts.

### III. SUMMARY OF ENDE GELÄNDE STRUCTURES FOR COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to establish EG structures against sexualised violence, it is planned to set up different groups that each take on distinct tasks. While the EG response group works permanently in the alliance and can be approached by everyone, the so called “support group” and “contact group” are only set up at the request of an affected person in a concrete case of sexualised violence. Our diagram at the end of this section illustrates the cooperation between the different groups.

#### RESPONSE GROUP

The EG response group works as a supra-regional working group in the EG alliance. It can be contacted by all persons affected by sexualised violence who are associated with EG, no matter where they are based. How to contact the contact group is described in more detail under VIII Contacting the Contact Group. After a case of sexualised violence, the contact group provides advice and support to the person affected. Guided by their needs, the contact group takes responsibility for a process of community accountability within EG. The goals of the response group are to support the affected person and to coordinate a process of collective responsibility in EG. In doing so, the response group works confidentially and acts without time automatism and without the need to initiate a process. In this way, affected persons who do not yet know how they want to deal with their experiences should also feel empowered to contact the response group in order to be supported at this point. If the affected person so wishes, the response group can help with setting up a “support group” (see below) to support the person affected locally and in their daily life. For community accountability in EG, the response group then helps to set up a “contact group” (see below), which takes over the communication with and the formulation of demands to the perpetrator of violence. In addition, the response group helps to initiate immediate protection measures at the request of the person affected and with the agreement of other working groups in EG. A possible workflow of the contact group is described under IV. How to Act in Solidarity? 4 Phases of Support and Restoring Agency. The response group also tries to contribute to the prevention of

sexualised violence in EG through educational offers. For example, the response group will give inputs at the alliance meetings or offer workshops at the camp.

## **SUPPORT GROUP**

The support group consists of people with whom the person affected has a relationship of trust. The composition of this group can only be legitimised by the person affected. People who work in the support group must also be willing to do the support work and be able to endure unpleasant debates. The central tasks of the support group are

### **A) HELPING THE PERSON AFFECTED TO EMPOWER THEMSELVES:**

A person affected by sexualised violence often needs emotional support. Encouragement and confirmation of the affected person's perception of what has happened are elementary for helpful support. Since the person affected by sexualised violence may also feel powerlessness and the loss of their own ability to act, the affected person's ability to act must be strengthened. This can be achieved in different ways, as everyone chooses a different way of dealing with assault situations: It can be important to support the affected person in the case of a (temporary) withdrawal from political groups in order to protect them against questioning and confrontations. It can also be important to accompany and support them in internal conflicts. Similarly, it may be that the person affected is fully aware of what has happened, but needs support in taking further action against the perpetrator of violence.

### **B) REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON AFFECTED:**

Upon explicit request, the support group speaks on behalf of the affected person, both internally within the alliance and externally, as desired. The focus is on their self-articulated needs. This may mean not mentioning names to the EG local group. Only in very well justified exceptional cases and after discussion between the person affected and the support group can a decision be made against the will of the person affected. Through the expressed trust, the support group has a considerable responsibility. This responsibility must be reflected on again and again, also with the involvement of the EG local group. It is important that the possibilities and also the limits of the support work must be defined at an early stage and made transparent (at least internally). The support group cannot do everything, but it must get an overview of who takes on necessary support tasks, and it must develop a way of dealing with gaps in support. Of course, individual tasks can always be taken over by other structures such as friends, relatives or the EG local group. In the work, needs of the person affected can also arise that exceed the political or emotional boundaries of the support group. However, such situations cannot be clarified within the framework of a guideline presented here, but must be dealt with in a very concrete

way—there are no universal solutions here, just as for other aspects of community accountability. Prosecution of the perpetrator of violence or recourse to the “Protection against Violence Act” by the affected person can be useful, but a court case can be perceived by affected persons as very stressful and lead to further problems. Moreover, a complaint cannot be withdrawn and thus the process cannot be stopped. The support group and the affected person should consult with each other and with lawyers or professional counselling centres.

## **CONTACT GROUP**

The contact group has the task of maintaining contact with the perpetrator of violence and communicating the demands of the affected person and the decisions of the support group. In addition, the contact group should ask the perpetrator of violence to deal with their violent behaviour and, if the perpetrator shows willingness to do so, support the perpetrator in a transformative process. The contact group must take care that it does not become an uncritical representative of the perpetrator. Especially for the work of the contact group, the concept of solidarity-based partiality with the person affected (as described in I. Foundations) is fundamental.

In order to set up a contact group, the perpetrator of violence is asked to find people to form this contact group. In addition, the support group, the affected person and the contact group can suggest people from the close environment of the perpetrator or from the EG local group. The aim is to have a mixed gender composition. It is often difficult to set up a contact group and its work too often does not take place on the basis of solidarity-based partiality. If this is the case, or if no contact group is formed, the response group takes over the corresponding tasks on a proxy basis. The principle of acting according to the wishes of the person affected applies to the composition of the contact group. However, it is recommended that the contact group does not consist exclusively of friends of the perpetrator, as this can lead to difficult conflicts of loyalty. Nevertheless, people close to the perpetrator are important as part of the contact group in order to work confrontationally in the long term and in an all-encompassing way. Difficulties can also arise if friends of the person affected are involved, as this can lead to complicated relationships in the contact group and the work with the perpetrator of violence (for example, through insider knowledge of the person affected). Not all persons in the contact group should and need to attend the meetings with the perpetrator, on the contrary a division of tasks might be beneficial. The persons working in this group must also be aware of the limits of what we can do in such a situation. Even if we cannot provide psychological or therapeutic services, we are convinced that as people personally/politically involved, we have considerable possibilities to influence the person who uses violence and together at least uncover, reflect on and perhaps even break up long practised patterns of violence.

## IV. HOW TO ACT IN SOLIDARITY?

### 4 PHASES OF SUPPORT AND RESTORING AGENCY

Agency is crucial for us in two respects. On the one hand, as a response group, we want to make the Ende-Gelände-“community” capable of acting against sexualised violence and against the normality of a passive or tolerant approach to it. On the other hand, we want to prioritise the restoration of the affected person's agency when dealing with sexualised violence. Both are in contradiction to police and legal processing of sexualised violence, which neither restores the community's nor the affected person's agency. However, what these two aspects of agency actually require of us can be very different in a complex context like Ende Gelände. Depending on whether an assault occurs in the context of an action, a camp, a local group or a working group of the alliance structure, both the subsequent process and the role of the response group will differ greatly. For this reason, the following chapter should also not be understood as a simple sequence of action steps, but as different dimensions of a transformative approach to sexualised violence. Phases 1 - 4 build on each other, but ideally run parallel and reflexively. The first phase, "creating and securing a protective space", is the basis for all further action. However, this does not have to be completed, nor can it be, in order to take steps on the levels that build on it. Conversely, an advanced process does not mean that no further action is needed to secure a safer space for the person affected.

#### PHASE 1: CREATING AND SECURING A PROTECTIVE SPACE

In cases of sexualised violence, the alliance needs to react quickly and reliably. A protective space for the affected person must be established immediately. Any person associated with Ende Gelände who learns of sexualised violence in our structures should offer support to the affected person. The immediate creation of a protective space for the person affected requires, on the one hand, measures on the part of EG structures, for example, a temporary exclusion of perpetrator of violence from the action, local group, etc. and, on the other hand, personal support for the person affected, for example, in the case of sick leave or therapeutic accompaniment. The measures to create an immediate protective space are discussed in an initial meeting between the response group and the person affected, if desired accompanied by trusted people. The person affected does not have to say anything more than that an assault has happened.

At this point the response group has the following tasks:

- ⑩ initiate immediate protection measures

- ⑩ support the needs of the person affected and, if desired, represent them to the outside world
- ⑩ to show a repertoire of possible courses of action
- ⑩ actively search for people who can support the person affected

## **PHASE 2: STABILISATION AND CLARIFICATION OF NEEDS OF THE AFFECTED PERSON**

The work of the support group is essential for the stabilisation and self-determination of the person affected. The support group helps the affected person to become clear about what they need in this complex and difficult situation. In the exceptional situation after the assault, this can be concrete help in coping with everyday life, shopping, cooking, cleaning, going to the authorities, etc. The support group is of fundamental importance.

As a support group, it is fundamentally important to be very open about the process in this phase. Especially at the beginning, needs can be unexpected, contradictory and changeable (rest - distraction, closeness - distance, control - trust). The support group exists, among other things, precisely in order to provide this ambiguity with an appreciative and supportive space for exchange. This process can be very long-term, as it may take many intensive meetings to become aware of the complexity of the effects of violence.

It may also be useful for the support group to meet without the affected person, for example to bring everyone up to date and to have the opportunity to address their own fears and limitations. At such a meeting, one's own attitude towards solidarity-based partiality could be reflected upon and documented, and professional support could be sought, for example from a counselling centre. If the person affected feels ready, the group develops ideas with them about the next steps (founding the contact group, demands or announcements to the perpetrator of violence, informing the EG local group, etc.). In all steps, it is important to consider whether this will strengthen the self-determination of the person concerned. The support group never decides over the head of the person affected!

Especially in the beginning, the support group needs to be very sensitive to how much the affected person can and wants to be involved in organisational work.

## **PHASE 3: RESTORING THE AFFECTED PERSON'S AGENCY & SAFETY IN THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT**

At this level, the focus is on restoring the affected person's agency, which has been taken away by the assault. Whereas the previous measures were aimed at protecting and stabilising the affected person, the focus is now on creating conditions that make self-determined action (*free of fear?*) possible again. In patriarchal cultures, experiences of sexualised violence are accompanied by a stigmatisation of the

person affected, which manifests itself in feelings of insecurity, shame or powerlessness. Any attempt at transformative justice therefore first requires the empowerment of the person affected.

In the course of restoring agency and safety for the affected person, conflicts with other groups quickly arise due to perceptions of excessive exercise of power on the part of the support group. At this point it must be made clear that any exchange “at eye level” can only take place on the basis of a one-sided balancing of the patriarchal power imbalance, as required by the concept of solidarity-based partiality. Especially when it comes to negative consequences in the social and political environment, it is often forgotten that it is not the work of the supporters that triggers these, but rather the further consequences of the assault by the perpetrator of violence.

The support group organises the contact with the perpetrator of violence and the announcements and demands to them. If necessary, the support group itself talks to the perpetrator of violence. If possible, the contact takes place through a contact group (see III. Contact group). In accordance with the wishes of the person affected, the support group informs the local group and/or alliance structure within a framework clearly set for this purpose. The support group discusses whether additional measures are still necessary that are not included in the immediate measures initiated by the response group. This may include, for example, the issue of an outcall or an extension of the protective space.

#### **PHASE 4: COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY, UNDERMINING STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE & POSSIBILITIES FOR TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE**

Community accountability and transformative justice processes can only start when the support group is of the opinion that the situation has been stabilised and the safety and agency of the person affected have been restored as far as possible. Conflict-laden and stressful dynamics are to be expected, especially in disputes about community accountability. Accordingly, there can be no temporal automatism for this. They depend on the subjective assessment of the person affected and the support group and can also be suspended again by them if the conditions for this are no longer felt to be safe enough.

Collective acceptance of responsibility begins with a debate in the social and political environment. This requires sensitivity, empathy, openness and the ability to confront to create an environment that can be an exercise and learning field for all involved. It is important to reflect on the emotional turmoil caused by one's own involvement, emotional entanglements with the perpetrator of violence, as well as connections between assault and social structures. There also needs to be space to address possible doubts, inconsistencies and contradictory perceptions. However, the fundamental credibility of the person affected must never be in question. The basis of any discussion is solidarity with the person affected. Solidarity-based partiality

means that doubts and contradictory perceptions are heard but do not take a position that guides action. Rather, this space should be used to allow them, to deal with them, and to find a way to really ensure the solidarity and partiality needed. The support group shapes the exchange. The person affected can participate if they want to. There should be no expectation in this regard.

The discussion is followed by a decision on permanent exclusion or the possibility of a return of the perpetrator of violence if they have been temporarily excluded. However, because EG is a very large alliance with different local groups and working groups, it remains unclear how this consensus process can work in practice. The desire to restore “normality” as quickly as possible must not become the guiding principle here. In such an apparent “normality”, the violence was made possible in the first place; and so these conditions must be changed in the long term.

## V. TRANSFORMATIVE WORK WITH THE PERPETRATOR OF VIOLENCE

A basic assumption of transformative justice is that the behaviour of the perpetrator of violence is changeable and not pathological. This assumption is central to the work with the perpetrator. If the perpetrator is willing to, the contact group engages in an ongoing transformative process with them. It is of fundamental importance that the contact group always upholds a solidarity-based partiality towards the person affected throughout the different steps in this process. We should also not forget that we are not in a position to replace professional, in-depth therapy or similar steps and should therefore neither presume nor burden ourselves with such a goal. Our aim is rather to make a constructive contribution to coming to terms with what has happened and to initiate critical reflection on the violent behaviour of the perpetrator. Moreover, one important goal of a transformative process should also be the prevention of future harm.

The aim of the work should be to prevent a permanent stigmatisation of the perpetrator, as long as they are willing to enter into a process of reflection and take responsibility for what has happened and its effects. Whether this succeeds and can be completed at some point must again not be decided by the person perpetrating the violence. Nor should it be so easy to exclude the perpetrator from structures and think that this will solve the problem. This would in fact release the perpetrator from their personal and political responsibility. The perpetrator should therefore be given space in the discussion. However, experience shows that it is important that the perpetrator does not determine how the violence is dealt with. It is important to clearly state what the person affected, the support group, the contact group or the response group wants from the perpetrator: concrete points should be formulated here and



communicated to the perpetrator of violence. This should not be forgotten in case the perpetrator withdraws from certain structures and can also serve to recognise progress in the work.

Furthermore, the perpetrator should be given the opportunity to make a statement, but the framework and modalities of this statement (such as where and to whom, verbally or in writing, and other restrictions such as no reports of previous consensual sex with the person affected, no redefinition of the assault) will be determined and enforced by the person affected and the support and contact group. However, the perpetrator should have the opportunity to elaborate on points that are important to them to the contact group. The contact group decides which statements contain important information for the work of the support group or are relevant for a political debate within EG. Statements made by the perpetrator are only passed on through the contact group, not by the perpetrator themselves. The Ende-Gelände-organisation as a whole, and especially the contact group, must also define the principles and limits of the discussion in further dealings with the perpetrator of violence. These can be, for example, that the perpetrator of violence must not portray themselves as a victim, that they must acknowledge their own misconduct and deal with it. This may also mean, for example, that we require them to undergo psychotherapy or make use of other professional support services.

In the course of the transformative process, the contact group may consider contacting friends, family and/or caregivers of the perpetrator of violence, although this may be difficult work as there may be very little sensitivity to such a concern in this environment. However, this approach can be particularly valuable, as it addresses people who have a higher credibility for the person affected and who can also initiate a reflection on their own position within a patriarchal power structure in the environment of the perpetrator.

During the initial contact with the perpetrator, it is important to take into account their level of reflection, and if necessary to give them more time at the start of the process. For transformative work with the perpetrator it is important to find a balance between confrontation and empathy: The tone with which the perpetrator is addressed should be chosen in such a way that clear points of view are formulated, but at the same time too strong a confrontation is avoided, because this would be likely to cause the perpetrator to withdraw. A possible structure of the initial contact could be that first the reason for the contact and the work of the contact group is presented. Then the perpetrator of violence is given the opportunity to comment on this, and at the end they are given demands that they are supposed to meet in the course of the transformative process.

All these points presuppose that the perpetrator is willing to enter into a reflection process. If it turns out that this is not the case, it is important to acknowledge this and

to see the limits of one's own ability to act as a contact group, after consultation with the person affected, the support group or the response group.

## VI. GLOSSARY

In developing this guide, the EG response group agreed on the use of certain terms. With these, a framework was created that should make it possible to talk about the different aspects of sexual violence and its surrounding power structures. At the same time, it is important to observe the discourse and to react to new insights without getting stuck on terms that were once fixed. In the sense of “solidarity-based partiality” and the “power to define”, it is especially indispensable to follow the wishes of the person affected in case they wishes to use other terms.

### **PERSON AFFECTED**

We use a gender-neutral formulation<sup>8</sup> for the person affected in order to make it clear that people of different genders are affected by sexualised violence. In this way, we decide against the term "victim", which is often used in a stigmatising way or as an insult and describes the person as incapable of acting.

### **COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE**

Community Accountability and Transformative Justice were developed primarily by FLINTA\* of colour in the US to find a way of dealing with sexualised violence outside of a structurally racist criminal justice system. Thus, community accountability is a feminist and abolitionist practice conceived as an alternative to the prison logic. The aim of such approaches is, on the one hand, to collectively support the affected person after concrete cases of violence. On the other hand, work is done with all those involved in order to stimulate a change in the behaviour of the person committing violence and to change the structures that make violence possible in the long term.

### **POWER TO DEFINE**

As a feminist response to rape culture, the concept of “power to define” has been a breakthrough in the German feminist movement, as it focuses on the perspective and needs of the person affected. Power of definition means that the person affected by sexualised violence has full authority over the definition of the experience of violence. In particular, power to define does not require the presentation of evidence, which is often based on the feelings and sensations of the person affected, because explaining the situation of violence can mean re-traumatising the person affected.

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<sup>8</sup>Finding gender-neutral formulations is mostly a challenge in the German language, where many terms like “die Betroffene” are similar in meaning to the person affected but still female-gendered.

However, power to define does not include power over consequences or sanctions against the person perpetrating violence—so the affected person does not have the “power to sanction”.

## **PREVENTION**

For us, addressing sexualised violence goes hand in hand with addressing possibilities for its prevention. This requires the ongoing confrontation with patriarchy and patriarchal structures. Theoretical debates are not enough, the focus should be on critically examining dynamics within the respective group. Talking about possible scenarios in advance can, on the one hand, raise awareness and, on the other hand, make it easier to talk about concrete incidents and thus increase the ability to act. The exchange about terminology and ways of speaking can also make it easier to deal with sexualised violence and help to dismantle or avoid possible myths. Successful prevention is not only about enabling a professionalised approach to sexualised violence, but also about creating a climate of mutual trust and sensitivity that makes assaults more difficult.

## **RACIAL PROFILING**

“Racial profiling (also called “ethnic profiling”) refers to a police practice and measures taken by other security, immigration and customs officers, such as identity checks, questioning, surveillance, searches or even arrests, which are not carried out on a concrete basis of suspicion or danger (such as the behaviour of a person or group), but solely on the basis of (“external”) racialised characteristics—in particular skin colour or (presumed) religious affiliation.”<sup>9</sup>

## **RAPE CULTURE**

It is important to locate sexualised violence within a patriarchal society and for this the term “rape culture” is crucial. Rape culture refers to a social climate in which sexualised violence is normalised and trivialised and in which victims are systematically blamed for what happened and their experiences are doubted. Victim blaming often takes place in order to protect the perpetrator of violence.

## **SEXUALISED VIOLENCE**

There are different terms for sexualised violence in the literature. We have chosen the term “sexualised violence” because we want to emphasise that such acts are always about exercising power and not about acting out sexual desire. This becomes particularly clear when we look at the act from the perspective of the survivor.

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<sup>9</sup>Translated from <https://m.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/kurzdoessiers/308350/racial-profiling-institutioneller-rassismus-und-interventionsmoeglichkeiten>

## SOLIDARITY-BASED PARTIALITY

Support work takes place on the basis of partiality. Partiality means not questioning the perception of the person affected. Only they can say what the assault is like for them and only they should be allowed to define it. Being biased is a political and conscious decision with the aim of supporting those affected by sexualised violence in solidarity in a society characterised by patriarchal and sexist power relations. Most incidents of such violence never come up at all because most of those affected do not say anything because they are ashamed, afraid of being doubted, because they cannot provide “objective” evidence or because (partial) blame could be assigned to them. The consequence is often silence. This silence is an elementary component of patriarchal structures. The approach of solidarity-based partiality gives those people affected the power to define what has happened to themselves and to come out of powerlessness. Due to the fears and risks associated with making violence public, we assume that false accusations are the absolute exception and that questioning the person affected is unfortunately the absolute rule. Therefore, we would rather take the very unlikely risk of a false accusation being made than accept that the vast majority of those affected will remain silent. A fundamental question that arises at various points in the process is whether our decisions are always and fully guided by the wishes of the person concerned. The needs of the person affected are at the centre of our concrete activities. In the early phase, when it is a matter of implementing a protective space, for example, they are the sole basis. In the long term, especially when dealing with the perpetrator of violence, the needs of the person affected remain important for our work, but are not the only basis for our decisions. In a specific case, we may make a decision that ultimately does not fully correspond to the wishes of the person affected.

## VII. FURTHER READING

Unfortunately, our reading list predominantly consists of German literature. We hope to change this in the future and if you have any suggestions please let us know.

### AVAILABLE FOR FREE:

Alter und Trauma (o.J.), *Sexualisierte Gewalt – Formen, Folgen, Täterprofile*, Online unter <https://www.alterundtrauma.de/basiswissen/sexualisierte-gewalt/wann-spricht-man-von-se-xualisierter-gewalt.html>

Brazzell, Melanie (2017), *Was macht uns wirklich sicher? – Toolkit für Aktivist\*innen*, Online-unter-<https://www.transformativejustice.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/toolkit-finished-1.pdf>

CARA – Community Against Rape and Abuse (2014), *Das Risiko wagen - Strategien für selbstorganisierte und kollektive Verantwortungsübernahme bei*

*sexualisierter Gewalt*, Online unter <https://www.transformativejustice.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Das-Risiko-wagen.pdf>

Community Accountability. *Taking collective responsibility against sexualised violence*, Online unter <https://commacct.uber.space/>

Initiative Awareness e.V. (2019), *AWARENESS - Umgang mit Diskriminierung und Gewalt-bei-Veranstaltungen*, Online-unter: [https://awarenessy.noblogs.org/files/2020/04/Initiative-Awareness\\_2019Antidiskriminierungsarbeit-im-Veranstaltungskontext.pdf](https://awarenessy.noblogs.org/files/2020/04/Initiative-Awareness_2019Antidiskriminierungsarbeit-im-Veranstaltungskontext.pdf)

Interventionistische Linke (2019), *Leitfaden - Im Umgang mit sexueller/sexualisierter Gewalt innerhalb der Interventionistischen Linke*, Online unter <https://interventionistische-linke.org/sites/default/files/attachements/il-leitfaden.pdf>

Lesmigras(o.J.), *Unser Gewaltverständnis*, Online unter <https://lesmigras.de/Gewaltver-standnis.html>

medica mondiale e.V. (o.J.), *Glossar (Sexualisierte Gewalt)*, Online unter <https://www.medica-mondiale.org/service/glossar/glossar-filter/s.html>

medica mondiale e.V. (o.J.), *Vergewaltigungsmythen*, Online unter [https://www.medicamondiale.org/fileadmin/redaktion/5\\_Service/Mediathek/Dokumente/Deutsch/Flyer\\_Infoblatter/Vergewaltigungsmythen\\_medica\\_mondiale.pdf](https://www.medicamondiale.org/fileadmin/redaktion/5_Service/Mediathek/Dokumente/Deutsch/Flyer_Infoblatter/Vergewaltigungsmythen_medica_mondiale.pdf)

RESPONS (2018), *Was tun bei sexualisierter Gewalt? - Handbuch für die Transformative Arbeit mit gewaltausübenden Personen*, Online unter <https://www.unrast-verlag.de/neuerscheinungen/was-tun-bei-sexualisierter-gewalt-detail>

Thompson, Vanessa Eileen (2020), *Racial Profiling, institutioneller Rassismus und Interventionsmöglichkeiten*, Online unter <https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/kurzdosiers/308350/racial-profiling-institutioneller-rassismus-und-interventionsmoeglichkeiten>

transact (2014), *Wie ist deine Freiheit mit meiner verbunden? - Stichworte zu gemischter Organisation, Definitionsmacht und Critical Whiteness*, Online unter [https://transact.noblogs.org/files/2014/02/transact6\\_de.pdf](https://transact.noblogs.org/files/2014/02/transact6_de.pdf)

Transformative Justice Kollektiv Berlin (o.J.), *Was sind kollektive Verantwortungsübernahme & transformative Gerechtigkeit?*, Online unter: <https://www.transformativejustice.eu/de/was-sind-community-accountability-kollektive-verantwortungsuebernahme-transformative-justice-transformative-gerechtigkeit/#unique-identifizier>

## FURTHER READING:

re.Action (2007). *Antisexismus\_reloaded: Zum Umgang mit sexualisierter Gewalt – ein Handbuch für die antisexistische Praxis* (1. Aufl.). Münster: Unrast Verlag.

Ehrmann, J. & Thompson, V. E. (2019). *Abolitionistische Demokratie: Intersektionale Konzepte und Praktiken der Strafkritik*. In R. Malzahn (Hrsg.), *Strafe und Gefängnis. Theorie, Kritik, Alternativen. Eine Einführung* (S. 222-248). Stuttgart: Schmetterling Verlag.

Monz, L. & Brazzell, M., Transformative Justice Kollektiv Berlin (2019). *Kein einfacher Weg: von Restorative zu Transformative Justice im Umgang mit sexualisierter Gewalt und Beziehungsgewalt*. In R. Malzahn (Hrsg.), *Strafe und Gefängnis. Theorie, Kritik, Alternativen. Eine Einführung* (S. 222-248). Stuttgart: Schmetterling Verlag.

Olufemi, L. (2020). *Feminism, Interrupted. Disrupting Power* (1. Aufl., Kapitel 8, S. 109-121). London: Pluto Press.

## OTHER COLLECTIVES:

Ignite! Kollektiv: <https://ignite.blackblogs.org>

Incite!: <https://incite-national.org>

Transformative Justice Kollektiv Berlin: <https://www.transformativejustice.eu/en/>

## VIII. CONTACTING THE RESPONSE GROUP

You can contact the response group for cases of sexualised violence within Ende Gelände via two different email-addresses.

1. It is possible to exclusively contact the FLINTA\* members of the response group by directly sending an email to the FLINTA\* email address. The contents will then only be discussed among FLINTA\* and any exchange with cis-men from the response group will only happen in consensus with the person affected.

[ansprechgruppe\\_flinta@ende-gelaende.org](mailto:ansprechgruppe_flinta@ende-gelaende.org)

2. Moreover, it is possible to contact the whole response group via a second email adress. [ansprechgruppe@ende-gelaende.org](mailto:ansprechgruppe@ende-gelaende.org)

Encrypted email-communication is possible and the public keys of both email addresses can be found under <https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/working-structure/>

## JOIN THE RESPONSE GROUP

Our working group is quite balanced in terms of gender identity. If you would like to join our group (on the long term), we are happy to hear from you and just send us an email to: [ansprechgruppe\\_flinta@ende-gelaende.org](mailto:ansprechgruppe_flinta@ende-gelaende.org)