

## GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC/ACTIVIST SPACES – 1<sup>ST</sup> NMCI CONFERENCE

This event is explicitly designed to include a diversity of people, as both contributors and attendees. The list includes but is not limited to:

- Academics and researchers from a number of different disciplines (from the sciences through to the arts)
- Activists and community leaders/members
- Practitioners such as mental health therapists, counselors, (public) health workers, and educators
- Artists and other creative workers

In addition, there will be people present from a number of different countries, with a variety of first languages, and with diverse cultural and generational backgrounds.

For these reasons we ask that you are mindful of the different backgrounds and perspectives of the attendees. To help in this we've drawn up the following list of ten guidelines which we invite attendees to follow, both when preparing their materials for the conference, and when taking part.

1. **Please keep your terminology simple such that it can be understood easily by people from all of the groups listed above.** If you are using words which are specific to your academic discipline or professional world then please explain them for those who are unfamiliar with them. This might include, for example: statistical terms, specific theoretical ideas (e.g. feminist, anarchist, post-structuralist), or references to thinkers/activists/artists who others will not necessarily be familiar with. You might simply consider stripping some of these elements out of your presentation if it would be difficult to explain all of the background in simple terms. We will also ask chairs of sessions to pick up on any unfamiliar terminology and ask for explanations in order that all presentations are understandable to the whole audience.
2. **Please don't assume that people will be familiar with the norms and conventions of your world.** We have very different ways of doing things across different kinds of academic, professional and community spaces, and people will also have different cultural and generational norms as well as different levels of experience and expertise. Please be aware of this when interacting with people. For example, people may ask questions or make points which feel clumsy or ignorant to you, but – if possible – try to 'call them in' by explaining things gently rather than 'calling them out' by publicly dismissing or challenging them. If you don't have the energy to do this yourself then it's fine to suggest that the person talks to one of the organisers who can explain.
3. **Please don't make assumptions about people themselves.** People at the event will have diverse genders, sexualities, relationship styles, nationalities, ages, disabilities, class and cultural backgrounds, and political and religious beliefs. Please try not to make assumptions about these, and to take somebody's self-identity at face value. For example: Use the names and gender pronouns that people provide on their badges. Don't make jokes or derogatory comments about an entire gender, sexuality, nationality or cultural group. Don't assume that somebody will be able to afford to join you in eating out, or that they will be an alcohol drinker, or that they will be able to hear in a noisy venue.
4. **Please treat presenters with respect.** It can be very daunting to talk in front of a group, especially about your own work and ideas. For some people this will be their first time. Also please bear in mind that people may make errors in their language under pressure and do check out whether that might have happened before criticising them.

5. **Please try to frame questions and discussion points in a way which leaves room for other people to contribute.** It's common at events to get excited about what people are presenting and to want to join the discussion. We really hope that you feel this way! However, it is easy for discussions to become dominated by certain individuals or views. Please keep your contributions brief enough that everybody present has the possibility of taking part. As a rough rule of thumb think about dividing the total available time between the number of people present. If you end up talking for a lot longer than this amount of time then it's time to stop! Remember that some people need a period of silence to consider what to say before contributing or putting their hand up, so don't rush to fill the space. If you've already contributed, or tend to do so a lot, consider stepping back to give others space. If you don't often contribute, think about stepping forward (if you speak quietly or find it too daunting you can write a comment on a post-it and give it to the chair rather than speaking).
6. **Please try to frame questions and discussion points in a way which leaves it open that other people may disagree with you.** There will be people present with very different political views, religious backgrounds, theoretical approaches, and opinions on how to conduct relationships, and what political strategies are most effective. Please consider whether your contribution leaves space for other people to express different points of view to your own. It's fine to disagree but please try to keep criticism constructive and to own your perspective: 'I think...' rather than 'you're wrong'.
7. **Please provide content warnings if the material you are sharing has the potential to be upsetting or personally triggering.** This counts both for presentations (which can have a brief content warning up front) and for comments in discussion. Please think first about whether your comment might feel too personally exposing for you afterwards, or triggering for others. For example, it is worth flagging up front if there is going to be any mention – or imagery - of sexual abuse, violence, mental health problems, traumatic experiences, or racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise derogatory sentiments. It is fine for people to decide to leave a session – temporarily or permanently – if they aren't comfortable with the material.
8. **Keep what people share confidential after the event.** If people discuss personal experiences, or if practitioners mention people they work with, remember not to discuss these outside of the event (with others, or with them if it is a confidential space). Also please be very careful only to talk about other people who have given you explicit permission to do so.
9. **Please use social media generously.** We very much hope that people will live tweet the event and blog about it. However, please don't use this media to publicly criticise or condemn individuals. If you have a complaint or criticism about the event please consider discussing it with the organisers before making it public.
10. **Dealing with problems.** If you have any problems with the event, please talk to the organisers individually. We'll do our very best but there will inevitably be some mistakes and imperfections and we're very keen to address those and to keep improving. It can be helpful to put yourself in the shoes of the organisers, recognising the pressures that they are under. For example, you might consider whether your query or point is urgent – in which case we want to hear it right away – or whether it might be one that is okay to feedback after the event, when people have had time to recover.