

Handout for awareness persons at events at the University of Bonn

Introduction

Awareness staff play a key role in ensuring that events at the University of Bonn are safe, inclusive and enjoyable for all participants. This handout is intended to give future awareness persons an overview of their tasks and important tips for their work at events. Awareness staff make an indispensable contribution to a safe and inclusive event environment. Their role requires sensitivity, empathy and ongoing training. This handout is intended to provide you with guidance on how to carry out your work successfully and for the benefit of all participants.

Tasks of awareness persons at events

1. **Preparation:**
 - **Briefing:** Take part in a briefing before the event to coordinate the objectives, procedure and specific requirements with the event team.
 - **Premises:** Familiarize yourself with the premises, including emergency exits, first aid stations and retreat rooms.
 - **Materials:** Make sure you have all the necessary materials (e.g. first aid kits, flyers with emergency numbers, contact lists) with you.
2. **Availability during the event:**
 - **Accessibility:** Make sure that you are clearly visible and easily approachable throughout the event (e.g. by wearing special clothing or name badges).
 - **Show presence:** Move around the event area regularly so that you can intervene quickly if necessary. (If you are a multi-person awareness team and have a fixed awareness stand, one person can look after the stand).
3. **Support and intervention:**
 - **Listen and support:** Be approachable for all participants who need support. Listen carefully to their concerns and offer emotional support.
 - **De-escalation:** Intervene in conflicts or inappropriate behavior to de-escalate the situation. Use de-escalating communication techniques.
 - **Documentation:** If necessary, document incidents carefully and objectively.
4. **Follow-up:**
 - **Support those affected:** If necessary, support affected persons after the event and refer them to suitable agencies if required.
 - **Debriefing:** Take part in a debriefing to evaluate the event and identify potential for improvement.

Important principles and behaviors as an awareness person

1. **Confidentiality:**
 - Maintain the confidentiality of conversations unless the person concerned agrees to the information being passed on or there is a risk to life and limb.
2. **Empathy and respect:**
 - Treat each person with respect and empathy.

- Recognize the experiences and feelings of those affected without prejudice.
- 3. **Neutrality and de-escalation:**
 - Remain neutral and look for de-escalating solutions. Your job is to support and mediate, not to judge or take sides.
- 4. **Competence and further training:**
 - Regularly educate yourself on topics such as discrimination and bias, conflict management and mental health.
 - Exchange ideas with other awareness people and/or take part in supervision sessions.

What questions do I ask the person concerned?

When talking to an affected person as an awareness person, it is important to ask questions that signal empathy, support and understanding. Here are some questions that can help:

Introductory questions

- "How can I help you?"
- "Would you like to tell me what happened?"
- "Do you feel comfortable talking about it?"

Comprehension questions

- "What exactly happened?"
- "When and where did it happen?"
- "Who was involved in the incident?"

Emotional support

- "How do you feel now?"
- "What do you need at the moment?"
- "Is there anyone we should contact (friends, family, trusted person)?"

Further support

- "Would you like me to help you find professional support?"
- "Would you like me to go with you to a safer space?"
- "Are there any measures we can take to protect you?"

Final questions

- "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?"
- "How can we ensure that you feel safe in the future?"
- "Do you have any questions or concerns that we still should discuss?"

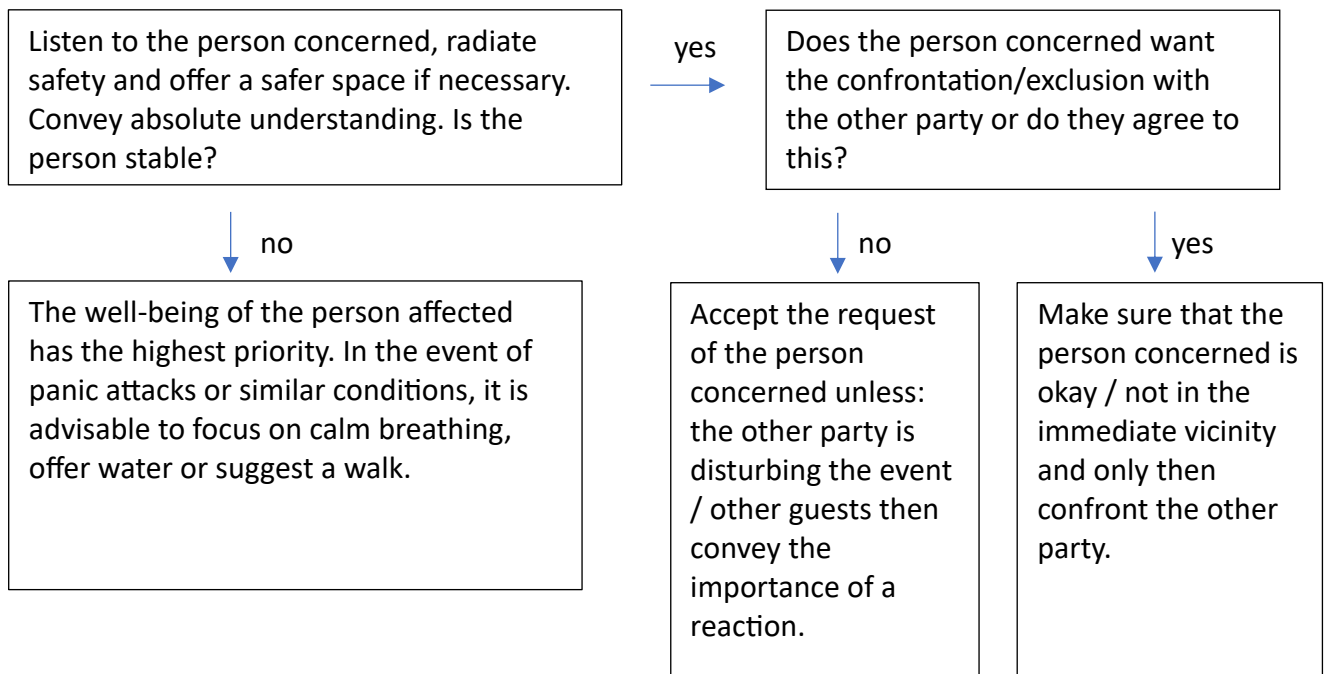
Important notes

- **Active listening:** Show that you are listening attentively by nodding, maintaining eye contact and occasionally paraphrasing.

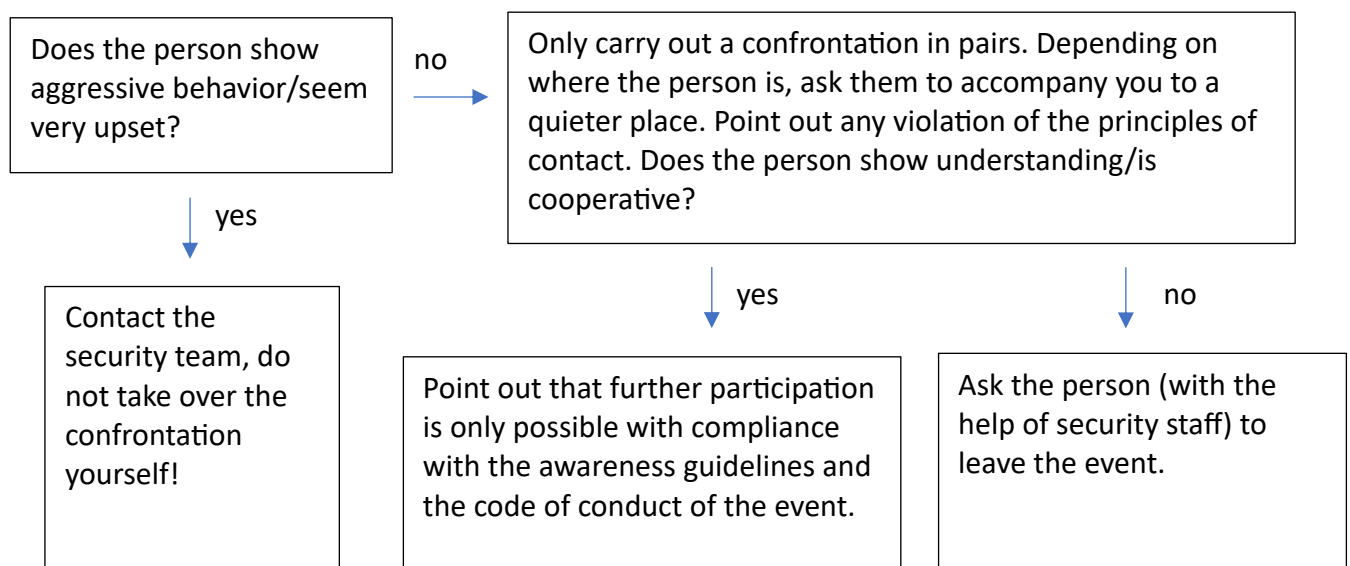
- **Do not rush:** Give the person concerned time and space to tell their story at their own pace.
- **Remain neutral:** Avoid making judgments or assigning blame. Your role is to offer support, not to judge.
- **Emotional support:** Show empathy and understanding for the feelings of the person concerned.
- **Discretion and confidentiality:** Assure the data subject that their information will be kept confidential unless they specifically request it or it is required by law.

Examples

Procedure in the event of a report by a concerned person



Procedure in the event of a confrontation



Boundaries of awareness persons

Awareness persons play an important role in supporting and promoting a safe and inclusive environment. However, there are certain limits to their capabilities and responsibilities. Here are some things that awareness persons may not do:

Therapeutic or medical treatment

- **No professional therapy:** Awareness persons are usually not trained therapists or doctors and therefore cannot offer psychotherapeutic or medical treatment.
- **No medical diagnoses:** You may not make medical diagnoses or give specific medical advice.

Legal advice or legal assistance

- **No legal advice:** Awareness persons are usually not lawyers and therefore cannot offer legal advice.
- **No legal decisions:** You may not make any legal decisions or take any legal action.

Long-term support

- **Limited support:** The support provided by awareness persons is only limited to certain periods of time (e.g. an event). They may not provide long-term support or guidance.
- **Referral:** You can refer affected persons to suitable specialist agencies that can offer long-term support.

Emotional load transfer

- **Personal responsibility of those affected:** Awareness persons can provide emotional support, but they cannot take on the emotional burden or responsibility for coping with trauma.
- **Self-care:** You must also take care of your own mental health and boundaries and not overload yourself.

Recognizing and openly communicating these boundaries is important to set realistic expectations and ensure that awareness staff can work effectively and sustainably.