

# Good Night Out

*Festival Guide*



Good Night Out Vancouver is a local chapter of an international initiative dedicated to raising awareness about sexual harassment and assault.

We help the entertainment and nightlife industries build capacity to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and assault, and offer tools to add to your existing safety plans and policy.

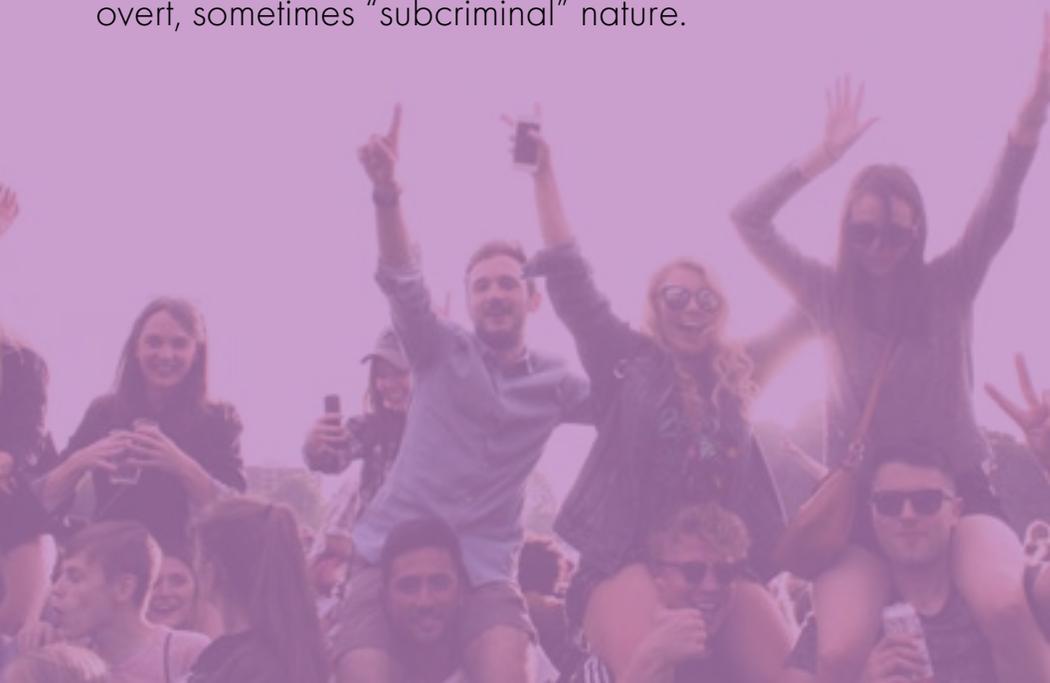
This project was initiated from community concerns that nightlife and event staff, volunteers and patrons are often under equipped to recognize or prevent harassment and assault from happening, nor do they always have the skills, resources or time to navigate complaints of this sometimes overt, sometimes “subcriminal” nature.

# What we do.

Good Night Out works with restaurants, pubs, clubs, art spaces, music festivals and promoters. We also host community workshops with young adults on how to have safer nights out, helping to create a safer environment for both patrons and service staff.

We support events to :

- give staff and volunteers the skills to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- have a clear plan in place for when someone reports problematic behaviour at the event.
- play a proactive role in a greater cultural shift that celebrates the safety and contribution of women, femme, and LGBTQ2 customers and employees in the live event industry.



**“Women at festivals are still made to feel uncomfortable and violated all the time - whether it’s some guy groping you as he brushes by in a crowd, making unsolicited comments about your body, or taking your enthusiastic dancing as an open invitation to touch you without consent.”**

Michelle Lhooq, [Thump](#)



## Why?

In the summer of 2016, the Stockholm police yielded 38 reports of sexual assault following an annual music festival attended by approximately a hundred thousand youth. Closer to home, Osheaga music festival in Montreal came under fire in August of the same year, for their staff’s failure to assess or adequately support a female patron who was wandering alone on festival grounds and experiencing the effects of being drugged.

In September 2015, a New York woman was shot in the head by a man after refusing his advances at a Carnivale festival. In 2015, a male patron at Coachella festival in the US made international headlines after being photographed wearing a T-shirt on festival grounds emblazoned with the words “Eat,Rape, Repeat.”



# It's time to do more.

\*We use this term, but recognizes this is not a term that all people who experience sexual assault identify with, as well as the difficulty with a victim/survivor dichotomy. We encourages all people writing and talking about this topic to ensure to use terms that specific individuals are comfortable with and refer to the [Femifesto Media Guide](#) as needed.

In recent years, sexual assault survivors\* and activists from all over the world have taken to online media to call for greater accountability in music festival culture.

Like most countries, Canada lacks any national guidelines or even suggestions on how organizers can build sexual violence prevention into their event infrastructure, making it hard to know where to begin. The Provincial Government of BC does include one page of guidance in their Guide for Major Planned Events to preventing sexual assault which promisingly, does place sexual assault within a greater matrix of gendered societal power. **It's a good start, but not enough.**

This guide aims to fill in the gaps, utilizing existing research on sexual assault and mass gatherings, and translating that foundational knowledge into a tool kit for event organizers, staff, volunteers and patrons . We hope to hold the greater community accountable for preventing sexual assault and challenge the narratives of personal responsibility and victim blaming in regards to sexual assault prevention

# What we mean when we say...

**Sexual violence**, as defined by the United Nations “is[a]ny violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality.”

The festival experiences recently reported in the media that inspired this guide include, but are not limited to: **sexual assault, rape, harassment, stalking, groping indecent / sexualized exposure, degrading imagery and voyeurism.**

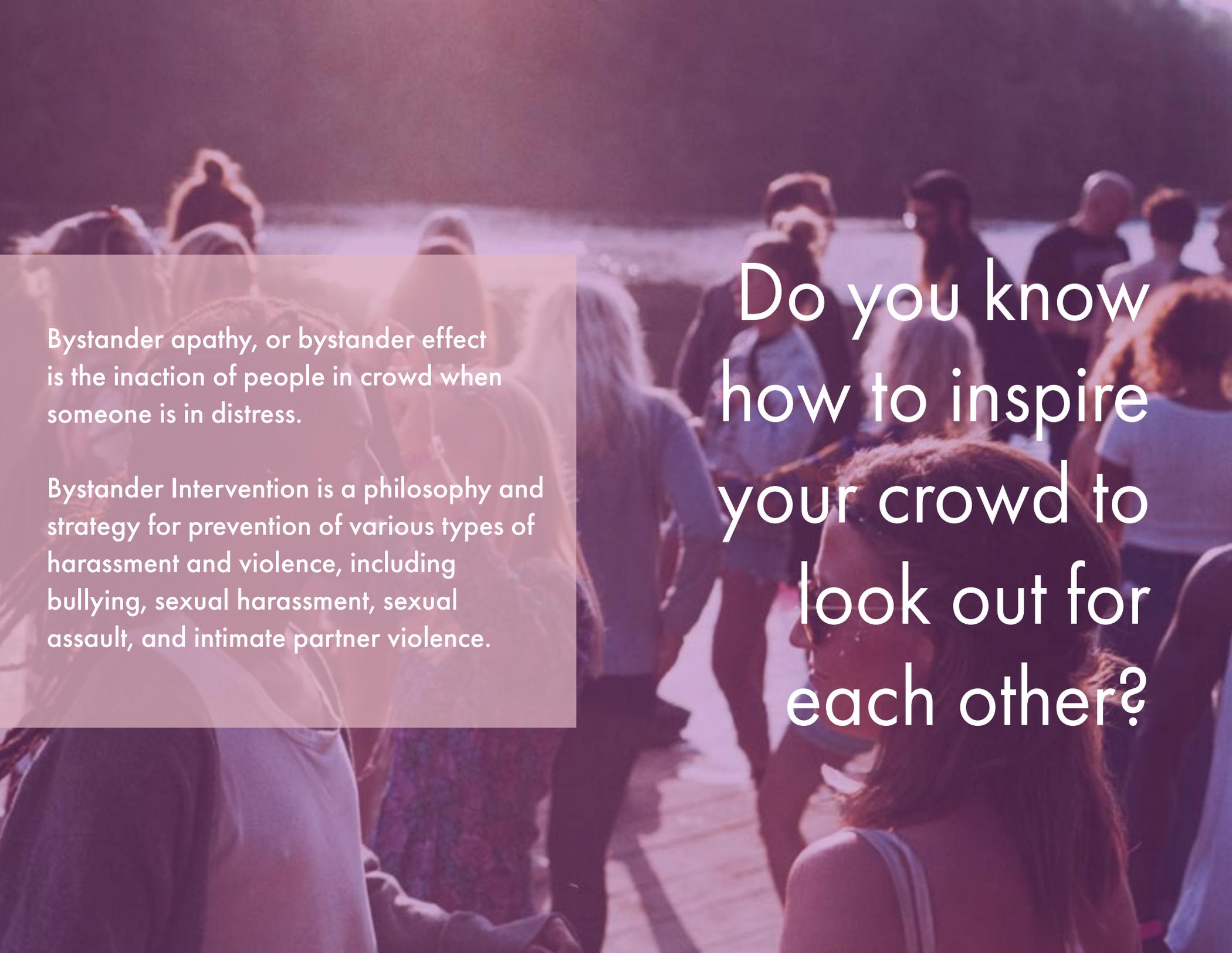
While **sexual assault**, or the non-consensual physical contact of a sexual nature, fits within UN definition, it doesn't explicitly make clear that the recent stories taking place at music festivals that inspired guide are also all acts of sexual violence. The acknowledgment that there is a continuum of sexual violence is necessary to clarify any ambiguity about “what the big deal is.”

**Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault (DFSA)** occurs when alcohol or other drugs are used to intentionally sedate or incapacitate a person in order to perpetrate non-consensual sexual activity. DFSA is **proactive** when perpetrator puts a drug into a victim's drink or gives a victim alcohol until she becomes inebriated and incapacitated. It is **opportunistic** when perpetrator targets an already intoxicated or incapacitated victim.



Research has shown that when it comes to the intervention of bystanders, the greater number of people around, the less likely individuals are to act, due to a diffusion of responsibility amongst the crowd.

Fostering a community of engaged and connected bystanders is an effective way for festivals to help prevent sexual assault.



Bystander apathy, or bystander effect is the inaction of people in crowd when someone is in distress.

Bystander Intervention is a philosophy and strategy for prevention of various types of harassment and violence, including bullying, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence.

Do you know  
how to inspire  
your crowd to  
look out for  
each other?

*“Consent culture is a culture in which asking for consent is normalized and condoned in popular culture. It is respecting the person’s response even if it isn’t the response you had hoped for. We will live in a consent culture when we no longer objectify people and we value them as human beings.” [source](#)*



# Fostering Consent Culture at events.

Also referred to as Rape myth acceptance, **Rape Culture** is characterized by attitudes and actions that deny the validity of sexual assault, victim blame, minimize the effects of sexual assault on the victim and / or defends the perpetrator.

Rape myth acceptance positions victims as asking for it, and includes “a complex set of beliefs that encourage male sexual aggression and supports violence against women” (Emilie Buchwald, 99). If the crowd at a mass gathering shares in rape myth acceptance, or the event includes social norms that don’t challenge rape culture, there is a higher risk of sexual violence perpetration.

Rape culture at festivals can include the hyper masculinity of musical acts, bystander apathy of volunteers and dismissive attitudes of security staff.

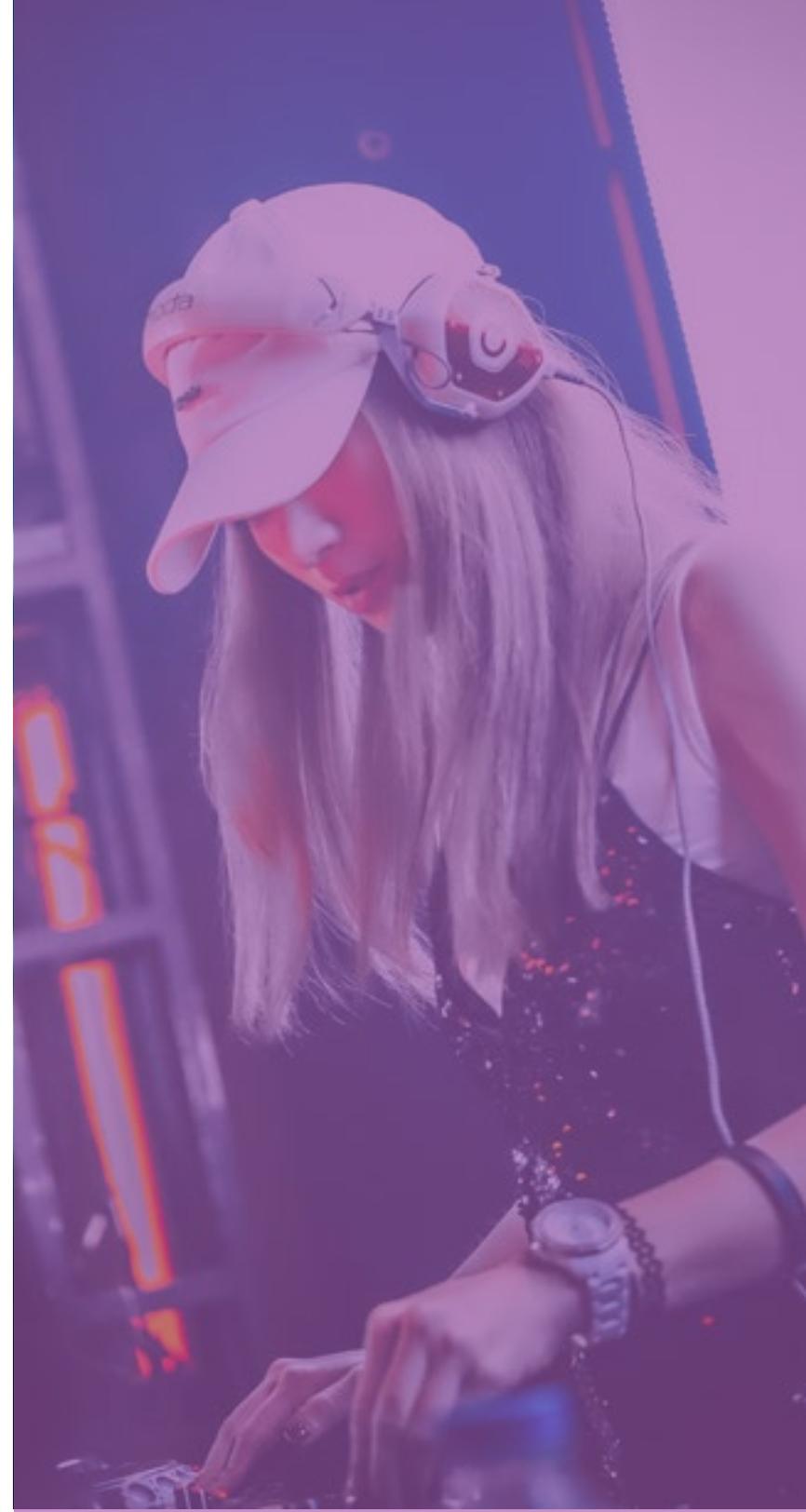
**Good Night Out training offers you tools to build and promote consent culture at your event.**

Not sure where to start in assessing if your festival fosters a consent culture? **That's understandable, patriarchy is rooted in things like belief systems, institutions and stereotypes, and so it can be hard to see sometimes.**

Rape culture is the more visible part of patriarchy. In nightlife, festival and live music scenes it can look like:

- "Eat, Rape Repeat" T-shirts
- Security guards not taking complaints of harassment /assault seriously or not knowing how to detect it or respond.
- Patron's inaccurately thinking that a rave costume, bathingsuit, outfit, dancing, or consuming substances is an invitation to
- harass, touch, grind, drug or sexually assault someone.
- Booking acts that have hateful, sexist or rape condoning lyrics or stage acts.
- The idea that women, trans and non-binary folk exist only for
- fetishization and/ or can't make music, art, or build and create festivals and live music events.

Our event audit and training can help ensure your event measures up.





# What interventions do you have in place in regards to safety and intoxication at your event?

In addition to patrons who are consuming drugs and alcohol, rape myth acceptance & bystander apathy have been identified as variables linked to sexual assault & sexual violence. *(Victoria L Banyard, Elizabeth G. Plante, and Mary M. Moynihan, 2004)*

Hundreds of thousands of sexual assaults happen every year in Canada, with less than 10% of them being reported.

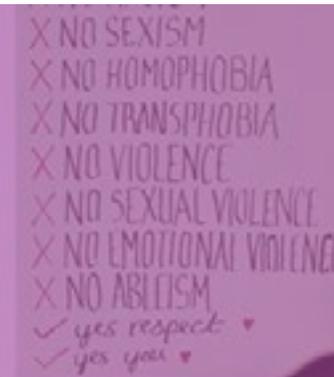
The Sex Information and Education Council of Canada reports that “alcohol continues to be the most common substance in DFSA and that 1 in 5 sexual assaults are drug facilitated. A variety of drugs, including alcohol, are used by perpetrators to incapacitate their victims.

A recent study on sexual assault at mass gatherings found that in 95% of cases of sexual assault reported in the study period, the person experiencing the assault had voluntarily consumed drugs or alcohol at the event in question. *(Sampsel et al, 2015)*

**“While the greatest risk factor is being female, one’s risk of experiencing sexual violence increases when one is young, old, poor, a person of colour, Aboriginal, an immigrant, deaf, a person with a disability, has a sexual orientation or gender identity which does not conform to heterosexual gendered norms, is criminalized or is institutionalized.”** *Source*

Safer spaces and safer space policies can protect the most marginalized of your event goers. Safer space conversations go beyond the safety of women, and recognize that “sexual violence occurs within a context of oppression including sexism, racism, ableism, heterosexism, ageism and classism.” *Source*

The establishment of sanctuary or “chill out zones” where people can receive supports while experiencing emotional stress or under the influence has been recommended in documents by the Provincial Government of BC and The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.



X NO SEXISM  
X NO HOMOPHOBIA  
X NO TRANSPHOBIA  
X NO VIOLENCE  
X NO SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
X NO EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE  
X NO ABLEISM  
✓ yes respect ♡  
✓ yes you ♡



Photo from Noise Against Sexual Assault

# Some questions to ask...

Does your event ...	Yes	No	Not Sure	Need help
have a Sexual Violence Policy?				
have a policy that states zero tolerance for sexual violence (inc. harassment)?				
have a social media and on-site campaign about harassment and consent?				
have a Safer Space/Sanctuary?				
have female/femme /non binary representation on the line up (how much)?				
have gender diversity at every staffing level?				
have a gender diverse security team?				
offer sexual assault training to staff including security?				
extend this training to volunteers?				
have a clear recording and reporting process for complaint?				
partner with an outside organization to address sexual violence prevention?				
refuse to book acts who are known to be sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, or perpetuate rape culture etc in their stage performances/lyrics?				
have clear signage on where/why / how to get help posted all over the event?				

We have worked with...

- Red Gate
- Bass Coast Music Festival
- GroundWerk Events
- Electric Love Music Festival
- Music Waste Festival
- Victory Square Block Party
- Foot Werk Events
- Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association
- BarWatch
- City of Vancouver
- Simon Fraser University
- Rent Cheque
- Society for the Advocacy of Safer Spaces
- Femme Wave Festival
- Vancouver Police Department
- Capilano Students Union
- Vancouver Art and Leisure



There are many ways Good Night Out can help with your event. Please get in touch to determine how we can support you in increasing patrons sense of safety.

### Our services for festivals include:

- Training for festival managers and security
- Train-the-trainer packages so that volunteers can access the information covered in our workshops
- Festival / event audit
- Outreach teams consisting of bystanders skilled in conflict resolution
- Messaging campaigns
- Safety plans
- Policy writing
- Establishing a “chill out zone” at the event
- Overview of technology options for increased patron safety



# Learn more

For a more detailed look at how to make your event as safe as possible and foster a culture where all bodies, gender identities, sexual orientations and physical abilities are celebrated, please email us.

If you are doing something to make festivals and events safer and more awesome, we would love to learn more!

Press:

[Georgia Straight](#)

[Vice](#)

[Georgia Straight again](#)

[Discorder](#)

**Web:** [goodnightoutvancouver.com](http://goodnightoutvancouver.com)

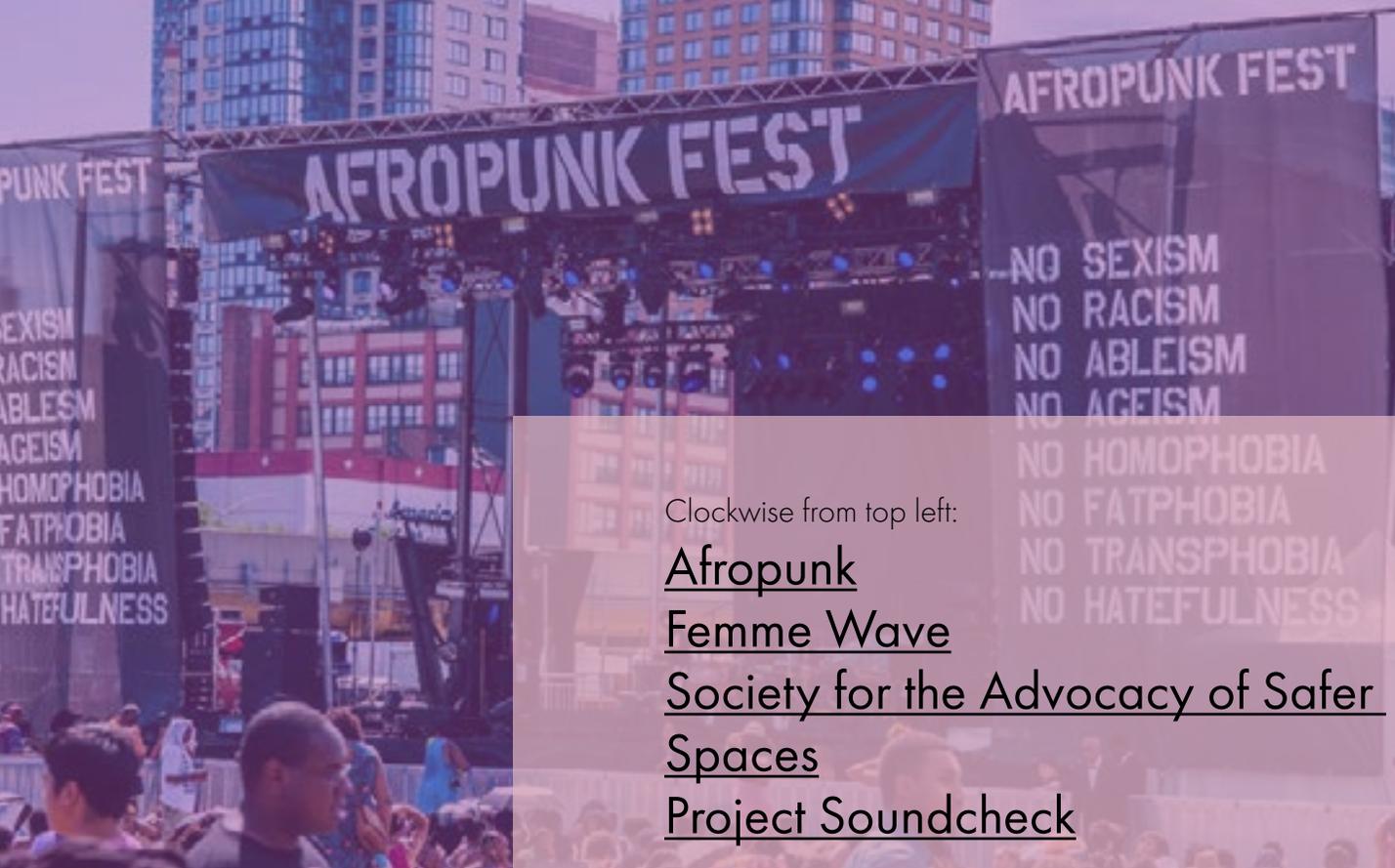
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**Twitter:** [goodnightoutVAN](#)

**Instagram:** [goodnightout\\_vancouver](#)





Clockwise from top left:  
Afropunk  
Femme Wave  
Society for the Advocacy of Safer Spaces  
Project Soundcheck

**PROJECT Soundcheck** You Can **Check In** & Prevent Sexual Violence

- ✓ **Watch what's going on:** Are you having fun?
- ✓ **Seem like things #JustNotCool? Call 911 to check in!**
- ✓ **Stick around:** say hi, ask what's up, ask the person who may be at risk "Do you need help?"
- ✓ **Interrupt Uncool Behaviour:** distract him, tell him to stop.
- ✓ **Need Support to Intervene?** Involve staff and volunteers.
- ✓ **Help:** Bring her to a safe space, find her friends, talk to a paramedic.

See also:  
Noise Against Sexual Assault  
Hollaback  
Dandelion Initiative

