

**Suggested steps to take
in case of physical and/ or psychological violence**

by PGA Europe 2005 plenary decision - 14.12.2004 01:08

The PGA Europe Conference in Belgrade found a consensus on the following steps to be taken in case of physical and/ or psychological violence during movement meetings.

It is based on the premise that the affected person always defines what counts as sexual harassment or rape - and will not be questioned. This does not imply that the accusation is taken for granted as a fact. The confidentiality of the affected person should be respected. The consequences should be build on according to the following principles.

1) When a person talks about/reports an assault committed against her or him, or when others confirm that something has happened, the work of putting together groups should start as quickly as possible. A group can consist of two or more persons. While this process is under way, the alleged perpetrator is not welcome to the movement's activities and spaces, or, alternatively, the gathering at which the event occurred.

2) Set up a group who talk to the affected person. The group should contain more than three people and consist of people the affected person trusts and is close to, as well as of people being prepared to deal with this kind of conflicts. The suggestion is to set up local groups and groups in advance of an event who are willing to deal with these issues. In every event there should be a visible contact point for this.

3) Set up a group of people who talk to the alleged perpetrator, according to the same principles.

4) Hold a general meeting if appropriate, unless the affected person objects.

5) The affected person's support group and the alleged perpetrator's contact group (and the affected person, if (s)he wants to be involved) develop a working plan: Should the alleged perpetrator be excluded from the movement/ gathering; will the alleged perpetrator be allowed to work in contexts outside of the groups where the affected person is involved but inside the movement/ gathering; should the alleged perpetrator be allowed to rejoin if (s)he works with the problem? The point is to create a basis for the alleged perpetrator to understand what has happened, and the goal is that (s)he should not do it again. During the process, the support group stays in contact with the affected person and tells her or him about what is happening, and follows up on how (s)he is feeling. The goal is to help the affected person to put into words what has happened, and strengthen her or his self-confidence.

6) The support group and the contact group (and the affected person, if (s)he wants to be involved) decide whether the alleged perpetrator is welcome back into the group, or whether the contact with him or her has not produced any results.

7) Finally:

First, one principle of this process should be the recognition that immediate and final exclusion is not the perfect solution. Reintegration and rehabilitation of the alleged perpetrator into our spaces should be the goal, although it is sometimes necessary.

Second, remember that few of us actually have the skills necessary to counsel for example a rape victim or a rapist. Professional counselling may be a very important route to take.

Third, the effect of the violence is not over after the event. The contact group should try to stay in touch with the affected person to provide support, and should also stay in contact with the alleged perpetrator.

These steps have first been developed within the Anti-Fascist Action in Stockholm/ Sweden, then further discussed during a European wide gender seminar at the Escanda collective in Spain, and finally consensed upon during the 3rd European pga conference in Belgrad, Ex-Yugoslavia, 23.-29. July 2004.