

Creating a Guiding Values Agreement

Similar to a Code of Conduct, a Guiding Values Agreement describes the set of attitudes and behaviours that everyone on set agrees to and that contribute to a psychologically safe, inclusive, productive, and creative environment. The Guiding Values Agreement has two parts:

1. the agreement of cast and crew to abide by the values
2. the commitment of leadership to demonstrate, uphold, and maintain accountability to the values.

The Guiding Values Agreement does not replace the Codes of Conduct of guilds, unions, or regional film commissions; rather, it complements those Codes by establishing a common standard for each production.

Why to use this document

This Guiding Values Agreement template is intended for Producers and Directors.

To be effective on set, we recommend that you ask every cast and crew member to sign a copy of the Guiding Values Agreement and ask every person in a leadership role (i.e. anyone who has another person or people reporting to them) to sign a copy of the Leader's Agreement. We also recommend that you post a copy of the document in a highly visible area (e.g. near craft services) during production as a reminder to everyone on set of the group's agreement to psychological safety and inclusion.

Because power dynamics can affect someone's safety in reporting concerns, we also recommend you have a designated Set Responder whom individuals can report Agreement violations to without fear of reprisal.

Customize the agreement

The Guiding Values Agreement is a template, so each production can create a document that reflects its own needs and opportunities. The template has some starting ideas to which each production can add its own parameters for expected attitudes and behaviours on set. Items to be updated are in blue. Respecting that every production is different, the template is designed to be flexible but clear – it is a group agreement to remain accountable for our own behaviours.

While the producer and director are ultimately responsible for finalizing the agreement, any member of the cast or crew should be welcome to contribute to the document. Including different lived experiences and perspectives will make the document better by considering perspectives the producer and director may not have thought of.

Guiding Values Agreement for Production Name

As a member of the cast and crew of [Production Name], I agree to work with everyone on set to create a welcoming and supportive experience for all members of the team.

I understand that my attitude and behaviour affect those around me and, even if unintentional, I can cause harm to others if I am not considerate in my words, actions, and reactions. I choose to be a positive contributor to the working environment of [Production Name].

Knowing this, I agree to the below Guiding Values for [Production Name]:

- **All members of the cast and crew will be treated with respect.** This includes, but is not limited to, using an individual's pronouns as requested, respecting cultural and religious traditions, avoiding demeaning or insulting language, being welcoming to all colleagues, and supporting one another to find solutions.
- **Safety is everything.** Safety includes both physical and psychological safety. All members of the cast and crew will contribute to a safe, welcoming, and supportive set experience for one another. This includes considering the risks and potential effects of all choices on one's own safety and the safety of those around them.
- [Production Name] has a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of harassment, violence, discrimination, intimidation, ridicule, retaliation, obscenity, and other acts of exclusion and abuse. Members of the cast and crew engaging in these behaviours will be held accountable for their actions, up to and including termination.

- **Feedback is an opportunity for growth.** Members of the cast and crew will help one another correct behaviours, language, and actions that do not contribute to a safe and inclusive set, whenever it is safe to do so. All feedback will be offered and received with the intent to support improvement, including behavioural feedback.
- The best apology is a change in behaviour. If I realize or learn that my attitude or behaviour has cause harm to another person or people on set, I will apologize to the person or people harmed sincerely and without delay. I will then reflect on my actions, internalize what I have learned, and change my attitude or behaviour for the better.
- [Add values statements for your production]

I will hold myself and my colleagues on the production accountable to these values. I will work with my colleagues to find ways to create a psychologically safe and inclusive set experience and will identify challenges to leaders on set.

Signature _____ Date _____

Leadership agreement

As a leader on [Production Name], I understand I have an additional responsibility to create a safe and inclusive experience for everyone working on set, not just those who report directly to me. I commit to the Guiding Values Agreement for [Production Name] and will hold myself and my colleagues accountable to its contents.

I recognize that failing to act when an incident violating the Agreement has occurred is, in itself, another violation of the agreement. Therefore:

- should I become aware that an individual on the production reporting to me has violated the terms of the agreement, I will work with that individual to rectify their behaviour and apologize for harms done. If the behaviour cannot be rectified or the behaviour warrants termination, I will work with the Producer to terminate their contract.

should I become aware that an individual on the production who does not report to me has violated the terms of the agreement, I will notify that individual's leader so that the situation can be rectified. Should I find that leader has chosen not to take appropriate action, I will continue to pursue action through additional levels of leadership, as needed.

The physical and psychological safety of all cast and crew members is essential to [Production Name]. I will lead by example to co-create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

Signature _____ Date _____