

A Housing Cooperative's Guide for Addressing Rape Culture and Sexual Assault

Rape culture can be defined as a culture in which rape, sexual assault, and abuse are expected and accepted societal norms. Housing cooperatives unavoidably exist within rape culture. In order to form sustainable and healthy communities, steps must be taken toward understanding, recognizing, and addressing the manifestations of oppression. This guide is intended to be a proactive community coordinated assessment and response to addressing rape culture and sexual assault.

The following questions are intended to guide a discussion about where your housing cooperative is and where you want to be in order to subvert the oppressive norms present in our communities.



Addressing Rape Culture and Sexual Assault in Our Community Needs to be...

✓ Prioritized

- Why is addressing rape culture and sexual assault relevant and important to our community?
- What do we have to gain in prioritizing addressing rape culture and sexual assault in our community? What is at risk?
- How can we make addressing rape culture and sexual assault a priority in our community?
- What steps can we take toward making this a priority?

✓ Responsive

- How are rape culture and sexual assault community concerns rather than a conflict between individuals?
- What level of responsibility does each individual house member have in addressing rape culture and sexual assault in our community?

✓ Timely

- Why is it important for our house to respond in a timely manner to addressing sexual assault and rape culture?
- What is at risk if our response is delayed or deferred?

✓ Survivor/Victim-Centered

- How can our housing community create safe space for all community members?
- Why is it important to prioritize victim-survivors needs/requests/opinions in addressing rape culture and sexual assault? What is at risk if we don't?
- What steps can be taken to ensure that victim-survivors' best interests are being considered?

✓ **Consistent**

- How often does our housing community need to assess whether or not rape culture and sexual assault are being addressed within the community?
- How can our community hold ourselves accountable for consistently addressing rape culture and sexual assault?

✓ **Culturally Competent**

- How do we define cultural competence?
- What barriers do we have which make cultural competence difficult?
- How is being cultural competence relevant and important to our community in addressing rape culture and sexual assault?
- How can we take into consideration the needs of members with differing identities?

Developed by The Sexual Trauma and Abuse Care Center (2015)