

Awareness

Notes for the Conference »Care Leaving Research 2025: Participation, Equity, Perspectives«

1. Purpose and Guiding Principle

At the conference, people with diverse experiences, perspectives, identities, and roles come together. The aim of the awareness concept is to create a space in which all participants feel comfortable, safe, and respected, fostering open, academic, and appreciative exchange.

Discrimination, boundary-crossing behaviour, and any form of violence have no place at the conference. Together, as participants, contributors, and organizers, we are committed to creating a discrimination-sensitive, as barrier-free as possible, and empowering environment.

2. Principles of Awareness Work

- **Respect and consent:** Every interaction, whether verbal or physical, requires the consent of all persons involved.
- **Sensitivity to discrimination:** Different lived realities and multiple forms of discrimination (e.g., based on origin, gender identity, class affiliation, care experience, disability, sexual orientation, etc.) are actively considered and respected.
- **Protection of vulnerable groups:** In particular, care leavers and other marginalized groups should be encouraged to bring in their perspectives. Questions regarding individual care experience, origin, or other biographical matters should not be asked without explicit invitation.
- **Barrier-free participation:** We endeavour to make access, communication, and infrastructure as barrier-free as possible.
- **Taking responsibility:** The responsibility for positive interaction is shared. Boundary violations, discrimination, or exclusion should be addressed and dealt with.

3. Implementation: Awareness Contacts at Registration and the Info Desk

- Two people are available at the registration and info desk as **awareness contacts**. You can recognize them by their yellow name badges.
- They will receive **concerns or information** about discrimination, boundary violations, or other awareness topics in confidence and will respond according to the wishes of the person affected.
- The awareness team is available for **confidential conversations**, interventions in critical situations, and as a contact point for relief or withdrawal.
- The team acts in **solidarity with affected individuals**, is non-judgmental toward those seeking support, and records incidents only at the request of those concerned, always maintaining strict data protection. If needed, they will accompany affected persons to the quiet room or **arrange further support**.

4. Infrastructure and Support

- **Quiet Room:** A designated quiet room is available for breaks, withdrawal, conversations, and immediate relief.
- **Barrier information:** Information on barriers, as well as directions to paths, entrances, elevators, and allergen-free and vegetarian/vegan food, will be provided.
- **Communication:** All participants will be made aware of the awareness concept at the start of the conference.

5. Guidelines for Conduct and Self-Commitment

- **Be mindful of your language** (gender-sensitive, discrimination-sensitive, inclusive) and avoid derogatory or exclusionary wording.
- **Respect self-designations** and the chosen pronouns of others. If unsure, politely ask.
- **Reflect on your own** privileges and be mindful not to unintentionally marginalize or overlook others.
- If you notice someone appears uncomfortable or is experiencing discrimination, **offer low-threshold support** and refer them to the awareness contacts if appropriate.
- If you are unsure whether your behaviour has overstepped a boundary, **take such feedback seriously**, pause the conversation if necessary, and make use of the awareness offer to reflect on your behaviour.

6. Procedure in Case of Incidents

- **Affected persons decide for themselves** on the further course of action (e.g., conversation, accompaniment, documentation, referral to external agencies/emergency numbers).
- There is **no assignment of blame or trivialization**; the subjective experience of those affected is paramount.
- Depending on the incident, the conference team or the awareness contacts **may take action** (e.g., discussion with those involved, issuing a warning). In the case of serious incidents, the conference management may be informed.
 - **All conversations are confidential.**

7. Contact and Availability

- During the conference: **Awareness contacts** are available at the registration or info desk and by email at info@cls-studie.de.
- Before and after the conference: You can contact the organizing team at info@cls-studie.de.

8. Appreciation of Different Levels of Knowledge and Linguistic Accessibility

We welcome the diversity of backgrounds, expertise, perspectives, and knowledge among participants. Academic exchange thrives on asking questions, articulating gaps in understanding, and clarifying terms collaboratively. We recognize that in the field of care leaving, researchers, practitioners, and those engaged in policy bring differing experiences, vocabularies, technical terms, or theoretical backgrounds.

- **Questions are welcome:** It is encouraged to ask questions or request clarification if terms, concepts, or processes are not clear.
- **No judgment of knowledge levels:** There are no “wrong” or “embarrassing” questions. Communication as equals is intended to be fostered.
- **Linguistic sensitivity:** Contributors are requested to explain abbreviations and technical terms or keep them as accessible as possible. In case of uncertainty, please ask for repetition or clarification.
- **Encouragement to ask questions:** We encourage an atmosphere in which asking questions or admitting not knowing is valued as a contribution to mutual understanding.

If you feel overwhelmed by content or language, the awareness contacts are available to provide explanations and facilitate smaller group discussions.

9. Respect and Openness to Names and International Diversity

- Our conference is internationally and transdisciplinary oriented. People from different countries, cultural contexts, and with diverse first languages bring a variety of names, expressions, and pronunciation habits. We **consider** this **diversity** to be **an asset to our collaboration**.

We are aware that the pronunciation of some names or terms may be unfamiliar. It is absolutely fine to respectfully ask about the desired pronunciation or form of address.

- Mutually practicing and inquiring about names is understood by us as a sign of appreciation and respect. No one should hesitate to ask for a repetition or correction.

Note: This awareness concept is to be understood as a living document. Feedback on implementation and suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

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