Welcome to the 2019 B.E.D. Safe Camp Challenge!.

This is our first year running our safe camp online.  We are always updating and improving our information and always want feedback!  Contact us anytime at b.e.d.organinzing@gmail.com or through our website – Bureau of Erotic Discourse.com. We could not do this without our contributors, volunteers and all the consent-oriented burners who support us! Thank you for helping us to improve our materials and for your dedication to the beautiful burner culture!

We recognize that Burning man is a beautiful, exceptional culture, and also that we’ve brought some issues from the Default Word to the burn. A huge part of solving many of these issues is making community level-change and that’s where your theme camp, and this training come in. Many theme camps have been tackling these issues for a while, but we, as a community can always learn more!

**What is B.E.D?**

The Bureau of Erotic Discourse, or BED was developed in 2004, as a volunteer-run sexual assault prevention and consent education program.  BED was started in response to unaddressed sexual assault on the Playa. Since then, our volunteers, leadership and content have evolved, but we always hold the same core message – Consent is FUNdamental!

**What is this training?**

Good question! This training is BED’s safe camp challenge. It functions as a prep course for theme camp creators (or any other community organizers) to develop resources to keep your community radically self-reliant by preventing boundary violations.  It is a communal effort to bring consent and sexual assault prevention to the forefront of civic responsibility.

Default world, including most of modern culture doesn’t prepare anyone well for navigating sexual consent, or any other type of consent for that matter. Consent failures aren’t just constrained to rapists or predators, most of us, myself included, have crossed boundaries, hurt people, and done things that were not in line with best consent practices. I’ve been lucky that none of my poor communication or hooking up while in altered states has harmed anyone to my knowledge. I have been in plenty of situations where I did not have ideal consent practices.  I have hugged and touched people without asking first. I have borrowed people’s things without asking and so has most everyone I know. All of these are forms of consent violations. Many of these situations and behaviors are normalized within our society as a whole, but normalizing these behaviors normalizes hurting people. If we make these boundary violations unacceptable, we reduce the likelihood of sexual assaults, and normalize the conversations around how to improve our communities. Part of keeping the culture of burning man beautiful is keeping the focus of the culture on consent!

BED has a few suggestions and guidelines for how to grow our consent culture!. This class functions as an introduction to community building resources, to establishment of common community priorities, to suggestions for giving and getting feedback that empowers change and finally to foundations of holding each other accountable.  Through these strategies, we get to grow as a community!

**What is Harm Reduction?**

BED and this workshop especially comes from a harm reduction perspective.  Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas that work to reduce harm.  Often this is in the context of substance use and misuse, but can be applied to many areas of society. In our case, is around sexual assault prevention.

This perspective focuses on personal autonomy, essentially meeting a person where they are, and allowing them to dictate their level of change rather than imposing our expectations on them. If this sounds familiar to you it may be because this approach connects strongly to many of the 10 principles, especially radical self-reliance and self-expression. Personal autonomy, the capacity to make an informed, uncoerced decisions, is really the foundation of consent, and also is fundamental to Burning Man.

BED also believes strongly in the importance of being sex-positive - All sex is good sex, as long as it is consensual.  Part of sexual assault prevention includes respecting people’s autonomy around sex and sexuality. To make consent part of every conversation, every hook up, a normal part of every interaction, we have to, as a culture, get much better at communication, especially about sex.

Finally, we believe that the complexity and diversity of life experience which makes the burn so amazing -also impacts interpersonal interactions, in our community, our relationships and our sex.  Even with best intentions for creating great community, great relationships and great sex, we can hurt people. It might be accidental, and we might never even know it happened.

By recognizing all our capacities to fuck up, we create the opportunity to talk about the complexities of consent, as a community, with the intention to learn, change and grow. This can empowers individuals and communities to make the choices that are right for them, while building a structure that reduces the likelihood of harm, especially around sexual assault.

For theme camps especially, this means that people need to consent to what they will experience in the spaces they are participating in, that people should clearly know what is acceptable behavior in the spaces they are interacting with. Participants should also be clear about the group norms of the space and the consequences for breaking them..This sets people up for success in the consent department! It allows us to create and grow the autonomy-focus of our community by modeling boundaries across all levels of community!

The diversity in our community is beautiful, and should be fostered so that it can flourish.  This requires recognizing the different needs of people with different life experiences and different identities, We also must be aware of the way that our communities at Burning Man and across the default world may not have historically supported or even been aware of the existence of some of these folks. To empower our community to be autonomy (and consent) focused, we must hear the experiences of those who have been historically ignored in our community. The reason why this is so important is that these are the folks that are statistically most likely to be affected by sexual assault. We must recognize the impacts of social inequalities in the default world, how they follow us to the burn, and how they enforce the ongoing prevalence of sexual assault and consent violations of all sorts in our communities.

In summary, community, relationships, and sex all share the complex interplay between multiple people. This can be synchronously beautiful, deeply harmful or anywhere in between. We want to work in Burning Man, to be continuously moving towards more beautiful, ever-growing and improving communities.