* + 1. Who you are - both as an individual and as a representation of your theme camp -  matters. Everything that goes into making you unique will impact the types of spaces that you, as a theme camp organizer, create. Communicating what happens in your camp matters (in the context of consent) because people need certain information to opt-in (or out) of participating with your spaces!

This applies not just to the people who will be camping with you, but also to the people who will be attending events that you are hosting.  Each of these groups of folks may need specific information to determine if this is a space for them. Much of this information, I am sure you have already considered, but stick with us anyway, because there is likely some new things here, and we need your feedback!

The spaces we are creating - especially our theme camps - are fundamentally designed for specific experiences, and with particular people in mind.  Usually at least partially with ourselves and our needs and our desires in mind. That might mean keeping kitchens vegan, it might be making a space for polyamorous folks or swingers, it might be a camp for dubstep enthusiasts, yogi’s, acrobats, fire spinners, or a million other things! The diversity of the burn is much of its awesomeness after all! However, it is up to us, as creators of our spaces, to give people the information necessary to determine if our spaces are the ones that they want to consent to participate in. In not providing enough information about our camps, and what individuals may experience in them, we may inadvertently be causing harm to others by removing their autonomy to choose their own experiences.

Examples of the types of harms that people may experience in everyday life include things like people of color having their hair touched without their consent, tattooed people having their tattoos touched without their consent, people’s bodies being commented on, touched and treated as “weird” or “not normal” - including trans, gender-non-conforming, pregnant, fat and disabled bodies. Inaccessibility to spaces due to mobility or ability, financial issues, and exclusion based on race or gender are other examples of harms people may experience in particular spaces throughout our society. It’s important to note that these harms can exist in multiple areas of life, including online forums. A huge conversation we have seen come up lately is snark, and we recommend checking out the separate snark section for further suggestions on that topic.

These harms normalize hurting or excluding people characterized as different, and set the stage for many other harms, including bullying, physical assault, social isolation and sexual violence. Even if we did not intend for our choices to hurt someone and even if we were not conscious that they were harmful, it does not change the fact that they were in fact harmful to the person experiencing them. Having good intentions, and not intending to exclude or hurt people when we built our camp, does not mean that we don’t end up having negative impacts sometimes. But don’t worry! There are things we can do, as human beings and as organizers, to minimize these harms.  And why wouldn’t we want to avoid hurting other people if we can!?

As organizers, taking a few thoughtful actions, and recognizing the impacts of societal oppression and harms can make huge positive impacts on our burn and on our camps. As we envision and create our camps it is essential to recognize that people who hold multiple socially stigmatized or marginalized identities are statistically most likely to experience sexual assault and other forms of violence. If we want to create a camp that is a safe and welcoming space for a diverse group of people, it is important to be conscious that each human experience is different, and that those with multiple, intersecting marginalized identities may have had a very different life experience than yours.

The diversity of our community is a huge part of what makes the burn amazing – the more we help all burners thrive, the more we improve our event! That is why recognizing how these societal impacts get carried onto playa is so important.

As theme camp organizers we are building spaces that people - our campers and our community - will be relying on for their whole burn.  It is imperative that we clearly communicate what and who our spaces are designed for. If we fail to do this we could potentially put burners in awkward or even dangerous situations. The good news is that we can work to avoid this and in the next section, we will work on how to communicate clearly to our campers and anyone who might be joining us for events!

The first step we recommend - mandatory for those who want a safe camp certification - is a mission statement or statement of purpose.  This helps you and your fellow organizers know who you are, what you represent, and how you function.

* + - * 1. Are you a vegan camp?
				2. A bacon camp?
				3. Are you sober?
				4. Are you into facilitating the best “altered” experiences?
				5. Are you a repair camp for the way-ward biker?
				6. A snark camp?
				7. A turn-key camp?
				8. A do it yourself camp?

You can be anything you want! We support you!

Once we identify what kind of experience our camps offer we should be focusing on is communicating which folks we are building our amazing environments for!

* + - * 1. So, consider who are the diverse communities most represented in your camp - (LGBTQIA, POC, low ses, Kinky, poly,folks etc), and let them know you are building a camp for them! (If your camp is not particularly oriented towards folks with diverse identities, consider having all your campers check out our Diversity 101 section in addition to consent 101.  Preparing your camp members for the diversity they may encounter at the burn, and some basic expectations about respecting autonomy goes a long way towards making the burn safer for everyone).

Remember, a good mission statement is specific, and communicates aims and values.

Some things to include are;

1. A goal statement (what do you do? )
2. How are you organized? (Democracy? Oligarchy? Dictatorship? )
3. Who is your leadership
4. Who are you targeting/serving (essentially who are you building a camp for and with)

For example, BED’s Mission Statement is: Bureau of erotic discourse, aka BED, is a burning man- centric, volunteer run sexual assault prevention and consent education Network.

Alternativley, the super-secret sub-camp N’Bed from BED have used this as the mission statement: N’Bed is a secret order of queer, trans and nonbinary consent crusaders, who form a non-hierarchical, space for qts to congregate, play and support each other  while making burning man a more radically inclusive space for all qts!

Now it’s your turn! If you are getting your safe camp certified, please submit your mission statement through the assignments tab

Or through email to b.e.d.organizing@gmail.com.