



Welcome to Skeiv Verden!

Skeiv Verden provides an open and diverse space to socialize, feel safe, included and welcome, by and for people of diverse backgrounds, ethnic, religious, sexual and gender identities.

Please help us by following our

10 steps towards a safe and inclusive space:

- 1. Inclusion: Everyone should be included, seen and welcome. Skeiv Verden is an organisation by and for persons of all cultural and religious backgrounds, skin colours, shapes and identities of the gender and sexuality spectrum.**
- 2. Pronouns: Respect the pronoun people use. You can always ask if you don't know.**
- 3. Tone of communication: We use respectful language and gestures, and avoid irony and jokes which can easily be misunderstood.**
- 4. Touching: Ask before making physical contact. People have different needs for personal space.**
- 5. Flirting: Be mindful of not crossing other people's boundaries, flirting can make some people uncomfortable. The primary aim of Skeiv Verden's events is not dating, but rather sharing community, safety, friendships and knowledge.**
- 6. Privacy: Everyone has a different story, and can decide what they want to share about themselves. It's okay to say no.**
- 7. Confidentiality: We respect the wish for anonymity of anyone we meet in Skeiv Verden. Do not share personal information or in any way reveal anyone's sexual or gender identity in other contexts.**
- 8. Cameras: Photos should only be taken before or after an event, always with consent. Cameras in the room may be intimidating.**
- 9. Open mind: Misunderstandings happen, so take care of each other.**
- 10. Relax: Everyone makes mistakes! Accept feedback, and/or give feedback in a constructive way. And be kind - always!**

Let us know, help us solve!

If you experience or witness discrimination, harassment, bullying, racism or **any** other uncomfortable situation in our community, please inform a volunteer, employee or board member present, and we will help you solve. We welcome anyone to tell any responsible person present – or anyone you trust in Skeiv Verden. If our staff



or board members are part of the problem, you may also file a complaint through our reporting system (which you can find [here](#))

Explanation of guidelines

- 1. Inclusion: Everyone shall be included, seen and welcome. Skeiv Verden is an organisation by and for persons of all cultural and religious backgrounds, skin colours, shapes and identities of the gender and sexuality spectrum.**

Skeiv Verdens members can be accustomed to sticking out, being different, being provocative or targeted just for being who they are: on the base of sexual or gender identity, on the basis of immigration or social status, on the basis of religious or ethnic background, even on basis of looks, body shape or skin colour – or a combination of these. Many experiences a sense of internalised shame or being outsiders because of this. When you come to Skeiv Verden, this should be a place where none of their identities or external attributes are questioned or exclude. We want people to feel belonging, recognition, community. However, as the group is diverse, there may still be some who are more dominant. Some may still feel vulnerable and different. In Skeiv Verden we work against such differences, prejudices and insecurities. Parts of the queer communities have been described as having strong focus on looks, and there are many stigmas within and outside of the group we relate to, creating unhealthy body images and expectations, as well as shame and discrimination experienced from outside. In Skeiv Verden we want to work against all of this, towards acceptance, inclusion and diversity.

- 2. Pronouns: Respect the pronoun people use. You can always ask if you don't know.**
Not everyone are comfortable with a gendered identity at all, and some may have a gender identity that is not evident at first glance. Some may be transitioning. The pronoun is a label for gender identity. Using the wrong pronoun reenacts an identity defined by others. It may even trigger difficult feelings or a struggle for acceptance that someone has been or are going through. You cannot know the gender identity and pronoun people use just by looking. Asking is a way of caring and respecting the integrity of others.

- 3. Tone of communication: We shall use respectful language and gestures, and avoid irony and jokes which can easily be misunderstood.**
Comment: Many in our target group have been ridiculed, shamed or discriminated against. In Skeiv Verden we should take extra care to be respectful to all. In addition, joking and irony are highly cultured events, with varied acceptance and expression in different cultures. It is so easy to explain something away as a joke, but jokes that comments on other people may always be hurtful and must therefore be avoided. Even other forms of jokes may or trigger insecurities. We want to encourage creative laughter and joy, but must be aware that humour can also be a weapon, by intent or accident, and care must be prioritised.



4. Touching: Always ask before making physical contact. People have different needs for personal space.

Comment: Many people naturally or because of personal experiences of rejection, distance in upbringing or earlier violent trespassing, feel uncomfortable with hugging or in other ways touching/being touched by others. Some may even have difficult feelings and experiences triggered, and experience even social touching as a breach of their own integrity. If someone does not like to be touched, it has to do with them, not you, and it needs to be respected.

5. Flirting: Be mindful that flirting can make some people uncomfortable. Skeiv Verden's events are meant to create community, safety, friendships and knowledge.

Comment: Firstly, while it is natural that some wish to flirt and make flirtful contact, this is not the main purpose of Skeiv Verden's meeting places. Secondly, because of the diversity of the group, we may have diverse way of turning others away, saying no, and being polite. Younger people may have been brought up to show respect for elders, and will find it difficult to show that flirting is not appreciated, for instance. Or, in some culture, extrovert behaviour may be the norm, while in other cultures, introvert behaviour may be most appreciated. It will be difficult to interpret each other and set boundaries in a setting of such mixed backgrounds. Lastly, many people naturally or because of personal experiences of rejection, or earlier violent trespassing, feel uncomfortable with unsolicited flirting. Many may find it difficult to turn people away, so the responsibility must be on everyone to make others comfortable.

6. Privacy: Everyone has a different story, and may decide what they want to share about themselves. It's okay to say no.

Comment: Some people have severed their connections with family, friends or country, others may be political refugees or live with hidden identities, some may want to stay anonymous because they are afraid their sexual or gender identity gets known outside of our meeting places. Some have bad memories they want to keep at a distance – and some are just introvert. They want to have a “free space” to relax. There are different reasons people will not want to talk about aspects of their past, identity or life. In Skeiv Verden we understand that we need to back away from questions if the counterpart seems reluctant or, preferably, if they feel comfortable and say they would like to skip a certain topic.

7. Confidentiality: We must respect the wish for anonymity of anyone we meet in Skeiv Verden. Do not share personal information about others, or in any way reveal anyone's sexual or gender identity in other contexts.

Comment: Whatever you learn about someone in Skeiv Verden, may hurt some of them if it was known in other contexts. Others just want to keep certain parts of their identity hidden in other areas of their life. Help people control what other people know about them, and especially make sure you do not “out” their sexual or gender identity if you meet them in other contexts.



8. Cameras: Photos should only be taken before or after an event, always with consent. Cameras in the room may be intimidating.

Comment: We can *never* completely control where a photo ends up, and many of our members may be subject to discrimination or worse if their identity or whereabouts are known to others. Skeiv Verden will not be a safe space for everyone if someone takes their photo, or if they are afraid that they will appear on a photo. Keep your camera in your purse, and make sure to ask and be open if you want to take a photo before or after an event.

9. Open mind: Misunderstandings happen, so take care of each other.

Comment: Misunderstandings may always happen. In a community with so many backgrounds and cultures, and where many have had traumatic experiences, feel shame or vulnerabilities, misunderstandings happen even more easily. We cannot just brush things off as misunderstandings, since those feelings are important. But we should also understand that feelings may have been triggered by misunderstandings, or exacerbated because they relate to previous adverse experiences. This means we need to understand our own vulnerabilities, and be open to understanding that others are also vulnerable – it goes both ways. We should help people understand each other. We should listen to someone who feel hurt. We must also respect the boundaries of others and our own. There is no right or wrong to this, we do our best.

10. Relax: Everyone makes mistakes! Accept feedback and/or give feedback in a constructive way.

Comment: In the context of everything said above, one may get the impression that manoeuvring the social space of Skeiv Verden is difficult. But we all make mistakes. If you are able to know and respect this, and accept feedback from others then we should be able to create a fun, creative and safe space together – where we are willing to learn and grow. So when someone calls you out you should not take this personal but accept the criticism. At the same time, calling out should also not be done in a personal way but constructively.