



# Public Lab

open source tools for environmental investigation

Public Lab

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## Community Code of Welcoming Conduct

We are coming together with an intent to care for ourselves and one another. We want to nurture a compassionate democratic culture where responsibility is shared. We -- visitors, community members, community moderators, staff\*, organizers, sponsors, and all others -- hold ourselves accountable to the same values regardless of position or experience. For this democracy to work for everybody, individual decisions will not be allowed to run counter to the welfare of other people. This document is a piece of the culture we're creating.

This code of conduct applies to the Barnraising event, and was written by Public Lab staff in order to provide a clear set of practical guidelines. It is our hope to see a larger, community-driven set of guidelines that can grow to provide similar guidance for all in-person and online forums. This includes in person events such as the Barnraising, local events led by organizers and community members, the website, comment threads on software platforms, the chatroom (IRC), our mailing lists, the issue tracker, and any other forums created by Public Lab which the community uses for communication. Guidelines specifically about online interaction are located: <http://publiclab.org/wiki/ mailing-lists#Guidelines>. In addition, violations of this code outside Public Lab spaces may affect a person's ability to participate within them.

## Public Labbers come from all kinds of backgrounds

Our community is best when we fully invite and include participants from a wide range of backgrounds. We specifically design spaces to be welcoming and accessible to newcomers and folks from underrepresented groups. Public Lab is dedicated to providing a harassment-free, safe, and inclusive experience for everyone, regardless of personal and professional background, gender, gender identity and expression, style of clothing, sexual orientation, dis-/ability, physical appearance, body size, race, class, age, or religion. Public Lab resists and rejects: racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, body shaming, religion shaming, "geekier-than-thou" shaming, education bias, the shaming of people nursing children, and the dismissal or bullying of children or adults.

**Content Warning:** The remaining portion of this document contains specific instances of harassment and what to do if you see it happening, which may be triggering to some.

## We do not tolerate harassment or shaming

While we operate under the assumption that all Barnraising participants subscribe to the basic understanding laid out above, we take these issues very seriously and think they should, in general, be taken seriously. Therefore, individuals who violate this basic understanding may, as last resort, be expelled from the gathering and be placed into moderation in online modes of interaction.

If you have any questions about our commitment to this framework and/or if you are unsure about aspects of it, contact the nonprofit executive director ([shannon@publiclab.org](mailto:shannon@publiclab.org)) and we will do our best to provide clarification.

### **Is this really necessary?**

Sometimes things go wrong. When a situation is uncomfortable, there is a problem that should be addressed. This code of conduct is an effort to maintain a safe space for everyone, and to talk about what might happen if that space is compromised.

### **How does it work? What to do if you experience something you aren't okay with:**

For Barnraising 2015, the following individuals are community moderators: Klie Kliebert, Carla Green, Nick Shapiro, and Shannon Dosemagen, the executive director of the Public Lab nonprofit.

If you feel that this Community Code of Welcoming Conduct has been violated and would like to have a confidential conversation, connect with the community moderators in person or email [moderators@publiclab.org](mailto:moderators@publiclab.org). If you would prefer to speak privately with a representative of the nonprofit, please contact directly Shannon either in person or by email: [shannon@publiclab.org](mailto:shannon@publiclab.org).

To submit a report anonymously for review by the community moderators, there are two options: 1) put a piece of paper into the suggestion box -- located in the main cafeteria on the welcome table, or 2) go online via phone or computer to our anonymous "contact" app, located at <http://bit.ly/PLReport>. The community monitors will check the box nightly and monitor the contact app inbox throughout the day.

## Specific things we do not want

Here are some specific things that have occurred at other organizations' conferences. We do not expect them to occur at the Barnraising (of course!). We also want to take positive action to prevent them. Just to be sure.

- Talking about [markdown/github] as though non-[markdown/github] people are less-than
- Presenting a session in a way/at a level that no one else in the room can understand, with no attempt to include others in the discussion
- Creating an event that isn't all ages appropriate
- Repeatedly disrupting a discussion
- "Joking" using words like "crazy", "lame", "retarded", "gay", "ghetto"
- Making unwelcomed comments regarding a person's lifestyle practices, including those related to food, health, parenting, drugs, and employment
- Initiating physical contact or simulating physical contact (e.g., textual descriptions like "\*hug\*" or "\*backrub\*") without consent
- Following someone back to their room or joking about how "hot" they are
- Caricaturing the cultural expressions of groups that you are not a member of, for instance a white person "acting black"
- Deliberately "outing" any aspect of a person's identity without their consent, except as necessary to protect other Public Lab members or other vulnerable people from intentional abuse

## The first rule of The Barnraising is consent

Consent is important to highlight because the negotiation of consent can be subtle, and it's easy to miss each other's non-verbal cues, resulting in miscommunication and/or offense.

### How do I start a conversation with consent??

Some folks have asked this, so here's some clarification.

We make guesses or assessments of consent (willingness, welcome, invitation) all the time. Then we stay open to signs that the consent isn't there. A friendly smile might indicate consent to start a conversation. It might not. We learn that in the interaction. Sometimes we ask directly. We are open to making mistakes, and learning from them. The more we learn to be empathetic and see other people, the more we're able to talk about consent.

Before you engage with someone on any level, be sure you have their consent. For example, before hugging someone, ask if they would like to hug. If you are not comfortable with a style of engagement, you do not have to consent. If your indications aren't being heard, and this isn't a time when you're interested in being more direct, you can also ask for help from other folks. "They aren't taking the hint. Will you help?"

No one at the Barnraising, or at any events associated with Public Lab, may speak at, stare at, touch, follow, or otherwise unnecessarily engage someone without their consent. For example, if you start talking to someone and they're not engaging, you should disengage. Making jokes within earshot of someone you know (or even think) is upset by them is a violation of consent. Purposely misgendering someone (ie, refusing to use their correct gender pronouns) after they

have told you their gender is also a violation of consent. Doing things that people feel bad about is often a violation of consent. Doing those things more than once is even more likely a violation of consent.

## A Culture of Empathy

When something's happened and someone is uncomfortable, our first choice is to work through it. Different views are allowed to respectfully coexist in the same space. Endeavor to listen and appropriately adjust your behavior if someone approaches you privately with a request that you apologize or with a public request to stop presenting.

Be aware that the next step for individuals who cannot coexist with others according to this Community Code of Welcoming Conduct may be expelled from the gathering. Repeating hurtful behavior after it has been addressed is disrespectful and is not allowed. Doing so will result in removal from the conference and being placed into moderation in online modes of interaction.

If someone questions your words, actions or motives, or "calls you out", hear their feedback and respond respectfully.

Sometimes, one or both parties are either uninterested or unable to work through the problem in the allotted time. It's okay to not understand why something is hurtful or causes discomfort, as long as you approach it respectfully, with empathy.

If you see something that seems off or scary, ask how folks are doing, or grab a community monitor for help. The community monitors will not dismiss you; [we] will be grateful.