



Awareness concept

3. Queerfilmfest Kassel

Version: 1.1 (April 9, 2026)

The awareness concept applies to everyone involved in the Queerfilmfest Kassel. This includes guests, cinema staff, artists, and the festival team. It applies to all events held at the BALi cinemas during the 3rd Queerfilmfest Kassel, from May 22nd to 24th, 2026. It was developed by a working group in consultation with the entire festival team and will be reviewed after the festival. In addition to this concept, we have also prepared a document on accessibility barriers at the festival. You can find it on our website.

What is awareness?

Awareness originates, for example, in anti-racist and feminist movements and aims to reduce inequalities and contribute to greater participation and mutual care.

The goals of awareness are:

- that everyone can feel safe and respected,
- to prevent and combat discrimination and abusive behavior,
- to respond appropriately when something happens,
- to find solutions to structural problems.

Our Responsibility

Everyone at the festival should feel safe and respected. As the festival team, we see it as our responsibility to create an environment that fosters this. We provide help and information. However, awareness is not just the responsibility of the festival team, but the responsibility of all of us. This means:

- Think about your behavior.
- Show solidarity.
- Always act with consent.
- Respect the boundaries of others.

Key contacts and emergency numbers

Emergency number	112	Fire department	112
Police	110	DB Security Service:	0561/7861055

A guide with further contacts/resources can be found at the end of the awareness concept.

Contact information for the Awareness Working Group:

Questions and feedback to: awareness@queerfilmfest-kassel.de

Anonymous feedback via: <https://tellonym.me/queerfilmfestkassel>

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1. Basic Awareness

Awareness...

... means being mindful and attentive to the boundaries of others.

... also means confronting one's own boundaries.

... is active and supportive assistance to those affected.

... always focuses on the person affected, not the act or the perpetrator.

... aims to create a space where everyone can feel comfortable.

... is prevention and education.

... is a fundamental attitude that advocates for a more just society, especially for marginalized individuals.

... fosters accountability in cases of abuse or discriminatory behavior.

... is based on confidentiality.

These assumptions result in an absolute zero-tolerance policy towards any boundary-crossing and discriminatory behavior. Furthermore, three key principles emerge for our awareness concept and its enforcement by our awareness team:

- The power to define lies with those affected.
- We act in the best interests of those affected.
- Consent is the basis of all interactions and actions.

2. Awareness during the festival

The awareness concept will be communicated to the entire team and published before the event. Furthermore, we will explicitly refer to the concept and its implementation during the festival opening, on social media, and through posters.

Before the festival begins, there will be a briefing for the awareness team and as many members of the festival team as possible, led by the awareness working group. Throughout the festival, there will be designated and available individuals responsible for awareness.

Every situation requires different approaches. Queer films can also present discriminatory perspectives and portray stigmatizing ideas. We aim to address this through our curation and program planning, post-screening discussions, content notes, and announcements before the screenings.

During the festival, it is possible that individuals may enter from the train station area and disrupt the events, either accidentally or intentionally. Should this occur, solidarity from festival attendees is encouraged. Assistance can be sought from the festival team and cinema staff at any time. When dealing with people who appear mentally incapacitated, particular sensitivity may be required. In any case, it's important to be aware of your own boundaries: asking for support is always encouraged!

We generally have the right to invoke our house rules and, if necessary, refuse entry to individuals. We will not hesitate to enforce this right in specific cases if someone feels threatened or harassed.

Dealing with Police and Station Security Personnel

In situations we cannot resolve ourselves, contacting DB security personnel or the police is always an option. The Awareness Team decides on this step in each specific case, in consultation with the individuals potentially affected by violence or discrimination – and, if desired, after consulting with the Festival Team. We always act with a critical and conscious eye on the potential impact on marginalized individuals and carefully consider whether external intervention is necessary. Our goal is to handle all parties sensitively in order to avoid escalation as much as possible.

a. The Awareness Team

The awareness team can be identified by their colored vests and can be reached through the cinema staff. They are generally volunteers or paid members of the community who strive to implement the concept to the best of their knowledge and ability. We highly value an open culture of learning from mistakes. A list of contact information is available for review from the cinema staff at any time.

For the entire awareness team, the following applies during events at the BALi cinemas:

- Remain sober.
- Communicate and maintain confidentiality.
- Recognize and respect your own limits (e.g., seek help from the rest of the team if involved or overwhelmed).
- Keep communication processes clear and visible to those affected (pay attention to meeting points and procedures, maintain accessibility, e.g., through messenger groups).

b. Help with initial contact

A first encounter with an affected person, or a confrontation with individuals who, for example, act contrary to the event's expected behavior, can be overwhelming. Therefore, take your time and remain calm. The following aspects can provide guidance during your first contact with an affected person:

- Introduce yourself briefly (with your name and, if you wish, pronouns).
- Ask yourself if you are the right person to lead this conversation at this moment. Consider whether there is someone better suited to do so.
- Find a somewhat secluded place so that the conversation isn't visible to everyone.
- Validate the affected person's feelings: All feelings are valid—whether sadness, anger, despair, or speechlessness.
- Communicate clearly and respect anonymity (if desired): Nothing discussed needs to be shared without consent.
- Ask supportive questions and listen actively. Keep in mind, however, that it's not always necessary to know the exact details of what happened. Let the affected person decide what they want to share.
- If the person doesn't know what they want, you can offer them options (Should we find/call friends? Would you like to go somewhere quiet to talk or recover? Would you

like a glass of water, juice, or something else? Would you like to talk about what happened?).

- Everyone reacts differently to experiences, depending on their personal history. What is harmless for one person can trigger great anxiety in another, based on their past experiences.
- Finally: Does the person feel safe/calm/recovered enough to return to the event? Does the person need assistance getting home? Are there places or organizations the person can go to now or later? If you have any ideas, ask the person if they would be interested in any contact information. (See also: Handouts)

c. Retreat space and awareness kit

During the festival, the cinema can be quite busy. While there is no designated quiet room, some supplies for minor emergencies/interventions are available, and the awareness team will do their best to provide appropriate support. In emergencies, the awareness team can escort affected individuals to a private room in the Offener Kanal (located in the train station hall next to the cinema entrance). This room is only accessible via stairs. An awareness kit is available for the awareness team. It contains:

- A guide to local and regional aid organizations with various functions; a collection of emergency contact information
- First aid kit
- Hygiene items
- Earplugs
- Water/Food
- Lemon
- Skills list with corresponding items

An additional first aid kit is available to the staff of the BALi cinemas.

d. Notices, speeches and content notes

Notices

During the festival, notices outlining the key guidelines of the Awareness Concept for respectful interaction will be posted in the BALi Cinemas. Additional notices regarding photography and video recording during the festival, as well as other specific information, will also be displayed. Further signage will indicate elevator access to the BALi Cinemas and the facilities in the restrooms. The complete version of the Awareness Concept will be available both on-site and online.

Speeches

During the festival opening, the working group will give a short speech on the topic of awareness, highlighting changes since the last festival, future goals, and opportunities for feedback. Additionally, the moderator may point out specific details of individual programs and films.

Content notes and debriefings

Queer films can also present discriminatory perspectives and depict stigmatized ideas. We strive to provide our program with comprehensive content notes to highlight potentially disturbing content. These notes on sensitive material are intended to empower you to make informed decisions about which films you wish to watch. They address topics such as violence, queerphobia, racism, or sexualized violence if these appear in a film.

You can find the content notes for each film on our Instagram channel and on our website: queerfilmfest-kassel.de/programm

Furthermore, this year, after almost all feature films (with the exception of the last film on Saturday), there will be an opportunity to participate in a post-screening discussion with members of the curatorial team (called "Chatterbox"). These discussions provide a forum for exchanging ideas and addressing potentially disturbing content.

3. When and how should I contact the awareness team?

If you have been discriminated against, verbally or non-verbally harassed/attacked in any way, or feel uncomfortable for any other reason, please contact us. This also includes, for example, if you need support due to alcohol consumption or similar issues. You have the right to feel safe and respected! If you see that someone else needs help but cannot or do not want to intervene yourself, please let us know. We are always available to offer support!

Entire Festival

Throughout the entire festival, there will be an awareness person present at the BALi cinemas at all times (recognizable by their purple vests). You can contact the cinema team as well as the festival team, who will connect you with the awareness person at any time.

Additional Events

In addition, there will be an external queer-friendly party at the Caricatura Bar (Queerfilmfest Celebration) as part of this year's festival. Here too, we are trying to provide the best possible support and refer you to the on-site awareness concept. An awareness person is always available, identifiable by their colored safety vests, and can be reached via the bar or security staff at the door.

***You can contact us anytime during and after the festival via email
(awareness@queerfilm-kassel.de) or social media (@queerfilmfest.kassel).
Anonymous contact option: tellonym.me/queerfilmfestkassel***

Contacting DB Security or the Police

As a specific reminder: In some situations, contacting DB security personnel or the police is a possible and sensible step. In any given case, the person affected by violence or discrimination should always decide on this option. Of course, the Awareness Team and the Festival Team are available to provide support and advice.

We always act with a critical and conscious eye on the potential impact on marginalized individuals and carefully consider whether external intervention is necessary. Our goal is to handle all parties sensitively in order to avoid escalation as much as possible.

4. Photo and video recordings

During the Queerfilmfest, photos and videos will be taken for documentation purposes at the BALi Cinema and in the train station hall. The people documenting the event are clearly marked. Please feel free to speak to them if you do not wish to be photographed or filmed.

Important:

- There are stickers at the counter that you can use to indicate that you do not wish to be photographed or filmed.
- Our documentation is used on our online platforms, possibly in publications, and for reporting to funders/sponsors.
- We take care not to take close-ups of individual faces without consent.
- If you feel uncomfortable with a photo or video afterward, please contact us at awareness@queerfilmfest-kassel.de – we will do our best to help you.

Press and other media:

Press photographers are invited to the festival opening on Friday between 6:00 and 10:00 pm. We have no control over the selection and publication of the images. Please speak to them if you do not wish to be photographed or filmed.

Special events:

Photography and filming may be prohibited or restricted at certain events. Please pay attention to signs and announcements.

Would you like to take photos or videos yourself?

Please be mindful when taking photos or videos during the Queerfilmfest. Make sure that everyone who appears in your photos has given their consent.

5. Hygiene and health

The health of everyone involved in the festival is of utmost importance to us. We therefore ask everyone to pay attention to personal hygiene and to use the provided hygiene products (e.g., hand sanitizer dispensers). Anyone who feels unwell or notices symptoms of illness is asked to refrain from attending. Getting tested for COVID-19 and wearing FFP2 masks are still advisable. On-site, the cinema staff will ensure the regular cleaning of contact surfaces and good ventilation of the rooms.

We hope that this request will make it easier for (vulnerable) people to attend the event and that it will help to raise greater (political) awareness of the medical and social catastrophe of the long-term consequences of COVID-19. An estimated one million people in Germany have contracted severe forms of Long COVID or ME/CFS as a result of infection – illnesses that severely restrict quality of life and often lead to serious disabilities. (Young) women and queer people are disproportionately affected.

6. Feedback and Evaluation

We understand the engagement with the topic of awareness and the development of concepts as an ongoing process. Even though our concept already illuminates many situations and circumstances, there are clearly aspects that should be addressed in more detail or that we haven't yet considered. To continuously improve, our festival evaluation and your feedback are particularly important. You can send us suggestions, criticism, and praise via email (awareness@queerfilmfest-kassel.de), social media (Instagram [@queerfilmfest.kassel](https://www.instagram.com/queerfilmfest.kassel) and Bluesky [@queerfilmfestks.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/queerfilmfestks.bsky.social)), or anonymously (<https://tellonym.me/queerfilmfest-kassel>). We also hope, of course, that the festival will once again inspire people to become part of our planning group and the association. Therefore, personal contact and independent participation are both possible and encouraged.

7. Appendices

a. Notices and signage

In the festival venues (BALi, Bahnhofshalle and Offener Kanal Foyer) there are clearly visible posters with the awareness concept and, if necessary, other information.

b. Handout

The accompanying pages (emergency contact information, resources, and skills list) serve as a support guide for all members of the awareness team, festival organizers, and event staff. They should also be distributed to bar/cashier staff and security personnel. A skills list at the end of the guide helps counter high levels of tension or stress.

c. Site plan

You can find a detailed map including marked barriers and directions on our website.

Small BALi, Foyer 2, Stairwell and Main Entrance



Large BALi, Foyer 1, Stairwell and Main Entrance

