



GAIA Code of Conduct

Why do we have a Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct makes space for us to **deeply consider and share our goals** and be **open and clear about how we want to behave**, as a community, so it's not hidden or secret. Our goal is to make GAIA a space where many **different people can come together to share and learn from each other**.

We want people to come to GAIA and participate and thrive no matter their experience, gender identity and expression, disability sexual orientation, personal appearance, race, ethnicity, body size, age, nationality, or religion.

When different people come together in a space there is huge potential for learning, collaboration, and real change. Unfortunately, there is also friction and conflict. This conflict emerges for many reasons including: historical and current racism, colonialism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, wealth inequality, and unhealed community and individual trauma.

Conflict is unavoidable. Our goal with the CoC isn't to avoid conflict, it's to have clearly communicated principles around how we deal with it.

We wrote this CoC with the knowledge that the CoC will and should change, as we learn more and grow as a community.

Who is this Code of Conduct for?

This CoC is for everyone, including GAIA's organizers, speakers, invited guests, and attendees.

What does this actually look like in action?

When attending GAIA sessions, we expect people to treat others with respect, to listen generously, and to work towards a thriving and equitable environment for all. The CoC is not about being "nice," it's about working towards an equitable environment where people from different backgrounds can come together to share and learn from each other.

The CoC applies to everyone equitably. Differences in power, histories, and current realities mean that in order to be equitable, we need to always consider specific relationships and environments when contextualizing words and actions.

Specific Examples:

Below are some examples that commonly come up. It would be impossible to write a full list here, but we hope these will help you get a feeling for what we expect.

Please do:

- Speak about your lived experience and knowledge.
- Participate in a way that makes you feel good and invested: feel free to ask questions and support speakers in the chat.
- Honour your own accessibility needs and let people know if they can help make the space better for you.
- Be aware of your own privilege and the ways you do or don't take up space.
- Make delightful spaces for others to contribute, help other people to shine.
- Always listen generously, especially if you are listening to people speak in their second or third language.
- Always be learning.
- Make space for newcomers and outsiders, help them feel welcome. Even if you are a newcomer yourself!
- Use people's pronouns (example: she/her) correctly. If you don't know, use their name or ask. If you make a mistake, apologize, correct yourself, and move on.
- Ask questions rather than making assumptions.
- When interrupting racism, sexism, ableism or transphobia, try to explicitly address the behaviour or phrase and educate (rather than name-calling).
- If you have the capacity and are coming from a place of privilege, practice correcting people and being corrected yourself. Ideally, we take feedback as a gift. In practice, it can feel like an attack. Practice helps with this.
- Apologize quickly and concisely when you realize you've done something wrong. Make a sincere effort to quietly do better.
- Escalate any issues to one or all of the GAIA organizers (Marie, Lu, Jim) even if the issues are with our friends or with one of us. We want to make this space good for you!

Please don't:

- Talk over people.
- Make assumptions about people (Of course, this is unavoidable, but try to minimize your assumptions).
- Romantically or sexually pursue people at GAIA or in the context of GAIA.
- Comment on people's appearance.

- Harass people. If someone doesn't want to talk to you, let it go.
- Make dismissive, patronizing, violent, or passive-aggressive jokes or comments.
- Make jokes about pronouncing people's names, especially if that person is already making the effort to speak your language.
- Diminish or underestimate structural inequities.
- Use ableist or racist language. Of course, language changes over time, is cultural, and is complicated, but avoid words that "punch down" at people. If you are curious about "ableist words" or "racist words" a quick search will help!
- Assume that if a person makes a small mistake with their words they are a "bad person."
- Assume another person is more important or valuable because they are more "famous", well-connected, or professionally accomplished.
- Assume that everyone else knows each other or that you are the outsider. None of us know everyone and almost everyone has feelings of insecurity.
- Excuse or justify the bad behaviour of others. It's easy to feel overwhelmed in moments of conflict and say things that make things worse, like "I'm sure they didn't mean that" and "maybe you're taking this the wrong way."
- Assume that "you are wrong" and "no one will help you" with an issue. We want to help!

What to do when things go wrong

If you are able and feel safe to do so, speak up in the moment: clearly name the behaviour and ask the person to stop. You can also reach out to the event organizers and we will help you.

You can reach all us at <https://forms.gle/mUES1e7SCqkEnBs58>

You can also reach us individually:

Marie marie@gameartsinternational.network

Jim jim@gameartsinternational.network

Lu luoulton@gameonxp.com

What to do when things go wrong (because of you)

If you are able, apologise immediately and clearly. Avoid phrases like "I'm sorry you felt X" and instead use phrases like "I'm sorry I said that." It can be hard to apologise in the moment of confrontation, but it's much easier than doing it later.

It can be tempting to talk about your intentions, but intentions aren't important here. Of course, intentions do matter, but when you've hurt someone, the important thing isn't what you *meant* to do, the important thing is what has happened.

Take a break. Emotions are powerful and can lead us to say things we later regret.

This can be an excellent moment for learning! Please don't ask the person you just hurt! It's an excellent opportunity to self-educate with books or with Google.

What happens when an incident is reported:

When an incident is reported, the person reporting the incident is to be treated with kindness, respect, and care. Safety and consent should be the priority. When you are reporting something to us, we will not ask you to confront anyone and we will not tell anyone who you are. We also strongly encourage you to reach out to your support network to discuss and decompress.

The steps after an incident report will be as follows:

1. Report received
2. If immediate action is required, a team member (Marie, Jim, and Lu) will take action. This might involve a correction, a discussion, or ejection from the session.
3. After the session, Marie, Jim, and Lu will discuss the incident. If the report involves one of us, that person will be excluded from the discussion.
4. First violations will result in a warning, severe or repeat incidents will result in expulsion from GAIA.
5. After each GAIA we will set aside a specific meeting to discuss the CoC and the ways we can do better.

People make mistakes, and we want to foster a culture where small mistakes can be corrected. Ultimately we believe in restorative justice, and we are interested in building systems that help everyone to thrive.