ATHEOPAGAN COMMUNITY CONDUCT STANDARDS and GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE v.3/23

Conduct

As Atheopagans, we endeavor to create an environment which is safe, responsible, and egalitarian. We celebrate inclusion, diversity, love, kindness and mutual respect. Atheopagan events, online spaces, and gatherings should be guided by the 13 Atheopagan Principles, including most specifically Inclusiveness, Social Responsibility, and Kindness and Compassion.

We embrace as an ethic that we treat one another well, that we respect and embrace difference, and that assume good intentions on the part of our fellow humans. We welcome people of all races, all colors, all ethnicities, all gender identifications, all ages and sexual orientations and those differences of life situation, background, and physical or mental ability, shape or condition that increase our diversity.

In any Atheopagan gathering, either online or in-person, we do not accept:

- Physical or verbal threats, or violence of any kind
- Harassment, bullying, coercion in any way or unwelcome sexual or physical attention
- Hostile and disrespectful speech or actions

When confronted with unkindness--or, worse, with discrimination--we call this out but at first with an eye to the education of the person who expressed it. Maybe they didn't understand that what they said or did was discriminatory, and they can learn, bettering themselves and our community; or, conversely, maybe they double down, in which case they may need to be removed from the community for the safety of other members.

This is not to say that oppressed peoples are responsible for educating those who oppress them. There is room for anger in such cases and it is a part of the work of people of the dominant culture to sit with this anger, to seek to understand and learn from it.

Consent

Atheopaganism supports consent culture. Affirmative consent to any physical contact or sexually intimate communication (includes hugging--ask first!) must be secured prior to such contact.

Affirmative consent is a knowing, voluntary, and mutual decision among all participants to engage in physical contact or sexual activity (which can include online sexual activity). Consent can be given by words or actions, as long as those words or actions create clear permission regarding willingness to engage in the activity. Silence or lack of resistance, in and of itself, does not demonstrate consent. The definition of consent does not vary based upon a participant's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

- Consent to any act or prior consensual activity between or with any party does not necessarily constitute consent to any other act.
- Consent given once does not necessarily constitute consent to perform the same act again.
- Consent is required regardless of whether the person initiating the act is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Consent may be initially given but withdrawn at any time.
- Consent cannot be given when a person is incapacitated, which occurs when an individual lacks the ability to knowingly choose to participate in activity. Incapacitation may be caused by the lack of consciousness or being asleep, being involuntarily restrained, or if an individual otherwise cannot consent. Depending on the degree of intoxication, someone who is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicants may be incapacitated and therefore unable to consent.
- Consent cannot be given as a result of coercion, intimidation, force, or threat of harm.
- When consent is withdrawn or can no longer be given, activity must stop.

Consent policies apply to online communications as well. Unwelcome and uninvited sexual advances constitute harassment. Harassment can include:

- Attempts to initiate or solicit unwelcome sexually explicit conversation or personal details
- Sending unsolicited explicit images, or soliciting such images
- Abusive language, insults, slurs, threats or attempts at coercion

If Harassed

If you are feeling harassed, ask the harasser to stop, if you are willing. If you are unwilling or unable to ask or the harassment does not stop, approach a group or event organizer and ask for help. Organizers will investigate and intervene in what they see as an appropriate manner. If you wish, organizers will contact authorities, nonprofit resources such as a sexual assault crisis center, and/or the Atheopagan Society Council for you.

If you are asked to stop any harassing behavior, you are expected to stop immediately. If a participant engages in harassing behavior, Atheopagan events and groups retain the right to take any action to keep our spaces a welcoming environment for all participants. These actions can include warning the participant(s) or expulsion from the group, event or future

events. Any admission fee to the group or event will not necessarily be refunded if this occurs.

Atheopagan event and group organizers are not, however, arbiters of interpersonal conflict. We expect participants in all Atheopagan events and activities to maintain the standards of conduct outlined above at all times and to resolve their differences in a civil manner if no harassment has taken place.

Minors

At both online and in-person Atheopagan events, children under 16 must be under the supervision of a guardian (or other arranged adult supervision with the consent of a guardian) at all times. Children aged 16 and 17 may participate independently in the activities of the group or event with permission of their guardian, so long as the activity is not explicitly defined as adults-only.

Media Policy

There is no photography or recording during rituals. Outside of ritual, photography is only allowed with the advance permission of the subject(s). Please be considerate that not all Atheopagans are "out" in their communities, and they may wish not to be photographed.

What transpires within Atheopagan spaces is meant to stay there. Recording, communicating, screenshotting or otherwise disclosing content from Atheopagan online and in-person spaces is expressly disallowed.

Leadership

Atheopagan groups are intended to be flat in power structure. We are anti-authoritarian and choose to lift one another up together rather than to have people who are "in charge". Our path encourages egalitarian participation in decision making and group dynamics. This doesn't mean that temporary leaders aren't sometimes chosen (say, to coordinate a ritual, lead a meeting or take on a task assignment), but these should indeed be temporary. As we suggest with the lower-case spelling of Atheopagan cleric, leadership roles in Atheopaganism are ***service roles*** to the broader community, not power-over positions of authority.

Ritual Etiquette

The ritual container provides a space for creative exploration. It is an open space where we come together to empower one another.

In ritual, you have an opportunity to explore creatively, test your boundaries, and challenge your limitations. We all have a role in making this circle safe. Making a personal commitment to your own safety is a powerful way to support your creative process. You are empowered to be the guardian of your own experience. You choose when and how you wish to interact with other members of the circle. If you are uncomfortable, challenged, or overwhelmed, ask yourself how you can respond constructively to the situation. Do you need transformational support? To talk directly with someone? To set an explicit boundary with someone? To take a break from the circle? To stick with your process? Do what you need to do, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

If you feel drawn to interact with someone in the circle, please be conscious of whether that person is inviting you in. Don't take it personally if someone declines to interact with you. Respect that request. They are doing their own work. If someone approaches you looking for help, please take the time to listen and take his or her concerns seriously. If you are not in a place to help, find someone who can. We support each other with our attention and understanding.

Being part of this community carries an agreement to treat each other with respect and to honor each other's boundaries.

Atheopagan events are intended to be places where we can bring our whole selves – not just what's wonderful but also the imperfections, the parts that feel broken, the parts we may be ashamed of. We may not agree with everything that each person does or says, but we hold space for each other to come together in our imperfection and our humanity and to be transformed.

Grievance Procedure

If you have a complaint that is very serious or you do not feel safe going to event or group organizers to notify them of abuse or harassment, you may contact the Secretary of the Atheopagan Society Council at APGrievance@comcast.net. Please specify the events as you experienced them, with details. The Council will investigate and take appropriate action. *This can take a few days. If you are in immediate danger, get to a safe place and/or contact police immediately.*

Getting Help

If there are problems in your group and you really aren't able to resolve them yourselves, assistance may be available from the Atheopagan Society. Send a request from the contact form at https://theapsocietyorg.wordpress.com/contact/ and someone will reply to you shortly.