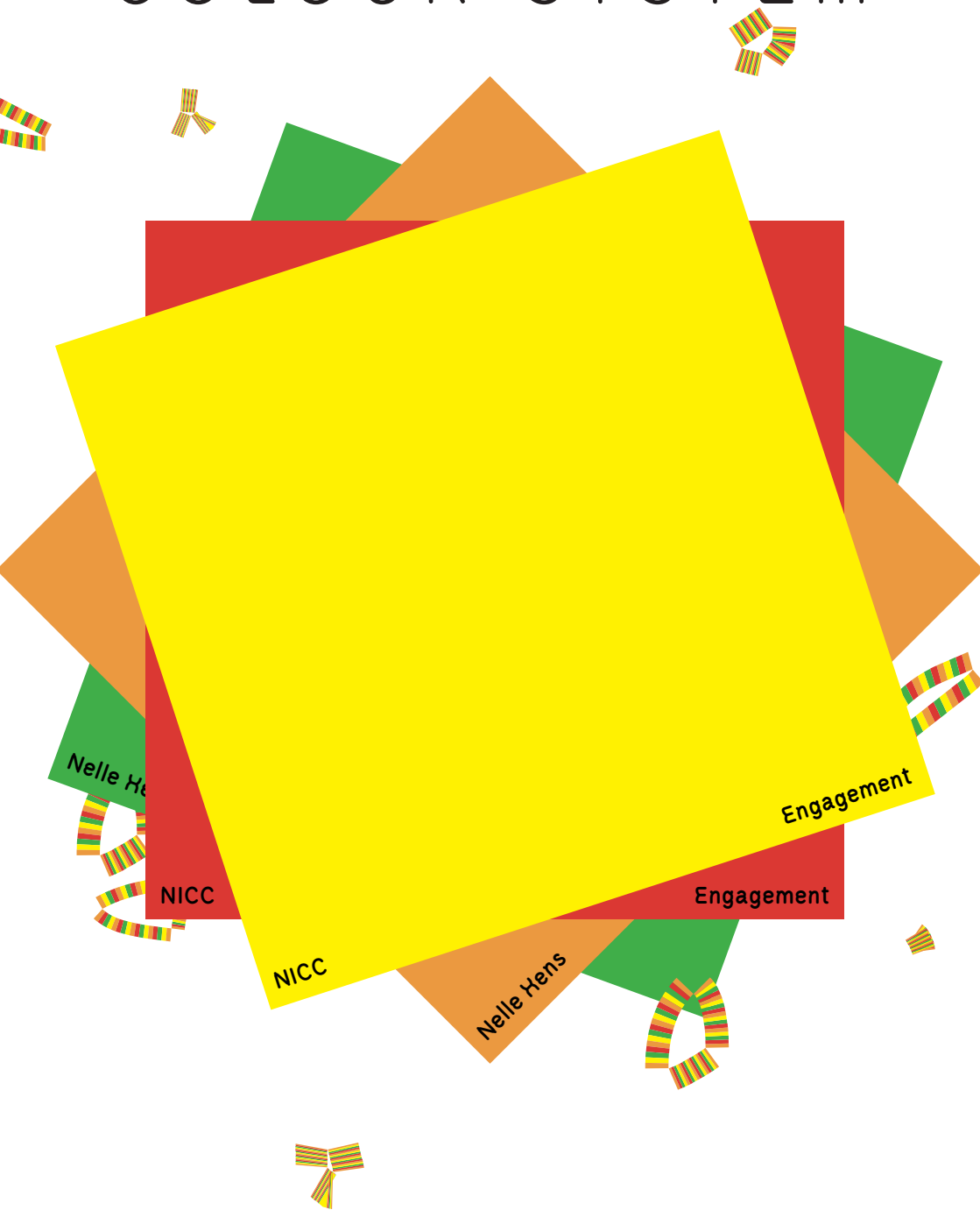


# COLOUR SYSTEM





This tool helps organisations better recognise and address transgressive behaviour. The Colour System provides a shared language and concrete criteria to assess situations and to open the discussion on what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.





























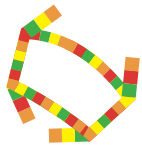
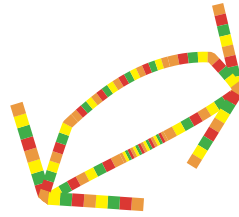


# 15

A young artist has a verbal agreement with an institution to participate in an upcoming group exhibition. During the preparations, the artist begins a relationship with the ex-partner of the curator of the exhibition. Shortly afterwards, the collaboration is abruptly terminated without explanation. At public events in the city, the artist is confronted with aggressive behaviour from the curator, who openly states that he will hinder the artist's career as long as the relationship continues.

- WE ASSESS THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE CURATOR BEHAVIOUR.

Comments



Colour



















suggested colours



1



CONSENT No clear consent (the agreements made in advance are not being complied with)

VOLUNTARINESS There is a lack of choice; the option not to publish the article (in that way) does not exist.

There is also manipulation: "you should be happy..."

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a difference in position and privilege (young artist vs. journalist for a major Flemish newspaper).

CONTEXT The journalist's behaviour is not in line with journalistic ethics.

IMPACT Public misrepresentation (reach) can have a negative impact on the young artist. In addition, his confidence may be damaged, which can have an impact on later situations.

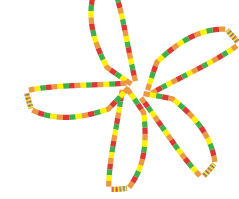
EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a power imbalance/authority relationship and abuse of privilege.

CONTEXT The bar manager's behaviour is unprofessional.

IMPACT This is a very personal comment, but micro-aggressions have a huge impact! The support of the other volunteer may be helpful, but it does not change the assessment of the bar manager's behaviour.

2





Comments

3.1



CONSENT The teacher does not ask for permission, but the question is whether that is a problem: he notices tension and wants to discuss it.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a relationship of authority, but the teacher takes responsibility in his position and does not abuse it.

CONTEXT The behaviour is appropriate for the context, with one comment: it might be better if the teacher addresses the students individually.

IMPACT There may be an impact due to public demand, but again, we would not hold that against the teacher.

3.2



CONSENT About pushing and verbal attacks: no permission.

VOLUNTARINESS Lack of choice.

EQUITY / EQUALITY As far as we know, there is no difference in power.

CONTEXT The impact is clearly significant, the effect lingers, and there is a need for support to deal with this.

IMPACT There may be an impact due to public demand, but again, we would not hold that against the teacher.



4



VOLUNTARINESS Lack of choice.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a difference in privilege (gender-based) in the way male artists are treated, as opposed to the female collective.

CONTEXT The behaviour of the technicians and artists is not appropriate for the professional setting; no respect is shown for others' expertise and authority (and concerns).

IMPACT The impact is partly determined by the fact that it happens repeatedly and appears to be personally directed against women. The impact can be significant (microaggressions).

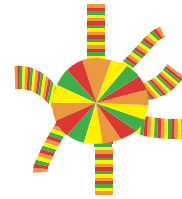
5



CONSENT There is no 'ongoing consent'.

VOLUNTARINESS There does not appear to be any explicit coercion or blackmail, but the question is how free you are to reject advances from someone in a position of power or how free you are to end that relationship. The secretive nature of the relationship may contain an element of blackmail. The aspect of reward/punishment in terms of opportunities may also play a role here.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is clearly a power imbalance (particularly because it involves a student), in terms of authority, authority relationships, age superiority, and abuse of privilege.



Comments

CONTEXT This poses a problem when it comes to establishing relationships with students.

IMPACT The potential negative impact here may be linked to ending the relationship or being caught by colleagues. Keeping it secret can lead to stress and isolation.



CONSENT No framework has been agreed upon for these types of consequences. It is not explicit and there is no transparency about it.

EQUITY / EQUALITY This is a case of abuse of power and favouritism.

CONTEXT This behaviour is not appropriate in an educational context: favouritism has a major impact on the learning opportunities of others.

IMPACT The impact on the learning environment is significant: it creates pressure within the learning context.

CONSENT Intrusive/racist comments are not permitted.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a power imbalance between the member of the selection committee and the applicant.

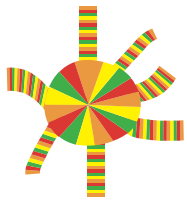
CONTEXT The behaviour of the member of the selection committee is unprofessional.

IMPACT This is a very personal comment, but the impact of microaggressions is huge!

6



7



8



CONSENT It is the students who do not respect the agreements, so there is no consent, but the teacher should monitor this. Therefore, it does not apply in the strict sense.

VOLUNTARINESS For the model, it may seem as if there is a lack of choice. The teacher says that cell phone use is not okay, but does nothing to change this, which may make it seem to the model as if she has no choice but to accept it.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a power imbalance (she is much more vulnerable, both literally and figuratively). It is not that the teacher actually abuses his power, but he does not use it to protect her position either.

CONTEXT The behaviour is unprofessional: in this context, he should prioritize ensuring that the agreed framework is respected, especially given his position of authority.

IMPACT The impact of the teacher's failure to intervene could potentially be significant. In addition to the risk of images being taken of the model, it could also represent a breach of trust with the teacher.



9



CONSENT In this state, clear consent cannot be given.  
VOLUNTARINESS It is unclear whether the young artist voluntarily accompanied the gallery owner. There is a possibility that reward/punishment (career opportunities) may have been involved.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is no equality.

FUNCTIONING Both are under the influence of drugs. However, this is not a mitigating circumstance for the gallery owner. He is taking advantage of the young artist's situation.

CONTEXT The gallery owner's behaviour is unprofessional.

IMPACT This situation has the potential to have a very significant impact on the artist (intensity, scope, personal).

10



EQUITY / EQUALITY The managing director speaks from a position of power.

CONTEXT Respect for employees should be a requirement in any organisation or company. As managing director, you are not setting a good example with comments like that, as they can be very damaging to the artistic director.

IMPACT A number of other team members do not approach this situation/comment with support for the artistic director, as they laugh along with the general director's comment in the background. This shows

a lack of support from those around him, which can make it difficult for the artistic director to indicate that he does not find this acceptable. The comments are also personally directed at the artistic director as an individual, which can also reinforce the negative impact. These types of comments are also micro-aggressions and stem from ableism (discrimination based on disability).

CONTEXT Appropriate; the cultural center answered the artists' questions honestly and correctly.

CONSENT A meeting with other colleagues is not a scheduled feedback moment or performance review for an individual. The employee is confronted with the feedback by surprise; there is no freedom of choice as to whether or not to receive it at that moment.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a power relationship (authority relationship) that may not be handled with sufficient sensitivity.

CONTEXT Here we can ask ourselves whether it is professional to give this feedback at the end of the project rather than when the problem arises; this does not give the person the opportunity to change anything. Is this good leadership?

11

12.a

12.b

IMPACT The fact that feedback is given in front of colleagues can have a negative impact. This does not necessarily have to be a problem, but in combination with the timing, it is at least awkward.

CONSENT Not okay, there is clearly no consent.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a form of abuse of power, the power of the large platform.

CONTEXT The employee's behaviour is unprofessional.

IMPACT The impact is potentially huge: the post is permanently visible, the medium has a wide reach, the message is very personal, and the employee deliberately wants to cause damage.

13

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a power relationship that makes it difficult to address this unclear communication.

CONTEXT It is unprofessional to make verbal promises that you cannot keep.

IMPACT This has a major impact on the curator's future career prospects, especially if she had prepared herself for this.



14



**CONSENT** There is no consent; the fifth artist indicates his boundary, but it is not respected.

**VOLUNTARINESS** Gossiping and exclusion could be seen as a consequence of setting boundaries, a form of blackmail or punishment.

**EQUITY / EQUALITY** The behaviour of the four artists is not acceptable. Abuse of power can also occur in friendships, in this case by the majority towards the minority.

**CONTEXT** Gossiping and forming alliances is unprofessional, as is discussing situations from a professional context outside of work, in your wider circle of friends.

**IMPACT** The impact of this behaviour can be significant; it is isolating, it lasts for a certain period of time, it is personal, it has a wide reach, and there is a lack of support from colleagues.

15



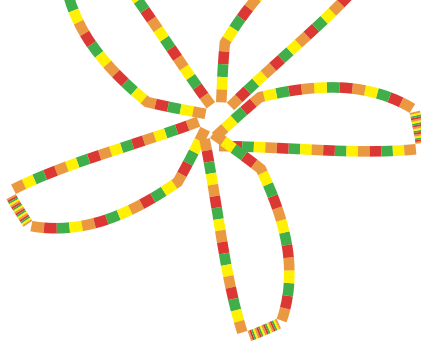
**CONSENT** There is a demand to end the relationship; there is no consent for this.

**VOLUNTARINESS** There is a threat of punishment (hindering one's career), so there is blackmail.

**EQUITY / EQUALITY** There is abuse of power.

**CONTEXT** This is highly unprofessional behaviour.

**IMPACT** The aggressive attitude and threats to hinder the artist's career can have a very negative impact on the artist, as this is directed at them on a very



Comments

personal level. The curator is also deliberate in his threats and aggressive behaviour. By bringing this up and responding aggressively at public events, this can also damage the artist's image.

16



EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a relationship of authority between the director and the technicians, which gives the comment a different effect. By referring to the context as a family, that relationship of authority is denied: pseudo-horizontality.

CONTEXT The director's comment/behaviour is unprofessional.

IMPACT The director's behaviour can create an unsafe atmosphere. He is known for his direct questions, so there is a pattern of behaviour and therefore repetition.

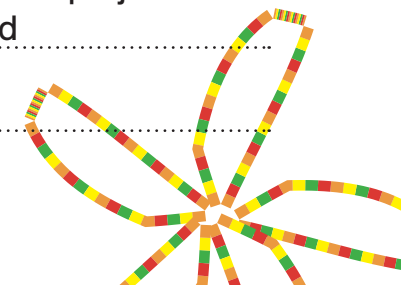
17



CONSENT The boundary that is indicated is ignored and even has a negative consequence.

VOLUNTARINESS There is a penalty attached to the decision not to accept the invitation to dinner.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is clear evidence of abuse of power, with the artistic director using his position to decide whether or not to give someone a project depending on whether the curator would have dinner with him after work (and thus respond to his advances).



18



CONTEXT The artistic director's behaviour is unprofessional.

IMPACT The behaviour affects the curator personally, has an impact on her job/career opportunities, and we may question the artistic director's awareness of this.

It will also have an emotional impact.

CONSENT There is no consent.

VOLUNTARINESS There is no voluntariness.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is no equality; the power imbalance between men and women comes into play here, and the situation is being exploited.

FUNCTIONING The technician is (probably) under the influence; this is not a mitigating circumstance, his behaviour is not acceptable.

CONTEXT The technician's behaviour is not appropriate in a professional situation (or in any other context).

IMPACT The impact can be very significant (intense, highly intimidating, threatening, and aggressive).

19.1



CONSENT There is no consent.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is abuse of privilege: someone is being treated in a racist manner.

CONTEXT Racism has no place in any context.

IMPACT The impact of racism is huge! It involves repeated and intense behaviour, and there is also a lack of support from bystanders.

19.2



CONSENT The artist sets his limits, and the curator does not comply.

VOLUNTARINESS There is a lack of choice: the artist will have to participate. There also seems to be a consequence attached to this: loss of wages.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a relationship of authority, and that relationship is used to demand that someone do something without ensuring their well-being.

CONTEXT The curator's is unprofessional; a good leader should intervene/take responsibility in this situation.

IMPACT The lack of support from the curator (bystander but also manager with responsibility) has a major impact.





20

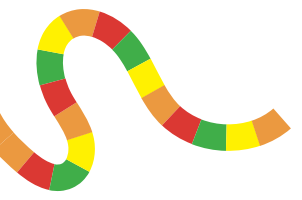
CONSENT The student attendant clearly sets a boundary, which is not respected by the visitor.

VOLUNTARINESS There is blackmail and intimidation, and the attendant is afraid of possible punishment if the police are called in.

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is abuse of privilege; threatening to call the police is an argument based on power.

CONTEXT The is not appropriate; it is simply unacceptable .

IMPACT This incident has the potential for a significant impact (highly personal, intense).



21.a

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is a power imbalance that may give the comment more weight.

CONTEXT The comment is tactless and unprofessional.

IMPACT The comment is very personal and intrusive.

21.b

EQUITY / EQUALITY There is an authority relationship, which may give the comment more impact.

CONTEXT It is professional (and simply the right thing to do) to correct a mistake by communicating clearly and offering sincere apologies.

IMPACT The apologies may lessen the impact.

22



CONSENT **A boundary is set that is not respected.**  
VOLUNTARINESS **Emotional manipulation is used to limit the employee's freedom of choice. They are made to feel guilty.**

EQUITY / EQUALITY **There is a relationship of authority, and that power is being abused.**

CONTEXT **This is unprofessional. As a coordinator, you are responsible (also by law!) for the well-being of your employees.**

IMPACT **This can have a very negative impact on the employee, as the extra workload is "on her," as the coordinator puts it (personally). It is also significant because it affects the employee's mental well-being.**

The Colour System was developed by the Sociaal Fonds voor Podiumkunsten and oKo, in collaboration with Engagement Arts, with financial support from the Flemish action plan on transgressive .

This tool is a translation of Sensoa's Flag System. The first version for the performing arts sector dates from 2022; the current version is from 2025.

In 2026, NICC, in collaboration with Engagement Arts and Nelle Hens, launched a version for the visual arts sector.

