

Baltimore Improv Group



Non-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy and
Complaint Procedure

Scope

This nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policy, with an established complaint procedure applies to all employees, vendors, teachers, coaches, performers, students and other individuals working for or interacting with the company. The policy addresses alleged discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and retaliation occurring among managers or supervisors, applicants, employees and third parties, such as vendors. It outlines the organization's objective in maintaining the policy and describes prohibited conduct in detail. The policy includes examples of conduct that will be considered violation of the policy and its consequences. The policy describes the complaint process and emphasizes the importance of confidentiality for all responsible parties involved in the process.

Objectives

The Baltimore Improv Group is committed to fostering a work and educational environment in which all its community members are treated with respect and dignity. Everyone has the right to work, study and perform in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Baltimore Improv Group expects its participant's behaviors in all relationships in the office, school and theatre will be professional and free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

To this end, the Baltimore Improv Group maintains a zero-tolerance policy to ensure that all its members can work, study and perform in a safe and supportive environment, free from harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment and retaliation. This policy means that no form of discriminatory or harassing conduct by or towards any employee, member, performer, faculty, student, volunteer or other persons associated with the Baltimore Improv Group, whether at one of our multiple environments (offices, theater and school) or elsewhere, will be tolerated. The Baltimore Improv Group is committed to enforcing its policy on all levels of our organization, including upper management, our Board and community leaders. Any individual who practices discrimination or harassment will be subject to immediate progressive discipline, up to and including possible discharge from employment (or contract termination for its vendors) and the immediate, permanent removal from our community,

The Baltimore Improv Group will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all concerned are familiar with these policies and are aware that any complaint of violation of such policies will be investigated and resolved appropriately as determined by BIG.

Any party who has questions or concerns about these policies should talk with the Managing Director, the Community Manager, or one of the Community Advocates.

This policy should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals of a particular gender, sexual orientation or any other protected class under applicable E.E.O laws or regulations, from participating in organization-related social activities or discussions. In other words, no one should make the mistake of practicing discrimination or exclusion to avoid allegations of harassment. The policies of the Baltimore Improv Group, as governed by applicable laws and/or regulations in this area prohibit discriminatory treatment based on sex or any other protected class characteristic, in terms, conditions, privileges and prerequisites of employment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination and retaliation are intended to complement and further those policies, not to form an exception to them.

Direct Personnel Interactions Versus Art

The Baltimore Improv Group is an artistic educational institution which educates and nurtures artists in the field of comedic improv. The Baltimore Improv Group acknowledges that the creation of art requires the bold expression of an individual's point of view or experience and/or the creation of fantastic or otherwise wholly fictitious narratives, devoid of truth. ***For this reason, the Baltimore Improv Group views the performance of improv as the creative expression of those who create it and not necessarily representative of their real world opinions or values.*** While guidelines exist in our classes and on stage to protect our performers from unwanted touching or subject material considered triggering, complaints regarding content within improv scenes will be treated as different and separate from instances of alleged discrimination or harassment (as defined in this policy) occurring directly between our members in our offices, classes or theater.

Equal employment opportunity

It is the policy of Baltimore Improv Group to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Baltimore Improv Group prohibits any such discrimination or harassment. Furthermore, the

Baltimore Improv Group extends this policy to include volunteer opportunities, such as performing in our improv shows, participating in our special events, serving on one of our Board committees or assisting with theatre operations.

Retaliation

Baltimore Improv Group encourages the reporting of all complaints of alleged discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of Baltimore Improv Group to promptly and thoroughly investigate such complaints. The Baltimore Improv Group prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such complaints.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal (e.g. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act), state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, “sexual harassment” is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as” unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.”

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognizes two types of sexual harassment: a) quid pro quo and b) hostile work environment. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include as examples unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual’s body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature. BIG also has a zero-tolerance policy against any acts of violence initiated by members of the community against others, which if investigated and proven to be true, would result in immediate expulsion of the responsible party.

Harassment

Harassment based on any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law, or that of his or her relatives, friends or associates, and that: a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, study or performance environment, b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's pursuit of work performance or educational goals, or c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment, performance or educational opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace, on company time or using company equipment by e-mail, phone (including voice messages), text messages, social networking sites or other means.

Individuals and Conduct Covered

These policies apply to all applicants, employees, students, volunteers and performers at BIG whether related to conduct engaged in by fellow employees or by someone not directly connected to Baltimore Improv Group (e.g., an outside vendor, consultant or customer).

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace, school or theatre and in any company-related setting outside the workplace, such as during company trips, company meetings and company-related social events.

Teachers

The Baltimore Improv Group as part of its mission to bring improv to the community seeks to create a learning environment open to experimentation and supportive of students. The organization feels that romantic relationships between students and

teachers not only does not coincide with those goals but can create an unhealthy environment for both parties and others in the class.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Improv Group expects all its teachers to avoid romantic involvement with students they are directly instructing and expressly prohibits such relationships during the length of a class. Should a romantic relationship exist prior to the start of a class, teachers are expected and required to report it to the Education Director or similar reporting figure in BIG. Outside of the period of instruction, BIG instructors are encouraged not to engage in romantic relationships with current or former BIG students.

Coaches

The Baltimore Improv Group as part of its mission to improve the quality of improv encourages BIG teams and students to seek out coaches and for individual performers to grow as performers by critically analyzing sets as coaches. The organization feels that romantic relationships between a coach and a performer not only does not coincide with those goals but can create an unhealthy environment for both parties and others. For these reasons, the Baltimore Improv Group discourages relationships between a coach and a performer regardless of whether the troupe or performer is associated with BIG.

Reporting an Incident of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation

The Baltimore Improv Group encourages reporting of all complaints of alleged discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe that they have been the victim of such conduct should discuss their concerns with the Managing Director, Community Manager, or Community Advocate. See the complaint procedure described below.

In addition, BIG recognizes that while it has taken steps to provide easy and effective avenues by which complaints can be made, sometimes situations are best dealt with directly as they occur. For that reason, BIG seeks to empower and encourage all members of its community to directly address incidents as they occur, as community members see fit. If an instance of alleged discrimination, harassment or retaliation is dealt with in such a manor, BIG highly encourages the parties involved to report the incident to the Managing Director, Community Manager or a Community Advocate.

Complaint Procedure

Any Baltimore Improv Group member who believes that they have been subjected to harassment of any kind has the responsibility to report the harassment as soon as possible to a Community Advocate, Community Manager or to the Managing Director. If the member is uncomfortable reporting the alleged harassment to a Community Advocate, Community Manager, or to the Managing Director (whether because they have committed the harassment, or for any other reason whatsoever), the member should report the alleged harassment to the next higher level of management, BIG's Board or another employee with the organization.

The Baltimore Improv Group is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent harassment, and will make every reasonable effort to promptly and effectively address and correct any alleged harassment. However, the Baltimore Improv Group cannot take prompt and effective remedial action unless incidents are reported. For that reason, BIG encourages the reporting of all incidents to the appropriate responsible and/or supervisory figures as soon as possible. BIG recognizes that due to the nature of harassment and discrimination, that sometimes an incident or complaint may possibly not be reported for some delayed period of time after its occurrence. Still, a full investigation can be more effectively completed closer to the actual date of its occurrence. For this reason, BIG encourages reporting these incidents as soon as possible.

Every report of harassment will be investigated promptly and impartially, with every effort to maintain confidentiality. The complainant and the accused will be informed of the results of the investigation, subject to the natural constraints of confidentiality and applicable legal obligations. If the Baltimore Improv Group finds that its policy has been violated, it will immediately take appropriate corrective and remedial action, most likely including the discharge of offending officers, employees or members similarly appropriate action towards offending vendors, contractors, or members and when necessary, the immediate and permanent removal of offending parties from our community.

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed.

If a complaining party does not agree with its resolution, that party may appeal to Baltimore Improv Group's Managing Director.

False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation (as opposed to complaints that, even if erroneous, are made in good faith) may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.