



Outing Policy & Procedures

1. Define Outing

In general terms, **outing** is sharing information without explicit consent about someone's association with the kink, consensual non-monogamy (CNM) or any alt-sex communities outside of those settings, or sharing identifying information that could allow people to identify someone in their mainstream life.

Outing may also include nonconsensual disclosure of a person's involvement in kink, CNM, or other alt-sex behaviors.

However, in many communities, that definition does not cover the scope of all areas in which confidentiality applies. For example, when events and groups are outed to the mainstream media or local regulators, this disrupts their activities and may expose the organizers or members associated with the kink, non-monogamy, or alt-sex communities.

Sample rules against outing:

1. Do not "out" anyone as kinky or non-monogamous to their family, friends, co-workers, or anyone not in the alt-sex communities.
2. Do not use someone's first/last name in person or online with others unless they give you specific permission to do so.
3. Do not provide details about anyone's place of employment, location, or other identifying information to anyone else without that person's explicit permission.

Questions to answer to set your group's policy:

- Is it *outing* to use someone's real name rather than a pseudonym inside your group (in person or online)?
- Is it *outing* to mention someone's employer or employment industry inside your group?
- Is it *outing* to mention someone's location attached to their pseudonym inside your group?
- Is it *outing* to mention identifying information if it doesn't include their name or place of work?

What about group organizers?

Often, group organizers do not have the same expectation of privacy as members because of administrative, legal, regulatory, or transparency reasons. However, personal information used for group management still shouldn't be used to *out* that person to their co-workers, family, or friends.

What if the information is a matter of public record?

It depends on the type of public information:

- Are judicial or law enforcement records being shared? That isn't an outing.

- Are public property or business records being shared with people who are unassociated with the group? That is an outing.

What if you ban someone from your group for outing?

Some questions to consider regarding punitive banning actions in your group include:

- Will you make that information available to the group?
- Will you make that information available to outside organizations?

If you intend to do those things, you have to tell people upfront so they can decide on joining or attending. Examples of that disclosure:

- *“If you break our rules and we have to ban you, we maintain the right to inform group members/other organizations/some other defined group of people.”*
- *“If you break these specific rules and we have to ban you, we will inform group members/other organizations/some other defined group of people.”*
- *“Your confidentiality exists in perpetuity, and even if we ban you, we won’t discuss it outside of the management team.”*

Your group's policies about banning should be clearly articulated to group members.

What if there is an emergency?

Though we hope that emergencies never occur, it is best for groups to plan for worst-case scenarios. Questions for your group to consider include:

- What if someone calls 911? (You can’t interfere with someone reporting a crime)
- What if someone calls a relative of a group member who has been hospitalized?
- How will your group handle these or other crises?

2. Set Policy

Write down your policy that outlines what outing means and what will happen to those who do it.

Establish sanctions for outing:

- Will there be zero tolerance or are sanctions dependent on the circumstances?
- If it depends on the circumstances, will it be based on the harm (or potential of harm)?
- Will it be based on how egregious the offense?
- Will it be based on intent (ignorance vs. revenge)?
- What if a manager, key volunteer, or owner outs someone?
- Will there be an escalation of consequences - education and coaching, suspension, permanent ban?

3. Education

Educate your members on this policy so everyone understands by providing your policy and sanctions procedures in writing. Let your community help you edit your policy. Get everyone to buy in, and then sign off. Remember, there is greater wisdom in working together to create safe and consensual communities than independently.