

Jaya Kula's Harassment & Abuse Policy

Version 4.0

Zero Tolerance

Jaya Kula has zero tolerance for any form of harassment, including harassment based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, caste, religion, neurodivergence, mental or physical disability, age, socio-economic status, marital status, medical condition, military status, or physical attributes.

Harassment creates a hostile environment and reinforces our sense of separateness. It disturbs the energy body of the community, undermines our mission, and obstructs the transmission of teachings. It is also illegal.

At any Jaya Kula teaching, event, or meeting; or in any meeting place owned, controlled, or rented by Jaya Kula; or during any Jaya Kula sponsored, sanctioned, or affiliated event; or on any Jaya Kula social media or collaborative online platform, it is prohibited to harass or abuse a person for any reason. This policy covers Jaya Kula employees, sevites (volunteers), and community members, as well as visiting teachers, guests, and contractors engaged by Jaya Kula.

Legally speaking, “harassment” covers a broad range of abuses, many of which are based on gender, gender expression, race, class, and other categories associated with marginalization and oppression. The term “abuse” is most often used to indicate physical harm, harmful behaviors intended to culminate in coerced sexual activity, and behaviors perpetrated for personal gain, including financial.

Harassment or abuse can include:

- unwelcome sexual advances
- requests for sexual favors

- leering, whistling or deliberate brushing against the body of another person in a sexually suggestive manner;
- persisting in pursuing an unwanted or rejected sexual relationship;
- verbal, visual, or physical harassment;
- bullying;
- assault of any kind;
- verbalizing or visually displaying derogatory epithets and jokes;
- sharing written or verbal derogatory remarks;
- displaying derogatory objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- making offensive comments;
- chronically wielding privilege to erase, attack, undermine, and disparage other people's speech, ideas, and experiences; and
- deliberate misuse of Jaya Kula funds for personal gain.

We count as abuse fraudulent self-representations about spiritual experiences or exaggerated claims about knowledge of and/or accomplishment in any form of sexual sadhana, or lying to anyone about the importance or necessity of sexual sadhana to Tantrik practice in order to manipulate people into having sex.

While this is not an exhaustive list, the following conduct *may* also constitute harassment depending on the context and circumstances. Such behaviors *may not* constitute harassment. However, if a person feels harassed, Jaya Kula will investigate the circumstance as potential harassment.

- commenting on an individual's physical characteristics;
- commenting on an individual's racial identity, gender identity, age, physical characteristics, mental abilities, sexual activity, culture, country of origin, caste, or socio-economic status;
- inquiries into another person's history, self-expression, physical or mental condition, culture, or identity;
- discussion of one's own sexual activities, gender, or sexual orientation.

One or two annoying or mildly offensive comments usually do not rise to the level of illegal harassment. But you can *still* bring your experience to a Board member. We will work with you and other relevant parties to remedy the situation.

Non-collaboration with Abusive Spiritual Teachers and Communities

Jaya Kula is committed to supporting people to do spiritual practice and to gather in community as an important aspect of spiritual practice. Abuse by spiritual teachers creates adverse conditions for students and destroys communities of practice.

We define spiritual teacher abuse as behavior that maneuvers, coerces, or by brute force compels students into participating in a teacher's quest for personal gratification and power. Abuse includes emotional, financial, and sexual abuse, and fraudulent self-representation. We have the understanding that such behavior indicates a lack of realization regardless of a teacher's claims, lineage, titles, education, years practicing, resume, or renown.

Our spiritual director and our organization, Jaya Kula, have a zero tolerance policy for supporting any type of abuse by spiritual teachers and organizations. We do not collaborate with known abusers, elevate them in any way, or appear on the social media platforms of known abusers or enablers and elevators of abusers.

How to Report Harassment or Abuse

Members of Jaya Kula's Board of Directors receive formal training in recognizing and responding to harassment. If you believe that the actions or words of an individual in the course of Jaya Kula teachings, events, or meetings, or on Jaya Kula property, or on a Jaya Kula social media or collaborative online platform constitute harassment, please inform any member of the BOD as soon as possible. This enables Jaya Kula to take reparative action and to address harassment, hopefully before it becomes severe or pervasive. Current Board members are: Shambhavi, Matri, Nirmana, Alexandra, and Devamadhu.

Complaints may be made orally or in writing. Ultimately, all complaints of harassment will be notated in writing, reviewed by the Board of Directors, and investigated promptly and impartially. If a complaint is brought against a member of the BOD or the Spiritual Director, that person(s) will recuse themselves for the duration of the investigation.

Intermediate measures may be taken before completing the investigation to ensure that further harassment does not occur.

You may also choose to speak to Shambhavi about your experience and *not* make a formal complaint. However, your experience will be documented for your and Jaya Kula's protection in case the situation escalates. If a serious crime has occurred, or if credible threats of bodily injury have occurred, Jaya Kula reserves the right to take any steps deemed necessary to protect you and the community.

Confidentiality

In order to investigate reports of harassment, it may be necessary to question the person or persons named as perpetrators and perhaps bystander witnesses. In some cases, Shambhavi may ask the complainant for permission to address the entire Mandala about the situation. This would be done in order to protect other community members and when transparency can usefully become an aspect of our sadhana and support a healthy spiritual community.

If we find that the incident involves threats of violence or actual assault and the potential or actuality of physical harm to the complainant, or potential physical harm to other students, the situation may be immediately reported to the police whether or not the complainant has expressed a desire to make a police report. In general, though, reports of harassment will be shared only on a need-to-know basis. We will maintain confidentiality other than as is needed to investigate and take appropriate action.

Retaliation

Jaya Kula will not take any action in retaliation against any person who brings or voices a complaint pursuant to this policy or who otherwise opposes harassment. Jaya Kula will in addition do its utmost to protect people reporting harassment from any form of retaliation. Community members are encouraged to report any incidences of retaliation of which they become aware.

Jaya Kula's Response to Complaints

1. The person to whom you initially report the harassment will listen to your complaint, will review your report with you to make sure it is understood, and will take notes if not provided by you. You will be asked how you would prefer the incident to be

resolved. The BOD will take your preferences into consideration, but may ultimately choose a different course of action. You will be asked to read over any notes before they are shared with the Board of Directors in order to insure that your complaint is accurately represented.

2. The BOD will investigate your allegation and may interview the named perpetrator(s) and any bystander witnesses. When necessary, the BOD will call on external, expert support in order to properly investigate complaints.
3. The BOD will then let you know both orally and in writing the outcome of the investigation and what reparative, preventative actions it intends to take, suggest, and/or require, if any. Other relevant parties may also be given notice of outcomes of investigations as is appropriate.
4. Actions may include mediating conversations between complainants and perpetrators; referring people to outside resources for further support; requiring perpetrators to participate in educational and/or reparations processes or to obtain outside support; and/or with permission of complainants, to hold Mandala-wide discussions of circumstances and issues in order to prevent further harm and support our sadhana together.
5. The BOD reserves the right to refer cases to the police in instances of threats of violence, actual assault, or other grave crimes and to ban perpetrators from participation in the community either in part, for specific periods of time, or in full and permanently.
6. Harassment perpetrated by members of the BOD, Jaya Kula employees, or the Mālā (the group of students running Jaya Kula) will be responded to with a requirement to engage in therapeutic, educational, and/or reparations processes and, depending on the nature of the offense, possible removal from any role in Jaya Kula teaching, management, and/or administration.
7. In the most egregious cases, should they occur, perpetrators will be required to entirely withdraw from any participation in Jaya Kula.