



Volunteer Handbook

Knowledge is *Power*

Just
say
Know

Volunteers Guidelines

Gauteng

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This is a working document... anything else to add in ?

Let us know

RaveSafe is ...

RaveSafe is a drug education and Harm Reduction project . We are a group of volunteers who believe that people have the right to accurate, honest and objective information about drugs and their effects, so they can make informed and responsible decisions about their lives and their health.

Being ravers ourselves, we have come to realise the importance of knowing what drugs are available, their dangers, and how they affect the body and alter the state of mind.

RaveSafe promotes the Harm Reduction approach of drug education by researching and distributing information that is of interest and importance to our community. This information covers common street and dance drugs, and serves to alert drug users to the potential dangers surrounding substance-abuse, as well as to suggest safer raving and lifestyle techniques.

Harm Reduction accepts that drug use is taking place, and works within that community towards reducing harm that can result from drug use. This is done by distributing straight forward unbiased information, which is comes from the a wide range of sources including the pharmaceutical companies, treatment and rehab centres, research agencies, professionals in the field and last but not least, the user community.

We are a non-commercial organisation, and therefore we can not endorse or sell any products or services that might compromise us. However, this does not exclude fund raising services such as a masseur, face painting, selling RaveSafe stickers etc at our stands. However, we should never charge for our literature - Information has to be Free !

Media Policy

RaveSafe does not pass judgement on the use of any drugs - the information we publish and distribute should be factual, accurate and impartial at all times. It should also be assessed by at least one medical professional before publishing, and it should be continuously reviewed with the latest research and input from our community to keep it up to date. Constructive criticisms should always be welcomed, and included into the material.

We should not publish anything that might encourage drug use or advise user how to get the most out of their drugs . Rather, it is aimed at those who have taken the decision to experiment and use, and should empower them with vital information such as dosage and potentially harmful side effects.

How Does it Work ?

RaveSafe is a group of volunteers, that is no one gets paid. It consist mainly of regular volunteers, who perform the outreach function at raves and parties.

Governing RaveSafe activities overall is a group of people called the Trustees. They are experienced members and become Trustees by being involved in all RaveSafe activities for at least two years continuously.

Anyone can nominate a person become a Trustee, but their appointment can only be ratified by the existing group of Trustees, after the criteria have been met.

The group of Trustees nominates a co-ordinator - which should be ratified by the volunteer group. This co-ordinator manages the day to day affairs of the organisation, such as finances and book keeping, getting the post, scheduling meetings, making sure minutes are taken and distributed, liaising with the organisers over parties, and appointing an Event Co-ordinator for each party that we are present at.

The group of Trustees deal with all disciplinary issues, editorial policy and material review. One person from the group of Trustees is appointed as a media liaison person.

Any volunteer can approach a trustee with any issue that needs attention. Decision making in the group of trustees is by consensus - that is there is no overall leader of the group of trustees.

Amongst everyone in RaveSafe, the spirit should be one of consensus and cooperation over all issues. The co-ordinator is there for just that - co-ordination.

What is RaveSafe volunteer ?

A RaveSafe volunteer is someone who helps out at RaveSafe, for no reward except the satisfaction of helping others.

You should be knowledgeable about recreational drugs. This does not mean you have had to take any or all of them, but a certain insight is required to be in a position to counsel and help others. Volunteers should not be suffering from any serious addictions, or be involved in any way in the drug trade.

It's important to understand medical conditions such as Asthma, Depression, etc and what effects the dance drugs might have on these, as well as the other psychological effects.

You should know how to handle situations like an Epileptic Seizure and a Bad Trip. All this information is on the web site and in the booklet.

Ideally every volunteer should have First Aid training, or at the very least know how to check the vital symptoms such as breathing and pulse.

Volunteers should attend meetings, and are encouraged to participate in the many other activities such as fund raising, policy and materials research.

New Members Induction & Probation Period

New members are inducted at a New Members meeting, which is held every three months. This is more in the form a social, and several experienced members will be present to discuss the nature and the scope of RaveSafe, and what is expected from a volunteer. The new volunteers are also given a chance to introduce themselves to others, and ask any questions they might have.

Every volunteer has to serve a probation period with RaveSafe before they become a fully-fledged member. This is currently attendance at three RaveSafe stands at parties, as well as all meetings for a period of three months. The volunteer has to provide their own tickets for these events, and is not entitled to wear a RaveSafe tag whilst on probation.

They are expected to participate in all activities at the events they are present, including either the setup or takedown. They are to assist the Volunteer crew in all ways possible during the event, and must refer all public enquiries to a member.

During this period of probation, they must familiarise themselves with all RaveSafe material and procedures, as well attend a first aid course if possible. Whilst this is not encouraged, it will be in your favour for acceptance as a member.

At the end of this period, you will be interviewed by a panel consisting of three experienced and active RaveSafe volunteers, one of whom must be a RaveSafe Trustee. The decision to accept you as a member will be taken by this group.

General Do's & Don'ts for Volunteers

As you might know, RaveSafe sometimes treads a very fine line with society. Some people say that our information encourages drug use, whilst others think we are not emphasizing the positive effects of drugs enough. So we all have to be very careful that we remain neutral and objective all the time, and above all, act responsibly. One mistake could be fatal for all of us and the organisation. Here are a few guidelines.

- RaveSafe information is only distributed in places where people are being exposed to drugs. This means (at the moment) Raves and Clubs, not schools or shopping malls.
- We do not hand out unsolicited material - that is thrust a flyer or a booklet into anyone's hands. They come and get it from our table, if and when it suits them.
- RaveSafe respects the individual's privacy. Any confidential information you come across should remain just that, and not be passed around. We can only develop and retain respect by showing it to others.
- The volunteer's private life is their own. However, in order to be objective and of clear mind in dealing with issues of recreation drugs and harm reduction, the volunteer should ensure that any personal indulgences do not become excessive or infringe upon your work as a RaveSafe volunteer or the organisation as a whole in any way.
- When attending a RaveSafe meeting, or helping with a stand at a party, it's important that you are well rested and of clear mind - that means take it easy the night before, and do not arrive intoxicated in any way.
- The RaveSafe information, both in pamphlet form and on the web site, should never be charged for, though of course soliciting donations are always a good idea. If you ever forward RS info in any way, make sure you credit RaveSafe as the source. For example, cite the web page address of the info you have used.
- RaveSafe only has one designated Press Liaison person, who is also a Trustee. Please refer all press enquires to that person - dealing with the press is very tricky most of the time, and it's best that someone with the experience handles it.

Helping at a Rave

Shift duties

Keep the stand neat and tidy at all times. Check that the UV & other lights are working, that things haven't fallen down. The public face of RaveSafe is at stake here.

Replenish flyers, booklets, condoms from the stock underneath the table - there is no need to put out all the flyers at once;

Check that there is water in all the drums, and that the dispenser is filled up. Send for water missions as much as is needed. If there aren't enough able-bodied volunteers to help with this, do some ad-hoc recruiting !

Keep an eye out for people who may be looking for someone to talk to (and are too shy to ask:). Sometimes a girl might have a problem that she is obviously more comfortable speaking to a female volunteer about;

Surveys: these are very useful for a number of reasons. Most importantly they give us direct feedback as to the success of our work. They are also used for research by selected organisations. We also pass feedback on the party back to the organisers. Please assure the person that they are confidential, and try and get them to fill it in as completely as possible.

Take regular walks, check out the chill out rooms and edges of the dance floors to see if someone may need help. Be sensitive if you feel the need to approach someone - no need to freak anyone out. Just go up to them gently and ask if they are OK;

Keep your RaveSafe tag visible at all times;

Remember, we are not a paramedic service, if you feel uncomfortable at any stage, ask for help from another RaveSafe member. If in any doubt about someone, call the paramedics;

Be prepared to handle difficult situations - keep your mind together. If in Doubt -ASK ! Ask for help from the other volunteers around whenever you need it;

Remain at the party for the entire time and act as eyes and ears for the people on duty;

Sign in at the beginning of your shift, read the shift report from the people before you to see if there is anyone in the tent. Note any shortages or problems and all incidences (with the time). Sign out and write a shift report at the end of your shift;

You will be asked at least once where punters can score. Even if you do know, you must politely say "Sorry, I can't help you". You should not have any illegal drugs on your person, or in your bags or jacket or anywhere near the RaveSafe stand.

Volunteers should not in any way be intoxicated whilst they are part of a production. i.e. you shouldn't be on anything if you are going to be part of the crew for that night.

Volunteers represent RaveSafe, and should behave responsibly. You should not make fun of anyone that is out of it. As a volunteer you hold a position of "power", in other words people will look up to you for reassurance and support. Don't abuse this trust;

The private tent (if there is one) is reserved for people having a bad time. It is your duty to make sure that this is not used for any other purposes. If you find that it is, and you can't handle it, you must speak to the event co-ordinator, who will sort it out.

If anyone from the media (newspapers, TV) approach you at the stand, and want to interview you or someone from RaveSafe, they must be referred to the co-ordinator. If they want to take pictures or film anything, please ask them where they are from, and what program/article they

are working for, and note this in the log book.

The type of information RaveSafe gives out at raves is about how to avoid danger and harm if a person is going to try or use drugs. Not how to get the most out of them. It is important to know when to draw the line. For instance, if someone asks what does Acid do, you can tell them it's effects, but you can't recommended a candy flip. It's tricky sometimes, but you must be careful not to encourage or condone any drug use.

Last, but not least: it's always handy to bring your own pen!

Helping someone on a bad trip

The best treatment for someone on a "bad trip" is to talk them down in a calm manner, without raising your voice or appearing threatening. Avoid quick movements, and let them move around so they don't feel trapped.

It helps to remind the person who they are, where they are, that they took a drug which will wear off, and they won't die or go crazy. Calm, flowing music may also help.

Here are some guidelines:

1. Gain the user's trust and confidence - tell them you are there to help;
2. Reduce stimuli - get the user to a quiet, non-threatening environment. e.g. in the privacy tent or outside;
3. Reassure - tell the user that they are experiencing a bad trip, assure them they are in a safe place, with safe people, and they will be all right.
4. Help the user to relax; use stress reduction techniques [such as slow, deep breathing, or relaxing muscle groups] and let them rest.
5. Talk the user down - discuss peaceful, non-threatening subjects with the user; avoid any topic which seems to create more anxiety or a strong reaction.

Two cautions when using the talk-down technique:

1. If the user is experiencing severe medical, physical, or even emotional reactions which are not responding, medical intervention is needed - send for the paramedics.
2. Although most psychedelic reactions are responsive to the talk down, PCP and Ketamine may cause unexpected and sudden violent or belligerent behaviour. Exercise caution when approaching someone suspected of using these.

Recognising serious problems

If you see any of the following symptoms, get a paramedic ...

Cocaine: overdose leads to confusion and dizziness, combined with a dry throat. Erratic breathing, short gasps followed by deep gulps

Speed: can cause collapse

Ecstasy: hyperventilation, overheating and unconsciousness

Poppers: poisonous if swallowed. Can cause fainting and collapse

Magic Mushrooms: eating the wrong type of mushroom can cause diarrhoea, vomiting, cramps, breathing difficulties, loss of consciousness and, in rare cases, death

GHB: overdose symptoms are convulsions, coma and inability to breath

Ketamine: temporary paralysis, nausea, vomiting and slurring of speech

Event Co-ordinator Guidelines

What is an Event Co-ordinator ?

This is someone who assumes responsibility and manages the RaveSafe presence at a party.

They make sure everything is organised for the party with the production house, the crew is lined up, passes organised, co-ordinate the setup, and make sure every thing runs smoothly during the party and are around for take down. There is also post production work to do, like making sure all the kit gets back to home base, write a report on the event and send it to everyone, and give the organiser feedback.

They should be experienced RaveSafe people, and know how to manage people and events.

Co-ordinators should always remember that the RaveSafe crew are volunteers, and that no one likes to get bossed around too much.

How to sell RaveSafe to a Promoter

Some useful pointers on how to sell RaveSafe to promoters ...

Remember, the rave promoters need us as much as we need them. They have a vested interest in nurturing the rave scene and fostering its growth in a positive direction. Be BOLD and CONFIDENT

Educating people about drugs reduces the risks associated with their use. An informed 'rave community' means a reduction in drug related casualties, which in turn means less negative publicity for the rave scene.

Rave Promoters should be seen to be caring for their customers, and giving something back to the community. They have a responsibility to ensure the information reaches the people who have the right to receive it.

RaveSafe monitors at parties act as a safety catch, and can assist people who are in states of chemical induced stress. There is no need for 'bad trippers' to end up in mental hospitals, if there is someone around to reassure them and talk them down.

RaveSafe works with the paramedics, informs them how to approach people on drugs, and how the different drugs affect the vital signs.

Anything else you can think of ... minimise risks, minimise risks, minimise risks, and a good party for all.

Organising a RaveSafe stand at a party

- Contact the promoters and set up a meeting at least two weeks before the event.
- Explain to them what RaveSafe does and why it is necessary to have us at their party
- Once you have established that RaveSafe can be at the party ask for a donation to fund media and consumables. Work on a basis of R500, and double it for every 5000 people they expect;
- Depending the amount of people expected, and the number of volunteers available, you must decide the scale of the setup.
- Establish the position where RaveSafe will be at the party. The place should be easily accessible to people: for example the entrance to the chill out is a good place.

- It is also good if the stand is visible from the dance floor, or the entrance. Try not to be next, or in range of the speakers. Make sure you are against a wall so that there is somewhere to hang the UV lights & banners.
- Make sure there will be a power point where the RaveSafe stand will be for the UV lights.
- Establish how many volunteers will be necessary relative to the size of the party. For big events, don't go for less than two people at the stand at any one time. There should be at least one female, and one experienced person on duty at any time. Two hour shifts are reasonable. For really big parties, have monitors walking around the venue as well.
- Organise passes or tickets for the monitors and Production passes for the co-ordinators. When promoters are not co-operative in giving us enough tickets, take what you can get, and split the cost of the rest of the tickets between all volunteers.

Duties of event co-ordinators at a party

The co-ordinator(s) are responsible for the whole event. Be around at the party at all times, and check in at the stand frequently. You do not have to take a shift, if there are enough people to cover. The overall production is your responsibility !

Arrange with the organiser for RS to be at the party.

Organise the volunteers.

Find a good location for the RaveSafe setup a day or two before, and check what is needed;

Arrange the RaveSafe crew tags. Normally the party flyers are chopped up in a guillotine and laminated back to back with UV active paper with "RaveSafe" printed on it;

Make sure supplies such as first aid & setup materials are replenished before hand, as well as all the lights etc are in working order;

Organise the Set Up crew for the stand. Make sure there is transport, a meeting place is set and there is enough capable people. If they can manage it, you don't have to be there for setup;

Make sure you meet with the paramedics and explain to them what RaveSafe is, what we do and how to approach people on drugs as well as where we are. Make a note in the log book where the paramedics and organisers office can be found;

It is useful to also introduce yourself to the security - find out who is in charge and show them the RaveSafe tag for the party;

Organise the Take Down crew and a time. This is often a grim job, so many hands make light work. Make sure the boxes are packed properly and the UV lights carefully stored;

Do post-production. Make sure ALL the kit is returned to storage, preferably straight after the party. Read all the surveys, and write a brief report to send out to all the RaveSafe members. Send the organisers a fax thanking them for their support, and let them know what the ravers thought of their party. It's also useful to pass any constructive criticism onto them, and well as compliments received. Arrange to collect the money from them, and pass in onto the regional co-ordinator.

Meeting before the event.

It is important to have a meeting of all the volunteers before the event. Anyone who left their names previously should be contacted. This is normally held a day or two before the event (Thursday evenings have always been good),

At the meeting, new members are welcomed. List of names of names are taken, and their requests for timing of their shifts. The final roster is drawn up later by the co-ordinator. Consideration should be given in combining new people with more experienced volunteers, as well as rotation (who did a late shift last time could do an early one this time). You should always have at least one female on duty at any time, as well as one experienced person;

Other things to point out at this meeting are:

- We are a team and should help each other out. You don't have to do anything which you don't feel comfortable with and ask for help.
- Discuss issues of sensitivity and responsibility;
- Remind them of the shift duties;
- Remind them to sign in and out, write shift reports, and read the reports of the people before them;
- Most of all, stay cool and have fun !!!

Setting up the stand

We already have most of the equipment below, which at this time is stored at Bruce's place. Take only the kit you need (Depending on what type of setup you have planned)

Check well ahead what is missing from the RaveSafe kit.

What you will need:

- Table (chairs you should be able to organise there)
- UV lights and desk lamp
- Table Cloth
- RaveSafe Banners
- Decorations
- Water drums & pipe
- Notice / message board and white board pens
- Blankets, pillows and beanbags for the tent
- Flyers, FAQ's, Survey Forms and booklets
- Condoms,
- Extension cords, multi-plugs and lights
- Log book, messages book and new volunteers book
- Pens and other stationery
- Parachute (depends on what type of setup you are going to do)
- Gazebo tent if necessary (depends on size of setup)

Tool Kit:

- Wire or cable ties
- Nylon string / rope
- Scissors & stanley knife
- Thumb tacks
- Wire clippers
- Tape (masking & duct tape)

- Thick black khaki pen

First Aid Box

- Disprin
- Plasters / bandages / safety pins / cotton wool
- Anti-septic cream / Mercurochrome for cuts & bruises
- Rennie's
- Eye drops
- Buscopan (for stomach cramps)
- Tampons
- Massage cream
- Deep Heat
- Tissues
- Vanilla Essence

Remember ...

The stall must be attractive and friendly ! It is usually best if the table is easy to approach in a central location i.e. if people can walk past and pick up flyers as they go.

Try to set up well before the event starts. Promoters get very stressed close to the start of an event and it is best if you can set up and not get in anyone's hair. The best time is in the afternoon before the event.

What to say to the paramedics

Introduce RaveSafe, tell them who we are and what we do at the party. Explain that we will assist them, but that we are not a paramedic organisation. They should call us if they need help, and we might need them !

Make sure they know where the RaveSafe stand is at the party.

They should encourage the person to tell them what drugs they have taken, and assure them that they are there to help them, and will not tell the police

Explain to them the effects of the different drugs and what users are likely to be feeling if they are on: E or A for example.

ACID: It is useful to tell them the degree to which a strong dose of acid can take over the mind, and that people on Acid are open to suggestions

ECSTASY: Explain that the greatest risk for ecstasy users is heat stroke and they should be aware of this. Explain how sensitive users can be emotionally.

GHB: A large dose of GHB can cause people to pass out. Lay the person in them recovery position and let them sleep it off.

Give them the flyers / booklets to read well before the event.