

The image features decorative floral illustrations in the corners. The top-left corner shows a large orange flower with red stamens and green leaves. The top-right corner shows a green plant with small green flowers. The bottom-left corner shows a green plant with small green flowers. The bottom-right corner shows a green plant with small green flowers and a large orange flower.

THE ANATOMY OF AN

APOLOGY



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CONSENT

Receiving an apology requires a degree of emotional labour that those we have harmed do not owe us. Checking in around boundaries and willingness to receive an apology (note: *receive*, not *accept*). Transgressing boundaries and disregarding the consent of the person(s) can cause further harm. Respecting someone's choice not to engage in the apology demonstrates that we value their healing over our comfort.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This happened/ bearing witness - this is particularly critical in the context of a world that gaslights individuals & communities, questioning the validity and extent of their experiences of oppression. This context minimizes and frames interpersonal harm, violence, and marginalization as fragmented incidents, rather than part of a system that facilitates & amplifies injustice in the lives of some, for the benefit of others.



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EMOTIONAL UPTAKE

Creating space for folks to feel, and express (or not) their feelings, without being policed on the appropriateness, validity, duration and intensity of their emotional response. Actively working against the notion that there is a singular “rational, reasonable or acceptable” emotional response. Tone policing is often used in oppressive structures to derail accountability and blame those who have been harmed. Single stories & stereotypes shape our responses to the emotional reactions of particular individuals and communities.



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CENTERING THE HURT

It's not about our feelings of guilt, but about the feelings and needs of those we have harmed. Those we've harmed shouldn't have to support us during an apology, nor should they have to coach us, or cheer for us or reassure us. Our apologies should focus on the experiences, perspectives and needs of the person(s) we're apologizing to.



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ACCOUNTABILITY

Taking ownership of our actions, naming and understanding them and changing the identified problematic behaviors, patterns, thoughts and words. Not providing irrelevant context/ justification to minimize the impact of our actions. Be mindful of minimizing, projecting, shifting blame or itemizing/listing instances or occasions where your behaviour was not harmful.



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CHANGED BEHAVIOUR

Demonstrating changed behaviour as the most critical aspect of our apology, reconciling our choices through transforming our behaviour and not repeatedly engaging in harm. We must actively seek ways to keep ourselves accountable, rather than expect those we've hurt to repeatedly do that labour.



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DIVESTING FROM FORGIVENESS

Divest From Forgiveness and invest in the labor of reconciliation, divorced from appeasing our feelings of guilt or need for absolution. Apologize without forgiveness as a target, we must take responsibility, change our behaviour, uptake the experiences of those we have harmed and contribute to their healing regardless of whether we are forgiven or our apology is accepted or not.



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