

Adopted by the Executive Board of rubicon e.V. in May 2025

## **MISSION STATEMENT of rubicon e. V.**

### **Who we are and what we want**

rubicon e. V. is a center for counseling, groups, education, and networking that is committed to ensuring that lesbian, gay, bi-, pan-, and asexual as well as trans\*, inter\*, non-binary, and queer people (LSBTIQA\*) can live and love without violence and with self-confidence. We support LGBTIQA\* people in exercising their right to self-determination, freedom from discrimination, and free development of their personality.

Our services are for people in Cologne and North Rhine-Westphalia. rubicon e. V. is also networked nationally, across Europe, and worldwide, and participates innovatively in new services for LGBTIQA\* people.

rubicon e. V. offers space for people of various queer gender and sexual identities. This includes people who are additionally affected by racist discrimination, people with international backgrounds, with different family experiences, income situations, educational qualifications, and religious beliefs, people with diverse physical abilities, neurodiversities and mental conditions, people from urban and rural regions, as well as children, adolescents, adults, and seniors in a wide variety of family and life situations. Therefore, intersectional work is a central guiding principle of rubicon e. V.

Rubicon e. V. also creates space for the development and experiences of people who are exploring, questioning, or fluid in their sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as heterosexual and cisgender people who feel connected to our concerns. We respect every person's right to self-identify their gender identity and sexual orientation. We also welcome relatives, friends, chosen families, and supporters of queer people, as well as institutions that would like to receive training on issues of sexual and gender diversity. The elimination of multiple discrimination and violence, as well as a conscious approach to diversity and power structures in our society and in our queer communities, is an important concern for us.

Our organization has a long history of critically examining issues and needs arising from multiple discrimination, as trauma is often experienced at these intersections and frequently overlooked. People affected by this are the particular focus of our work and services. Creating spaces that are as free from discrimination as possible and are empowering is something we constantly reflect on and practice in our everyday work.

## **What we do & how we work**

Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, pansexuals, asexuals, trans\*, inter\*, non-binary, and queer-oriented people are repeatedly confronted with prejudice, rejection, and violence. At the same time, thanks to the courageous civil rights activists of recent decades, many rights and freedoms, as well as spaces for queer people, have been fought for and gained.

In light of these two aspects, there is a great need for counseling, groups, education, and networking. For this purpose, we are constantly developing and providing target group-specific services. Using a variety of methods, we help those seeking advice to process experiences of discrimination and violence and empower them to defend themselves against it. At the same time, rubicon e. V. supports people in finding themselves and shaping their newly gained spaces with confidence and solidarity.

### *Counseling*

We offer psychosocial counseling, specialist counseling, anti-violence counseling, and clearing counseling for emergency situations. We support people in processing normative pressure, emotional harm, existential threats, and trauma, and empower them to live authentically and to continually reshape their personal space. This is particularly important when it comes to creating spaces that secure livelihoods and providing counseling on forming chosen families, partnerships, new ways of living, diverse relationship constellations, rainbow families, or counseling on the legal, physical, and emotional aspects of gender diversity. The causes for the need for counseling usually do not stem from the individuals themselves, but rather from discriminatory laws, societal power structures, and social inequalities that those seeking counseling are confronted with.

### *Groups*

Open meetings, interests and self-help groups are further services at rubicon e. V. to enable people to connect with one another in solidarity, process experiences of discrimination and violence within the community, and overcome isolation. Experiencing community helps people to overcome their own hardships, experience participation, and courageously, self-effectively, and creatively reshape their own lives. This often makes a good life more tangible for everyone.

### *Networking and education*

The networking and educational services offered by rubicon e. V. aim, on the one hand, to raise awareness for violence prevention and, on the other hand, to generate knowledge by drawing on the everyday expertise of our queer target groups. We provide long-term support for solidarity-based and/or community-based, participatory research of the queer communities' lifestyles and realities, for example by cooperating with universities and other colleges. The target groups of our educational services are the general public, institutions, and our own communities.

## **Where we come from**

Founded in 1975, rubicon e. V. has evolved from glf-Sozialwerk e. V. (gay liberation front) to Sozialwerk für Lesben und Schwule e. V. (social welfare organization for lesbians and gays) to a queer-oriented social institution for LGBTIQA\*. It has thus evolved from a gay self-help group to a lesbian-gay self-help group with equal representation and then further into a queer-oriented association and professional counseling center. In addition to self-help, the corresponding political civil rights movements continue to shape the association's development to this day.

Since 1990, rubicon e. V.'s life-world-oriented HIV prevention and mutual solidarity with AIDS support groups have been groundbreaking for the development of our working structures. Furthermore, the autonomous, (queer) feminist, inter\*, and trans\* movements have been and continue to be important sources of inspiration for our work on gender equality and sexual self-determination. Impulses from anti-racist movements have also been and continue to be formative for the further development of rubicon's work. We are aware that there are strong differences within queer communities in terms of whose work has been and continues to be socially promoted and recognized in cis-heteronormative-white structures and whose has not.

rubicon e. V. has initiated, developed, and co-founded pioneering areas of work for LGBTIQA\* people throughout Germany. These include, among others:

- the development of the first nationwide counseling service by and for lesbians and gay men (1975)
- the co-founding of the association for young male and transgender sex workers, Looks e. V. (1995)
- the opening and founding of Germany's first lesbian and gay youth center, anyway (1998)
- establishing Germany's first queer senior citizen projects (2003)
- developing one of Germany's first projects for queer people with a history of migration and flight, baraka (2005)
- establishing Germany's first nationwide psychosocial counseling service on gender diversity and self-determination (2014)
- the development and securing of one of Germany's first counseling centers for parenting and rainbow families (2015)

## **What is incompatible with our values**

At rubicon e. V., we firmly reject any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. We also firmly reject exclusion and devaluation based on actual or attributed origin, religious affiliation, social background, social status, age, disability, physical appearance, or other external characteristics.

We expressly oppose the instrumentalization of our work for the purpose of devaluing, excluding, or committing violence against other individuals and groups. At the time of adopting this mission statement, we observe worrying tendencies to co-opt LGBTIQA\* rights in the name of nationalist agitation. Such tendencies, as well as trans\* hostile

concepts of feminism, are incompatible with our values. We also condemn violence in all its forms, including sexual, physical and psychological violence, (anti-) religiously motivated discrimination, and all other forms of group-focused hostility.

We firmly reject any attitudes and efforts within and outside rubicon e. V. that seek to pit us against each other and divide us.

### **Our vision**

The vision of an inclusive and equal society, in which all people are accepted in all their diversity and are able to participate in all areas of life, fills our hearts with joy. In this context, we particularly long for peaceful interaction with sexual and gender diversity.