



# KRB Costume Code of Ethics

The Krewe of Red Beans has a unique opportunity to be a leader in Mardi Gras Krewe diversity, respect and ethical community engagement. For the last decade, Red Beans has given individual members the choice to decorate their Bean Suits without restriction, allowing for maximum individual creativity. In an effort to continue this tradition with the added goal of being responsible social neighbors, Red Beans has decided to put together a Krewe Costume Code of Ethics. No costume should cause harm and we seek to create a welcoming environment. Our members are silly and creative enough to celebrate the Monday of Mondays without appropriating, offending, causing pain through ignorance and leaving our community at odds while at the same time being an advocate for Mardi Gras equity, championing those whom inspire us and showing respect to the traditions which influence us.

We welcome all to participate in our parades and hope to encourage costumes that are respectful.... we also encourage folks to avoid the term "beaner" which has a racist history.

## **Blackface & Changing Skin Color**

Under no circumstances is it appropriate to change your skin color with makeup to reflect or represent the skin color of a marginalized (any group for that matter) group of people. The practice of blackface, brown-face, red-face and yellow-face has been used systematically throughout history by dominant groups to exploit, marginalize, stereotype and minstrel oppressed groups.

Face-painting to imitate fictional characters (like Avatar), animals or mythical beings is acceptable. For non-Latin members of Dead Beans, skull face painting should not characterize Dia De Los Muertos (ie sugar skulls). Please use your best judgement.

## **Culture as a Costume**

Someone else's culture should not be our costumes. We have, and will continue to, take steps to practice cultural appreciation and not appropriation in all regards. We hope to create a culture that respectfully celebrates the traditions, influences and cultures of our krewe members, our ancestors and our city.

Amaris Holguin of the University of St. Thomas's Student Diversity and Inclusion Services writes: 'Cultural appropriation is defined as "the act of taking intellectual and cultural expressions from a culture that is not your own, without showing that you understand or respect the culture." This can be as simple as wearing a dashiki without knowledge or respect to West African culture, and as serious as wearing a fake Native American headdress without any regard of its sacredness. It generally incorporates a history of prejudice and discrimination by perpetuating longstanding stereotypes.'

If unsure ask the following questions. Does my costume...

- Represent a culture that is not my own?
- Include the words "traditional," "ethnic," "cultural," or "tribal?"
- Perpetuate stereotypes, or historical and cultural inaccuracies?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, or is murky or you are unsure, it's best to go with another costume idea. Please use your best judgement to be respectful and culturally sensitive.

## **Intellectual Disability Sensitivity & Ableism**

Stigmatizing mental illness, intellectual disability and physical disability harms the perception of these conditions by propagating misinformation and stigmatization. Refrain from costuming as a "mad" scientist, or introducing props such as straight-jackets and faux medication. Also abstain from costuming that enforces ableist stereotypes such as costumes with wheelchairs or crutches when it is not necessary for the individual's mobility.

## **LGBT+ Inclusion**

The Red Beans Parade is extremely supportive of the LGBT+ community and does not tolerate any discrimination, even in satire. We ask that you use your best judgement.

## **Sex Worker Respect**

Sex work is work. Costumes that satirize prostitution, escorting, dancing and stripping are insensitive and advance misconceptions. Criminalization of sex work is a conduit for discrimination and violence against sex workers, the majority of whom support several other people with their earnings.

## **Sexual Assault**

Red Beans believes in #MeToo and does not abide in glorifying sexual assault perpetrators, excusing sexual harassment and assault or in victim blaming. Costumes that poke fun at the movement serve to discredit marginalized voices.

## **Mass Incarceration Awareness**

The US Prison System disproportionately targets and impacts people of color and their families. Dressing as a prisoner of such institutions is inappropriate and problematic.

## **Body Shaming**

As one of the most diverse and inclusive krewes, body shaming, deriding, ridiculing people for their weight, fitness, looks and/or appearance is not tolerated.

## **Terrorism/Mass Violence**

Red Beans, and especially Dead Beans, loves to explore the absurdity of death, but not on the terms of violence. Domestic abuse, violence against women, mass murder, national tragedy and terrorism are subjects that cause pain and harm to those who have experienced it and are to be left alone.

## **Homelessness**

Many people experiencing homelessness suffer an intellectual disability, are people of color or have otherwise been unfavorably cast aside by a system not set up for them. Having fun at the expense of people that are destitute or in an unfavorable situation to your own is insensitive.