

Summary of events: What's been going on with Breathe Education & Raphael Bender

It is now public information that the CEO of Breathe Education, Raphael Bender, promotes ableist, racist, and transphobic rhetoric internally in his Pilates teacher training organization. Below this short summary of events are links to evidence with dates showcasing the hateful rhetoric coming out of Breathe Education.

In early July a promotional clip for the Pilates Elephants, a podcast presented by Breathe Education and hosted by Raphael Bender, surfaced with misogynistic language by the person being interviewed. In this clip, Nathan Ross Rees explains how he believes Pilates would be more effective for more people if it were “less feminized.” After this video clip was shared, multiple people have come forward with allegations of unwanted touching and sexual harassment by Nathan. Raphael has been silent about these allegations against Nathan.

A few days later, Raphael Bender shared an anti accessibility post on Instagram prompting exclusionary biased teaching practices and ableism by focusing on those who are the strongest and perform the fastest. It was under the guise of advice for teachers, but it is actually anti disability and pro status quo. When asked if Raphael is prompting “zero sum mentality,” Raphael confirmed that he is prompting the biased and debunked ideology that stems from white supremacy.

After this, Raphael issued a video statement dismissing critical feedback as not understanding what he means by anti accessibility. Raphael even went so far as to blame Roe V Wade and hysteria, which is extremely misogynistic. Raphael blamed “American emotions” attached to the word accessibility. It is very dismissive and also condescending. It exemplifies that he does not understand the issues with his anti accessibility rhetoric.

Then on August 10th, staff members leaked the internal “memo.” This internal document written by Raphael Bender, outlines his racist, xenophobic, transphobic and hateful stances in Pilates and his own personal values. In the memo Raphael uses what is considered to be a “racist dog whistle.” When you are done reviewing the “memo”, review the edited down ‘manifesto’ that made it on the Breathe Education website, it is equally as troubling.

That same day, 3 other internal videos were leaked. The first video is Raphael explaining his version of why some staff members have quit, without mentioning it is due to the internal "memo." Former employees have since confirmed publicly that the reason they left Breathe Education was due to the bigoted memo. The second video is Raphael making a stance that he will not use inclusive language such as pregnant people, he will say and expect staff and students to say 'pregnant women.' Then Raphael continues to elaborate on his transphobic views. The last video Raphael continues to not take any accountability.

Since these events have transpired, former and current students have spoken out against the decreasing quality of Breathe Education's Pilates training program, and many students are seeking refunds. As of August 17th, 6 teacher training staff members have quit working for this organization since this has become public. Numerous organizations, studios and Pilates teachers have spoken out against Raphael's actions and bigoted words. As the word continues to get out about what Raphael Bender has promoted within the Pilates community, we can expect to hear more leaders in Pilates organizations, studio owners, and Pilates teachers and students will speak out and take action against hateful rhetoric in our industry.

Please share this information with your networks in the Pilates industry! This includes Pilates teachers (no matter the size of their platforms), organizations, and leaders in our field. Breathe Education is working to expand into the United States and elsewhere outside of Australia. We must inform prospective students about what is going on so they have a full picture of the educational institution they are tying themselves to.

If you are a leader in the Pilates community, we encourage you to make a public statement denouncing Raphael Bender and Breathe Education.

Lastly, help us get the word out. There is no room in this industry for bigots such as Nathan Ross Rees and Raphael Bender.

In solidarity,

Pilates Instructors in support of former & current BE students

Complaint Next Steps for Students both former and current

Make a complaint due to discrimination via **Human Rights:**

<https://humanrights.gov.au/complaints>

Make educational quality complaints and BE's RTO status via **ASQA**:

<https://asqaconnect.asqa.gov.au/>

Case# CAS-549962-Y319N

Make a consumer complaint and work on refunds via **ACCC**:

<https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers> and/or via **Consumer Affairs Victoria**:

<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/cav-forms/generalcomplaint.doj> You can also contact your bank for a charge back if you have paid via cc

If you are making complaints specifically Human Rights and/or, Consumer Affairs make sure to reference Victoria Wells, BE's Legal representative in the complaints and contact her after you make the complaint: Victoria@attlaw.com.au

Evidence

Event Date:

July 9th, 2022

Event Description:

Nathan Ross Rees' clip of what would have been Raphael's Pilates Elephant's 97th podcast episode, but the episode was not posted due to staff and the public speaking up about the "Less feminized" and other misinformed comments.

Link to proof of event:

Minute mark in the video, go to: **15:54 to 16:37**

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cfyc4z1hNjp/?hl=en> (login to view)

Event Date:

July 14, 2022

Event Description:

On Raphael Bender's personal account he posted anti accessibility rhetoric

Link to proof of event:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CgAq1QShmMr/?hl=en> (login to view)

Event Date:

July 19th, 2022

Event Description:

After people in the Pilates industry spoke out against the anti accessibility post, Raphael Bender the CEO of Breathe issued this statement.

Link to proof of event:

<https://www.instagram.com/tv/CgOO36zhmMv/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y%3D> (login to view)

Event Date:

August 10th, 2022

Event Description:

Breathe Education internal “memo” was leaked by staff.

Link to proof of event:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vTA3j96P3d6YNXDiiHJb6nV2Fg9zIQy6dOQULgYVltEzmk-xQi-xTd8f4qflfmmqC6AqDv8uqfBp269/pub>

After you read the full “memo” above then view the **website/edited down version:**

<https://breathe-education.com/manifesto/>

Event Date:

August 10th, 2022

Event Description:

This video is an internal video released by staff.

Link to proof of event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN3R62luSnM>

Event Date:

August 10th, 2022

Event Description:

Raphael makes a stance that he will not use inclusive language, and Raphael promotes transphobic rhetoric.

Link to proof of event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID2pkf-aB8c>

Event Date:

August 10th, 2022

Event Description:

He talks in circles about “science” and Pilates, but he never actually gets to the point, and he sure does not take any accountability.

Link to proof of event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GBssblhZiU>