



One Neurosurgery Summit Professionalism and Harassment Policy June 26, 2019

I. Value Statement:

The values of Integrity, Respect, Compassion, Healing, Teamwork, Excellence and Mentorship are core to the profession of neurological surgery and guide our purpose, decisions and work. By conducting our work honestly, ethically and respectfully, we breathe life into these values and into the fabric of our organizations and the profession of neurological surgery.

II. Background:

When a diverse group of people comes together for a course, meeting or convention, the sensitivities can vary by individual. What may feel appropriate for one person based on beliefs or culture may not be appropriate for others gathered at the same event. The American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS), American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS), and American Academy of Neurological Surgery (AAcNS) wish to establish that all participants at sponsored and organized events should have an opportunity equal with others to participate without being hindered by harassment and/or discriminatory or insensitive practices. Participants should be free from harassment, intimidation and discrimination at all professional meeting events and all associated social events.

In order to set uniform expectations for behavior, the ABNS, AANS, CNS, SNS and AAcNS have collaborated to develop this professionalism and anti-harassment policy to be observed at all events sanctioned by these organizations.

III. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to state clearly that acts constituting harassment and/or discrimination will not be tolerated. Furthermore, this policy will result in “harassment-related” complaints or reports being dealt with swiftly and fairly. This policy provides an algorithm that the participating organizations will follow should an incident of alleged harassment or discrimination occur. Prompt action and corrective measures will create a safe environment for all attendees.

IV. Definitions:

Harassment is defined as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome or offensive.

Discrimination is defined as unequal, disadvantageous treatment of an individual based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, or disability, or any other basis proscribed by law.

Participant is defined as an attendee, vendor, guest, or individual involved in the event.

V. Prohibited Behavior:

Participants of any ABNS, AANS, CNS, SNS or AAcNS event will not engage in any behavior that will undermine or interfere with the goals and purposes of the event including, but not limited to:

- A. The use of offensive or insensitive language or behavior;
- B. The use of denigrating comments based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender or disability;
- C. Harassment, threatening behavior or similar intimidation, or assault of other participants;
- D. Discriminatory acts or behavior; or
- E. The intentional damage or destruction of any property that belongs to another.

VI. Responsibilities of Host Organization:

- A. Each of the participating organizations has adopted, or will adopt, a Code of Conduct, consistent with this policy, which sets forth basic principles of equal and respectful treatment of others, non-harassment, non-discrimination and non-retaliation. Organizations hosting events should ensure that their Code of Conduct is prominently displayed on the homepage of their website, and in pre- and intra-meeting emails or communications. Contact information for further questions or concerns should also be made available on these sites and documents.
- B. All participants of any participating organization's meeting/event will agree to abide by organization's Code of Conduct when registering for any meeting/event. Organizations that distribute onsite printed handouts to attendees should include the Code of Conduct and contact information for complaints or questions. A supplemental video or verbal presentation describing the Code of Conduct or other means of informing attendees of the policy may be displayed at the discretion of the host organization.
- C. All ABNS, AANS, CNS, SNS or AAcNS events will have designated staff (Response Team) who will respond to complaints or questions about discrimination or harassment. The members of the Response Team will be determined by each organization. This team will be responsible for investigating complaints.
- D. The host organization shall develop a procedure for investigating and resolving complaints.
- E. Each organization's procedures for investigating and resolving complaints must include the following:
 - 1. a process for the making of complaints;
 - 2. a process for the subject of the complaint to make a written statement responding to the allegation against him or her;
 - 3. a process for determining whether Section V and/or the organization's Code of Conduct have been violated (i.e., an investigative process);
 - 4. a process for determining the appropriate corrective action in the event of a violation of Section V and/or the organization's Code of Conduct;
 - 5. a process for determining whether the complaint should be reviewed by the leadership of the host organization; and
 - 6. a process for informing all affected parties of the outcome of the investigation.
- F. Each organization's procedures for investigating and resolving complaints must include a meeting/event Response Team, which, to the extent reasonably feasible, should reflect the diversity of the organization. The duties of the Response Team include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. being aware of all resources and security provisions at the event site;
 - 2. being visible and available for the duration of the event, including attendance at organization-sanctioned social events;
 - 3. initiating the investigation procedures; and
 - 4. issuing any report, if deemed necessary by the sponsoring organization, at the close of the event.
- G. The leadership of each of the ABNS, AANS, CNS, SNS and AAcNS will be responsible for the education of all of its staff members regarding this policy and that organization's associated processes.

VII. Complaints and Review:

Each organization's procedures for investigating and resolving complaints should be consistent with (and/or include) the following:

- A. In the event a participant believes in good faith that he or she has been harassed or discriminated against, she/he should immediately contact the Response Team. Organization staff will facilitate communication between the individual and the Response Team. For every complaint, the Response Team shall determine, based on an initial review, if immediate action is required and/or whether the complaint should be referred to designated authorities within the host organization for further action.

- B. Where a complaint involves potential criminal acts, the complainant will be asked if they have contacted law enforcement, or if they would like the responding organization to contact law enforcement. In cases of alleged criminal acts, the responding organization should consult legal counsel regarding further steps.
- C. Where the initial review suggests that further immediate investigation is required, the Response Team shall investigate the allegations raised in the complaint and provide the subject of the complaint with an opportunity to respond to the allegations. The Response Team shall be assisted by legal counsel and may choose to meet with or interview the complainant, the subject of the complaint and any witnesses.
- D. Reasonable efforts shall be used to minimize contact between the complainant and the subject of the complaint during the duration of the investigation. Decisions regarding the scope and timing of the investigation will take into account this goal of minimizing such contact between the complainant and the subject of the complaint, and well as the goal of keeping the complaint and the investigation confidential.
- E. The Response Team, having investigated a complaint, may request that the complaint be reviewed by the leadership of the respective host organization through a well-designed and specific mechanism. A review by the organization leadership may also be prompted by the complainant or the subject of the complaint.
- F. The leadership of the host organization, upon its review of the investigation findings, reserves the right to initiate disciplinary proceedings or take any action consistent with its bylaws or rules and regulations that it deems appropriate against the accused meeting participant. Such actions may include:
 - a. dismissal of the complaint
 - b. a written order reprimanding the person for their unprofessional conduct;
 - c. an oral order reprimanding the person for their conduct;
 - d. ending a speaker's talk early if the speaker uses inappropriate language or images;
 - e. having the harasser leave the meeting immediately;
 - f. an order that the person apologize to the complainant for their offensive conduct;
 - g. remediation and education;
 - h. an order prohibiting the person from participating in that organization's sanctioned events either indefinitely or for a prescribed period;
 - i. suspension of membership; and/or
 - j. expulsion from membership.
- G. No significant disciplinary action, such as suspension or expulsion from the organization, should be imposed by an organization against any individual unless the disciplinary action has been imposed pursuant to a due process mechanism set forth in the organization's written bylaws, rules or regulations/policies. Lesser, non-permanent, non-reportable actions -- such as removal of the subject of the complaint from the meeting/event -- may be imposed by the Response Team without the involvement of the organizations' leadership where appropriate (such as where the organization's leadership is unavailable and immediate action is necessary to a diffuse a potentially serious and/or escalating situation).

VIII. Protections:

- A. Individuals will be protected from retaliation for reporting in good faith behavior or information which the individual reasonably believes is a violation of this policy.
- B. Individuals who are the subject of a complaint maintain the right to file a countercomplaint.
- C. Each organization will provide participants an opportunity to make anonymous complaints through course or event evaluations.
- D. To the extent reasonably feasible, the host organizations will endeavor to keep complaints, investigations and any findings related thereto confidential.