

Guidance for Safe and Inclusive Events

An open resource created by professionals working
to end hate, bigotry, extremism and violence.

About this Resource

This Code of Conduct is an open resource created by over 40 professionals who have dedicated their careers to ending hate, bigotry, extremism and violence in its many forms. This resource has been made available for use by organizations, conferences, and events.

It offers detailed information on what represents violations of the Code of Conduct, as well as responsibilities for event organizers, participating organizations, and bystanders. Please consider adopting or adapting this Code of Conduct for your events.

Acknowledgement

This resource draws heavily from Access Now's [Code of Conduct](#). We sought Access Now's permission to adapt and build on their Code of Conduct, as it is widely seen as a gold standard within the human rights field.

Code of Conduct

Expectations for participants

We are committed to providing an inclusive and safe environment for all event participants. This Code of Conduct applies to all of our events, virtual spaces, including any parties and casual gatherings at restaurants or bars, or any other venue, related to any of our official initiatives. A reminder that when you attend our conference, you are at work. This includes if you organize or attend unofficial events which are not on the agenda.

What represents a violation of the Code of Conduct?

This event prohibits harassment, including sexual harassment, and bullying of any kind. **Harassment is any verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, silence, or coerce.** Harassment includes but is not limited to:

- **Offensive or unwelcome comments** (including epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, degrading, mocking and discriminatory remarks disguised as humor) based on gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, or physical appearance; and aiming to cause feelings of discomfort amongst marginalized communities;
 - **Distribution, display, or discussion of written or graphic material that ridicules, insults, or shows hostility or disrespect** toward an individual or group because of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, or physical appearance;
 - **Deliberate “outing”** of any aspect of a person’s identity without their consent;
 - **Deliberate misgendering or use of rejected names;**
 - **Intimidation or silencing**, including sustained and deliberate disruption of discussion. We expect and welcome disagreement and discussion, but it must be done so respectfully;
 - **Threats of violence or incitement of violence**, including encouraging a person to commit suicide or to engage in self-harm;
 - **Stalking or following**, including repeated one-on-one communication despite requests to cease, continued communications with the intent to harass, annoy, or alarm, unwanted photography or recording, and tracking and logging online activity for the above purposes;
 - **Coercing or peer-pressuring a person to consume substances** or higher quantities of a substance than they originally intended;
 - **Failure to safeguard confidential or privately shared information**, including publication of or sharing of private communication without consent, unless it is required to report a violation;
 - **Unwelcome sexual attention**, including innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, lewd remarks and obscene gestures, and requests for sexual favors (including repeated and unwelcome requests for dates);
 - **Engaging in sexualized activities or distribution, display, or discussion of any sexually suggestive written or graphic material**, including emails, photos, text messages, DMs, emojis, and tweets, that are gratuitous, off-topic, or show hostility or disrespect toward an individual or group;
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- **Any deliberate behavior that creates barriers to access** for people with visible or non-visible disabilities;
 - **Unwelcome physical contact** including inappropriate touching, tickling, pinching, petting, brushing up against, hugging, cornering, kissing, fondling, and forced sexual intercourse or assault.
 - **Failure to disengage** when alerted by someone that specific behavior is offensive or makes participants uncomfortable;
 - **Attempts at intimidation, ostracism, retaliation or retribution** to someone who has
 1. Filed or responded to a report of discrimination or harassment.
 2. Appeared as a witness in the processing of a report.
 3. Served as a coordinator of a report;
 - **Encourage, support or assist violations** of the values enshrined in this Code of Conduct.
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Exceptions

The exceptions to the Code of Conduct violations are: Presentation or discussion of content related to hate speech, racist content, violent misogyny, sexuality or sexual activity is permissible if it meets all of the following criteria:

1. it is necessary for educational, research, or intervention purposes and no alternative exists and
 2. it is presented in a respectful manner, especially towards minoritized peoples, at-risk communities, and/or those directly impacted by the topic in question.
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Bystander Responsibilities

The minimum expectation

Bystanders, at a minimum, have a responsibility to extract themselves from a situation where a violation is taking place, when it is safe to do so. It is your responsibility as a bystander to be aware of the Code of Conduct and ask yourself questions:

- Am I witnessing behavior that represents a violation?
- Could presence be construed as acceptance of what's going on?
- Can I safely extract myself from the situation, and thereby create space for others to follow?

For those in positions of power

If it is physically and otherwise safe to do so, bystanders should aspire to:

- Ask the person doing the unacceptable behavior to stop.
 - Be vocal with violators that their behavior is unacceptable.
 - Alert event organizers if you witness behavior that violates this Code of Conduct.
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For Organizers and Organizations Sending Participants

Expectations for events adopting the Code of Conduct:

- Determine a clear process for reporting, handling and actioning violations, and clear consequences for violations.
 - Provide a clear point of contact for violations, and ensure that person or system is equipped to handle complaints (if useful, reference Access Now's confidential/anonymous process).
 - Ensure that channels for reporting violations of the Code of Conduct are easily and equitably accessible for all event attendees.
 - Ensure confidentiality of any information received.
 - Communicate the Code of Conduct with all attendees and how violations of the Code of Conduct will be handled.
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Recommendations for events adopting the Code of Conduct:

- Set expectations regarding the Code of Conduct at the start of an event. This could include: requiring participants to electronically sign and acknowledge each section of the Code of Conduct in order to register for the event online; requiring participants to sign and acknowledge each section of the Code of Conduct in order to receive an event badge; or signposting the Code of Conduct at the event opening and re-iterating the expectations of all participants.
 - Offer training for event organizers and personnel on handling complaints related to the Code of Conduct.
 - Include non-alcoholic beverage options at receptions, and consider offering a wider array of inclusive options than typically offered at events.
 - Include social and mentoring activities which do not involve alcohol.
 - Provide alternative ways of offering access to senior practitioners and researchers (e.g. brown bag lunches, meet & greets, mentoring sessions). The alternatives should be made clear to attendees prior to the event and listed in any resources provided at the event.
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- Consider signposting panels which are likely to include permissible presentations or discussions including hate speech, racist content, violent misogyny, sexuality or sexual activity, such that attendees are respectfully given ample warning and opportunity to leave beforehand.
 - Work with disabled and neurodivergent participants to identify and cater to access needs and address access friction. Offer various modes of participation and engagement beyond in-person, face-to-face interactions.
 - Offer event participants multiple external channels to access support in the event of a violation. These channels can include a physical location at the event, online chat, or anonymous text.
 - Always protect and honor victims and targeted individuals' wishes regarding their own privacy, and whether and how their story is told, in any action involving the authorities.
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Recommendations for organizations sending participants to events:

- Remind employees of any existing Codes of Conduct within your organization.
 - Remind employees that post-conference socializing is still a work environment even if not formally part of the agenda.
 - Set expectations with staff on behavior expected at conferences.
 - Provide guidance on expectations and boundaries related to networking.
 - Offer training on harassment, navigating power differentials and consent in the workplace, and appropriate behavior for the workplace.
 - Always protect and honor victims and targeted individuals' wishes regarding their own privacy, and whether and how their story is told, in any action involving the authorities.
 - Establish clear points of contact within organizations: the HR or Title IX office lead if there is one, if not, someone else tasked with responding to concerns.
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