

Canadian Critical Care Trials Group Code of Conduct Policy

The Canadian Critical Care Trials Group (CCCTG) is committed to providing a friendly, safe and welcoming environment for all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, national or ethnic origin, or other characteristics (e.g., colour, religion, age, sex). The rationale for this Code of Conduct is to promote our values and ensure that we remain collegial in our interactions within and outside of the CCCTG. This Code of Conduct Policy also applies to the Canadian Critical Care Translational Biology Group (CCCTBG) and the Canadian Critical Care Research Coordinator Group (CCCRG).

This *Code of Conduct* outlines our expectations for participant behavior and the consequences of unacceptable behavior. In the context of our meetings, we expect all attendees, media, speakers, volunteers, organizers, venue staff, and exhibitors to help us to ensure a safe and positive conference experience for all who attend our meetings and events. Outside of our meetings, we also expect our members to model the same behavior as when CCCTG related activities.

This policy aims to meet the following objectives during our meetings:

- 1) All participants at events organized by the CCCTG should have an equal opportunity to have their needs accommodated, consistent with their duties and obligations as participants, without being prevented or hindered by discriminatory practices based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, national or ethnic origin, or other characteristics.
- 2) All participants and attendees should engage in respectful communication, free of harassment and intimidation. Discussion of opposing or different viewpoints is appropriate but is expected to be conducted in respectful manner and tone.

This policy also seeks to ensure that our members always model similar conduct, when conducting activities outside of CCCTG meetings related to their CCCTG membership.

For the purpose of this Code of Conduct Policy, a participant is defined as a presenter, adjudicator, observer, attendee or organizer of an event (meeting, conference, etc.). Harassment is defined as engaging in verbal discourse (remarks/jokes) or conduct (threats, intimidation, physical contact) that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome.

Code of Conduct

1. Be considerate, respectful, collaborative and professional (see glossary).
2. Refrain from behaviours and speech that are intimidating, uncivil (glossary), demeaning, discriminatory, derogatory, abusive, or harassing.
3. Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants. Alert CCCTG staff ('Meeting Host' or member of the Board of Directors) if you notice someone in distress or in a dangerous or harassing situation.

Participants at events hosted or cohosted/cosponsored by the CCCTG will not engage in behavior(s) that undermine oppose the goals and purposes of CCCTG including, but not limited to:

- A. Using offensive language or behavior.
- B. Making denigrating comments on the basis of, but not limited to, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, national or ethnic origin, or other characteristics (e.g., colour, religion, age, sex).
- C. Acting in ways that harass, threaten, assault, or intimidate other participants.
- D. Performing acts that damage or destroy property that belongs to others.
- E. Acting in a manner that threatens the safety of participants.
- F. Engaging in behaviours that interfere with the ability of other participants to participate in and enjoy formally scheduling meeting or conference.

Scope and Adjudication Process

The scope of this policy is broad and includes conduct at CCCTG hosted/cohosted events (e.g., meetings, conferences) and conduct in CCCTG related activities outside of CCCTG hosted/cohosted events (e.g., individuals who represent the CCCTG at international meetings/events, individuals engaged in research that is being conducted under the auspices of the CCCTG).

In meeting our objective of creating a safe environment for all participants, an environment where ideas can be debated and discussed, free of harassment and abuse, we will:

- (i) support an open environment where incidents/events (inappropriate behavior/verbal discourse) can be brought forward without fear of reprisal,
- (ii) investigate and discuss events with all involved parties in the spirit of due process,
- (iii) take appropriate action when all sides have been heard (e.g., educate, remediate, request participant to remove him/herself from meetings, withhold/revoke membership, and/or positions held within the CCCTG) depending on the circumstances (i.e., nature, frequency and severity of the incident/events).

- (iv) Ensure that individuals who are responsible for implementing this policy are free of conflicts of interest so that they can fairly adjudicate and provide guidance to all parties involved

If at any time, a member feels that he or she has been treated unfairly in the decision-making process, he/she has the right to appeal the decision. For immediate removals from meetings, a formal appeal must be requested and addressed in writing to the Chair of the CCCTG. Reasons for appeals will include 1) new information that has been brought forward; 2) an undeclared conflict of interest by the adjudicator(s); and 3) a review of the sanction (if considered unduly harsh by the accused). The Chair will rapidly review the rationale and decide on the timing and an appropriate process for the appeal.

At Meetings or CCCTG hosted/cohosted events:

For each CCCTG meeting, the Executive Director will appoint a Meeting Host and a second individual from the CCCTG Board of Directors (Chair, Chair elect, Treasurer, Secretary - ideally composed of members reflecting gender diversity) to be the points of contact.

The CCCTG reserves the right to ask any participant to remove him/herself from the formally scheduled meeting or conference proceedings if (i) his/her language or behaviours towards others contravene the above Code or (ii) he/she continues to engage in these interactions after the unwelcome nature of their conduct has been communicated directly to him/her. The CCCTG also reserves the right to ask any participant to remove him/herself from the formally scheduled meeting or conference proceedings if he/she appears intoxicated *and* if he/she engages in conduct that interferes with the ability of other attendees to participate in and enjoy the meeting or conference.

Depending on the circumstances (e.g., repeated incidents/events), the Meeting Host and a second individual from the CCCTG Board of Directors (ideally composed of members reflecting gender diversity) will investigate and discuss events with all involved parties and take appropriate action in consultation with the CCCTG Board of Directors. Our approach will be to engage, educate, and coach involved parties with the goal of preventing future incidents/events.

Outside of CCCTG hosted/cohosted events:

Outside of CCCTG meetings, members who feel that they have experienced unacceptable behavior or verbal discourse, should alert the Past Chair or a current member of the CCCTG Board of Directors (Chair, Chair elect, Treasurer, Secretary) to the incident. These individuals will investigate and



discuss events with all involved parties and take appropriate action in consultation with the CCCTG Board of Directors depending on the circumstances.

Deciding when to allow individuals to stay or return at meetings

The two main factors that will guide decisions regarding whether participants who contravene the above Code can stay or return:

- Whether it is reasonable to think that the individual will continue to violate our code of conduct.
- Whether attendees will feel safe if the individual remains or returns.

These decisions will be discussed and formulated by at least three members of the CCCTG Board of Directors, including the Current Chair, past Chair and Chair-elect if present and uninvolved in contravention of the code of conduct, and substituted by the Secretary, then Treasurer if one or more of the Chairs is not present.

What to do if you witness or experience conduct that violates the code?

Conduct in violation of this Code should be brought to the attention of the Past Chair or a member of the CCCTG Board of Directors promptly. Alternatively, if members wish to disclose events in a confidential manner they can approach a member of the CCCTG Secretariat with their concerns.

Awareness

To ensure broad scale awareness of this policy, we will:

1. Post this policy on the CCCTG website.
2. Reference this policy in conference/meeting materials (e.g., program, handbook) with links to the CCCTG website.
3. Mention/highlight this policy (in brief) in the opening announcements of meetings/conferences that it participates in (referencing the full documents available on the CCCTG website)
4. Appoint a 'Meeting Host' and a second individual from the CCCTG Board of Directors (current Chair, past Chair, Chair elect, Treasurer, Secretary – ideally composed of members reflecting gender diversity) to be the points of contact for CCCTG meetings.
5. The Past Chair and a current member of the CCCTG Board of Directors (Chair, Chair elect, Treasurer, Secretary) will be the contact persons for potential incidents that occur outside of meetings and will provide follow-up with the involved individuals.

Glossary

Professionalism is defined by CanMEDS as “being committed to the health and well-being of individual patients and society through ethical practice, high personal standards of behaviour, accountability to the profession and society, physician-led regulation, and maintenance of personal health”.

Incivility can be defined as rude or unsociable speech or behavior; it encompasses a wide gamut of overt and covert actions. Although aggressive actions such as actual physical harm, throwing objects, threats, inappropriate language, and verbal intimidation are easily recognized as disruptive, less aggressive behavior such as facial expressions, social remarks and demeaning comments may also be considered disruptive. More subtle forms of incivility may include deliberate avoidance, failure to respond to phone calls or emails, non-participation and lackadaisical performance.¹

¹ Swiggart WH, Dewey CM, Higson GB, Finlayson AJR, and Spigkard Jr WA. A Plan for Identification, Treatment and Remediation of Disruptive Behaviors in Physicians. *Frontiers of health services management*. 25. 3-11.

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