

CCCTG Code of Conduct Policy

Version Date: February 2023

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

This Policy 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 ensure a safe and positive experience for all. Outside of CCCTG meetings, we also expect our members to model the same behaviour when conducting activities related to the CCCTG and its membership.

For the purpose of this 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 or written discourse (remarks/jokes/derogatory language) or conduct (threats, intimidation, physical contact) that is known, or ought to reasonably be known, to be unwelcome.

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, obligations, and privileges as participants, without being prevented or hindered by discriminatory practices based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion or other characteristics.
- 2) All participants should engage in respectful communication, free of harassment and intimidation. Discussion of opposing or differing viewpoints is appropriate and encouraged but is expected to be conducted in a respectful manner and tone.

Code of Conduct

1. Be considerate, respectful, collaborative, and professional (see glossary).
2. Refrain from behaviours and speech that are intimidating, uncivil (see glossary), demeaning, discriminatory, derogatory, abusive, or harassing.

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

- A. Using offensive language or displaying offensive behaviour.

- B. Making denigrating comments on the basis of, but not limited to age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or other characteristics (e.g., self-expression).
- 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 the meeting or event.
- G. Committing microaggressions which include intentional or unintentional statements, actions and or remarks that directly or indirectly discriminate against others.

Scope and Process for Addressing Violations of the Code

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

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

- (i) Support an open environment where incidents/events (inappropriate behaviour or 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 themselves from meetings, withhold/revoke membership and/or positions held within the CCCTG) depending on the circumstances (i.e., nature, frequency and severity of the incidents, recalcitrance).
- (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.

Alert CCCTG staff (Meeting Host or member of the Board of Directors) if you feel targeted and/or unsafe, or notice someone in distress or in a dangerous or harassing situation.

The Executive Director should be the usual first point of contact for raising a concern or complaint regarding behaviours that violate this code. Individuals may also raise a concern or complaint with the Chair, Vice-Chair or any member of the Board of Directors, who will then be expected to direct or raise the concern to the Executive Director and/or Chair or Vice-Chair as appropriate.

The Executive Director and Chair will investigate and discuss incidents with all involved parties and take appropriate action in consultation with the CCCTG Board of Directors, where appropriate.

Whether the unacceptable behavior or discourse takes place at a CCCTG-hosted/cohosted event or an outside meeting, members should follow the same reporting process as described above. At CCCTG hosted/co-hosted meetings and events, the CCCTG Board of Directors reserves the right to ask any participant to remove themselves from the formally scheduled meeting or conference proceedings if their language or behaviour towards others contravene the above code.

Adjudicating Concerns and Complaints

As noted above, in all cases the Executive Director and/or Chair or Vice-Chair as appropriate will investigate and discuss incidents with all involved parties and take appropriate action in consultation with the CCCTG Board of Directors depending on the circumstances. Our approach will be to engage, educate, and coach involved parties with the goal of preventing future incidents.

If a complaint is made to a member of the Board of Directors who is not the Chair or Executive Director that person will divulge the complaint to the Executive Director and/or Chair. If the complaint involves the Executive Director, the Board member must divulge the complaint to the Chair. If the complaint involves the Chair, the Board member must divulge the complaint to the Executive Director.

Depending on the circumstances (e.g., repeated incidents), the Executive Director and Chair will investigate and discuss incidents with all involved parties and take appropriate action in consultation with the CCCTG Board of Directors.

The CCCTG strongly encourages any individual who has a concern about the conduct of a member to raise it directly using the processes described above. If an individual feels that their complaint must be made **anonymously**, they may do so by asking the person to whom they reported the incident to treat it anonymously or by submitting their complaint via the anonymous report submission form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X6ZKDBP> If a complaint is submitted anonymously, it must be accompanied by sufficient detail that it may be fully explored.

Submissions to the anonymous reporting form will be received by the Manager of Communications and Operations and immediately shared with the Executive Director.

Deciding when to allow individuals to stay or return to meetings

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

- Whether it is reasonable to believe that the individual will continue to violate the Code of Conduct.
- Whether attendees will feel safe if the individual remains or returns.

These decisions will be discussed and adjudicated by at least three members of the CCCTG Board of Directors who are uninvolved in the incident.

If at any time a member feels that they have been treated unfairly in the decision-making process, they have the right to **appeal** the decision. A formal appeal must be requested and addressed in writing to the CCCTG Chair. Reasons for appeals will include: 1) new information 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.

Awareness

To ensure broad awareness of this Policy, we will:

1. Post this policy on the CCCTG website.
2. Reference this policy in conference/meeting materials with links to the CCCTG website.
3. Mention/highlight this Policy (in brief) in the opening announcements of meetings/conferences where the Policy applies (referencing the full documents available on the CCCTG website)

Glossary

Professionalism is defined by CanMEDS¹ 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.²

¹ <https://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/canmeds/framework/canmeds-role-professional-e>

² Swiggart WH, Dewey CM, Higkson 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.

From <https://blog.thesullivangroup.com/disruptive-behavior-in-healthcare>