

# **AACN Standards for Professional Behavior Policy**

**Policy Number:** [5]

**Effective Date:** [9/23/24]

**Approved By:** Board of Directors

**Last Reviewed:** [9/23/24]

**Next Review Date:** [9/23/29]

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards of professional behavior for members of AACN. These standards are designed to foster a respectful, inclusive, and productive environment, guiding interactions among members and ensuring alignment with the organization's values and mission.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all members, volunteers, and associates of AACN including interactions at official meetings, events, and any form of communication related to the organization.

## **3. Standards of Conduct**

Members are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct Manual, the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists, the ethical principles of a state or provincial psychological association, and the rules of a state or provincial psychology licensing board.

Members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects AACN's commitment to professionalism, respect, and ethical behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, the following standards:

### **3.1 Respectful Communication**

- Members must engage in respectful, constructive, and courteous dialogue, regardless of one's status within the organization.
- Disagreements should be addressed professionally and respectfully, focusing on issues rather than personal attacks.

### **3.2 Integrity and Honesty**

- Members must act with honesty and integrity in all organizational matters.
- Misrepresentation of credentials, falsification of information, or deceptive practices are strictly prohibited.

### **3.3 Fairness and Non-Discrimination**

- Members must treat others with fairness and without discrimination based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected characteristics.

## **4. Prohibited Conduct**

The following behaviors are explicitly prohibited and will be considered breaches of the Standards for Professional Behavior:

### **4.1 Verbal Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying**

- Any form of verbal or written harassment, intimidation, or bullying, including derogatory remarks, making malicious false statements, or insults is strictly prohibited.
- Harassment is defined as any behavior that is unwelcome, repetitive, intends to cause discomfort, distress or harm, and has an adverse impact of the recipient (including fear or discomfort).
- Intimidation is intentionally frightening or coercing someone into doing or not doing something by using threats, fear, or perceived power.
- Bullying is the repeated, intentional use of aggression, power, or influence to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone, often perceived as weaker or vulnerable.
- This includes cyberbullying, abusive language in emails, social media, or any other digital communication platforms.

### **4.2 Physical Harassment or Assault**

- Physical harassment, threats, intimidation, or any form of violence towards another member will not be tolerated.

### **4.3 Discrimination**

- Discriminatory behavior based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected characteristics is prohibited.

### **4.4 Unethical Behavior**

- Actions that are unethical or conflict with the organization's values, such as bribery and corruption are not allowed.

## **5. Reporting and Investigation**

### **5.1 Reporting Violations**

- Members who believe they have witnessed or experienced a breach of this policy should report the incident to the Board of Directors.
- Reports should be made in writing and provide as much detail as possible.

## **5.2 Investigation**

- The Board of Directors will investigate all reported violations.
- All parties involved will be given an opportunity to provide their account of the incident.

## **5.3 Confidentiality**

- The investigation process will be conducted with confidentiality to the extent possible, protecting the privacy of individuals involved.

## **6. Consequences of Violations**

### **6.1 Disciplinary Actions**

- Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, including but not limited to:
  - Warning or reprimand
  - Suspension (temporary removal) of membership
  - Expulsion (permanent removal) from the organization

### **6.2 Termination, Expulsion, or Suspension**

- Members may be expelled from membership in the organization for significant and/or repeated breaches of this policy. The decision to expel a member will be made by the Board of Directors following the process described in the AACN Termination, Expulsion, or Suspension of Membership or Privileges Policy. The Academy may, at their sole discretion, send the member a warning(s) before deciding to suspend or terminate membership, depending on the nature of the detrimental conduct.

## **7. Appeals**

Members have the right to appeal disciplinary actions by following the process outlined in the AACN Termination, Expulsion, or Suspension of Membership or Privileges Policy.

## **8. Review and Amendments**

This policy will be reviewed every five years by the BOD or as needed. Amendments to this policy require approval by the BOD.