

Code of Conduct: Society for Prevention Research

Preamble affiliate

The Society for Prevention Research Inc. (“SPR”) is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to the advancement of prevention research. SPR members and other participants in SPR activities come from diverse backgrounds and are guided in research ethics following the ethics codes laid out by their professional alliances. The SPR Code of Conduct (“Code”) serves as a code of professional conduct for SPR members, conference attendees, staff, volunteers, and any individual who participates in any activities of SPR. In this document, an individual who participates in any SPR activity in any capacity is referred as an “SPR-associate.” The Code of Conduct is designed to assist and enable all SPR-associates to engage with one another and with the Society with integrity, honesty, efficiency, safety, and legality.

SPR-associates (including members, conference attendees, and all participants in the activities of SPR) affirm their commitment to uphold its principles by joining as a member and subsequently renewing their membership, registering for an SPR conference, or volunteering for service activities of SPR. Violations of the Code may result in sanctions imposed under the Procedures for Review of Conduct Complaints described below. These Procedures aim to provide due process to SPR-associates and to protect the integrity and ensure the efficacy of the SPR Code of Conduct.

Mission of SPR: The Society for Prevention Research is dedicated to advancing scientific investigation of the etiology and prevention of social, physical, mental health, and academic problems and to the translation of that information to promote health and well-being. The multi-disciplinary membership of SPR is international and includes scientists, practitioners, advocates, administrators, and policy makers who value the production and dissemination of prevention science worldwide.

The Society for Prevention Research’s (SPR’s) Code of Conduct follows from SPR’s valuing of:

1. Equity and respect for all people regardless of status, race, ethnicity, religion, veteran status, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy status, sex, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, mental or physical disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by law. In our prevention work, and in our interactions with each other, SPR-associates recognize the need for fairness and justice (assuring that all persons are treated equitably), and for respect for people’s rights and dignity, including the rights to privacy and confidentiality.
2. Transparency and openness in scientific investigations, advocacy, and communications among researchers, publications, trainees, and with community partners. SPR-associates promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in our research as well as our teaching and practice of prevention science. This includes transparency and openness in our communications with each other as well as with our community partners.

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3. Inclusive relationships that promote feelings of being respected and valued as individuals. SPR–associates should establish relationships of trust and responsibility in their interactions with each other and with the communities engaged in their work.

As such the SPR in all of its activities prohibits engagement in

1. Unlawful discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, veteran status, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy status, sex, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, mental or physical disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by law.
2. Harassment that creates a hostile atmosphere, or is intimidating or abusive through jokes based on individual identities, bullying, epithets, crude language, and hostile or sexualized physical conduct or gestures.
3. Quid pro quo harassment, including use of social power, i.e., an academic advisor to a trainee/student or employer to employee or senior to junior colleague or when one can influence decisions that can directly affect the status, well-being, or advancement of a colleague or trainee.
4. Sustained or disrespectful verbal or physical disruption of speakers or events such as by threatening speakers (verbal or physical).

Additional specific examples of prohibited activities are:

- Verbal and nonverbal insults or discriminatory jokes, directed at individuals based on their marginalized group membership
- Bullying in any form; including, verbal, physical, relational or cyber
- Violence, threats of violence, or violent language directed against another person for any reason
- Posting or displaying sexually explicit or violent material
- Posting or threatening to post other people’s personally identifying information
- Inappropriate, unwelcome, or non-consensual photography or recording
- Unwelcome sexual attention including sexualized comments or jokes, non-consensual or unwelcome touching, and unwelcome sexual advances
- Deliberate intimidation, threats of retaliation for rebuffing advances, stalking or unwelcome following (online or in person)
- Sustained disruption of community events, including talks and presentations, for any reason

Procedures for Review of Conduct of Conduct Complaints

These Procedures shall apply to all complaints or inquiries received about a SPR-associate whether initiated by another SPR-associate, SPR or its agents, or another third party. Referral to appropriate federal, state, or local government agencies may be made about such conduct.

Individuals bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages from SPR by virtue of this process, although they will receive notice of the actions taken. These procedures are not meant to address complaints that are essentially of a commercial nature, primarily involving claims of libel or slander, or primarily requesting judicial-type relief, unless they also involve potential violations of the Code.

I. Development and Administration of Procedures

A. The SPR Board is responsible for the development and administration of these Procedures.

B. The SPR President is specifically responsible for ensuring that these Procedures are implemented and followed.

C. To the fullest extent permitted by law, all committee members, SPR staff, and other individuals engaged in investigations or decisions on behalf of SPR with respect to any complaint under these Procedures are indemnified and shall be defended by SPR against any liability arising from related activities to the extent permitted by law, provided such individuals act in good faith and with reasonable care, without gross negligence or willful misconduct, and do not breach any fiduciary duty owed to SPR. **No one who has any personal involvement in the alleged misconduct or any conflict of interest shall be permitted or delegated to participate in the matter to be reviewed.** In the event the SPR President has any personal involvement in the alleged misconduct or any conflict of interest, the President Elect or Past President shall assume the responsibilities of the President in the administration of these procedures.

II. Submission and Review of Complaints

Anyone who has information about a violation, against them or anyone else, can file a complaint (and is hereafter known as the "complainant"). Complaints may be transmitted to SPR in writing. In addition, the President, SPR Officer, or Board Member may self-initiate an inquiry if circumstances warrant. Inquiries or submissions other than complaints may be handled by SPR at its discretion. All such complaints, inquiries or submissions relating to the Code are directed to the President. Any complaint submitted to the President could also be submitted to legal counsel before any action taken.

A. Upon receipt and preliminary review of any such submission, the President in consultation with the other SPR Officers (Past President or President Elect, Secretary and Treasurer) may conclude that the submission: 1. contains factually unreliable or insufficient information or 2. is patently frivolous or trivial. In such cases, the President and other SPR Officers may determine that the submission does not constitute a potentially actionable complaint that would justify further

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investigation or bringing it before the Board. Such submission shall be disposed of by the President, and notice to its submitter shall be provided by the President, if the submitter is identified.

- B. All such preliminary dispositions by the President in consultation with the other SPR Officers shall be reported to the Board.
- C. If a submission is deemed by the President in consultation with the other SPR Officers on a preliminary basis to be a potentially actionable complaint, the President shall see that written notice is provided to the SPR-associate advising the SPR-associate that an investigation is being initiated. The President shall convene an Investigative Committee and also shall provide notice to the individual submitting the complaint that the complaint is being reviewed.

III. Review of Complaint by Investigative Committee

A. For each submission involving an alleged violation of the Code that the President in consultation with the SPR Officers believes is a potentially actionable complaint, the President shall authorize an investigation into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary in order to clarify, expand or corroborate the information provided by the submitter. The President in consultation with the other SPR Officers will create an investigative Committee which would include the other Officers of the Board (who are the President, Past President or President Elect, Secretary and Treasurer) and two Board Members appointed by the President. The Investigative Committee will conduct the inquiry, make a determination as to whether the complaint against the individual should be brought to the Board, and formulate formal actions for the Board, if warranted. The Investigative Committee may be assisted in the conduct of its investigation by SPR staff and/or legal counsel. The Investigative Committee works, decides, and communicates as a team. All communications will include at least two individuals and summarized in writing for each meeting.

B. Both the individual submitting the complaint and the SPR-associate [or group of people] who is [are] the subject of the complaint also may be contacted for additional information with respect to the complaint. The time for providing such additional information shall be established by the Investigative Committee and the individuals shall be given not less than thirty (30) days to respond. The Investigative Committee may, at its discretion, contact such other individuals who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

The Investigative Committee shall initially determine whether it is appropriate to review the complaint under these Procedures, or whether the matter should be referred to another entity engaged in the administration of law. If the Investigative Committee concludes from the review that a response against the complaint is appropriate, it shall return to the President the formal charges recommended and a written report explaining the alleged aggrieved conduct and why such conduct constitutes grounds for disciplinary action under the Code. If no further actions are recommended the Officers shall notify the SPR-associate and send a report of its determination to the Board.

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C a. If the Investigative Committee has recommended formal actions in response to the complaint; the President shall notify the individual who is the subject of the complaint and send him or her a copy of the complaint and the Investigative Committee's report. This individual shall be advised that they may request the opportunity to submit information or arguments contesting the complaint in person or in writing, by submitting such request within thirty (30) days from receipt of the notice.

C b. The President shall advise the SPR-associate that further investigation will be conducted and that a hearing will be held, providing the SPR-associate with the proposed date and time for such hearing. The SPR-associate shall also be advised that the SPR-associate may have the right to review evidence to be presented at the hearing and that the SPR-associate may be represented by counsel at their own expense. The SPR-associate shall also be sent a copy of these Procedures for Review of Conduct of Conduct Complaints. A representative of the Officers may be requested to serve an interrogative role in the proceeding.

D. All investigations and deliberations of the Investigative Committee are to be conducted in confidence to the extent practical, except that the Committee shall be permitted to disclose any relevant information when compelled by a validly-issued subpoena, when otherwise required by law, or to parties essential to the review and investigation of the alleged aggrieved conduct. All written communications relating to the investigations and deliberations of the Investigative Committee should be sealed and marked "Personal and Confidential." All investigations and deliberations of the Investigative Committee shall be conducted objectively, without prejudice of any kind. An investigation may be directed toward any aspect of a complaint which is relevant or potentially relevant.

E. The Investigative Committee hearing may be held in person or by telephone or video conference if the SPR-associate does not request the opportunity to appear in person. The President shall preside and make evidentiary and other procedural rulings with the advice of SPR legal counsel. If a hearing is held with the SPR-associate who is the subject of the complaint present, the President shall, in his or her discretion, determine the rules of evidence and for oral presentations by the parties, as advised by SPR legal counsel. Written statements may be accepted as evidence and witnesses may appear on behalf of the SPR-associate. The SPR-associate may be accompanied and represented by legal counsel or advocate.

IV. Determination of Violation

A. Upon completion of its investigation and the hearing, the Investigative Committee shall determine by majority vote, based upon a standard of the preponderance of the evidence, whether or not there has been a violation of the Code, and whether the Board should impose sanctions. When the Investigative Committee finds that there has been a violation, it shall also recommend imposition of an appropriate sanction. A written determination with a proposed sanction shall be prepared under the supervision of the President or delegate and SPR legal

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counsel, and shall be presented by a representative of the Investigative Committee to the Board, along with the record of the investigation and deliberation. Written notice of the Investigative Committee's determination, the proposed sanction(s), and the fact that the matter will be reviewed by the Board shall be provided to the SPR-associate charged with the violation within fifteen (15) days of the Investigative Committee's determination.

If the Investigative Committee determines that a violation has not occurred, the complaint shall be dismissed with notice to the SPR-associate, as well as to the individual or entity who submitted the complaint; a summary report shall also be made to the Board and filed as Confidential.

B. If a violation is found and sanctions are recommended by the Investigative Committee; the Board shall review the recommendations of the Investigative Committee based upon the record presented. The SPR-associate who is the subject of the complaint may submit a written statement to the Board prior to its decision, but otherwise will not have the opportunity to appear before or participate in the Board's deliberations. The Board may accept, reject or modify the Investigative Committee's determinations either with respect to the determination of a violation or the recommended sanction to be imposed. If the Board agrees, based on a two-thirds majority vote, that a violation has occurred, then the determination and imposition of a sanction, as determined by the Board also based on a two-thirds majority vote, shall be provided by written notice to the SPR-associate. The same notice shall be provided to the individual or entity who submitted the complaint, if the submitter agrees, in advance and in writing, to maintain confidence of whatever portion of the information is not made public by the Board.

V. Possible Responses

Any of the following sanctions may be imposed by the Board upon a SPR-associate whom the Board has determined to have violated the Code, specifically, whose conduct the Board has determined constitutes one or more of the Grounds for Disciplinary Action, as defined by the Code. The responses applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the SPR-associate and deterrence of the same or similar conduct by others. Common responses may include:

- No action (if the team determines no violation occurred),
- A private or public reprimand,
- Requiring a public apology,
- Requiring that a SPR-Associate stops their behavior,
- Requiring that a SPR-Associate avoids further contact with certain other individuals in relation to SPR activities,
- Cancelling a conference talk,
- Suspension of a volunteer from SPR activities,
- Removing a participant from the conference, meetup or online space, without refund,
- Written reprimand to, or censure of, the SPR-associate,
- Suspension of the SPR-associate from membership in SPR for a designated period; or from attendance at SPR functions and meetings,

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- Permanent expulsion of the SPR-associate from membership in SPR.

For each any sanction, a summary of the determination and the sanction and the SPR-associate's name may be published at the Board's discretion in a medium which is distributed to all SPR-associates, after the 30 day time allowed for appealing the decision has passed.

VII. Appeal

A. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of notice of a determination by the Board that a SPR-associate has violated the Code, the affected SPR-associate may submit to the Board in writing a request for an appeal. Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the President of SPR shall appoint an Appeal Panel composed of at least one Board member from the Investigative Committee and two other senior SPR-associates (e.g. SPR Fellows or Previous Officer of Board). No one with any personal involvement in the alleged misconduct, or with any conflict of interest in the matter to be reviewed, may serve on the Appeal panel. This Appeal panel may review one or more appeals, upon request of the President.

B. The Appeal panel may only review the record to review whether the determination by the Board of a violation of the Code was inappropriate because of: 1. material errors of fact, or 2. failure of the Investigative Committee or the Board to conform to the Code's criteria, policies or procedures. Only facts and conditions up to and including the time of the Board's determination, as represented by facts known to the Board, may be considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding.

C. The Appeal panel shall conduct and complete the appeal within ninety (90) days after receipt of the request for an appeal by the Board. Written appellate submissions and any reply submissions may be made by authorized representatives of the SPR-associate and the Investigative Committee. Submissions shall be made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal panel. The decision of the Appeal panel shall either affirm or overturn the determination by the Board that a violation of the Code has occurred, but the Appeal panel shall not address any sanction(s) imposed by the Board. The decision of the Appeal panel, including a statement of the reason(s) for the decision, shall be reported to the Board and the Investigative Committee. The decision of the Appeal panel shall be binding upon SPR and the SPR-associate.

VIII. Resignation

A. If a SPR-associate who is the subject of a complaint is a SPR member who voluntarily surrenders their membership at any time during the investigation of a complaint under these Procedures; the complaint shall be dismissed without any further action by the Investigative Committee, the Board, or any Appeal panel established. The entire record shall be sealed and the member may not apply for membership in SPR for five years. However, the Board shall authorize the President of SPR to communicate the fact and date of resignation, and the fact and general nature of the complaint which was pending at the time of resignation, to or at

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the request of a government entity engaged in the administration of law. Similarly, in the event of such resignation, the person or entity who submitted the complaint shall be notified of the fact and date of the resignation and that the Board has dismissed the complaint as a consequence.