



**International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation
Member Code of Conduct August 2020**

1 Purpose of the Code

The International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (the Society) seeks to advance clinical, scientific, and societal understanding about the prevalence and consequences of complex trauma and dissociation.

Just as we promote high standards of clinical care outside the organization, the Society seeks to promote a high standard of collegiality within the organization, and to ensure that all of our staff and members enjoy a safe and supportive environment when engaged in Society activities.

The Member Code of Conduct (the “Code”), as established by the Society’s Board of Directors (the “Board”), pertains to all Society members exclusively within the context of their participation (including leadership) in Society-sponsored activities, groups and communications in any medium at the local, regional, national, and international level.

Society members have an obligation to be familiar with the Code. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of the Code is not an acceptable defense to a charge of improper conduct.

The Code is not intended to supersede or supplant any other codes of ethics to which a Society member may be subject, though a Society member’s alleged or proven violation(s) of other such Codes of Ethics may inform concurrent deliberations regarding alleged violations of the ISSTD Member Code of Conduct.

The Society reserves the right to impose disciplinary sanctions or take other appropriate action, up to and including expulsion, when conduct is not in accordance with the Code.

2 Standards of Conduct

Society members must behave in a manner that facilitates, enhances, and ensures the:

1. reputation and standing of the Society;
2. ability of other members of the Society to participate in Society activities
3. health, safety and comfort of staff employed by the society

3 Violations of the Code

The following sections of the Code set forth improper actions and behavior that may result in disciplinary action against a member. The Society reserves the right to identify other behaviors not listed below as appropriate and necessary, by the Board of Directors and may modify these rules accordingly for future application.

Board members who may have a conflict of interest (see section 2.2.1) related to a particular complaint must recuse themselves from deliberations and voting. A conflict of interest may exist if a Society member participates in the deliberation of an issue that is important to Society, while at the same time having other professional, business, volunteer, personal or family responsibilities or interests outside of

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the Society that might be perceived as predisposing or biasing the member one way or another regarding the issue under deliberation.

For Society-related activities and communications taking place in the context of Regional, Study, and Special Interest Groups, appointed and/or elected representatives of these groups can make the conflict of interest determination with prior consent of the Board of Directors.

2.1 Personal Misconduct

Unacceptable personal misconduct is defined as:

1. Harassing, threatening, or abusing, either physically, verbally or in writing, another member or any person associated with or employed by the Society, at any Society-sponsored function or event, or via any Society-associated communications medium. Examples of harassment include but are not limited to:
 - Intentionally subjecting another person to offensive or intrusive physical contact or verbal behavior;
 - Specifically insulting another person or their perspectives in their immediate presence, or via any communications platform, with abusive or degrading words or gestures;
 - Discriminating against or disparaging any individual because of that person's particular characteristics or group membership, including but not limited to race, color, national or ethnic origin, alienage, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, physical or mental disability, or perceived membership in any of these classifications.
 - Engaging in unwanted/uninvited sexual behavior or overtures or stalking behavior directed toward an individual.
2. Defaming the character or professional standing of any Society member or staff.
3. Conducting oneself in a manner that may or does endanger the health or safety of another person at any Society event or function.
4. Engaging in lewdness or indecency at any Society event or via any Society-associated communications medium (including listservs).
5. Selling, brandishing, or possessing firearms, ammunition, explosives, dangerous chemicals, or any other objects such as weapons at a Society-sponsored event.
6. Potentially bringing the Society into disrepute through inaccurate public statements of fact and/or by behavior that contradicts the Society's stated mission and values.

2.2 Ethical Misconduct

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Ethical misconduct is conduct that violates key moral principles including honesty, disclosure, and fairness.

Examples of ethical misconduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Failing to report, or misrepresenting, any conflict of interest between a member's appointed or elected role within Society and any outside considerations. This includes a member of the Board of Directors or other designated voting body within the Society failing to disclose a conflict of interest that would necessitate recusal (e.g., voting on the expulsion or readmission of a member who has violated the Code, where the Board member's personal relationship with the accused might raise questions of objectivity, voting on an issue that could directly benefit the Board member financially (unless the matter under consideration would benefit all members), etc.).
2. Using an elected or appointed position within the Society for personal enrichment. This includes, but is not limited to, inappropriately charging Society members for goods or services previously established as member benefits associated with belonging to Regional, Study, or Special Interest Groups, and which results in financial or equivalent personal gain for the officer.
3. Speaking for or representing the Society as an organization, to the media or any agency or individual, without holding official sanction, and/or without the express prior consent of the Board of Directors.
4. Deliberately attempting to collude or enter into agreements with another member, in conduct hostile to the well-being of the Society. This includes conspiring to remove or undermine an executive, Regional Community leader, or Board officer or Director via subterfuge or reputational damage.
5. Negotiating or attempting to negotiate agreements binding the Society without holding elected office that allows for this and/or without the express prior consent of the Board.
6. A determination or finding by a state, provincial, or national licensing body that a member has functioned outside of relevant standards of care, or resulting in the revocation of or declination to renew a professional license, rendering one no longer eligible for Society membership, based on the membership criteria in effect at the time of said determination or finding.

2.3 Financial Misconduct

Financial misconduct may generally be limited to Board members and those in leadership, but may in some cases apply to a member, and is defined as failing to carry out fiduciary responsibilities by:

1. Misrepresenting, hiding, or failing to release to Society headquarters monies collected in the administration of any Society-sponsored event at the local, regional, national, or international level.

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2. Failing to file timely and accurate financial reports to federal and state regulatory bodies and Society headquarters, as applicable.
 3. Failing to release/disclose to Society headquarters documentation intended to ensure proper, ongoing oversight by Society employees and/or the Board of Directors or one of its committees.
 4. Destroying documentation of a financial nature pertinent to the functioning of the Society.
5. Positing oneself as a representative of the Society specifically for the purposes of financial gain.

2.4 Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior is defined as:

1. Creating noise or other disturbances that disrupt Society-sponsored activities or events, or that disrupt either participants or non-participants at the venue of a Society-sponsored activity or event.
2. Behavior which is argumentative, hostile, accusatory, or that hinders or interferes with the established functioning and administrative structures of the Executive Committee; Board of Directors; Board Committees and Task Forces/Groups; Regional, Study, and Special Interest Groups; and, Society-related communications of any kind (including listservs).

2.5 Abuse of Controlled Substances

Controlled substances shall be defined as:

1. Alcoholic Beverages: Members are expected to know and abide by State or other laws, and by Society policies and procedures, governing the use of alcoholic beverages at Society-sponsored events. The following is not permissible:
 - Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by persons under the age of 21 at a Society-sponsored event.
 - Furnishing alcoholic beverages to any member under the age of 21 within or outside the context of a Society-sponsored event.
 - Consuming alcohol to the point of obvious impairment at a Society-sponsored event.
 - Using Society funds for the purchase of alcoholic beverages without prior consent from or arrangement with the Executive Committee and/or Board of Directors.
2. Marijuana and Other THC-Infused Products: Members are not permitted to be under the influence of, possess, manufacture, distribute, or sell marijuana or its active ingredient (THC) in any form, as defined and/or prohibited by Federal, State, Provincial, Municipal, or other governmental law, at Society-sponsored or approved events, or while speaking otherwise communicating at any Society-sponsored communications medium.

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3. **Illegal Drugs and Substances:** Members are not permitted to be under the influence of, possess, manufacture, distribute, or sell illicit drugs, as defined and/or prohibited by Federal, State, Provincial, Municipal, or other governmental law, at Society-sponsored or approved events, or when participating in any Society-sponsored communication in any medium.

3 Reporting Code of Conduct Violations

Violations of the Code may be reported by any witnessing attendee at a Society-sponsored event or participant in any Society-related group or communications medium, including listservs. Such violations should be reported in writing no later than ten (10) days after the alleged occurrence, though the Board has the authority to accept complaints after the ten (10) day period has expired. Violations should be reported to a member of the Executive Committee or the Executive Director via email or hard copy. All cases will be reviewed by a small group of the Board of Directors, and the member(s) involved in the alleged violation will be asked to respond to the small group of the Board of Directors in writing within 30 days regarding the alleged violation. If the small group of the Board of Directors does not receive a response within 30 days of notice, the member will be deemed to have been afforded due process. If a disciplinary action is deemed appropriate, a notification will be sent within thirty (30) days after the small group of the Board of Directors has made a determination.

Both the complaining and the responding parties have the right to appeal any decision to the ISSTD Board of Directors. If the complainant would like to make an appeal, they must do so within one month of being notified of the formal decision. Appeals can be made by sending a formal, written request to the ISSTD Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will review all details associated with the report and formally vote on the sanctions within two months of receiving an appeal.

4 Penalties for Violations

Violation of the Code will subject the member and, if applicable, associated leadership, to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension of membership or expulsion. Any alleged criminal behavior may be reported to authorities in accordance with Federal, State, Provincial, or Municipal, or other governmental law.

Any violations of the Code that occur on or after the Code is approved by the Board of Directors will be kept on record at Society headquarters.

1. **Warning:** A warning constitutes written notice or reprimand stating that a violation of the Code has occurred and that continued or repeated violations of the Code may be cause for further disciplinary action. A warning may be issued in instances of deliberate and serious violations, as well as for repeat, non-egregious violations, of the Code (e.g., a violation of the ISSTDWorld Guidelines, addressing Society staff in a disparaging and/or hostile manner, etc.). Warnings that are issued will remain in place for a minimum of ninety (90) days, after which they will be reviewed by the Board to assess if the behavior has been rectified and the Warning may be removed. Additional violations or

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egregious activities during the period while a Warning is in place can escalate the warning to a higher level at any time during those 90 days. A warning that has been removed will still remain on file even if inactive and resolved. A number of repeat warnings (3 or more) on file may present cause to escalate an issue to a higher level of sanction automatically. Individuals who are on a Warning-level remediation contract will be granted privacy around their situation and the issue of having been provided a remediation contract will be between the Society member and the Society Board and Staff.

2. Probation: Probation constitutes administrative action that informs the member in writing that they have violated the Code. The purpose of this action is to observe the member's behavior, to ensure that the violation is not likely to be repeated. Members on probation are ineligible for Society-sponsored scholarships, grants, and awards, as well as any elected or appointed office—including a currently held position—at the local, regional, or Board level. The probationary period will last no less than ninety (90) days. At the end of the specified period, the member's standing in the Society will be reviewed by the Board. If the Board has decided that the member has met the terms of their probation satisfactorily, the probation will be removed. However, the probation will remain on file. If the member has escalated their behavior during the period of the probation or has failed to meet the terms of the probation terms, the matter will be escalated to a higher sanction. More than one probation in any contiguous three-year period will result in an automatic escalation of sanctions. Individuals who are on a probation level contract will be provided privacy around their situation and the issue of having been provided a probation contract will be between the organization member and the Society Board and Staff.

3. Suspension: Suspension is the exclusion from all Society-sponsored events and communications platforms, as well as ineligibility for Society-sponsored scholarships, grants, and awards, or any elected or appointed office—including a currently held position—at the local, regional, or Board level for a period of time to be determined by the Board of Directors. Membership fees will not be reimbursed, in whole or in part, for any period of membership time lost due to suspension. Suspensions will remain in place for ninety (90) days unless a longer period of time has been agreed upon by the board. During that period of suspension any escalation of egregious behavior may result in an escalation of sanctions by the Board. If the individual has completed the period of suspension and met the terms provided by the Board during that period, the suspension will be removed. However, it will remain on file. More than one suspension in any contiguous five-year period will result in an automatic escalation of sanctions. Individuals who are on a suspension level contract will be provided privacy around their situation and the issue of having been provided a suspension contract will be between the member and the Society Board and Staff.

4. Termination of Membership: Termination of member status and expulsion from the Society is intended to be permanent; however, there may be very limited circumstances under which readmission may be permissible. Conditions for readmission into the Society, if any, shall be explicitly stated in the Notice of Expulsion. Readmission will be granted only by a majority vote of

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the Board. Membership fees will not be reimbursed, in whole or in part, for any period of membership time lost due to expulsion. Permanent termination of membership may also result in the revocation of appellations such as Fellow status, etc., previously awarded by the Society. Because of the severe nature of expulsion from the Society, designated individuals or the Society Board and staff may be unable to avoid disclosure, which will be limited to the fact that membership was terminated and the reason for the termination. Instances of such a disclosure would include inquiries from accrediting bodies, current/potential employers, or current/potential clients or patients, or the media; or, proactive disclosure to Society affiliates or to the Society membership-at-large.

If a Regional, Study, or Special Interest Group's existing policy is more restrictive than the Code, then the Regional, Study, or Special Interest Group shall follow its existing policy. If a Regional, Study, or Special Interest Group's existing policy is less restrictive than the Code, then the policies outlined in the Code will take precedence. In the latter case, the Regional, Study, or Special Interest Group may undertake a remediation process, under the guidance of the Board of Directors, to revise its existing policies to align with the Code.

5 Effective Date

The Code has been approved by the ISSTD Board of Directors on (date) and is hereby incorporated as part of the Society's Policies and Procedures, effective immediately.