

AANS Policy Regarding Harassment and Disruptive Behavior at Meetings and Courses

A. Purpose

The AANS is committed to providing a safe and productive meeting/course environment that promotes open dialogue and the exchange of professional and scientific ideas, and is free of harassment, discrimination, and other unprofessional behavior. All participants at AANS meetings and/or courses are expected to treat others with respect, comply at all times with the AANS Code of Ethics, and to follow venue rules.

B. Policy Statement

The AANS strictly prohibits any form of harassment, sexual or otherwise, as well as other disruptive behavior at its meetings, courses, and sponsored events.

C. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all members, officers, directors, attendees, speakers, faculty, staff, volunteers and/or guests (collectively, "Meeting Participants") at all AANS meetings, whether in person or virtual, including but not limited to the AANS Annual Scientific Meeting, meetings of the AANS/CNS joint sections, meetings of AANS committees and other AANS-sponsored events such as resident and practitioner courses. This policy shall also apply to all ancillary social activities held in conjunction with AANS meetings and/or courses that are controlled or sponsored by the AANS.

D. Definitions

The following definitions shall be applicable to this policy:

1. **Harassment** - Harassment is any behavior by an individual or group that contributes to a hostile, intimidating, and/or unwelcome environment. Harassment includes speech or behavior that a reasonable person would find unwelcome or offensive, whether it is based on ethnicity, gender, religion, age, physical appearance, disability, military or veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Conduct that constitutes harassment also includes epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; demeaning jokes; and display or circulation of written or graphic material that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.
2. **Sexual Harassment** – Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical actions of a sexual nature. The following examples may constitute sexual harassment if unwelcome: sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; unnecessary touching; verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; display of sexually suggestive objects or images including material sent electronically; and sexually explicit jokes.
3. **Other Disruptive Behavior** - Bullying behavior, deliberate intimidation, and sustained disruption of presentations, events or meetings constitutes other Disruptive Behavior prohibited under this policy.

E. Procedure

1. **Prior to the Meeting or Course.** All AANS Meeting Participants shall acknowledge, in writing, that they have reviewed and agree to abide by this policy during the registration process prior to any AANS meeting or course.
2. **Reporting Harassment or Other Disruptive Behavior.** Any individual who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment or other disruptive behavior during a meeting or course held or sponsored by the AANS may report such conduct in any of the following ways: (a) in person to the AANS CEO, any officer of the AANS, or AANS legal counsel; (b) through a telephone discussion with the AANS CEO, any officer of the AANS, or AANS legal counsel; (c) by email addressed to the AANS CEO; or (d) through submission of the online complaint form available at <https://www.aans.org/aans-online-complaint-form>. An individual reporting alleged conduct through the submission of the online complaint form available on the AANS website may do so anonymously. All reports of harassment or other disruptive behavior should include pertinent information such as the name of the individual(s) involved, the date, time and location of the incident, a description of the prohibited conduct in issue, and whether there are any individuals who witnessed the conduct in issue.
3. **Initial Investigation of Complaints.** Any complaint made under this policy will be reviewed initially by a Response Team consisting of the AANS CEO and AANS legal counsel. The Response Team shall determine, based on its review of a complaint, if immediate action is required and/or whether the complaint should be referred to the AANS Professional Conduct Committee for further investigation and handling. The Response Team shall be authorized not to proceed with a referral to the Professional Conduct Committee should it determine that there is insufficient evidence or grounds to proceed. The Response Team shall report its findings to the AANS President, or such other AANS officer as is designated by the President.
4. **Referral to AANS Professional Conduct Committee.** If referred by the Response Team, a subcommittee of the AANS Professional Conduct Committee (the "subcommittee") shall conduct an investigation of the allegations raised in the complaint and provide the respondent with an opportunity to respond to such allegations. The subcommittee shall be assisted by AANS legal counsel and may choose to meet with or interview the complainant, the respondent, and any witnesses. Reasonable efforts shall be used to minimize contact between the complainant and the respondent during the pendency of the investigation. The subcommittee shall report its findings to the President of the AANS (or his/her designee), the AANS CEO and AANS legal counsel. Any disciplinary action recommended by the subcommittee must be reviewed and approved by the AANS Board of Directors.
5. **Action by the AANS Board of Directors.** The AANS Board of Directors, upon its review of the findings of the subcommittee, reserves the right to take any action it deems appropriate against a Meeting Participant who engages in conduct that violates this policy.
6. **Confidentiality.** To the fullest extent possible, the AANS will keep complaints, investigations and any findings related thereto confidential.