

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR AMERSA EVENTS

AMERSA seeks to create an open and welcoming environment at our conferences and other gatherings, whether in-person or virtual. AMERSA has pledged to promote cultural, linguistic, and racial equity and inclusion as we advance evidence-based and interprofessional substance use scholarship, policies, and clinical practice. That commitment extends to creating a safe space for all AMERSA events in which there is no discrimination based on, including but not limited to, age, culture, disability, education, ethnicity, faith, family status, gender identity, language, lived or living experience, national origin, occupation, physical appearance, political leanings, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexuality, or socioeconomic position. Below are code of conduct policies regarding person-first language, alcohol consumption at AMERSA events, photography, suggestions for positive behaviors and reporting harassment.

This code of conduct applies to all convening participants and all event-related staff (e.g. hotel staff, AV technicians, interpreters, etc.). It applies to all convening-related activities such as sessions related to the formal agenda; all related side- and social- events; parties; and informal gatherings at restaurants or bars.

### Person-first language

AMERSA is a leader in promoting person-first language and avoiding terminology that can be stigmatizing. Specifically, person-first language (1) respects the worth and dignity of all persons and avoids perpetuating negative stereotypes and biases through the use of slang and idioms. Conference attendees are asked to follow the principles outlined in the publication cited below, accessible at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24911031/>.

Broyles LM, Binswanger IA, Jenkins JA, et al. Confronting inadvertent stigma and pejorative language in addiction scholarship: a recognition and response. *Subst Abus.* 2014;35(3):217-221. Doi:10.1080/08897077.2014.930372

When speaking about patients or persons who use substances, it is important to be respectful of the persons who are the focus of the discussion, maintaining anonymity of the person(s) as well as being acutely aware that persons with such lived experiences may be in the audience.

### Alcohol

AMERSA does not provide alcohol for sponsored events, including the annual conference, and prohibits the use of AMERSA funds for purchase or provision of alcoholic beverages at any gatherings of the association.

### Positive Behaviors

For real discussions to take place, it is inevitable to have different expressions and opinions, however, any kind of harassment will not be tolerated. In the case of any harassment, we will take strict action, as outlined in the Enforcement section below.

To build a conducive atmosphere, we provide the following examples of positive behaviors.

- Recognize the value of scholarly disagreements and convey respect for the opinions of others;

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- When speaking, briefly introduce yourself: provide your name and your affiliation;
- In the question period following a presentation, be succinct; please restrict yourself to one question or one comment;
- Be audible and speak with clarity;
- Be an active and engaged listener when someone is expressing themselves;
- Maintain your calm, address the issue;
- Disagreements happen; it's okay to walk away from a conversation that isn't fruitful or is becoming tense;
- Do not assume anyone's gender identity, gender pronouns (some people don't identify with the sex they were assigned at birth, and others use gender-neutral pronouns. You can ask people what their gender pronoun is), sexual orientation, survivor status, economic status, background, or health status;
- Try to refer to people by their name.

### **Reporting Harassment**

If you are being harassed or observe someone being harassed, please report by taking the following actions.

- Locating an AMERSA staff at the registration desk;
- Communicating with the AMERSA host of the virtual event;
- Emailing the AMERSA Executive Director or AMERSA host of the event.

All reports made will be kept confidential except when otherwise prohibited by law (there is a threat to self or others or a serious crime has been committed).

### **Photography**

Please ask permission beforehand to determine the individual's comfort level with being photographed.

### **Enforcement**

AMERSA staff and leaders may intervene when there is a concern of code of conduct. Participants who are asked to stop any behavior inconsistent with the code of conduct are expected to remediate their behavior and follow the request. All complaints will be reviewed and investigated and will result in a response that is deemed necessary and appropriate to the circumstances.

Event organizers retain the right to take any action to keep the event a welcoming environment for all participants. This includes warning the offender, expulsion from the conference/ event, mediation with the complainant / victim in the complaint and the person alleged to have participated in harassing or discriminatory behavior. However, to preserve both the safety and the confidentiality of the complainant / victim in the complaint, no specific action will be taken without consultation and their approval. Any illegal conduct will also be reported to local authorities if needed.