

## **AES Anti-Harassment Statement and Policy**

*Approved May 2017*

The American Epilepsy Society is committed to supporting educational and scientific dialogue, and to fostering a welcoming community in which all participants can contribute fully. Reflecting these values, AES will not tolerate harassment in any form. We expect all attendees, media, speakers, volunteers, organizers, venue staff, guests, and exhibitors at AES-organized events to help us ensure a safe and positive environment. Anyone violating these rules may be sanctioned or expelled from the conference without a refund at the discretion of the conference organizers. This policy applies to all activities and events where AES is the primary sponsor.

### **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, speech or behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, or debilitates morale whether based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion or belief, age, body size, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. It includes stalking, unnecessary touching, unwelcome attention, deliberate intimidation, disruption of talks or other events, or encouraging any of the above behavior, including persisting with the offending behavior when asked to stop.

Behavior that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another. Individuals should use discretion to ensure that their words and actions communicate respect for others and be cognizant of actions or language that could be interpreted in unintended ways.

Retaliation for reporting harassment is also a violation of this policy, as is reporting an incident in bad faith.

### **Reporting and Investigative Process**

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

Anyone who feels harassed, or who witnesses harassing behavior, is encouraged to inform the AES Executive Director, AES meetings manager, the AES President, or any AES Board member.

If appropriate to the situation, AES staff will immediately help an individual to contact convention center/hotel venue security, health services, and/or local law enforcement, to help them feel safe during AES-organized events. Information on how to contact these resources is included in the program materials and meeting app for all conferences.

All reports of harassment will be treated seriously. If an individual experiences or witnesses harassment, they should contact the AES Executive Director, AES meetings manager, or any AES Board member. In situations where a person's safety is at risk, contact security.

If an individual wishes to file a formal complaint of harassment it will be directed to a committee made up of the AES Executive Director, the President and the chair of the Professionalism Committee. The individual filing a complaint will not be asked to confront anyone.

Respect the reporter's privacy by not sharing unnecessary details with others.

A report of the incident will be provided to the Executive Director, President, and chair of the AES Professionalism Committee, who will determine if further action is required. The committee will assure that, if possible, both the complainant and the alleged offender can provide their perspective, assuring however that every effort is made to maintain the confidentiality of both parties and the process. Advice of AES legal counsel may be requested.

Once the investigation is complete, it will be the determination of this review group if further action is required. If disciplinary action is recommended, the individual alleged to have behaved inappropriately will have the right to appeal the decision. The chair of the Professionalism Committee will make a final recommendation and report in Executive Session to the Board, whose decision will be final.

This policy does not replace the specific staff policies for situations in which only staff are involved.