

SNS Professionalism Policy

Introduction

The SNS has unique organizational qualities derived from serving as the representative society for residency program directors and academic department chairs of neurological surgery. This requires the highest standards for professional conduct appropriate to set an example in the education of future neurosurgeons and to avoid conflicts of interest amongst neurosurgical educators.

On July 26, 2018, the SNS proposed that the One Neurosurgery Summit create a Professionalism Task Force representing the Summit organizations. This task force developed the One Neurosurgery Summit Professionalism and Harassment Model Policy. The intention was that each organization would then utilize and adapt the model policy as required for the special characteristics of its own organization, membership, and By-Laws. The following policies utilize the same definitions included in the One Neurosurgery Summit Professionalism and Harassment Model Policy.

Policy

1. Participants of any SNS or SNS sponsored event will not engage in any behavior that will undermine or interfere with the goals and purposes of the event including, but not limited to:
 - 1.1. The use of offensive or insensitive language or behavior;
 - 1.2. The use of denigrating comments based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender or disability; or
 - 1.3. Harassment, threatening behavior or similar intimidation, or assault of other participants.
2. The SNS endorses a Code of Conduct that requires equal and respectful treatment of others, non-harassment, and non-retaliation, as well as ethical and professional behavior in the conduct of patient care and other professional activities.
 - 2.1. All participants of any SNS event will sign an acknowledgment of willingness to adhere to the meeting policy regarding harassment.
 - 2.2. All SNS members and SNS event participants will be provided this Code of Conduct at the time of event registration and the Code of Conduct will be posted on the event site and in the appropriate location on the SNS website.
 - 2.3. The SNS will also review the submission of any finding by a relevant professional body of unethical or unprofessional behavior by an SNS member in the conduct of patient care or other professional activities. Such professional bodies include but are not limited to state medical boards and licensing agencies, the medical executive committee of the hospital at which the member practices, the American Board of Neurological Surgery, and/or the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) Professional Conduct Program.
3. The SNS will provide a specific mechanism for reporting conduct that violates the Code of Conduct that will be easily accessed by all members and event participants.
 - 3.1. Any urgent or emergent issues will be addressed by calling 911.
 - 3.2. Any immediately threatening issues will be addressed by calling 911 or other authorities (police).

- 3.3. A mechanism for protecting the identify of any individual reporting conduct that violates the Code
- 3.4. Investigation and adjudication will be through a special task force appointed by the President of the SNS to include the Secretary (who will serve as Chair), the President-Elect and 3 additional SNS members in good standing. If the alleged violation relates to diversity or gender, then the task force will make every effort to include representation from that community.
- 3.5. Accused members will be given the opportunity to make a written or oral statement to the special task force before any task force recommendations are made.
- 3.6. The Task Force will collect preliminary information from pertinent individuals in written form and then within 3 months make a preliminary recommendation to the Executive Council.
- 3.7. Where appropriate, the SNS President may additionally or alternatively refer concerns for review by an appropriate external body, including but not limited to the AANS Professional Conduct Program.
- 3.8. The SNS Task Force and/or a delegated review body will share findings and make recommendations for action to the SNS Executive Council (SNS Bylaws, Article II, Section B.6).
- 3.9. An accused member, who after full review and recommendation by the special task force is subject to action by the SNS Executive Council, may request the opportunity to submit a written appeal. The Council will review appeals and provide timely responses to accused members.
4. Code of Conduct violation reports should be directed through regular or electronic mail or by telephone to an SNS officer, or through submission of an online complaint form. The online complaint form will be present on the SNS website and a link to it will be included in Code of Conduct materials distributed at SNS events.
5. The SNS will develop or obtain educational material with review required for all Executive Committee members, committee chairs, course directors and holders of other leadership positions prior to assuming duties. Repeat training will be required every 5 years for individuals with ongoing SNS leadership roles.
6. Individuals reporting Code of Conduct Violations will be protected in the same manner as all reporters and whistleblowers:
 - 6.1. Individuals will be protected from retaliation for reporting in good faith behavior or information which the individual reasonably believes is a violation of this policy.
 - 6.2. To the extent appropriate, the host organizations will endeavor to keep complaints, investigations and any findings related thereto confidential.
7. The SNS will designate one member of the Annual Meeting Program Committee (or equivalent for other SNS events) to monitor the content of all presentations for compliance with the Code of Conduct. The Chair of the Committee on Resident Education the CoRE subcommittee chairs will serve the same role for SNS curricular materials under their purview.
 - 7.1. The relevant event planning committee will review possible Code of Conduct violations.

- 7.2. The event planning committee will report to the violation to the SNS President and Secretary with a recommendation for an appropriate course of action to include:
 - 7.2.1. Letter of information;
 - 7.2.2. Letter of reprimand;
 - 7.2.3. Temporary removal from participation in SNS events in a leadership or teaching capacity;
 - 7.2.4. Or permanent removal from participation in SNS events in a leadership or teaching capacity
- 7.3. A letter of information may be issued with unanimous approval by the SNS officers (President, President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice-president), with a report to the full EC at its next meeting; two thirds of the voting members of the SNS Executive Committee must approve any other final recommendations for action.
- 7.4. This process will be completed within 6 months of each SNS event.
8. SNS event planning committees will evaluate all social components of educational events to assure their suitability, promote standards of professionalism, and reduce risk for violation of the Code of Conduct:
 - 8.1. Special attention will be given to social events involving alcohol where residents or junior neurosurgeons directly interact with senior neurosurgeons.
 - 8.2. Duration of events and the availability of alcohol should be assessed as reasonable for the purpose of the event.
 - 8.3. Alcohol will only be available with the concurrent provision of food.
 - 8.4. Event planning committees should include information about associated social components for approval by the SNS Executive Committee.
9. Guests at any SNS event (speakers, spouses, etc.) will be held to the Code of Conduct as SNS members and may be barred by the SNS Executive Committee from future guest participation.
10. Reports of individual incidents occurring at SNS sponsored events must be made within 30 days of the event. Other reports of professional conduct violations may be made at any time.
11. This policy will be reviewed every 5 years after adoption.

Last revised: January 27, 2022