

# International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation Member Code of Conduct

## 1 Purpose of the Code

The International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD) seeks to advance clinical, scientific, and societal understanding about the prevalence and consequences of chronic trauma and dissociation. As such, ISSTD is dedicated to the academic and professional development of its members by providing sound training and resources for students and emerging and seasoned professionals, as well as promulgating guidelines to encourage ethically sensitive and responsible treatment of, and research concerning, persons with experiences of chronic trauma and dissociation. Just as we maintain certain expectations for ourselves in the context of working with such persons in professional settings, it behooves us to hold ourselves to expectations in our collegial interactions. The following Code of Conduct has been developed in the spirit of encouraging independence, maturity, and respect for the rights, viewpoints, and self-determination of all members of ISSTD.

Conduct in any ISSTD-related context (e.g. ISSTD events or programs), as well as ISSTD-pertinent interpersonal communications in any medium, is expected to be in accordance with this Member Code of Conduct (hereafter referred to as “the Code”). ISSTD 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.

The Code pertains to all ISSTD members specifically and exclusively within the context of their participation (including leadership) in ISSTD-sponsored activities and communications at the local, regional, national, and international level. This includes participation and/or leadership in Component, Regional, Study, and Special Interest Groups; the Board of Directors and committees established by the Board of Directors; and, task force groups established by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

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

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

## 2 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. ISSTD reserves the right to identify other behaviors not listed below, to be determined, as appropriate and necessary, by the Board of Directors. Board members who may have a conflict of interest related to a particular complaint must recuse themselves from deliberations and voting. For ISSTD-related activities and communications taking place in the context of Component, Regional, Study, and Special Interest Groups, appointed and/or elected representatives of

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

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 ISSTD, at any ISSTD-sponsored function or event, or via any ISSTD-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 words or gestures.
- Discriminating against or disparaging any individual because of that person's race, color, gender, religion, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender affiliation, psychological perspective, political affiliation, or national origin.
- Engaging in unwanted sexual behavior directed toward an individual.

2. Defaming the character or professional standing of any person associated with or employed by ISSTD.

3. Conducting oneself in a manner endangering the health or safety of another person at any ISSTD event or function.

4. Engaging in lewdness or indecency at any ISSTD event or via any ISSTD associated communications medium.

5. Selling, brandishing, or possessing firearms, ammunition, explosives, dangerous chemicals, or any other objects as weapons at an ISSTD-sponsored event.

**2.2 Ethical Misconduct**

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, a conflict of interest of any kind between one's appointed or elected role within ISSTD and outside considerations. This includes a member of the Board of Directors or other designated voting body within ISSTD failing to disclose a conflict of interest that

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

would necessitate recusing themselves in a vote (e.g., voting on the expulsion or readmission of a member who has violated the Code, voting on an issue that could directly benefit the Board member financially, etc.).

2. Using an elected or appointed position within ISSTD for personal enrichment. This includes, inappropriately charging ISSTD members for goods or services previously established as member benefits associated with belonging to Component, Regional, Study, or Special Interest Groups, and which results in financial or equivalent personal gain for the offerer.
3. Speaking for or representing ISSTD as an organization, to the press or other bodies, without holding elected office that allows for this 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 ISSTD. This includes conspiring to remove or undermine a SIG executive or Board leader via subterfuge or reputational damage.
5. Negotiating or attempting to negotiate agreements without holding elected office that allows for this and/or without the express prior consent of the Board of Directors.

***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 ISSTD headquarters monies collected in the administration of any ISSTD-sponsored event at the local, regional, national, or international level.
2. Failing to file timely and accurate financial reports to federal and state regulatory bodies and ISSTD headquarters, as applicable.
3. Destroying documentation of a financial nature pertinent to the functioning of ISSTD.

***2.4 Disruptive Behavior***

Disruptive behavior is defined as:

1. Creating noise or other disturbances that disrupt ISSTD-sponsored activities or events, or that disrupt either participants or non-participants at the venue of an ISSTD-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 Groups; Component, Regional, Study, and Special Interest Groups; and, ISSTD-related communications of any kind (including listservs).

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

***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 ISSTD policies and procedures, governing the use of alcoholic beverages at ISSTD-sponsored events.

The following is not permissible:

- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by persons under the age of 21 at an ISSTD-sponsored event.
- Furnishing alcoholic beverages to any member under the age of 21 within or outside the context of an ISSTD-sponsored event.
- Consuming alcohol to the point of obvious impairment within the context of an ISSTD-sponsored event.
- Using ISSTD funds for the purchase of alcoholic beverages without prior consent from or arrangement with the Executive Committee and/or Board of Directors.

2. 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 ISSTD-sponsored or approved events, or via any ISSTD-sponsored communications medium.

**3 Reporting Code of Conduct Violations**

Violations of the Code may be reported by any witnessing attendee at an ISSTD-sponsored event or participant in any ISSTD-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 the Board of Directors, and the member(s) involved in the alleged violation will be asked to respond to the Board of Directors regarding the alleged violation. If a disciplinary action will be deemed appropriate, a notification will be sent within thirty (30) days after the Board of Directors has made a determination.

**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.

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

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 ISSTD headquarters.

1. 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 ISSTD-sponsored scholarships, grants, and awards, as well as any elected or appointed office at the local, regional, or Board level. The probationary period will last no less than ninety (90) days.
2. Suspension: Suspension is the exclusion from all ISSTD-sponsored events and communications platforms, as well as ineligibility for ISSTD-sponsored scholarships, grants, and awards, as well as any elected or appointed office at the local, regional, or Board level for a period of time to be determined by the Board of Directors. Fees will not be reimbursed, in whole or in part, for any period of membership time lost due to suspension.
3. Expulsion: Expulsion is the termination of member status permanently or for a specific period of time. Conditions for readmission, if any, shall be stated in the notice of expulsion. Readmission will be granted only by a majority vote of the Board Directors. Fees will not be reimbursed, in whole or in part, for any period of membership time lost due to expulsion.

If a Component, Regional, Study, or Special Interest Group's existing policy is more restrictive than the Code, then the Component, Regional, Study, or Special Interest Group shall follow its existing policy. If a Component, 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 Component, 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 October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and is part of ISSTD's Policy and Procedures, to be immediately effective.