



Public Health Alliance for Genomic Epidemiology

Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

Adopted by the Steering Committee (16 September 2020) (v2.0)

1. PURPOSE

The Public Health Alliance for Genomic Epidemiology (PHA4GE) is committed to maintaining a welcoming and participatory environment for all participants. All participants must conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner, and adhere to the following code of conduct always.

2. SCOPE

This code applies to any individual of the PHA4GE community, including any and all activities, interactions and contributions through email, distribution lists, virtual workspaces, source code, documentation, teleconferences and meetings.

3. CODE

PHA4GE participants shall:

1. Represent PHA4GE in a courteous, professional and dignified manner at all times. Treat each other with respect, professionalism, fairness, and sensitivity to differences and strengths, including in situations of high pressure and urgency.
2. Never harass or bully anyone verbally, physically or sexually.
3. Never discriminate against any member on the basis of personal characteristics or group membership.
4. Communicate constructively and avoid demeaning or insulting behavior or language.
5. Seek, accept, and offer objective work criticism, and acknowledge the contributions of others.
6. Refrain from deliberate absenteeism in fulfilling Working Group activities.
7. Be honest about their qualifications, and any possible conflicts of interest.
8. Respect the privacy of others and uphold confidentiality of all data accessed.
9. Promote the rules of this Code and take action (especially if in a leadership position) to steer the discussion back to a civil level whenever inappropriate behaviors are observed.

4. DEFINITIONS

Absenteeism is irregular participation by members in PHA4GE group activities without justifiable reasons. The degree of absenteeism is defined by the extent to which PHA4GE members lack fulfillment of their roles and responsibilities in the various membership categories (*Please refer to the PHA4GE Charter, Section 5.1*).

Acknowledgement is a record of the origin(s) and author(s) of a contribution.

Demearing behavior is acting in a way that reduces another person's dignity, sense of self-worth or respect within the community.

Discrimination is the prejudicial treatment of an individual based on criteria such as: physical appearance, race, ethnic origin, genetic differences, national or social origin, name, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, family or health situation, pregnancy, disability, age, education, wealth, domicile, political view, morals, employment, or union activity.

Harassment is any conduct, verbal or physical, that has the intent or effect of interfering with an individual, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, and/or offensive environment.

Insulting behavior is treating another person with scorn or disrespect.

Leadership position includes Working Group chairs, activity leads and Steering Committee members.

Participant includes the following persons:

- PHA4GE members
- Any member of the public or broader public health community providing input or participating in PHA4GE activities.

Respect is the genuine consideration you have for someone (if only because of their status as a participant in PHA4GE, like yourself), and that you show by treating them in a polite and kind way.

Sexual harassment includes visual displays of degrading sexual images, sexually suggestive conduct, offensive remarks of a sexual nature, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome physical contact, and sexual assault.

Unwelcome behavior

Unwelcome behavior includes but is not limited to the following questions:

- How would I feel if I were in the position of the recipient?
- Would my spouse, parent, child, sibling or friend like to be treated this way?
- Would I like an account of my behavior published in the organization's newsletter?
- Could my behavior offend or hurt other participants?
- Could someone misinterpret my behavior as intentionally harmful or harassing?
- Would I treat my boss or a person I admire at work like that?

Summary: if you are unsure whether something might be welcome or unwelcome, don't do it.

Unwelcome sexual advance includes requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation,
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for participatory decisions affecting the individual,
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating hostile or offensive working environment.

Workplace Bullying is a tendency of individuals or groups to use persistent aggressive or unreasonable behavior (e.g. verbal or written abuse, offensive conduct or any interference which undermines or impedes work) against a co-participant or any professional relations.

Work Environment is the set of all available means of collaboration, including, but not limited to messages to mailing lists, private correspondence, Web pages, chat channels, phone and video teleconferences, and any kind of face-to-face meetings or discussions.

5. ENFORCEMENT

The PHA4GE community requires all participants and contributors to be treated with professionalism, courtesy, dignity and respect. There is a strict, zero tolerance policy for incidents of harassment, bullying, intimidation or other inappropriate behavior as described in this code. Infractions will be referred to the PHA4GE Steering Committee for review and will result in immediate removal from PHA4GE Working Groups and collaboration spaces, as appropriate. Please be kind to one another.

6. REFERENCE AND LICENSE

This code is very lightly adapted from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)'s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (<https://www.w3.org/Consortium/cepc/>), released under CC0. Similarly, this adapted code of conduct is available for unrestricted reuse under CC0.