



AFFIRMATION OF CARE, DIALOGUE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

By way of your membership and/or participation in POD Network programs and events, you affirm a commitment to an ethic of care, open dialogue, and accountability as laid out in this document. The POD Network is dedicated to fostering and maintaining a safe and inclusive professional environment centered on the care, dialogue, and accountability of individuals engaged with the organization and free from discrimination and harassment.

This Affirmation of Care, Dialogue, and Accountability emphasizes POD Network's values and expectations for engagement among members, staff, and affiliated individuals and within organizational activities and programs.

An Ethic of Care

Every individual associated with and representing the POD Network has an ethical responsibility to demonstrate care and compassion toward others. This includes promoting emotional well-being, physical safety, psychological safety, and a sense of belonging among all POD members and in their respective workplaces. Enacting our values means acknowledging and celebrating our community members' diverse needs and abilities and affirming their intrinsic value and agency within the POD Network. Through this collective commitment to care, we embrace a culture of belonging where each person's experiences, perspectives, and contributions are integral to the success of the POD Network and our collective well-being.

A Commitment to Open Dialogue

The POD Network expects all individuals to treat each other with mutual respect, empathy, and kindness, regardless of their background, identity, or role within the organization. Kindness within the POD Network depends on exchanging ideas, experiences, and perspectives that advance our understanding of our professional work and our world. Through open, honest, and respectful communication, any individual within the POD Network is empowered to express their ideas or concerns, share their experiences, and seek support without fear of judgment or retaliation.

Examples of behaviors and skills fostering a culture of care, dialogue, and accountability:

- Creating conditions that welcome a diverse range of perspectives to be presented and heard
- Ensuring meetings, programs, resources, and materials are accessible
- Using active listening when engaging in discussion
- Providing constructive feedback respectfully, focusing on the improvement of ideas and contributions
- Demonstrating empathy by considering the needs and feelings of others, and valuing diverse experiences

- Maintaining transparent and clear communication, ensuring that fellow colleagues and committee members are well-informed of goals, processes, and procedures
- Engaging in mutual support of one another's initiatives, projects, and tasks by offering and providing assistance to others when needed
- Engage in curiosity when addressing conflict by engaging openly and constructively, seeking resolution through dialogue and compromise
- Establishing clear expectations and responsibilities; ensuring members understand their roles and obligations
- Implementing strong project management frameworks that ensure accountability on responsibilities, and allow for flexibility of different working styles and adaptation to various collaboration preferences
- Recognizing and acknowledging the contributions and achievements of fellow colleagues and members, and celebrating achievements and milestones collectively
- Collaboratively addressing challenges and problem-solving as a team, leveraging the collective expertise and skills of POD Network
- Prioritizing the well-being of one another, providing support when needed

Accountability

The commitment to accountability is a fundamental responsibility of POD Network members and staff. Members and staff should work to address incidents that are out of alignment with this Affirmation of Care, Dialogue, and Accountability to prevent their escalation.

It is crucial to acknowledge the impact of one's behavior on others and demonstrate a commitment to rectifying mistakes when harm is done. Further, it is essential to recognize that cultural and neurodiverse differences in communication can lead to miscommunication, discomfort, or unintended harm. Therefore, open dialogue following an event misaligned with the affirmation is crucial for fostering understanding. Accountability is a cornerstone of the POD Network's efforts to nurture a culture characterized by respect, empathy, and continuous growth and improvement, thus strengthening our enduring connections.

Examples of behavior misaligned with this practice of care, dialogue, and accountability include, but are not limited to:

- Using disrespectful or offensive language when communicating with colleagues; sending hostile or aggressive emails or messages to colleagues.
- Disrupting conversations or presentations by interrupting and talking over colleagues.
- Ridiculing or belittling colleagues, their ideas, or their contributions.
- Disregarding or dismissing the input, suggestions, or ideas of others without consideration.
- Engaging in gossip or spreading rumors about colleagues.
- Offering constant, destructive criticism or feedback; undermining colleagues' self-esteem.
- Publicly shaming or humiliating a colleague in meetings, presentations, or other venues in front of peers.
- Using passive-aggressive tactics to express disagreement or frustration.

- Actively working to undermine the efforts, projects, or success of colleagues.
- Disregarding established norms and overstepping boundaries by making decisions outside one's role
- Refusing to collaborate or work effectively with team members, hindering collective goals; consistently failing to fulfill work responsibilities, thus impacting the team's productivity
- Neglecting or ignoring required health and safety measures designed to protect colleagues.
- Engaging in discriminatory behavior or harassment based on protected characteristics, such as race, gender identity, age, or disability.*

Review

This Affirmation of Care, Dialogue, and Accountability will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness.

**If you witness or become aware of behavior that may harm, discriminate, or be perceived as harassment toward another person, you have a duty to take the appropriate action outlined in the [Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy](#) to prevent further harm.*