
Code of conduct first responder training

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(she/her/hers)

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What are code of conduct first responders?

A first responder is:

- the first person with a duty to help enforce the code of conduct
- who becomes aware of a possible code of conduct violation
- and is not personally impacted by the violation

What do first responders do?

Prepare in advance

Pay attention in community spaces

Listen carefully when people tell them about problems

Take any immediate action necessary

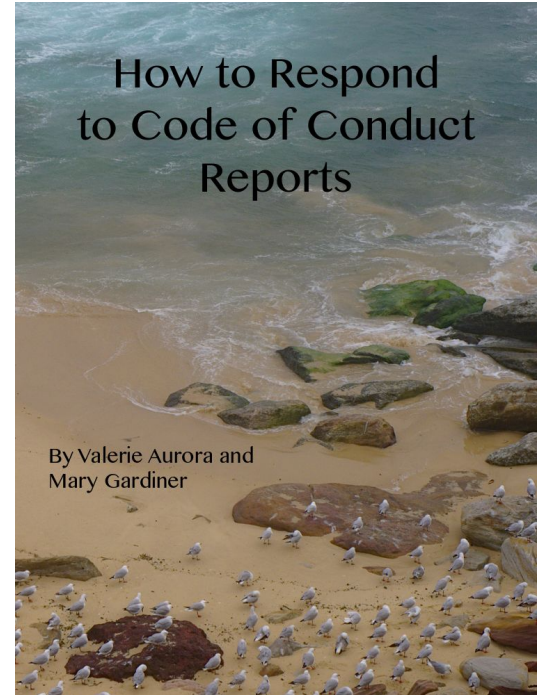
File or help file a report for longer term action

About Valerie Aurora

Co-wrote ebook "How to Respond to Code of Conduct Reports"

Lead author of code of conduct in use by 1000s of conferences

10+ years code of conduct work, ally skills, executive DEI coaching, etc.



Have more questions?

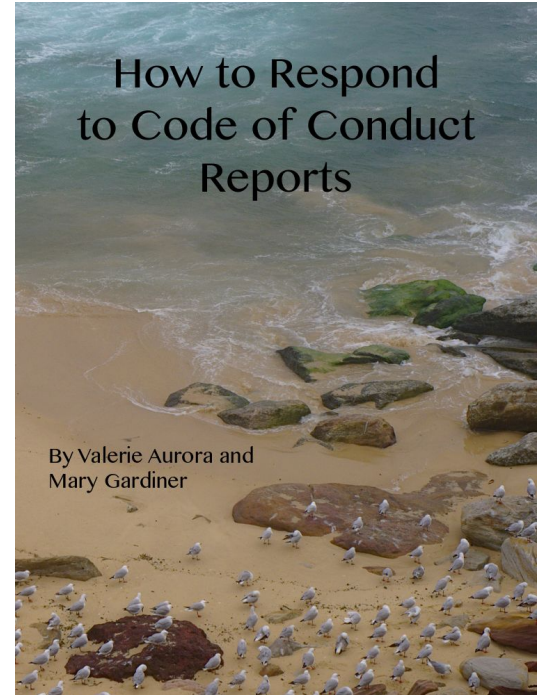
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Terminology

Code of conduct/policy

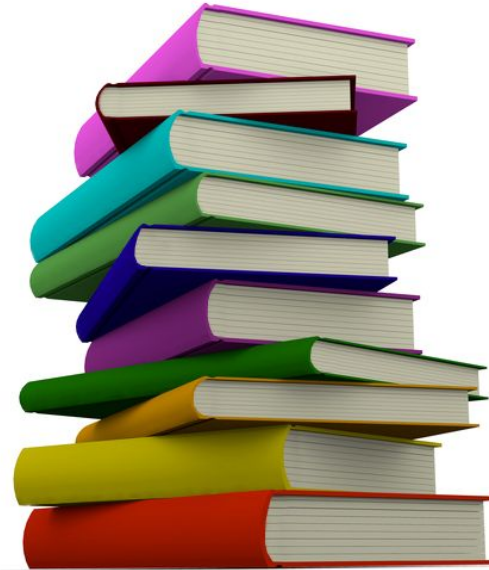
Events/spaces/community

Perpetrator/harasser

Target/victim

Incident/violation/harassment

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Outline

How to prepare

What to do in the moment

How to intervene

Complex problems: consent to report, drinking, powerful people, etc.

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Create a written reference

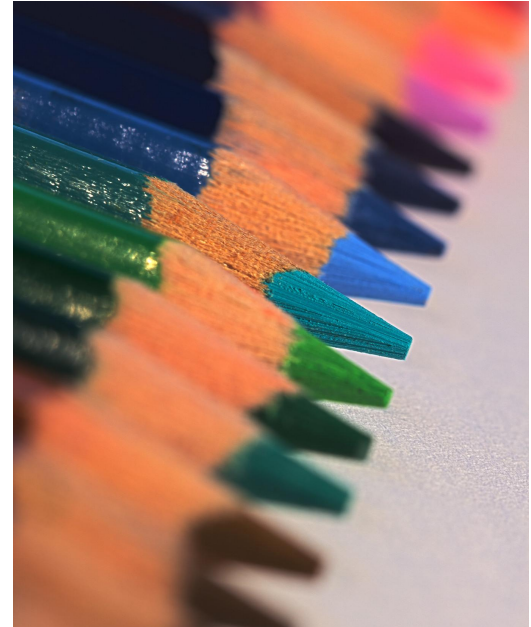
In the moment, it will be hard to remember all the things!

A written guide helps

See "Report-taking form" and other examples in the book

<https://frameshiftconsulting.com/resources/code-of-conduct-book/>

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Prepare in advance

Read the code of conduct

Tell new people about the code of conduct

Read transparency reports

Be supportive of the code of conduct in public communications

Practice your canned responses

During the event/in the space

Pay attention to what's happening

Listen to people who say they've seen problems

Get enough information to decide whether immediate action is necessary

If appropriate, make a report to the committee

Don't try to mediate/resolve/fix anything non-urgent

If you notice something going on

People have a tendency to freeze in bad situations

It's okay if it takes awhile to realize you need to act

Not sure? Get more information

Take any immediate action necessary

Make a written report and follow up

If someone else notices something

Find a quiet safe place

Ask if you can find someone to support them

Ask if you can take notes

Tell them if you have any requirements to report to another person or organization

Express empathy and care

Report

File a report with the code of conduct committee

Report even small things

If it's part of a pattern of behavior, it could prevent larger harm

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If you need to intervene in an ongoing situation

Evaluate power relationships, safety, potential for retaliation, then choose an option:

- Distract
- Get help
- Confront

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Distract

Less chance of retaliation, good for getting more info

"Can I ask you where you got your laptop bag?"

"Your friends are looking for you. If you have a minute, I can take you to where they are?"

Ask them to show you how to get to the bathroom, etc.

Make conversation with the perpetrator

Get help

Who is nearby, more powerful,
easy to reach?

Venue staff

Other event organizers

People you trust

Work together as a group

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Get help

This is not legal advice; use your best judgment

Only call security, medical assistance, or law enforcement if requested, if someone is in imminent danger, or you are legally required to (e.g. mandated reporter)

Sometimes doing this causes more harm than good (e.g. calling an ambulance for someone with frequent seizures)

Confront

Safety first! Think about who is at risk of retaliation

"What are you doing?"

"We don't do that here"

"When people do BEHAVIOR, I don't like it"

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Complex issues

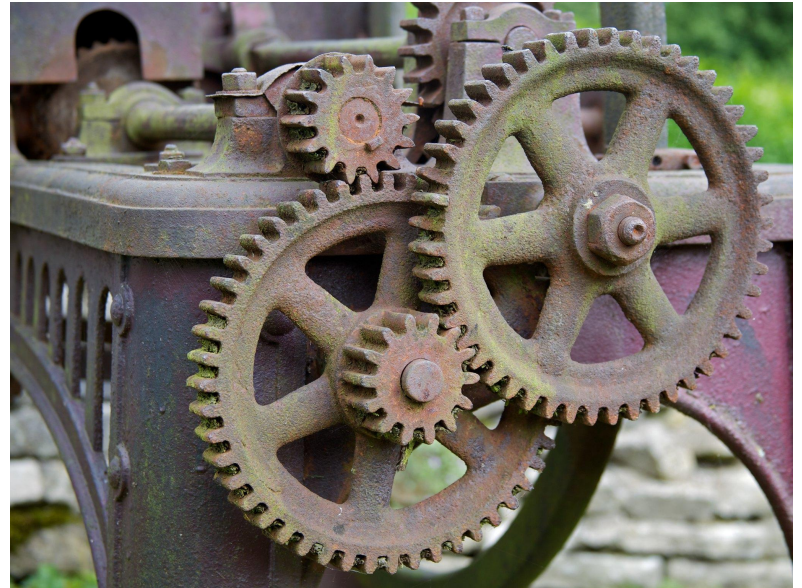
What if the direct target says the violation is okay?

What if someone is drinking?

What if reporting the violation might harm innocent people?

What about legal concerns?

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What if the direct target says it is okay?

People often think of violations as a conflict between two people, but it affects the entire community

Example: A straight person uses a homophobic slur, and their queer friend says they don't mind—but other people hear it and think, "Homophobia is tolerated here"

The target has important information, but it is not their job to decide what is acceptable within the community

What if someone is drinking?

Studies show alcohol causes clumsiness, sleepiness, lower problem-solving ability, and memory loss

Everything else (violence, sexual advances, rude comments) depends on what is socially acceptable

Drunk people **can** follow the code of conduct

<http://www.sirc.org/publik/drinking4.html>

What if someone is drinking?

If someone can't stop themselves from violating the code of conduct while drunk, they shouldn't drink at all

Events can send messages about what behavior is socially acceptable when people are drinking by the way they present alcohol

Targets do not "deserve" harassment because they are drunk, wearing certain clothes, out late, alone, etc.

What if the perpetrator is very powerful?

Codes of conduct should reduce abuse of power, but can't overcome a power structure by themselves

Holding a powerful person accountable is one step towards removing their power, but often hurts the people doing the accounting

It's okay to protect your own career and life first

What about anonymous reports?

People have many valid reasons to stay anonymous

Don't pressure them to break anonymity

Anonymous reports are hard to investigate but help the organization put together a pattern of behavior or structural problems

Anonymous reports are better than no reports!

What if someone doesn't want to file a report?

Basic conflict: what if filing a report would hurt an individual person, but help the community overall?

E.g. reporting someone would end one target's career, but prevent ten other people from being assaulted

Mandatory reporting can sometimes do more harm

No easy answers, but look for clever ways around it

What about legal concerns?

I am not a lawyer and this is not legal advice

Seek legal advice from your legal advisor

Perpetrators sometimes use the legal system to get or maintain access to targets or further harm them

If your community has people with this level of dedication or resources, preparation makes sense

Have more questions?

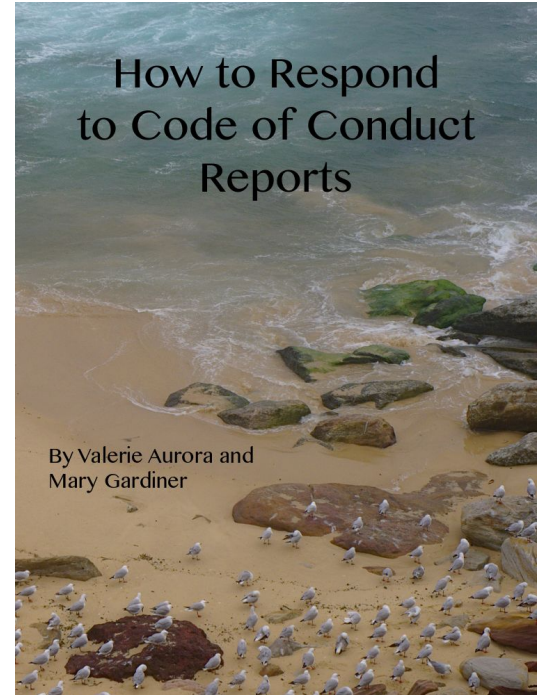
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Thank you!

Valerie Aurora

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