



Code of Conduct, Professional Ethics Policy and Procedure

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Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics Policy and Procedure

Part A Policy

1. **Title:** Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics for Members of the Telemedicine Society of India (TSI).

2. **Commencement**

This Policy guidelines shall come into effect from the date of approval by the Telemedicine Society of India Executive Committee (TSI EC) and General Body.

3. **Preamble**

The Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethics, integrity, transparency, and accountability. This Whistleblower Policy provides a mechanism for individuals to report concerns about unethical conduct, malpractice, or violations of policies without fear of retaliation.

This Code of Conduct establishes the standards of behavior expected from all members and provides a framework for accountability, transparency, and disciplinary action.

4. **Purpose**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct Policy is to establish a comprehensive framework to promote ethical standards, professional behavior, and accountability mechanisms for all members of TSI, while ensuring their actions uphold the reputation, mission and objectives of the Society.

This policy aims to:

- 4.1 Promote integrity, transparency, and professionalism
- 4.2 Ensure ethical practice in functioning of the society
- 4.3 Safeguard members rights and data privacy
- 4.4 Provide a structured mechanism for addressing misconduct

5. **Scope**

This policy applies to all categories of members – life members, institutional members, corporate members, startup members, student members, honorary members, paramedical members, patrons, participants in TSI programs, events collaborators and all office bearers – while representing the society in any capacity, including meetings, events, committees, or public communications.

6. **Definitions**

- 6.1. “Member”: Any individual or entity enrolled under the society’s membership categories
- 6.2. Misconduct: Any act violating this Code of Conduct

- 6.3. Conflict of Interest: A situation where personal or financial interests influence professional decisions
- 6.4. EDC: Ethics and Disciplinary Committee constituted by TSI

7. Statement on Inclusive Language

All references to roles and designations in this policy document are gender-neutral and shall apply to individuals of any gender.

8. Core Values and Principles

Members shall adhere to the following core values and guiding principles:

- 8.1. Integrity – Act honestly and responsibly
- 8.2. Professionalism – Maintain high standards of conduct
- 8.3. Confidentiality – Protect personal and organizational data
- 8.4. Equity & Inclusiveness – Promote fair and unbiased practices
- 8.5. Accountability – Be responsible for actions and decisions
- 8.6. Scientific Rigor – Ensure evidence-based practice and decision

9. Policy Statement

Members of the TSI are expected to:

- 9.1. Uphold the highest standards of professional conduct, honesty, and respect.
- 9.2. Promote the objectives of the Society in good faith, ensuring that personal, professional, or financial interests do not improperly influence actions, decisions, or representations made on behalf of TSI.
- 9.3. Maintain confidentiality of internal information.
- 9.4. Avoid conflict of interest situations and declare any potential bias.
- 9.5. Represent the society with dignity, fairness, and inclusivity in all forums.
- 9.6. Adhere to all laws, rules, and ethical standards relevant to the Association's functioning

10. Code Of Ethics

The Code of Ethics of the TSI outlines the fundamental principles and standards that guide the professional conduct, integrity, and responsibilities of its members.

10.1. Professional Conduct

Members of the Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) shall maintain the highest standards of professionalism in all their activities.

10.1.1. General Professional Behavior; Members shall:

- 10.1.1.1. Uphold the dignity, credibility, and objectives of TSI at all times
- 10.1.1.2. Conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, and accountability
- 10.1.1.3. Act in good faith in all professional interactions
- 10.1.1.4. Avoid any conduct that may bring disrepute to TSI or the profession.

10.1.2. Representation and Affiliation: Members shall:

- 10.1.2.1. Accurately represent their qualifications, expertise, and affiliations
- 10.1.2.2. Use TSI membership status and official position responsibly and not for misleading promotion
- 10.1.2.3. Avoid unauthorized representation on behalf of TSI
- 10.1.2.4. Seek prior approval before using TSI name, logo, letterhead for personal or commercial promotion or platform for external activities

10.1.3. Conflict of Interest: Members shall:

- 10.1.3.1. Disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Declare conflicts of interest in writing
- 10.1.3.2. Ensure that personal, professional, or financial interests do not compromise their responsibilities toward TSI.
- 10.1.3.3. Recuse themselves from decisions where a conflict exists
- 10.1.3.4. Maintain transparency in collaborations, sponsorships, and partnerships

10.1.4. Communication and Interpersonal Conduct: Members shall:

- 10.1.4.1. Communicate respectfully with all individuals, peers, partners, clients, office bearers, office staff and other stakeholders
- 10.1.4.2. Avoid abusive, defamatory, or discriminatory language
- 10.1.4.3. Foster a collaborative and inclusive professional environment
- 10.1.4.4. Respect cultural, social, and gender sensitivities

10.2. Academic and Research Conduct: Members shall:

- 10.2.1. Maintain integrity in research, publications, and academic activities
- 10.2.2. Avoid plagiarism, falsification, or fabrication of data
- 10.2.3. Ensure appropriate authorship and acknowledgment
- 10.2.4. Disclose funding sources and conflicts of interest
- 10.2.5. Follow ethical standards in research

10.3. Financial and Commercial Conduct: Members shall:

- 10.3.1. Ensure transparency in financial dealings related to TSI
- 10.3.2. Avoid misuse of TSI resources, funds, or platforms
- 10.3.3. Refrain from unethical commercialization or exploitation of TSI affiliation

- 10.3.4. Conduct business or commercial activities ethically and responsibly.
- 10.3.5. TSI office bearers shall recuse themselves from any decision making and influence other office bearers where they have commercial interest.
- 10.4. **Conduct in TSI Events and Activities:** Members shall:
 - 10.4.1. Follow guidelines and protocols during conferences, workshops, and meetings
 - 10.4.2. Engage respectfully with participants and organizers
 - 10.4.3. Adhere to all event-specific guidelines, codes, and instructions issued by organizers
 - 10.4.4. Respect the authority and directions of event organizers, moderators, and coordinators
 - 10.4.5. Maintain punctuality and professional discipline during sessions and activities
 - 10.4.6. Engage constructively in discussions, panels, and academic exchanges
 - 10.4.7. Refrain from disruptive behavior, including interruptions, heckling, or inappropriate conduct
 - 10.4.8. Avoid any form of harassment, discrimination, or offensive behavior during events
 - 10.4.9. Ensure respectful interaction with speakers, participants, sponsors, and staff
 - 10.4.10. Use appropriate language and decorum in both physical and virtual settings
 - 10.4.11. Seek permission before recording, photographing, or sharing event content
 - 10.4.12. Respect intellectual property rights of presenters and contributors
 - 10.4.13. Avoid unauthorized promotion, marketing, or solicitation during TSI events
 - 10.4.14. Use digital platforms (webinars, virtual conferences, chat forums) responsibly and professionally
 - 10.4.15. Avoid spamming, sharing irrelevant content, or posting inappropriate messages in event platforms
 - 10.4.16. Comply with safety, security, and logistical protocols of the venue or platform
 - 10.4.17. Respect diversity, inclusiveness, and cultural sensitivities of participants
 - 10.4.18. Report any misconduct, violations, or concerns observed during events to organizers or TSI authorities
- 10.5. **Use of social media and Public Platforms:** Members shall:
 - 10.5.1. Maintain professionalism integrity, and respect in all online public communications and social media interactions.

- 10.5.2. Avoid posting misleading, defamatory, or confidential information
- 10.5.3. Refrain from actions Ensure that all information shared is accurate, evidence-based, and not misleading
- 10.5.4. Clearly distinguish personal opinions from official positions of TSI
- 10.5.5. Refrain from posting or sharing content that is defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, or offensive that could harm the reputation of TSI.
- 10.5.6. Avoid engaging in online harassment, trolling, or unprofessional debates
- 10.5.7. Comply with applicable data protection and privacy laws while sharing any information
- 10.5.8. Exercise caution while sharing emerging evidence, ensuring appropriate context and disclaimers
- 10.5.9. Refrain from unauthorized use of TSI name, logo, or branding on social media or public platforms
- 10.5.10. Do not represent themselves as official spokespersons of TSI without prior authorization
- 10.5.11. Disclose conflicts of interest when promoting products, services, research, or collaborations
- 10.5.12. Avoid using TSI affiliation for personal promotion, commercial gain, or endorsement without approval
- 10.5.13. Respect intellectual property rights; not share copyrighted materials, presentations, or proprietary content without permission
- 10.5.14. Credit original sources and contributors appropriately
- 10.5.15. Engage in constructive, respectful, and meaningful discussions that promote knowledge sharing and professional growth
- 10.5.16. Avoid posting content that may harm the reputation of TSI, its members, or the broader healthcare community
- 10.5.17. Follow platform-specific guidelines during TSI-hosted webinars, forums, and digital events
- 10.5.18. Report inappropriate or unethical online behavior related to TSI to the appropriate authorities
- 10.5.19. Avoid self-glorification ,self-promotion, self-praise exaggerated claims, or undue self-promotion that may mislead or compromise professional integrity.
- 10.6. Compliance with Laws and Regulations :Members shall:
 - 10.6.1. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including those related to telemedicine, data protection, professional conduct, and financial practices

- 10.6.2. Avoid any activity that may constitute a legal offence or ethical violation
- 10.6.3. Cooperate with regulatory and institutional requirements
- 10.7. Accountability and Responsibility: Members shall:
 - 10.7.1. Take responsibility for their actions and decisions
 - 10.7.2. Cooperate with inquiries, audits, or investigations conducted by TSI
 - 10.7.3. Report any observed misconduct or ethical violations in good faith
 - 10.7.4. Support enforcement of this Code of Conduct.

11. Misconduct

Misconduct refers to any act or omission by a member that violates the provisions of this Code of Conduct, ethical standards, professional norms, or applicable laws and regulations, and which may harm individuals, institutions, or the reputation and functioning of the Telemedicine Society of India (TSI).

11.1 General Principles

- 11.1.1 Misconduct may be intentional or unintentional
- 11.1.2 Both actions and negligence may constitute misconduct
- 11.1.3 Misconduct may occur in physical, digital, academic, or professional settings
- 11.1.4 Violations may attract disciplinary and/or legal action.

11.2 Categories of Misconduct

- 11.2.1 **Professional Misconduct** Members shall not:
 - 11.2.2 Misrepresent qualifications, experience, or affiliations
 - 11.2.3 Engage in unethical or unsafe telemedicine practices
 - 11.2.4 Provide services beyond their competence
 - 11.2.5 Bring disrepute to TSI through inappropriate conduct

11.3 Ethical Misconduct: Members shall not:

- 11.3.1 Violate patient rights, confidentiality, or informed consent
- 11.3.2 Engage in conflicts of interest without disclosure
- 11.3.3 Exploit patients, colleagues, or stakeholders

11.4 Academic and Research Misconduct Includes:

- 11.4.1 Plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification of data
- 11.4.2 Improper authorship or denial of credit
- 11.4.3 Misleading publications or presentations

11.5 Financial Misconduct: Includes:

- 11.5.1 Misuse or misappropriation of funds
- 11.5.2 Unauthorized financial transactions using TSI name
- 11.5.3 Fraudulent claims, billing, or sponsorship misuse

11.6 Digital and Cyber Misconduct : Includes:

- 11.6.1 Sharing confidential or sensitive data without authorization

- 11.6.2 Online impersonation or misuse of digital platforms
- 11.7 Harassment and Discrimination;** Includes:
 - 11.7.1 Sexual harassment, verbal abuse, intimidation
 - 11.7.2 Discrimination based on gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, or any other factor
 - 11.7.3 Unprofessional behavior during TSI events or interactions
- 11.8 Defamation and Reputation Damage :** Includes:
 - 11.8.1 Making false or malicious statements against TSI or its members
 - 11.8.2 Public dissemination of misleading or damaging information
- 11.9 Self-Promotion and Misuse of Position :**Includes:
 - 11.9.1 Undue self-promotion or self-glorification using TSI affiliation
 - 11.9.2 Misuse of TSI platforms, events, or networks for personal gain
 - 11.9.3 Unauthorized endorsements or promotions
- 11.10 Legal and Criminal Misconduct**
 - 11.10.1 Includes acts that may fall under applicable laws such as:
 - 11.10.2 Fraud, cheating, impersonation
 - 11.10.3 Criminal breach of trust or financial irregularities
 - 11.10.4 Data privacy violations
 - 11.10.5 Harassment or defamation
- 11.11 Classification of Misconduct**
 - 11.11.1 Minor Misconduct**
 - 11.11.1.1 Unintentional or first-time violations
 - 11.11.1.2 Procedural lapses or minor breaches of etiquette
 - 11.11.2 Moderate Misconduct**
 - 11.11.2.1 Repeated minor violations
 - 11.11.2.2 Misrepresentation or non-compliance with guidelines
 - 11.11.3 Major Misconduct**
 - 11.11.3.1 Serious ethical violations
 - 11.11.3.2 Fraud, harassment, data breach, or reputational harm
 - 11.11.3.3 Reputational damage to TSI.
 - 11.11.3.4 Any act with legal implications
- 11.12 Consequences of Misconduct**

Depending on severity, actions may include:

 - 11.12.1 Warning or advisory
 - 11.12.2 Written reprimand
 - 11.12.3 Suspension of membership or privileges
 - 11.12.4 Removal from roles or committees
 - 11.12.5 Termination of membership
 - 11.12.6 Blacklisting from TSI activities
 - 11.12.7 Reporting to regulatory or legal authorities

11.13 Linkage with Legal Provisions

11.13.1 Any misconduct that constitutes an offence under applicable laws (including criminal, data protection, financial, or professional regulations) may result in:

11.13.2 Action under this policy

11.13.3 Parallel legal proceedings by competent authorities

11.13.4 Any behaviour inconsistent with the spirit of professionalism, ethics, and integrity expected from members of TSI shall be deemed misconduct, even if not explicitly listed above.”

Part B Procedure

12 Reporting

12.1 Reporting Channels

12.1.1 Complaints may be submitted via Official email

12.1.2 Designated grievance submission form

12.1.3 Format and Submission

12.1.3.1 Complaints shall be submitted in written form (email or designated complaint form)

12.1.3.2 Complaints should be clear, factual, and concise

12.1.3.3 Anonymous complaints may be considered at the discretion of the Ethics & Disciplinary Committee (EDC), particularly in serious matters

13 Complaint Requirements

To ensure fair and effective grievance redressal, all complaints submitted to TSI shall meet the following requirements:

13.1.1 Name and contact details of the complainant (may be kept confidential upon request)

13.1.2 Name and details of the respondent (individual(s) against whom the complaint is made)

13.1.3 Clear description of the incident, including nature of misconduct

13.1.4 Date(s), time(s), and location(s) of the incident (physical or virtual)

13.1.5 Context and circumstances under which the incident occurred

14 Timeliness

14.1 Complaints should preferably be filed within a reasonable time frame (e.g., within 30–90 days of the incident)

14.2 Delayed complaints may be accepted if justified with valid reasons

15. Grievance Redressal Mechanism

The Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) is committed to ensuring a fair, transparent, and time-bound mechanism for addressing grievances and complaints raised by its members and stakeholders.

Objective

15.1 The objective of the grievance redressal mechanism is to:

- 15.1.1 Provide a structured process for receiving and resolving complaints
- 15.1.2 Ensure fairness, impartiality, and confidentiality
- 15.1.3 Uphold ethical standards and accountability within TSI
- 15.1.4 Protect the rights of both complainants and respondents

15.2 Grievance Redressal Authority

Ethics and Disciplinary Committee (EDC) is the primary body responsible for handling complaints constituted by the Executive Committee, that shall operate independently and impartially.

15.3 Process of Grievance Redressal

15.3.1 Submission of Complaint

- 15.3.1.1 Complaints shall be submitted in writing via official email or designated form
- 15.3.1.2 Must comply with the prescribed complaint requirements.

15.3.2 Acknowledgment; Receipt of complaint shall be acknowledged within 3–5 working days.

15.3.3 Preliminary Review

- 15.3.3.1 Conducted within 7–14 days
- 15.3.3.2 Determines:
 - 15.3.3.2.1 Admissibility of complaint
 - 15.3.3.2.2 Jurisdiction
 - 15.3.3.2.3 Need for further investigation

15.3.4 Formal Inquiry

- 15.3.4.1 If the complaint is found valid:
- 15.3.4.2 Notice issued to the respondent
- 15.3.4.3 Opportunity provided to submit response
- 15.3.4.4 Collection and review of evidence
- 15.3.4.5 Hearing conducted, if required

15.3.5 Decision and Recommendation

- 15.3.5.1 EDC evaluates findings and classifies the misconduct
- 15.3.5.2 Recommends appropriate disciplinary action
- 15.3.5.3 Submitted to EC for approval (if required)

15.3.6 Communication of Outcome

- 15.3.6.1 Final decision communicated to both parties in writing by EC
- 15.3.6.2 EC Ensures confidentiality and clarity of action taken

16 Principles of Grievance Redressal

16.1 Natural Justice – Equal opportunity to be heard

16.2 Impartiality – No bias or conflict of interest

16.3 Confidentiality – Protection of identities and information

16.4 Transparency – Clear and reasoned decisions

16.5 Timeliness – Prompt resolution of complaints

17 Record Keeping

17.1 All complaints, proceedings, and decisions shall be documented

17.2 Records shall be maintained securely and confidentially

17.3 Periodic anonymized reports may be presented to the EC

18. Classification Of Violations

18.1 Minor Violations

18.1.1 Procedural lapses

18.1.2 Unintentional misconduct

18.2 Moderate Violations

18.2.1 Repeated minor violations

18.2.2 Misrepresentation

18.3 Major Violations

18.2.3 Fraud, plagiarism, or data breach

18.2.4 Harassment or discrimination

18.2.5 Financial misconduct

18.2.6 Reputational damage to TSI

19 Disciplinary Actions

19.1 Minor Violations

19.1.1 Verbal or written warning

19.1.2 Advisory note

19.1.3 Training requirement

19.2 Moderate Violations

19.2.1 Written reprimand

19.2.2 Suspension of privileges

19.2.3 Removal from roles

19.3 Major Violations

19.3.1 Suspension of membership

19.3.2 Termination of membership

19.3.3 Blacklisting from TSI activities

19.3.4 Reporting to authorities (if required)

20. TSI reserves the right to take suo motu cognizance of any misconduct and initiate proceedings under this mechanism, even in the absence of a formal complaint

Part C Legal and Regulatory Alignment

21. This Code of Conduct aligns with applicable laws, regulations, and professional conduct, and financial accountability in India. Members are required to comply with the following (as applicable):

21.1 Information Technology Act, 2000 and amendments

21.2 Information Technology (Reasonable Security Practices and Procedures and Sensitive Personal Data or Information) Rules, 2011

21.3 Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act)

21.4 National Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, (as applicable)

21.5 Income Tax Act, 1961

21.6 Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

21.7 Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act)

21.8 Copyright Act, 1957

21.9 ICMR and COPE research ethics guidelines

21.10 Criminal Conduct and Misbehavior (BNS Alignment) This policy aligns with the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS)

22. Roles and Responsibilities

22.1 Chairperson : Oversees proceedings, ensures fairness and timelines

22.2 Member Secretary: Receives complaints, maintains records, coordinates communication

22.3 EDC Members: Review evidence, participate in hearings, provide recommendations

22.4 External Expert (if any): Provides independent opinion on complex/technical/legal matters

23. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if required.
