

Fellowship Directors WhatsApp Group Code of Conduct

Purpose

This WhatsApp group is intended to support professional communication, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among Fellowship Directors. Participation in the group constitutes acceptance of this Code of Conduct and the WhatsApp Terms of Service, as updated from time to time.

1. Professional Conduct

Participants are expected to:

- Engage respectfully and professionally.
- Foster an inclusive and collegial environment.
- Contribute constructively to discussions relevant to fellowship education and training.

The following content is prohibited:

- Harassment, discrimination, or personal attacks.
- Defamatory, abusive, profane, threatening, or offensive content.
- Disruptive behavior, including excessive, repetitive, or irrelevant messaging ("spamming") or intentionally derailing discussions ("trolling").
- False or misleading information.
- Promotion of products or services in which the participant has a personal or financial interest.

Respectful disagreement is encouraged; personal attacks and public disputes are not.

2. Educational Purpose; No Medical Advice

This group is intended for general educational and informational discussion.

Participants must not:

- Seek or provide patient-specific medical advice.
- Present discussions as clinical guidelines, standards of care, or official recommendations.

Any clinical discussions should:

- Be fully de-identified in accordance with applicable privacy laws.
- Be shared solely for educational purposes.

Participants are responsible for exercising their own professional judgment.

3. Antitrust Compliance

Participants should avoid discussions that could raise antitrust concerns, including topics related to:

- Pricing, fees, reimbursement, or billing practices.
- Salaries, compensation, or employment terms.
- Market allocation, referrals, or competitive strategies.
- Agreements or coordination involving vendors, services, or business practices.

If a discussion begins to involve these subjects, participants should redirect the conversation.

4. Confidentiality and Use of Information

WhatsApp is not a secure or confidential platform.

Participants should:

- Never share identifiable patient information or any information that violates applicable privacy laws.
- Refrain from posting confidential, proprietary, or sensitive institutional information without appropriate authorization.

Participants are expected to respect the confidentiality of group discussions and not forward, copy, or redistribute content outside the group without the original poster's permission.

Because WhatsApp allows messages to be forwarded or shared, participants should recognize that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

5. Intellectual Property

Participants may not share copyrighted or proprietary materials without appropriate permission.

By posting content, participants represent that:

- They have the right to share the material.
- The material does not infringe on the rights of others.

6. Appropriate Use; No Commercial Activity

This group is intended for professional collaboration rather than commercial promotion.

The following are not permitted:

- Advertising, marketing, or solicitation of products or services.
- Using group participation or member information for commercial outreach.
- Job postings or recruitment unrelated to fellowship education.

Participants may share general experiences or recommendations, provided there is no personal or financial conflict of interest.

7. Representation

Participants contribute in their individual capacity. Opinions expressed within the group are those of the individual participants and should not be interpreted as official positions or endorsements of any institution or organization.

8. Participant Responsibility

This WhatsApp group is not continuously monitored.

Participants are individually responsible for their posts and are expected to comply with this Code of Conduct and all applicable laws.

Participants should also:

- Avoid unnecessary or low-value messages (e.g., "Thanks" or "Me too") when a reaction or direct message is sufficient.
- Use direct messages when appropriate.

9. Reporting Concerns

Participants who believe this Code of Conduct has been violated are encouraged to contact the group administrator(s).

Group administrators may remove content that violates this Code of Conduct and may restrict or remove participants whose conduct is inconsistent with these expectations.

10. Enforcement

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in:

- A reminder or warning.
- Removal of content.
- Removal from the WhatsApp group.

Participants remain subject to WhatsApp's Terms of Service, and WhatsApp may take action independent of this Code of Conduct.

11. Acknowledgment

By participating in this WhatsApp group, participants:

- Acknowledge that they have read and agree to this Code of Conduct.
- Agree to participate in a professional, lawful, and respectful manner.
- Understand that participation may be restricted or revoked if this Code of Conduct is violated.