

INDIVIDUAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR AEV EVENTS, FOCUS GROUPS & WhatsApp

The AEV individual Code of Conduct outlines expectations at all AEV events, focus groups and within WhatsApp groups. The goal is to create a respectful, professional and productive environment which is safe, inclusive and harassment-free for everybody.

Any breaches will be dealt with seriously and may result in temporary or permanent exclusion from our events.

The code of conduct applies to all members, organisers, volunteers, attendees, speakers, sponsors and partners across all in-person and online interactions.

By attending AEV events you agree to abide by the following guidelines:

Expected behaviour

We celebrate and welcome the diversity of all and will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour by or towards anyone taking part in our events (whether in-person or virtually):

- Treat others with respect and fairness
- Foster an environment of inclusion
- Engage in open, constructive and honest communication
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive matters

Key areas

1. **Professionalism:** engage respectfully and constructively, even when opinions differ.
2. **Respect for others:** no harassment, bullying or discrimination of any kind.
3. **Safety and wellbeing:** ensure your own behaviour does not harm others. Report any concerns to AEV immediately.
4. **Conduct:** avoid disruptive behaviour (e.g. excessive talking in meetings, misuse of devices).
5. **Respect for venues and property:** be mindful of the physical space and resource provided. Do not damage or misuse property including event equipment and materials and respect venue rules, including those related to food and beverage, photography and noise levels.
6. **Social media:** ask permission before sharing photos or content featuring others.

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- 7. Alcohol & substances:** if alcohol is provided at the event, participants should consume it responsibly and in moderation. Overconsumption that results in inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. The use of illegal substances is strictly prohibited at any time.
- 8. Confidentiality:** protect sensitive information and respect others' privacy including the privacy of other participants and speakers.

Unacceptable behaviour

We do not tolerate:

1. Discriminatory or demeaning comments.
2. Deliberate intimidation or unsolicited physical contact.
3. Disruption of sessions or talks.
4. Conflicts of interest without disclosure.
5. Misuse of association resources or funds.
6. Retaliation against those who report misconduct.
7. Advocating for, or encouraging any of, the above behaviour.

Reporting and addressing violations

1. Members are encouraged to report concerns to AEV.
2. Reports will be handled promptly, fairly and confidentially.
3. Anyone engaging in unacceptable behaviour may be asked to leave the event without a refund (if applicable) and may be refused entry to future events and focus groups, at the sole discretion of AEV.

WhatsApp Group

Use of the shared AEV / cross association WhatsApp group is open to all focus group members in accordance with the following guidelines:

- All messages posted on the group should be relevant, respectful and supportive of other group users.
- All messages should be kind, constructive and considerate.
- Expressing frustration is allowed but language must be moderate and users must avoid swearing.

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- Respect the confidentiality of anything posted on the group and don't share sensitive or personal details.
- Avoid posting commercially sensitive information about your organisation.
- Remember that other members want to hear about successes as well as challenges.
- Keep comments on non-industry topics brief.
- Only share links that relate directly to the focus group.
- Don't advertise commercial services, personal appeals or paid services. AEV/ESSA/AEO cannot endorse or take responsibility for them.
- Remember participation is optional. There is no pressure to chat, reply, or share your story.
- If someone messages you directly and it does not suit you, refer the message to info@aev.org.uk and a member of AEV/AEO/ESSA will aim to resolve the matter.
- If you have any concerns about any messages being discussed, refer the message to info@aev.org.uk and a member of AEV/AEO/ESSA will aim to resolve the matter.
- Moderators may contact users about inappropriate messages and seek removal if necessary.
- Support new group members and be patient as they settle in before choosing to communicate.
- Anyone engaging in unacceptable behaviour may be asked to leave the group and may be refused entry to future groups at the sole discretion of AEV.

General Data Protection Rules (GDPR)

Your mobile phone number is required to join WhatsApp.

It is not possible to hide your mobile phone number in WhatsApp and is visible to anyone else in the same discussion group.

Misusing someone's number is strictly prohibited.

Note

This Code of Conduct may be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. The latest Code of Conduct is included on AEV websites.

By participating in the AEV, all members agree to abide by this Code of Conduct and contribute to a positive and professional community.