

Safety Plan

Statement of commitment to provide a safe environment: The Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance (SCMR) is dedicated to fostering a safe and respectful environment for all participants, including faculty, speakers, moderators, abstract presenters, conference staff, vendor representatives, and trainees. Central to this commitment is the expectation that every member treats others with the professionalism and courtesy befitting colleagues in the field. Faculty members, in particular, play a crucial role as mentors and evaluators for trainees. It is imperative that faculty exercise their authority judiciously, ensuring fairness and avoiding any actions that could be perceived as exploitation or mistreatment. The SCMR emphasizes the importance of maintaining a supportive atmosphere that nurtures career development without compromising ethical standards. Furthermore, the society believes that the success of its conferences hinges not only on the excellence of the educational content and skills imparted but also on setting an example of humane conduct among physicians and scientists. Respect for professional peers at all stages of their careers is fundamental to upholding the integrity and value of SCMR events. In essence, the SCMR's commitment to providing a safe environment underscores its dedication to promoting ethical behavior, fostering professional growth, and setting standards of conduct that reflect the highest ideals of cardiovascular magnetic resonance research and practice.

Expectations of behavior: The SCMR attendees are expected to behave in a way that embodies mutual respect, minimizes the likelihood of mistreatment, and optimizes the educational experience. Examples of inappropriate behaviors which compromise the integrity of the scientific conference include, but are not limited to:

- Unwanted physical contact (such as touching, hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing) or the threat of the same;
- Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct;
- Discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, or any other classification protected by both federal and state laws;
- Verbal harassment, including humiliation or belittlement in public or privately;
- Use of grading and other forms of assessment in a punitive or self-serving manner;

Instructions for participants to confidentially report alleged violations of those expectations to conference organizers: While we believe that professional behavior is generally practiced and respected by the members of SCMR, we recognize there may be occasions when real or perceived incidents of unprofessional behavior could occur. In these circumstances, SCMR is committed to establishing the facts through a fair process, which respects, to the extent possible, the privacy of the involved parties.

To provide medical students with an impartial initial point of contact, SCMR has designated faculty ombudspersons available for individuals to reach out to (scientific@scmr.org). The faculty ombudsperson, along with the organizing committee comprising six members, serves as a confidential point of contact. They will generally disclose information only with the complainant's consent, except in cases where there is a risk of harm to the affected individual or others. These ombudspersons are available to assist by addressing concerns directly or by referring individuals to an appropriate office or individual best suited to resolve the issue. Their role ensures that all concerns within the SCMR community are handled impartially and confidentially, promoting a safe and respectful environment for all participants.

Description of how the organizers will assess allegations and the consequences for those who are found to violate the expectations of behavior:

1. Inquiry into a violation of the standards of conduct committed by any individual, should be initiated by written complaint and filed as soon as possible, typically within 30 days of the end of the workshop in which the alleged incident occurred. A delay in filing may be grounds for rejection of a complaint.
2. The complaint must be detailed and specific, and accompanied by appropriate documentation, if available.
3. After receipt of a properly documented complaint, which has been made in good faith, the organizing committee will conduct an initial review of the allegations to determine the appropriate path of resolution. Available options include: (a) dismissing the case when insufficient information exists to move forward or when the alleged misconduct – even if substantiated – would not be a violation of our policy; (b) resolving the case through any other ongoing, related disciplinary matters; or (c) investigating and resolving as detailed below.
4. If the complaint is not dismissed or resolved through another ongoing matter, the SCMR CEO shall inform the respondent of the nature of the charges. The SCMR CEO will also remind the respondent about the non-retaliation policy of SCMR.
5. If the complaint is against any member of the organizing committee, then those individuals will be recused from the investigation. If the investigation team is less than three individuals, then the SCMR CEO will designate other individuals unrelated and impartial to the incident. The investigation will typically be initiated within two weeks of receiving the complaint, and the complainant and respondent will be notified that the investigation has been initiated. The investigation team shall also make every effort to protect the identities of both complainant and respondent, with respect to the larger SCMR community.
6. The investigation committee shall undertake a thorough examination of the charges. Whenever possible, interviews should be conducted with the complainant and respondent. Interviews may also be conducted with others having information regarding the allegations, if the committee deems it necessary. When appearing before the committee, the respondent and the complainant may each be accompanied by a non-attorney adviser who is not a family member. Except in unusual cases, the respondent and the complainant will not appear before the committee at the same time.
7. Following the completion of the investigation, the committee shall submit a report of findings to the SCMR CEO. This report shall describe the policies and procedures under which the investigation was conducted, how and from whom information was obtained, the findings, and the basis of the findings, and texts or summaries of the interviews conducted. This report shall ordinarily be submitted to the SCMR CEO within 60 days of the receipt of the complaint. The complainant and respondent shall be permitted to make a written reply to the SCMR CEO within 15 calendar days of receipt of the report. Such replies shall be incorporated as appendices to the report. The entire investigation process shall typically be completed within 90 calendar days of its initiation, unless circumstances warrant a delay. In such cases, the reasons for a delay shall be documented.
8. Consequences include suspension from any SCMR participation, including serving on leadership and committees and attending future meetings.

Process of filing complaints with the conference organizers, HHS Office for Civil rights, and NIH:

- Any individual affected by the incident who have questions may contact the conference organizers or the HHS Office for Civil rights (OCR, <https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/index.html>).

- The complainant may file a complaint with HHS OCR (<https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/complaints/index.html>).
- The complainant may file a complaint with HHS OCR without seeking assistance from the conference organizers.
- Individuals may also notify NIH about concerns of harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination, and other forms of inappropriate conduct at NIH-supported conferences (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/harassment/find-help.htm>).