

# EACTS members' guide to disruptive behaviour

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## Purpose of this guide

EACTS values are 'Act with integrity', 'Be dedicated to progress', 'Collaborate and learn together' and 'Strive for innovation', and these guide us in our day to day activities, both in the way we achieve our strategic goals and objectives, and the way we interact and collaborate with our people and members.

Our 'Professional Behaviour at EACTS' document establishes how these values inform our work as members, and the expected behaviours of everyone at EACTS. It codifies what good looks like and what we aspire to as an organisation.

With that in mind, this guide aims to provide:

- guidance in dealing with and managing disruptive behaviour for our members,
- our own internal procedures that we will undertake when receiving reports of disruptive behaviour.

# What is disruptive behaviour

Disruptive behaviour can be described as unwanted behaviour that is either;

- offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting
- an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone

Disruptive behaviour might:

- be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one off incident
- happen face to face, in emails or calls
- happen at work or in other work related situations
- not always be obvious or noticed by others

It's possible someone might not know their behaviour is disruptive. It can still be disruptive behaviour even if they do not realise it, or if they did not intend for it to be so.

## Why is disruptive behaviour a problem?

Disruptive behaviours have serious impacts on recipients' well-being and mental health. They impact the performance and job satisfaction of both recipients and observers, and also impact patient care.

- When our members were surveyed, 80% of respondents said they had either experienced or witnessed disruptive behaviours in the workplace.
- 47% of respondents said disruptive behaviours occurred weekly or more often.
- 29% of respondents said they thought they may have displayed disruptive behaviours themselves.
- 75% of respondents felt that disruptive behaviours either witnessed or experienced, had impacted their job satisfaction.
- 86% of respondents believed disruptive behaviours affected the overall work environment.
- And 65% of respondents believed disruptive behaviours affected patient care quality in the workplace.

Guidance on dealing with and witnessing disruptive behaviours, can be found in the [addendum](#) at the end of this document.

# EACTS disruptive behaviours policy

**This section of the document outlines EACTS commitments and processes for raising formal complaints regarding disruptive behaviours.**

Through our own research we know that disruptive behaviours have the potential to impact members' engagement, well-being and productivity.

We recognise that many of our members work in environments involving high levels of pressure and stress and this may affect individuals' behaviours.

EACTS seeks to mitigate some of these behaviours by raising awareness of their occurrence and the damage they may cause, while also providing tools for our members to better manage disruptive behaviour when it occurs.

Should members experience or witness disruptive behaviour as part of their work within their own organisation, we advise following the guidance outlined below in this document.

Within EACTS we expect our members to interact respectfully and collaboratively. Should members experience disruptive behaviours as part of their work with EACTS, we advise the following steps be taken:

- In the first instance, where possible, members should raise the issue of the disruptive behaviour with the perpetrator. This may need to be done after the fact if the member feels unable to do so in the moment
- Members who either a) do not feel comfortable addressing disruptive behaviour directly, or b) witness or experience further disruptive behaviour having previously addressed it with the perpetrator, should report the disruptive behaviour using one of the methods below. This will then trigger the reporting process.

## EACTS process for reporting disruptive behaviours

When reporting disruptive behaviours as a member you have two courses of action: In the first instance it is recommended that you speak to either your task force chair or head of committee as part of an informal complaint.

Should you need to escalate your complaint or if you feel the complaint warrants it in the first instance, you can press a formal complaint with the Chief Executive. The formal process is laid out below:

### Step1: Initial reporting:

Your initial report of disruptive behaviour should be sent by email to the Chief Executive. You should include details of when and where the incidents/s took place as well as what occurred. This email will remain confidential at this time.

### Step 2: Initial Assessment:

The Chief Executive will arrange a call with the reporter to discuss the details of the incident, the desired outcomes for the reporter and to agree next steps.

Next steps may include coaching of the reporter to manage the situation directly, mediation between the reporter and the perpetrator of the incident, or a formal investigation into the incident/ongoing behaviour. A confidential record of this conversation will be kept on file.

### Step 3: Formal investigation (where appropriate):

An investigation into the incident will be carried out with the perpetrator of the incident and any relevant witnesses, sensitively and respecting confidentiality where possible.

### Step 4: Assessment and Decision:

The severity and impact of the reported behaviour will be assessed. Appropriate actions will be determined based on investigation findings, such as mediation, counselling and/or training for relevant parties involved.

### Step 5: Communication and Follow-Up:

The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to both the reporter and the perpetrator of the incident.

### Ongoing support and intervention:

EACTS will provide support and resources to the victim(s) of disruptive behaviour, including counselling or other interventions as necessary.

We will also monitor the situation closely to ensure that reported behaviours do not persist.

## Handling disruptive behaviours as a task force chair/head of committee

As a task force chair/head of committee, you should take any complaint of disruptive behaviours seriously and look into it as soon as possible.

A complaint could come from:

- A member or colleague in the task force/committee about something they've experienced
- A member or colleague who's witnessed bullying or discrimination directed at someone else

You should look into the complaint in a way that's fair and sensitive to:

- the person who made the complaint
- anyone who witnessed it
- anyone accused of bullying or discrimination

If someone makes a complaint a long time after an incident has taken place, you should still take it seriously.

## Decide whether to handle it formally or informally

You should try to resolve a complaint informally if possible. This is usually quicker and less stressful for everyone. However, not every situation is suitable to handle informally.

How you handle the complaint will depend on:

- what the person making the complaint wants
- what your organisation's policy says
- how serious the issue is

You will need to speak to the person who's made the complaint before deciding how to handle it.

You should take what they would prefer into account. However, if you feel that what they'd like to happen is not appropriate, you should try to agree on the approach together.

If your colleague has made a formal complaint, you can encourage them to try resolving it informally first if you think that's appropriate.

If you cannot agree on an approach together, you'll need to decide the most appropriate way to handle it. If you're in any doubt, you should deal with it formally.

## EACTS ongoing commitments

As part of our commitment to creating a positive working environment within our organisation, we commit to the following actions:

- Implementation of preventive measures such as awareness campaigns, workshops, or policy reviews to address inappropriate behaviour with the committee and task force chairs.
- Regular review of reporting procedures and intervention strategies to ensure effectiveness (withing the working group on professional behaviour)
- Seek ongoing feedback from members and EACTS employees to continuously improve the handling of such incidents, i.e. through regular surveys
- Learn from incidents to identify trends and inform future prevention efforts
- Include feedback from members attending the EACTS courses and the annual meeting by adding questions to the evaluation of the events.

# Addendum

## Examples of disruptive behaviour

EACTS defines disruptive behaviour as falling into the categories below:

### Verbal abuse

Using harsh language, insults, or derogatory remarks towards colleagues or subordinates based on their behaviour or personal characteristics.

### Intimidation

Engaging in behaviour intended to create fear or anxiety in others, such as aggressive body language, threats, or shouting.

### Exclusion

Deliberately excluding certain individuals or groups from meetings, social activities, or opportunities for advancement.

### Undermining

Actively working to sabotage or undermine the efforts or reputation of others, often through spreading rumours, gossip, or misinformation.

### Microaggressions

Making subtle, often unintentional, remarks or actions that convey discriminatory attitudes or stereotypes towards people from marginalised groups.

### Withholding information

Deliberately withholding important information or resources from colleagues or team members in order to maintain power or control over them.

### Public humiliation

Criticising or belittling others in front of their peers or superiors, aiming to embarrass or demean them.

### Retaliation

Taking punitive action against individuals who speak up against discriminatory behaviour or report instances of bullying, such as reassigning tasks, denying promotions, or ostracising them from the team.

### Gaslighting

Manipulating others into questioning their own perceptions or experiences, often by denying or downplaying instances of bullying or discrimination when confronted.

### Harassment

Engaging in unwanted or unwelcome behaviour of a sexual, racial, or other discriminatory nature, including inappropriate comments, gestures, or physical contact.