
BCDSS Code of Conduct

Dear member/guest,

Welcome to the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS).

The BCDSS is committed to creating and maintaining a work, learning, and research environment where all members feel safe, respected, and heard. Here, we welcome students and researchers from all over the world, and we believe that our internationality and diversity in language, gender, sexuality, religion, beliefs, race, age, physical abilities, and socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds is one of our greatest assets and a promoter of excellent science.

This Code of Conduct outlines the behavior that we expect all BCDSS members and guests to abide by during all activities and across online and offline spaces to maintain a respectful, trusting, and non-discriminatory cooperative environment at the Cluster.

As a BCDSS member/guest, please make sure to be mindful of the following:

- **Consider your word choice and communicate constructively.** Please consider that you are part of an international, diverse academic community. When speaking to others or communicating your views or requests, please do so with kindness and be sensitive to potential conflict. Freedom of speech does not imply that it is acceptable to insult or put down others personally or their beliefs when communicating with them. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Avoiding discriminatory jokes or personal attacks and insults.
 - Avoiding racist, antisemitic, sexist, anti-gay, transphobic, ageist, ableist, or sexist terms (including implicit gender bias and normative oppressive expectations of gender performance).
 - Referring to your classmates and colleagues by their stated names and pronouns.
 - Making sure to communicate your requests and needs politely when addressing all BCDSS members.
 - Respecting other members' and guests' religious beliefs and practices during academic discussions that engage critically with religious constructs. Please respect religious differences and attempt to avoid making others uncomfortable or offended when discussing their religious beliefs or worldviews.
 - When you disagree with someone, try to understand their viewpoint and accept that they have the right to hold views that contradict your own perceptions. Aim to resolve such disagreements and differing opinions constructively.
- **Refrain from verbal and physical harassment.** The BCDSS enforces a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of violence or harassment. As a member/guest, you are expected to:
 - Familiarize yourself with and abide by the Universität Bonn's '*Guidelines for Protection against Sexualized Discrimination and Violence*', available online in English^[1] and German^[2]. The Guideline lists various acts and behaviors that fall under sexual harassment and violence, including but not limited to inappropriate, sexualized comments, inappropriate questions concerning the private or intimate lives of individuals, and inappropriate physical closeness or unwanted touching.
 - Avoid any violent threats or language directed against another person.
 - Avoid any repeated harassment of others. In general, if someone asks you to stop, then stop and always respect a "No" as a "No," once and forever.
 - Avoid engaging in bullying, cyberbullying, verbal assault, or the defamation of others.

- **When possible, assume that communications are positive.** Misunderstandings are highly probable in culturally diverse settings like ours where individuals are accustomed to different communication styles, or when people are communicating under stress. When this happens, remain polite and assume good faith. Ask for clarification before assuming that a communication was inappropriate, and remember that you have the right to call out inappropriate behavior and clarify how you wish to be addressed or treated by others.
- **You have the right to speak up and seek support.** All BCDSS members are encouraged to speak up against incidents of discrimination or harassment and to report them. Please note that:
 - All BCDSS members and guests must comply with the BCDSS Antidiscrimination Policy[3] and adhere to its behavioral guidelines. The policy clarifies available complaint procedures for acts of sexual harassment, bullying, and identity-based discrimination at the BCDSS and Uni Bonn. These procedures include informal processes (such as being able to seek advice, counseling, or mediation) and formal procedures, including the filing of legal complaints at Uni Bonn, which may result in a confidential investigation of allegations and disciplinary measures taken against violators.
 - It is essential to trust your senses and perception and not ignore your or somebody else's discomfort in situations charged with potential or tangible harassment.
 - Please reach out to those who might be suffering from harassment and offer your support. Sometimes, listening with empathy is all the support they need. Suppose you or another BCDSS member experience discrimination or harassment. In that case, you can reach out to any member of the BCDSS Antidiscrimination Team, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator at BCDSS, or the Equal Opportunity Representative. Their contacts can be found on the DEI Team[4] page of the BCDSS website.
 - Complaints, whether oral, written, anonymously, or non-anonymously submitted, will be handled with the utmost discretion. Any decisions to take further actions, such as attempting mediation (having a discrete conversation with the suspected member of the BCDSS) or filing official complaints, are executed only after the person who observed or experienced harassment gives their explicit consent.
 - In cases of emergencies or threats to safety, you can call the Uni Bonn Campus Security directly. You can find their contacts and other emergency contact information on the Emergency Contacts[5] page of the BCDSS website.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the contents of the above Code of Conduct.

Date

Name

[1] [richtlinie zum schutz vor sexualisierter diskriminierung final en.pdf \(uni-bonn.de\)](#)

[2] [Amtl. Bek. 23006.pdf \(uni-bonn.de\)](#)

[3] [BCSS Antidiscriminationolicy \(uni-bonn.de\)](#)

[4] [DEI Team — BCDSS \(uni-bonn.de\)](#)

[5] [Emergency Contacts — BCDSS \(uni-bonn.de\)](#)