

IOA Organizational Values and Community Norms

How Participants in International Ombuds Association (IOA) activities respectfully interact with each other matters¹. To help clarify expectations and establish a safe and respectful environment for all, regardless of IOA membership status, IOA has defined Organizational Values and Community Norms for the Association². Our goal is to create a positive, sustainable culture that honors the dignity of each Participant³, and to provide a framework so Participants know what to expect of each other.

Participants' attendance at or participation in any IOA Activity will be deemed to be an agreement to abide by these Values and Norms⁴.

IOA Organizational Values

These values have been adopted from IOA's Code of Ethics and will guide interactions that take place *within* the association between all Participants⁵:

- Act with honesty and integrity
- Promote fairness and support fair process
- Be open minded, and act with empathy and respect for individual differences
- Promote dignity, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging
- Communicate accurate understanding through active listening; and
- Enable individual empowerment, self-determination, and collaborative problem-solving.

¹ For purposes of these Values and Norms, "Participants" includes all IOA Members (as defined by IOA Bylaws), attendees, staff, consultants/contractors, media representatives, speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, other vendors, volunteers, organizers, and other guests who attend or participate in any IOA Activity.

² These Organizational values Community Norms will be piloted from March 2023-June 2024. This will help inform what educational efforts and other interventions may be needed.

³ IOA defines dignity as the belief that all humans have equal worth and value. The ten elements of dignity, as defined by Donna Hicks, include Acceptance of identity, Recognition, Acknowledgement, Inclusion, Safety (physical and psychological), Fairness, Independence, Understanding, Benefit of the doubt, and Accountability.

⁴Participants will be reminded that these values and norms apply when registering for an activity, renewing membership, and other opportune times.

⁵ These Organizational Values and Community Norms guide Participant behavior *in* IOA activities and do not extend beyond IOA activities.

IOA Community Norms

As a Participant:

1. I will behave with dignity, treating myself and others in a way that is respectful at all times.
2. Humility, thoughtfulness, generosity and IOA's organizational values will guide my interactions.
3. I am responsible for my words and actions, and I will make space to openly listen if they impact others⁶.
4. When I witness or experience a breach of IOA's Organizational Values or these Community Norms, I am empowered and encouraged to stand up, speak up and call in. Inaction and silence harm IOA's culture and intended clarity of expectations.
5. I will demonstrate respect for each individual throughout IOA. I honor current chains of command and direct my suggestions and contributions through appropriate channels.
6. I agree to abide by these norms and will remove myself from IOA Activities if I cannot.

These values and norms are not designed to inhibit dissenting views or constructive debate. They are intended to remind all IOA Participants to bring their best selves to their interactions, and to respect the dignity of all IOA Participants in all IOA sponsored activities regardless of their perspective, background, age, religious beliefs, lived experience, cultural background or state of practice.

These Organizational Values and Community Norms are a framework for all Participants and support a collectively created, nurtured and reinforced culture. Participants, including bystanders, are encouraged and invited to self-advocate as needed, and/or to utilize the services of IOA's Ombuds for additional support.

IOA will provide education around these Values and Norms, and is committed to annual review after the initial pilot⁷ to assess and modify, as needed.

⁶ While hopefully unintentional, there have been times when participants have used words that are perceived as hurtful to others or that resulted in a psychologically unsafe environment for some. This norm is intended to shine light on that behavior and asks participants to be open to recognizing and hearing impact.

⁷ We welcome feedback: <https://forms.gle/zQ8VGGeAKHGLeZv68>