

SETI POLICY ON INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

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SETI has a duty to protect the public, including its members, from any therapist who is known, or reasonably should be known, to pose a possible danger as a therapist or to the SETI community. Accordingly, SETI should take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment or other professional therapist misconduct from occurring within the context of SE therapy and training. If SETI acquires information that suggests that an incident occurred, whether it be a formal or informal report, or if an incident observed by another member of the SETI community, SETI should promptly investigate and take appropriate corrective action. While advising a complainant to report possible therapist misconduct to the appropriate state therapy board is important, SETI's duty goes further, in that it must investigate and take appropriate, prompt remedial action.

1: Incident Reporting

An aggrieved individual may report an alleged incident to anyone with whom they feel comfortable, and may not be reasonably expected to know the internal reporting protocol. (For example, regarding the incident which is currently being investigated, the individual reported the incident to the lead assistant but was told nothing can be done about it, then went to the BOD, likely because she did not know to whom she should report the incident). **Everyone involved in trainings or administration of SETI should be trained on how to receive a report of harassment with sensitivity and route it through appropriate internal channels).** The complainant should not be expected to know how our internal procedures or to satisfy any formalities that we may find convenient, because added procedures and formalities may be viewed as a deterrent to reporting of this important information.

2. Develop a Plan for Prompt Investigation

Prompt investigation is important. After a report is received, SETI and its Board should promptly confer to determine who should investigate and outline the intended steps. If the investigation is conducted by an employee, that employee should be trained in how to conduct an inquiry. I recommend reference to the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's \(EEOC\)](#) guidelines on how to conduct an effective inquiry into unlawful employment harassment, as a starting point. Otherwise, SETI should take steps to ensure that the investigating employee is properly prepared.

3. Documentation

All interviews and steps taken should be carefully documented. Witness statements should be signed by the witnesses. When offering conclusions about a witness' credibility, the investigator should set forth the objective basis for his determination. For example, the witness' demeanor and motives, the extent of corroboration by other witnesses or evidence, and any history of similar accusations or conduct should all be documented.

4. Interviews

Start by interviewing the complainant, and ask the complainant to identify any witnesses who

might have relevant information. The accused must also be interviewed, along with anyone else who SETI determines may have relevant information. SETI must determine whether the organization has any prior information on the accused's conduct, and retain information about this incident indefinitely, for future reference.

5. Confidentiality

All information relating to a reported incident must be retained securely and subject to strict confidentiality, to be shared with anyone within and outside the organization ONLY if necessary to further the investigation or remediation of the alleged problem.

6. Take Interim Remedial Measures During the Investigation

If helpful to SETI or the complainant, some interim remedial measures should be considered to ensure that no further harm comes to the complainant while the investigation is ongoing.

7. Retaliation

SETI must inform everyone in the organization that retaliation against a person who reports inappropriate conduct or harassment, is strictly prohibited, and SETI should remind everyone of this fact frequently (e.g add it to the email confirming the interview time and place, mention it at the end of the interview, etc). Document your reminders to individuals regarding prohibited retaliation.

8. Do Not Pre-Judge, and Bring Results of the Investigation Promptly to the Board

The Board and Executive Director must receive the information and make the ultimate determinations regarding fault and remedy. Take all complaints seriously, promptly investigate, be respectful to everyone, and focus on effective gathering of information. The issues presented by a complaint are often complex and should not be pre-judged or handled hastily.