Anti-Harassment Policy

Samvera Anti-Harassment Policy

Samvera is dedicated to providing a harassment-free community experience for everyone. Samvera, previously known as Project Hydra, was conceived and executed as a collaborative, open source effort from its very beginning, committed to openness and transparency in all that it does: code, designs, discussions. We are equally committed to helpful and respectful communication.

Samvera has established the following policy & protocol to make it clear that we do not tolerate harassment in any form. Sexual or discriminatory language and imagery is not appropriate for any event venue, including talks, or any community channel such as Slack-based chatrooms or mailing lists.

Harassment includes: offensive verbal comments related to sex, gender, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, age, race, religion; sexual or discriminatory images in public spaces; deliberate intimidation; stalking; harassing photography or recording; sustained disruption of talks or other events; inappropriate physical contact; and unwelcome sexual attention.

Participants in Samvera communication channels violating the anti-harassment policy may be sanctioned or expelled at the discretion of the organizers of the meeting (if the channel is an in-person event) or the Samvera Steering Group (if the channel is online).

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

If a participant engages in harassing behavior, event organizers and Steering Group representatives (or their designees) may take any action they deem appropriate, including warning the offender, expulsion from the meeting or other community channels, or contacting a higher authority such as a representative from the offender’s institution.

Participants are expected to follow the anti-harassment policy at all meeting venues, meeting-related social events, community gatherings, and online communication channels.

We value your participation in the Samvera Community and your support in keeping it a safe, welcoming, and friendly space for fellow participants!

Protocol for Conflict Resolution

Initial Incident

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, and you feel comfortable speaking with the offender, please inform the offender that he/she/ze has affected you negatively. Oftentimes, the offending behavior is unintentional, and the accidental offender and offended will resolve the incident by having that initial discussion.

The Samvera Community recognizes that there are many reasons speaking directly to the offender may not be workable for you (including but not limited to unfamiliarity with the conference or its participants, lack of spoons, and concerns for personal safety). If you don’t feel comfortable speaking directly with the offender for any reason, skip straight to Escalation.

Escalation

If the offender insists that he/she/ze did not offend, or if the offender is actively harassing you, or if direct engagement is not a good option for you at this time, then you will need a third party to step in.

If you are at a conference or other event, find the on-call Samvera Community Helpers (email) or the event organizer or staff person, who should be wearing an identifiable Samvera Community Helpers badge or a rainbow lanyard. If you can’t find any of these, there will be other staff available to help if the situation calls for immediate action.

If you are in the Samvera Community Slack, contact one of the Samvera Community Helpers via direct message. You can direct message the Community Helper of your choice by clicking the + next to Direct Message and typing in their name.

Process for Samvera Community Helpers

Reporters should receive an acknowledgment of their report within one business day. Follow up on a report should be completed within 1 week.

After you have spoken to the offender, follow up with the reporter. You can talk to them in person or send them an email.

If the report was determined to be a Code of Conduct violation, follow up with the reporter to:

- Outline what behavioral modification plan was given to the offender.
- Make sure to mention if the offender was told not to contact the reporter.
- Thank them for their report.
- Ask them to make an additional report if any other behavior makes them feel unsafe or unwelcome.

If the report was determined not to be a Code of Conduct violation, follow up with the reporter to:

- Thank them for their report.
- Outline why the report was not a Code of Conduct violation, and/or not in scope for the community’s Code of Conduct.
- Give the contact information of a person/group they can appeal to, should they have concerns about how this report was handled.

If handling the report takes longer than 1 week, then the Samvera Community Helpers will need to send an update to the reporter:
If you cannot find the offender at an event, give the reporter daily updates as you search for the offender. If the committee is waiting on additional information, give the reporter an estimated timeline for when the committee will finish their discussion. Once the discussion deadline has passed, follow up with a new deadline.

The Samvera Community Helpers should send an email acknowledging receipt of possible Code of Conduct incident(s) within one business day. Reporters should receive an email back with the committee’s decisions and actions taken within 1 week. If deliberations are taking longer than a week, you should email the reporter letting them know that the report will take more time to handle.

Once a decision has been made, the Samvera Community Helpers involved in the reports should send a summary of the incident to the Steering Committee, which will be retained by Steering in its document archive.

Wider community response to Incident

If the incident is resolved in the first step, then there's not much the community can do at this point since the incident was remedied without outside intervention.

If incident results in corrective action, the community should support the decision made by the Helpers if they choose corrective action, like ending a talk early or banning from the listserv, as well as support those harmed by the incident, either publicly or privately (whatever individuals are comfortable with). If the Helpers run into issues implementing the Code of Conduct, then the Helpers should come to the community with these issues and the community should revise the Code of Conduct as they see fit.

In Real Life people will have opinions about how the Code of Conduct is enforced. People will argue that a particular decision was unfair, and others will say that it didn't go far enough. We can't stop people having opinions, but what we could do here is have constructive discussions that lead to something tangible (affirmation of decision, change in Code of Conduct, modify decision, etc.).

Sanctions

Participants asked to stop any offending behavior are expected to comply immediately. If a participant engages in offending behavior, Community Helpers may take any action they deem appropriate, including warning the offender, expulsion from the Samvera event, or banning the offender from a chatroom or mailing list.

Specific sanctions may include but are not limited to:

- warning the offender to cease their behavior and that any further reports will result in other sanctions
- requiring that the offender avoid any interaction with, and physical proximity to, their victim for the remainder of the event
- early termination of a talk that violates the policy
- not publishing the video or slides of a talk that violated the policy
- not allowing a speaker who violated the policy to give (further) talks at the event
- immediately ending any event volunteer responsibilities and privileges the offender holds requiring that the offender not volunteer for future Samvera events (either indefinitely or for a certain time period)
- requiring that the offender immediately leave the event and not return
- banning the offender from future events (either indefinitely or for a certain time period)
- banning the offender from any (or all) Samvera Community channels
- publishing an account of the offending event

Samvera event organizers and Community Helpers can be identified by their name badges, and will help participants contact hotel/venue security or local law enforcement, provide escorts, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment to feel safe for the duration of the event.

In the case of organized events, those responsible for the event should have readily available the following information:

- Conference organizers: TBD for UCSB Santa Barbara Connect
- Recommended Hotels:
- Sexual Assault/Crisis Hotlines:
- Taxi Companies:
- Samvera Community Helpers: helpers@samvera.org

Acknowledgments

Portions of this policy are based on the Ada Initiative's event harassment policy, the Code4Lib Code of Conduct, Otter Tech's Code of Conduct template, and SageSharp's Code of Conduct template.