



Discrimination, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Action Plan

February 2018

Foreword

As the peak professional organisation for emergency medicine in Australia and New Zealand, ACEM has a duty to the emergency medicine profession and the wider community. Part of this entails training a sustainable emergency medicine workforce that provides high quality patient care and upholds the highest possible professional standards in emergency medicine.

In late 2016 the ACEM Board initiated a project to investigate discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment (DBSH) in emergency medicine. The College's DBSH Project was overseen by a working group comprised of trainees, new Fellows and senior Fellows from Australia and New Zealand, supported by College staff.

The ACEM Board would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the large number of trainees and members who took the time to contribute to the project throughout its two phases. The Board appreciates that these contributions have been honest, passionate, and at times difficult to provide and confronting to read. Nevertheless, it is these honest contributions that enabled the project to meet its primary objective of enabling the College to develop strategies to address the issues of DBSH in the practise of emergency medicine.

This action plan is the culmination of work conducted through the DBSH Project and has been developed following widespread consultation with ACEM's trainees and members, and which included a survey of trainee and membership experiences of DBSH in emergency medicine, and two consultations to inform an action plan.

Emergency specialists are leaders in the emergency department, and in the wider health system. We believe the initiatives in the action plan will empower ACEM trainees and members to lead culture change in emergency departments and hospitals.

The ACEM Board is committed to the long term implementation of this action plan. A *Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group*, reporting to the Board, will be established to oversee its implementation. The Steering Group will also be tasked with evaluating progress against the action plan after three years.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Judkins', written in a cursive style.

Dr Simon Judkins
President
Australasian College for Emergency Medicine

Theme 1: Culture Change and Leadership

Goal

1.1 Institute and support healthy workplace cultures, leadership and professionalism in emergency medicine.

Recommendations

1.1.1 Establish a set of **core values** that clearly define expectations of Fellows, trainees and staff. This will include a broad consultation process and dissemination and incorporation of the core values into all aspects of College business.

1.1.2 Develop and conduct a **long-term campaign** to communicate and demonstrate ACEM's core values and commitment to leadership and patient safety.

1.1.3 **1.1.3.1**

Develop one **Core Values Online Training Module** as a CPD activity that will include:

- + ACEM's core values;
- + Expectations of members' behaviour;
- + Understanding professional standards and legal obligations;
- + Leadership in calling out DBSH and building healthy ED cultures; and
- + Constructive feedback and having difficult conversations.

1.1.3.2

Consider completion of the Core Values Online Training Module by all FACEMs as a CPD activity during 2018-2020.

1.1.3.3

Mandate that DEMENTs complete either the Core Values Online Training Module or the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons' **'Operating with Respect'** online module by the end of 2018.

The Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (see 2.1) will monitor completion of the modules and make the results publicly available.

1.1.4 Consider development of a **New Trainee Orientation Resource** for new trainees entering the FACEM Training Program. The resource will also be included as part of Emergency Medicine Certificate and Diploma training.

Content could include:

- + ACEM core values online training resource;
- + Complaints pathways and support available;
- + Understanding of how to participate in College governance structures and decision making;
- + Strategies for calling out bad behaviour and addressing bystander silence;
- + Cultural competency (could link to other ACEM resources already developed);
- + Giving constructive feedback and having difficult conversations;
- + Basic leadership training;
- + Wellbeing (mindfulness/resilience/emotional intelligence).

1.1.5 Conduct a **biennial membership wellbeing survey**. The survey would include questions relating to experiences of DBSH, general member wellbeing and engagement of the membership with the College. The survey can be used to monitor our progress in addressing DBSH and advocating for hospital system reform. Engagement data would be useful for the ACEM Communication and Engagement Department.

1.1.6 **1.1.6.1**

Ensure that **ACEM staff receive the training** necessary to enable them to provide high quality customer service with confidence. This includes training in regard to cultural competency and courses on recognising and dealing with DBSH behaviours.

1.1.6.2

As part of this action and the ongoing commitment to College improvement, review College communications to ensure they are appropriate to optimise the recommendations in this plan.

Goal

1.2 Foster leadership, mentoring and accountability

Recommendations

1.2.1 Offer an **ACEM Leadership Program** as part of ACEM CPD, and encourage all members to undertake at least some components of leadership training. The leadership program should be part of the College's 'member offer' and should be designed in such a way that our membership will see the value in completing it. Uptake will be monitored and reported by the *Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group*.

The program could include:

- + Emotional intelligence;
 - + Resilience in maintaining professional behaviour;
 - + Constructive feedback and having difficult conversations;
 - + Cultural awareness and diversity;
 - + Understanding professional standards and legal obligations;
 - + Leadership in calling out DBSH; and
 - + How to participate in College governance structures and College decision making.
-

1.2.2 Ensure Directors of Emergency Medicine have the opportunity for mentoring and support through **ACEM's Mentoring Program** (see also 1.2.3), as well as:

- + Wellbeing Awards (1.3.1);
 - + Establish partnerships with hospitals to address DBSH in emergency medicine (1.4.1); and
 - + Guide for hospital CEOs and Boards (5.1.5).
-

1.2.3 1.2.3.1

Strengthen and embed the **ACEM Mentoring Program** to ensure that:

- + All Fellows, SIMGs and trainees have access to quality mentoring;
- + ACEM trainees have access to a mentor who is not involved in their supervision and training if they would like this option; and
- + The effectiveness of this program is carefully monitored, with results reported to the Board and COE.

1.2.3.2

Strengthen ACEM's mentoring program by utilising external mentoring expertise alongside ACEM's mentoring reference group with the aims of:

- + Embedding mentoring as a standard support mechanism for all trainees and FACEMs;
- + Establishing an Australian and New Zealand wide matching process for mentors and mentees (this could be an online platform, or another mechanism informed by best practice);
- + Ensuring our online resources are best practice, and an induction/orientation is provided to all ACEM mentors and mentees;
- + Ensuring the program is well-resourced and supported;
- + Ensuring there is a robust evaluation process in place; and
- + Establishing a Mentor Program Coordinator role to oversee the program.

Goal

1.3 Celebrate healthy workplaces, leadership and professionalism in emergency medicine

Recommendations

1.3.1 1.3.1.1

Administer an annual **ACEM Wellbeing Award** that recognises the achievement of an individual member, group of members or whole department in enhancing wellbeing for their emergency department.

1.3.1.2

Consider establishing a 'Wellbeing Excellence Register' on the ACEM website as a repository for award finalists' stories to increase trainee and membership engagement.

1.3.1.3

Consider adjudication of the awards by the proposed Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (see 2.1).

1.3.1.4

Consider presenting the awards at the annual ASM gala dinner.

Goal

1.4 Cultivate relationships of trust, confidence and cooperation on DBSH issues with employers

Recommendations

-
- ### 1.4.1
- Explore the development of effective and practical mechanisms, such as partnerships with hospitals, or the use of ACEM Accreditation requirements, to address DBSH in emergency medicine departments.
-

Theme 2: Governance

Goal

2. Increase diversity on College entities to reflect the demographics of the ACEM membership, and ensure that efforts to increase diversity on College governance structures are evaluated and regularly reported to the Board and broader membership.

Recommendations

- 2.1 Establish a *Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group* reporting to the ACEM Board, with the following functions:
- + Establish and monitor a **Governance Diversity Action Plan** (see 2.2) for ACEM, which will include a strategy to recruit diverse memberships to all College entities, particularly the major governance entities;
 - + Produce an annual Governance Diversity Report for benchmarking;
 - + Monitor ACEM's initiatives to support the wellbeing of trainees and Fellows (including completion rates of CPD training for leadership training and core values training);
 - + Monitor the progress and implementation of the DBSH action plan;
 - + Provide advice and guidance on the implementation of the DBSH action plan; and
 - + Monitor and advise on the implementation of the ACEM Wellbeing Award.
- 2.2 Establish a **Governance Diversity Action Plan** with the goal of increasing diversity on ACEM governance structures. The action plan will be monitored by the *Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group*. Activities will include the actions associated with recommendations 2.3 to 2.9, inclusive.
- 2.3 Set a target of 40 per cent female representation by March 2020 on the ACEM Board, Council of Advocacy, Practice and Partnerships (CAPP) and Council of Education (COE).
- 2.4 The President, the Chairs of CAPP and COE, and chairs of all committees and working groups of the College will actively encourage nominations from women and under-represented groups on College entities, so as to reflect the diversity of our membership.
- 2.5 Ensure that members and trainees are provided with regular, accessible information as to how they can participate in College governance structures (this should also be included in the proposed New Trainee's Orientation Resource and the ACEM Leadership Program).
- 2.6 Recruitment policies for all College entities will state that ACEM strongly encourages and supports diversity on all entities. Where a position on an entity remains unfilled, the College will aim to fill that position with consideration to gender and cultural diversity.
- 2.7 That a **Governance Diversity Report** on the composition of ACEM Governance structures be produced, provided to the Board at regular intervals and published annually, to highlight areas where particular member groups are under-represented.
- 2.8 Through a mentoring program, encourage under-represented groups to apply for membership of the Board and other governance structures.

-
- 2.9** Review the terms of reference for the *Trainee Committee* to strengthen representation of trainees' interests in College governance. Mechanisms to strengthen support for trainees could include:
- + More than one regional representative in states with more than 400 trainees (QLD, NSW, VIC);
 - + More than one representative in New Zealand (consider one urban and one regional/rural representative);
 - + Regional trainee meetings;
 - + Trainee online forum;
 - + Representatives from the Trainee Committee to sit on the proposed Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group; and
 - + A review of the mechanisms/eligibility requirement for election of the trainee member to the ACEM Board.
-

Theme 3: Education and Training

Goal

3 Improve the capability of all members involved in emergency medicine training and assessment to provide effective education based on the principles of respect, transparency and professionalism

Recommendations

-
- 3.1** Ensure the College has mechanisms in place that ensure the requirements of the Australian Medical Council Reaccreditation Standard 8.1 are met in regard to:
- + Selection and recruitment of DEMENTs and supervisors;
 - + Monitoring performance and supervision of DEMENTs and supervisors; and
 - + Training and support of DEMENTs and supervisors.
-
- 3.2** Consider whether additional action is required in order to ensure that ACEM DEMENTs and supervisors are aware of their leadership role in creating healthy workplace cultures in the ED, calling out DBSH behaviours, and understanding professional standards and legal obligations.
-
- 3.3** Ensure mechanisms are in place to minimise conflict of interest between DEMENTs and the conduct of their training and assessment responsibilities.
-
- 3.4** Consider undertaking work to ensure the potential of the *ACEM Curriculum Framework* to build the critical skills of trainees in the areas of leadership and management, professionalism, teamwork and collaboration, and communication is optimised through appropriate assessment modalities.
-
- 3.5** Ensure ACEM accreditation teams are constituted to reflect the diversity of trainees and the membership.
-

Theme 4: Complaints Management and Appeals

Goal

- 4** Revise and strengthen ACEM's complaints management process to ensure Fellows, trainees and Specialist International Medical Graduates have confidence in and are protected by the process

Recommendations

- 4.1** That the Board review all policies and procedures relating to the College's Complaints Management system to ensure it meets the requirements of best practice, including mechanisms by which complaints may be submitted in order to afford maximum confidence in the process, but still acknowledges and protect the rights of both the complainant and the respondent.
- 4.2** That the Board consider the development of an interactive complaints pathway webpage on the ACEM website that clearly articulates the options available to members individually, through their hospital or via the College.
- 4.3** That the Board support the recommendations of the EAG in relation to the College's *Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy*.

Theme 5: Advocacy

Goal

- 5** Advocate on behalf of members and trainees on issues that impact their safety and wellbeing

Recommendations

- 5.1** Increase advocacy efforts to address access block and ED overcrowding through the development and implementation of an access block strategy.
- 5.2** Develop standards on best practice rostering that can be used to advocate on issues such as predictability and planning for pregnancy, parental leave, caregiver roles, and outside employment etc.
- 5.3** Develop tailored advocacy briefings and templates for Faculties to support their own local advocacy.
- 5.4** Consider increased resourcing to assist Faculties in their local advocacy efforts.
- 5.5** Develop a guide for hospital CEOs and Boards that DEMs (and members and ACEM Policy and Advocacy staff) can use for advocacy in relation to ACEM's best practice recommendations for:
- + Staff rostering and clinical/clinical-support time and other relevant HR issues;
 - + Supporting and promoting wellbeing; and
 - + Handling DBSH.
- The guide would also include best practice case studies from EDs.

Australasian College for Emergency Medicine

34 Jeffcott Street
West Melbourne VIC 3003

t +61 3 9320 0444

f +61 3 9320 0400

e admin@acem.org.au

acem.org.au

