

January 31, 2021

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Dear Shambhala Community,

We hope that you are well and safe. In this email, you will find a summary of the key points relating to the **New Shambhala Code of Conduct** implementation and procedures that go into effect on Shambhala Day 2021.

This communication includes:

- A description and link to the **Procedure Documents**
- An outline of the **Phased Implementation Approach**
- Links to the **Code of Conduct Facilitator and Council Member position descriptions**, for which we are hoping qualified volunteers will apply. This is a call for dedicated practitioners and community members like you to bring the new Code of Conduct to life.

Introduction

In July 2020 we released the new Shambhala International Code of Conduct together with its five policy provisions. Please review the Code and the Policies together with the Board's introduction on the [Code of Conduct Hub Website](#). The new Code of Conduct and policies are part of a large body of work done not only in response to issues of past conduct, but to provide reasonable guidelines, structure and human resources to create a common understanding and a reliable container for members to move forward on our mutual path towards a good human society. (See [Board Introduction to](#)

[the Code](#) dated August 3, 2020.)

Other elements that have been introduced include the [Therapy and Counselling Offering](#), the [Right Use of Power training](#), the earlier training with Robert Wright, [Sexual Harm, Trauma, and the Healing Journey](#), and ongoing work around issues of discrimination and inclusion.

The Code of Conduct Procedures

The new Code goes into effect on Shambhala Day, February 12, 2021 (the “Effective Date”). The new Code will not be retroactive. The Code covers all activities within Shambhala and applies to everyone. As such, it is a tremendous undertaking to make sure that the Code is applied equally and fairly.

Since we released the Code, the Code of Conduct Support Group (CCSG), members of the Board, and the Director of Community Care and Conduct, along with many consultants and advisors, have been hard at work developing the Procedures to accompany the Code (the “Code Procedures”) by which complaints and concerns will be handled in Shambhala. In addition, the Board has drawn heavily upon the many years of experience of the Care and Conduct Panel in applying and working with the current Care and Conduct Policy. The Board and the community owe these individuals a huge debt of gratitude for this work product.

- Click [Here](#) to access the **Code of Conduct Procedures**
- Click [Here](#) to access **“What to do if you have a concern”** document

The new Code Procedures are designed to help address the many difficult experiences reported in the [2019 Care and Conduct Survey](#).

How we deal with misconduct in Shambhala in the future needs to be trustworthy. For this to be possible, we must work together in a way that is caring, while ensuring accountability, transparent, yet respectful of individual privacy. The Code Procedures aim to address complaints in a way that is just and fair, that serves and provides protection for communities, and actively supports reconciliation and rebuilding trust wherever possible.

To a certain extent, the Code Procedures draw on traditional civic and internationally agreed-upon principles of dispute resolution and procedural fairness, such as notice and opportunity to be heard, fact finding, and investigation. This also includes application of standards (the Code) to such facts by impartial, trained people, a decision which involves both kindness, accountability and consequences, and then a limited appeal from the initial decision. The CCSG viewed these values and standards, which could be summarized as due process or fundamental fairness, as worthy, if not essential, to the Code Procedures. The Code Procedures build upon these norms in several very important ways:

- The Code and its Procedures are founded on and immersed in the Shambhala principles, practice, and experience of basic goodness, warriorship, and working with others in order to create and make manifest good human society. The Code is both path and practice. In this regard, we intend to incorporate our considerable teachings and inheritance from both Sakyongs and the years of experience and training of the Dorje Kasung and the Desung corps.
- The Code Procedures attempt to lessen the first resort to an adversarial method in a number of ways, such as: a.) the initial emphasis on local resolution, the presence and active involvement of “facilitators” at the local level; b.) the training in, and options to use, a number of “restorative processes”; and c.) lastly, differentiating accountability from “punishment” in the “protective and rebalancing measures”.
- Related to the above, we have tried to balance, as have so many other Western institutions: a.) the initial credibility accorded to a “reporting person” and the protection of a responding party from unfounded claims; and b.) the accessibility and transparency of the process (even with “Anonymous Claims”) and the necessary confidentiality required to protect all involved. For example, in that regard, we have provided for cases to be “removed” from the “local” level where conditions are unworkable; c.) We have also tried to balance an efficient, confidential, and expeditious process with open communication and genuine care for the parties involved.

A Phased Implementation

The Board, after reviewing the plan to roll out the Code and infrastructure with many people, including the CCSG, has decided to implement it in stages. The Covid crisis gives us the opportunity to devote needed time to recruiting, training and putting in place the people required to implement and administer the Code.

During this phased roll out, the current Care and Conduct Panel has generously agreed to continue to serve on an interim basis as the panel (equivalent to the international Council) as a way to support the transition to the new Code of Conduct.

As situations arise under the new Code, the Code Procedure will be tried, tested and refined. We encourage the community to give [feedback](#) on these procedures. The Office of Community Care and Conduct, in consultation with the Panel and new Council members, will serve as a resource and help desk to support centres and groups as situations arise under the new Code (contact codeofconduct@shambhala.org).

A Call for Volunteers

We are recruiting at this time for people to be trained and fill and carry out certain roles who will serve as the core personnel of the [Code Procedures](#) and its application: Code of Conduct Facilitator, Regional Council, and International Council Member. The roles are not new, in the sense that they have been carried out at various formal and informal levels in the past, but they are critical to the credible functioning of the Code. We would like to hear from people who are inspired to fill these roles. We seek to recruit ten (10) people at the outset.

- **A minimum of four (4) [Code of Conduct Facilitators \(CCFs\)](#)** who will serve as local reference points for those involved to navigate the Code of Conduct process. CCFs will receive and respond to concerns and complaints and coordinate the stages of the process for the parties involved in it. The CCF role is critical to the experience of individuals involved, for the community affected, and for progress to a successful conclusion. Responsibilities may include arranging local reconciliation or group processes, when desired by parties, and following through and monitoring the success of outcomes. CCFs liaise with the Council roles below. While CCFs may be based in a local centre, they will be serving multiple communities as the need arises.
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- **A minimum of three (3) [Regional and three \(3\) International Council Members](#)** will receive formal complaints, and when needed, oversee an investigation. The International Council will receive complaints concerning people who have a global role in Shambhala, and hear appeals if needed. The Councils are responsible for determining what happened and deciding the best way forward, in consultation with both parties and with the community as appropriate. Protective measures may be needed; remedies may need to be applied. The Code of Conduct procedures are aimed to ensure to the greatest extent possible that the process is managed impartially, equitably and efficiently, and that the wellbeing of the individuals and communities affected is safeguarded and promoted.
- All Code of Conduct Facilitators and Council Members will participate in ongoing training in the Code Procedures, Right Use of Power, Gender Dynamics and other key areas.

You can find the full description of these roles, the qualities that are required, and how to apply, [at this link](#).

Why volunteer to serve in one of these positions? First, it offers an opportunity to bring benefit to individuals and communities in our sangha. Second, you will have opportunities to apply your expertise and skillful means in an area of sangha life that needs repair and increased confidence. Third, the training will deepen your understanding in many areas of communication, care and dispute resolution. A small monthly stipend is also offered. If you wish to ask any questions regarding the roles, please write to tara.templin@shambhalaglobal.org

If one of these opportunities resonates with you, you are warmly invited to apply. We also encourage you to explore the new [Code of Conduct Hub](#), which sets out all the new policies, and contains foundational documents, training materials and in the future, contacts for key people across Shambhala, available to all locations.

In the Vision of the Great Eastern Sun,

Shambhala Board of Directors

Mark Blumenfeld
Phil Cass
John Cobb
Susan Engel
Lilly Gleich
Peter Nowak
Tai Pimputkar
Susan Ryan
Paulina Varas

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