

# Statement of Appropriate Conduct at MLA Conferences

The Medical Library Association holds professional conferences and meetings to enable its members to receive continuing education, build professional networks, and discover new products and services for professional use. To provide all participants—members and other attendees, speakers, exhibitors, staff and volunteers—the opportunity to benefit from the event, the Medical Library Association is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, physical appearance, ethnicity, religion, or other group identity.

As an association, MLA is strongly committed to diversity, equity, and the free expression of ideas. Taken cumulatively, the values and beliefs delineated within MLA policy describe conduct based on a firm belief in the value of civil discourse and the free exploration of competing ideas and concepts—with a fundamental respect for the rights, dignity, and value of *all* persons.

Within the context of MLA policy and the professional practices of librarianship, critical examination of beliefs and viewpoints does not, *by itself*, constitute hostile conduct or harassment. Similarly, use of sexual imagery or language in the context of a professional discussion *might not* constitute hostile conduct or harassment.

MLA seeks to provide a conference environment in which diverse participants may learn, network, and enjoy the company of colleagues in an environment of mutual human respect. *We recognize a shared responsibility to create and hold that environment for the benefit of all.* **Some behaviors are, therefore, specifically prohibited:**

- Harassment or intimidation based on race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, appearance, or other group status.
- Sexual harassment or intimidation, including unwelcome sexual attention, stalking (physical or virtual), or unsolicited physical contact.
- Yelling at or threatening speakers (verbally or physically).

Speakers are asked to frame discussions as openly and inclusively as possible and to be aware of how language or images may be perceived by others. Participants may—and do—exercise the “law of two feet.” Exhibitors must follow all MLA Exhibits rules and regulations and MLA policies.

**All participants are expected to observe these rules and behaviors in all conference venues, including online venues, and conference social events. Participants asked to stop hostile or harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.** Conference participants seek to learn, network, and have fun. Please do so responsibly and with respect for the right of others to do likewise.

Please contact conference management staff in the Registration Office at the Annual Meeting if you believe you have been harassed or that a harassment problem exists. All such reports will be directed immediately to the conference manager, who will determine and carry out the appropriate course of action, and who may consult with and engage other MLA staff, leaders, and legal counsel as appropriate. Event security and/or local law enforcement may be involved as appropriate based on the specific circumstances. A follow-up report will be made to individuals who report being harassed.

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