

# **VII Mentor Program. Code of Ethics**

## **Responsibility to VII**

VII is committed to the highest standards of teaching integrity and ethics. We recognize an obligation to comply with professional standards, legal and regulatory requirements, and our own policies and procedures. VII is the recipient of funds and donations from various agencies, partners, and contributors. We owe it to our colleagues, our mentees, our students, our partners, our funders and our industry to act responsibly and properly.

In all activities, members of the VII community are expected to conduct themselves honestly and with the utmost integrity. Nowhere is this more important than in a teaching or mentoring environment.

When teaching or managing a VII educational activity the VII trainer or mentor assumes all responsibilities laid out in this document on behalf of themselves, colleagues they teach with and any guests they invite to participate in any activity with the VII Mentor Program or any VII related teaching environment.

Failure to comply with certain laws and regulations can result in significant adverse consequences for VII and for the VII trainer or mentor including but not limited to fines, removal from the agency, loss of funding, and negative publicity. Accordingly, all members of the VII community are expected to comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations that govern their activities.

## **Responsibility to Mentees**

VII respects individual rights. It seeks to uphold these rights through respect, equal treatment and honest dealing. It expects equal treatment and tolerance for differing viewpoints regardless of an individual's race, color, national and/or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression (including a transgender identity), genetics, and any other characteristic protected under applicable international and national laws.

Harassment or prejudice of any kind will not be tolerated whether it is sexual, racial, or based on religious or political beliefs.

A VII mentor or educator's principle obligation is to create a teaching environment that treats students with dignity and respect. This includes establishing and maintaining appropriate verbal, physical, emotional and social boundaries.

A VII mentor will establish and maintain a teaching environment that promotes the emotional, intellectual, physical, and sexual safety of all students.

## **Contact and relationships**

VII trainers will consider the implication of accepting gifts from or giving gifts to individual Mentees; will never engage in physical contact with mentees unless there is a clearly defined purpose that benefits the mentee such as a medical or safety emergency; will avoid relationships with

mentees which might impair objectivity and increase the risk of harm to mentee learning or well-being or decrease educator effectiveness; acknowledges that there are no circumstances that allow for educators to engage in romantic or sexual relationships with mentees; and consider the ramifications of entering into an adult relationship of any kind with a former mentee, including but not limited to, any potential harm to the former mentee, public perception, and the possible impact on VII. The VII mentor ensures that the adult relationship was not started while the former mentee was enrolled in the VII mentor program.

## **Data Protection and Communication**

VII mentors will interact with mentees with transparency and in appropriate settings; communicate with students in a clear, respectful, and culturally sensitive manner; will respect the privacy of mentees and understands the need to hold in confidence certain forms of mentee communication, documents, or information obtained in the course of professional practice; where appropriate, uphold parents'/guardians' legal rights, as well as any legal requirements to reveal information related to legitimate concerns for the well-being of a mentee; and protect the confidentiality of mentee records and releasing personal data in accordance with prescribed state and federal laws and local policies.

The VII mentor undertakes to use social media responsibly and transparently for purposes of teaching and learning; will consider the ramifications of using social media and direct communication via technology on his/her interactions with mentees, colleagues, and the general public; recognize that some electronic communications are records under Freedom of Information Acts and State Public Access Laws in some countries and should consider the implications of sharing sensitive information electronically either via professional or personal devices/accounts; and understand that electronic communication may put the mentee at risk which must be avoided at all times.

VII mentors will respect the privacy of mentees presence on social media unless given consent to view such information or if there is a possibility of evidence of a risk of harm to the mentee or others; and take appropriate and reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality of mentee information and educational records stored or transmitted through the use of electronic or computer technology;

## **Social media and communication in training**

The VII mentor will exercise prudence in maintaining separate and professional virtual profiles, keeping personal and professional lives distinct; be vigilant in identifying, addressing and reporting (when appropriate and in accordance appropriate laws) inappropriate and illegal materials/images in electronic or other forms; respect the privacy of mentees presence on social media unless given consent to view such information or if there is a possibility of evidence of a risk of harm to the mentee or others; and ensure that the rights of third parties, including the right of privacy, are not violated via the use of technologies.

VII mentors will monitor to the extent practical and appropriately report information concerning possible cyber bullying incidents and their potential impact on the mentee learning environment, and will protect mentees from any practice that harms or has the potential to harm them.

## **Reporting violations**

The VII trainer acknowledges that lack of awareness, knowledge, or understanding of this Code of Ethics is not, in itself, a defense to a charge of unethical conduct;

Alleged violations will be investigated by the VII CEO, the Board and outside experts. If there are complaints against the CEO or the Board they will be investigated by elected members and outside experts.

The VII mentor undertakes to:

- 1 Take proactive steps when having reason to believe that another VII trainer or invited guest may be approaching or involved in an ethically compromising situation;
- 2 Neither discriminate nor retaliate against a person on the basis of having made an ethical complaint;
- 3 Neither file nor encourage frivolous ethical complaints solely to harm or retaliate.
- 4 Cooperate fully during ethics investigations and proceedings.

Name:

Address:

Date:

Signature: