

# Shambhala Care and Conduct

## Conducting Ourselves and Caring for Each Other

### Introduction

The Shambhala mandala is committed to creating enlightened society. This commitment involves devoting ourselves to personal transformation, helping to develop a compassionate community of practitioners, and contributing to the creation of enlightened society in the world at large. Behaviours that are harmful arise naturally in human communities. Ours is no different. However, we are endeavoring to work with and learn from such situations in ways that are beneficial to those directly involved, and beneficial to the Shambhala community as a whole.

In all instances of conflict or complaint, it is essential to remember that a number of causes and conditions have come together. The result is suffering on the part of all involved. The practice of authentic leadership requires us to find ways of helping each other without aggression through connecting with each other's innate wisdom, intelligence, and good heart.

The Care and Conduct process may resemble judicial and conciliation mechanisms of society at large, but the foundation of the Shambhala process differs in several significant ways: as a contemplative community, we endeavor to bring all activity of body, speech, and mind to the path of meditation, compassion, and wisdom. Behaviours that may be harmful to ourselves and others are regarded as karmic obstacles to be acknowledged, examined, and worked with on the basis that the innate nature of all beings is profound, brilliant sanity.

This document is organized into four parts. It begins with the Care and Conduct Policy itself, followed by a section on the view of Shambhala Care and Conduct. Next are procedures for implementation, followed by an appendix.

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# Shambhala Care and Conduct Policy

## PURPOSE

- To ensure safe and respectful Shambhala communities and to protect the Well-being of individuals within those communities; and
- To investigate any allegation of a Shambhala office holder causing harm (for a list of those who meet the definition of “office holder,” see appendix, page 17); and
- To care for all concerned when harm has occurred; and
- To take appropriate measures to ensure that harm does not occur again.

## 1. Care Comes First

In July of 2002 the Board of Directors of Shambhala adopted a resolution on Shambhala conduct. It states:

*Shambhala is committed to a practice, study, and work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. In addition to being bound individually and as a community to basic Shambhala and Buddhist standards of conduct, we are also citizens of the larger communities in which our centres are located worldwide and, therefore, must abide by public laws. These include but are not limited to laws pertaining to alcohol, drugs, and sexual conduct. Each individual has the right to practice, study, and work in an atmosphere that is free from discrimination.*

*Although each individual is part of what it takes to provide a safe and uplifted environment for teaching, and practice and study, overall responsibility rests with the leadership of Shambhala Centres and Groups with final responsibility held by the Sakyong and the bodies that govern the mandala as a whole. Teachers, program directors, and coordinators, meditation instructors, and other office holders are expected to make every reasonable effort to ensure that such an environment is maintained.*

The basis of the Care and Conduct process is not punitive, but is informed by the profound view of basic goodness. It enables individuals to identify and correct harmful behaviours, to support all those who may have been harmed, and to assist development of mature community life. The nature of this work may involve the individual, those associated with the individual’s unfolding karma, and the community as a whole or its representatives, all of whom share a deep commitment to the Well-being of each other.

Shambhala is committed to a community and work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. It is each person’s right to be free from harassment, intimidation and discrimination. Each individual has the right to practice, study, and work in an atmosphere that is free from abuse of any type, including sexual, verbal and emotional abuse.

PLEASE NOTE: Each Shambhala city and land centre is directed to post public information about the right to safety and freedom from harassment, mistreatment, and discrimination. In addition, the centres are asked to post information about how to initiate a complaint in a public area where the

information can easily be viewed by all. Please see the appendix for the information to be posted in Shambhala Centres.

## **2. Oath of Understanding and Adherence**

All new Shambhala Guides, meditation instructors, teachers, program directors and coordinators, centre directors and coordinators, Kasung officers, Envoys, Members of the Court and office holders in every pillar are required to sign an oath saying they have read, understand, and will adhere to this policy statement as long as they are in that or any other leadership role. Therefore, any teacher, meditation instructor, program director or coordinator, staff member, or other office holder or member of the Dorje Kasung, who refuses to participate in this process may be suspended or have their participation in the community limited in some way. The head of each pillar or their designated appointee shall be responsible for ensuring that these oaths are taken. This oath is in the appendix, as is a list of Shambhala office holders.

Kasung who hold posts for less than 24 hours, and are not otherwise listed as Dorje Kasung officers in the appendix, are exempt from signing this oath. When such Kasung are on duty, however, it is their responsibility to adhere to the Care and Conduct policy.

The Care and Conduct Policy pertains to all Shambhala office holders whether or not they have signed the Oath of Understanding. The sole purpose of this Oath is to ensure, as much as is possible, that all Shambhala office holders have read and understood the policy.

## **3. The International Care and Conduct Panel**

The International Care and Conduct Panel members are appointed by the director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being or a representative of the Shambhala Board of Directors. The Panel includes an acharya who represents the Practice and Education pillar, the Desung Care and Conduct Officer, and a representative of the Office of the Kalapa Court. Additional members have skills related to addressing issues involving conflict, emotional upheavals, and community disharmony. Please see the appendix for contact information for the Desung Care and Conduct Officer, to whom all complaints can be directed.

All complaints regarding Care and Conduct matters involving an office holder must be reported to the International Panel by contacting the Desung Care and Conduct Officer. Contact information for the Care and Conduct Officer can be found in the appendix. Land and city centres should not undertake a local Care and Conduct procedure unless the International Panel has referred the complaint back to them.

The International Panel frequently appoints a regional panel to work with a complaint. Normally the regional panels consist of three senior members of the sangha. The regional panels receive support from the International Panel about the process for investigating complaints, while considering the unique factors in each case. The panel members are selected on the basis of experience in dealing with this type of matter, their integrity, good judgment, and openheartedness. When possible, efforts are to create panels that are composed of people with diverse characteristics.

#### **4. Violations of Law and the Duty to Warn**

The Care and Conduct process is an internal Shambhala process for the benefit of our community. It is not part of the legal system of the general society. The existence of a Shambhala process for responding to complaints within the Shambhala community does not preclude the rights or obligations of individuals or office holders to report violations of the law to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Individuals and office holders are directed to be aware of and comply with applicable local requirements to report possible violations of law, if any.

Duty to warn refers to the responsibility to breach confidentiality if a student or other identifiable person is in clear or imminent danger. In situations where there is clear evidence of danger to the student or other persons, there may be a duty to notify the person in danger and/or others who are in a position to protect that person from harm. Further, the United States judicial system has upheld that this is an ethical responsibility of clergy and spiritual advisors, the same standard as for those in other professions in which confidentiality is typically upheld. In cases where there may be a duty to warn, either the Desung Care and Conduct Officer or the Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being should be contacted immediately. They will assist in determining the best course of action.

#### **5. Initiating the Complaint Procedure**

The complaint procedure can be invoked at any level of the Shambhala mandala. Any individual, whether or not they are a member of Shambhala, may seek to have the process invoked by contacting a local leader. That office holder will then refer the complaint to the Desung Care and Conduct Officer, a position in the Shambhala mandala specifically established to assist with this procedure.

(The Desung Care and Conduct Officer is appointed to bring the extensive experience of Desung “harmony protector” practice to this aspect of working in the mandala. A candidate for the Care and Conduct Officer position is proposed by the Desung Arm commander, and approved and appointed by the director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being or a representative of the Shambhala Board of Directors).

When there is an allegation, the director of the appropriate Shambhala land or city centre should be notified by the person receiving the initial allegation. The only exception to this would be if the director/coordinator is the person named in the complaint. In such cases, the complaint could bypass the director/coordinator and go directly to the Desung Care and Conduct Officer, who will decide which leaders should be notified. See Care and Conduct Procedures, page 15.

It is the responsibility of the International Care and Conduct Panel to notify the heads of the appropriate pillars when a complaint has been made.

#### **6. Anonymous Complaints**

Anonymous complaints may be made. The complainant may request that the person about whom the complaint is being made not be informed of the complainant's identity. In addition, the complainant may request that their identity be withheld from others to whom the complaint would

be reported, including centre directors and heads of pillars as described above. If such requests are made, it must be with the acknowledgement that the anonymity of the complainant may influence the nature of what can be done.

## **7. The Basis for Invoking the Procedure**

The Care and Conduct procedure aims to address complaints of alleged harmful conduct on the part of teachers, meditation instructors, Centre directors and council members, program directors and coordinators, staff and other office holders in the Shambhala community, including Dorje Kasung officers and Kasung on duty. (See appendix for a comprehensive list of Shambhala Office holders.) The procedure also aims to work with the distress involved in relation to any such allegations. It may be invoked in response to:

- Allegations about behaviour that could possibly be unlawful;
- Allegations about actions that appear to violate specific vows taken by teachers, meditation instructors, program directors and coordinators, staff, and other office holders in Shambhala;
- Allegations that point to a possible pattern of behaviour that may have harmfully affected a range of individuals;
- Allegations that cause a level of disturbance within the community that requires a formal response;
- Allegations about behaviour that violates appropriate interpersonal boundaries and/or constitutes abuse of power. These include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment, financial malfeasance, threatening behaviour, discrimination and verbal/emotional abuse including screaming, name-calling, shaming, intimidation and bullying.

Please Note: The International Care and Conduct Panel will consider complaints about issues that occurred prior to 2002 if:

- The subject of the complaint is a current office holder
- The behavior of concern, whether done as an office holder or not, is serious enough to negatively impact the person's current capacity to continue as a Shambhala Office holder, and/or the incident of concern was prohibited at the time by guidelines and policies in existence at the time.

Complaints may be related to, but not necessarily limited to:

- Aggression: aggressive behaviour of body speech or mind;
- Passion: inappropriate sexual behaviour, misuse or misreporting of funds, etc.
- Ignorance: not fulfilling one's duty, thus causing harm to others.

## **8. Intimate Relationships between Teacher and Student**

In the area of Practice and Education there is a high standard of care required of teachers and instructors. The relationships between teachers and their students, and between meditation instructors and their students, are particularly sensitive situations where extra care needs to be taken in respecting boundaries. It is the responsibility of teachers, directors, assistant directors, meditation instructors, Shambhala Guides, and staff to establish and maintain the formality of the teaching relationship. When members of the Dorje Kasung are acting in a teaching role, this higher

standard of care also applies. Given the experiences of genuine open heart that take place along the path, feelings of tenderness, or even sexual attraction, might arise in either the instructor or the participant. It is common and natural to be struck by the brilliance and beauty of people, to feel affection and love for them. Both instructor and student may feel emotionally and physically open, vulnerable and alive, or alternatively, fearful and needy.

Such feelings must not be acted upon, however, if the integrity of the teaching relationship is to be preserved. The essence of decorum in such a situation is to provide a dignified and decent environment in which powerful emotions can be present without triggering the reflexes of our habitual patterns. Without denying the sexual dimensions of our being, the leader or instructor should keep present in his or her mind the purpose of the instructor-participant relationship, which is to guide, encourage, and protect the participant's engagement with meditation practice and the teachings. The responsibilities and expectations that accompany the instructor role are not compatible with those that accompany a casual friend. Thus, the instructor must refrain from any sexualizing gestures, inappropriate touching, verbal innuendo, invasive personal questioning, scheduling of dates, and intimate self-disclosures.

This directive is no different from the professional code of conduct for a doctor, therapist, teacher, manager, or anyone else who can be seen to be in a position of authority or power relative to a student. No matter how equal two people may feel, no matter how much the participant or student may want or even initiate the sexual nature of the contact, the decision to sexualize the relationship almost invariably means the loss of any ability to properly fulfil the situation's original purpose, and it can cause deep harm to the student/participant and to all involved, including the community.

## **9. Conflicts That Do Not Involve Allegations of Harmful Conduct**

The Care and Conduct mission is to respond to allegations of harmful conduct on the part of a Shambhala office holder. All other conduct on the part of an office-holder remains the responsibility, and is under the jurisdiction of, the pillar in which the individual holds a position. Such conduct is addressed through processes developed and administered by that pillar. Whenever possible, conflict/communication impasses that do not specifically include allegations of harmful conduct as defined above in section 7, should be handled locally through working with the Societal Health and Well-being representative and/or the Desung for the local centre.

## **10. Investigation of Complaints**

Depending on the nature of the allegations being made, the matter may need to be investigated regionally or may involve investigation and assessment at the international level or a combination of both. The Desung Care and Conduct Officer and the other members of the panels consult regularly to monitor the unfolding of the investigative process and make whatever adjustments are needed in the interests of all involved.

The role of the international and regional panels is to:

- Provide a container in which the individuals involved can express their grievances and, if amenable to all parties, respond to each other in a way that provides the ground for basic goodness to arise;

- Determine if there has been a violation of the principles or policies that form the basis of our community, and the harm that has been caused by this;
- Determine actions that need to be taken to make amends for any such violation and the steps that need to be taken to prevent such behaviour in the future;
- Recommend any measure to be taken by any or all parts of the Shambhala mandala that could help lessen the likelihood of any such violation occurring in the future, to the appropriate pillar.
- Offer all parties the opportunity for support during the Care & Conduct process. Upon request, a support person will be assigned to keep the party or parties advised of the C&C process and to assist them in connecting to other resources as needed. Those requesting a support person will be directed to contact the Director of Societal Health & Well-being.

If a person wishes to object to the presence of an individual on a panel, they may do so in writing to the Desung Care and Conduct Officer, who will be responsible for deciding on the merits of the objection. If the objection is to the presence of the Desung Care and Conduct Officer on the panel in a particular case, the decision will be left to the acharya on the international panel.

### **11. Suspension of the Office Holder's activities during a Care and Conduct Investigation**

When a Care and Conduct complaint is filed against a Shambhala officer in any of the four pillars, a preliminary review of the complaint will be conducted by the Care and Conduct panel which will lead to one of two possible outcomes:

1. The preliminary review may find that there is insufficient reason to proceed with an investigation. In this case, all parties will be notified that the case will not proceed further.
2. The preliminary review finds there is sufficient reason to proceed with a full investigation. At that point, the Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being or a representative of the Shambhala Board of Directors will suspend the officer from carrying out the duties of their office(s) for the duration of the Care and Conduct investigation.

The intention of the suspension during the Care and Conduct investigation is not to convey a sense of "guilty until proven innocent" or to stigmatize the officer, but to communicate that the complaint has been received and is being taken seriously. This will allow the officer, the person who filed the complaint and the surrounding community a chance to pause, reflect on what has happened, and care for themselves during the period of the investigation, without triggering secondary anxiety that the officer is still in a position of power. The officer may be granted a full or partial exception to this rule due to special circumstances. Exceptions will be decided by the Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being on a case by case basis. The Director may, at his or her discretion, consult with any or all of the following: the officer's immediate supervisor, the head of the appropriate pillar, and/or the person who filed the complaint.

Care will be taken to communicate the details of the suspension to the smallest circle of people who need to know. This may include the person who filed the complaint, the officer against whom the complaint was made, their immediate supervisor, and the head of the appropriate pillar. The Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being has discretionary authority to decide whether it would be important in particular cases to communicate this more widely in order to protect the community. In every case, care will be taken to find the appropriate balance between



maintaining confidentiality and offering a sense of protection to those in our community who are vulnerable.

PLEASE NOTE: The officer may be immediately suspended, before the preliminary investigation, due to special circumstances, as determined by the Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being on a case by case basis. Before or during the period of the preliminary review, if the officer does not honour communication limits or is in some way exacerbating the situation, he or she may be suspended from their duties immediately without waiting for the results of the preliminary review.

## **12. Outcome**

When the investigation has been completed, the International Care and Conduct Panel will confer regarding the outcome of the complaint. In cases in which a regional panel is formed, the regional panel will conduct its work and report a provisional outcome to the international assessment panel. The regional and international panels will consult to ensure a reasonable level of consistency throughout the community and to determine if further investigation or discussion is needed before the regional panel concludes its work. The aim is to achieve broad agreement across the members of the panel, and between the regional and international assessment panels when a regional panel is formed.

Based on the investigation, a report is developed that describes the complaint and the findings, as well as conclusions and recommendations. When a regional panel is involved, their report is made to the Desung Care and Conduct Officer and then reviewed by the International Care and Conduct Panel. The final report is compiled and communicated to those deemed appropriate by the panel. Typically, but not always, those directly involved include the complainant(s), the person against whom the complaint was filed, the centre director, and the head of the appropriate pillar.

A person who is suspended from any particular role or activities (such as teaching, giving meditation instruction, or exercising a leadership role), or who decides for themselves to refrain from such activities, will be trusted to abide fully with the suspension or personal decision. The International Care and Conduct Panel, with the agreement of the Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being, will decide whether general information about a complaint and/or the outcome, should be shared more broadly. If a person has been suspended from leadership or teaching activities, their status on the Shambhala Data Base should be changed to “inactive” to avoid inadvertent invitations to teach/lead during the period of their suspension. The Care & Conduct Panel will notify the appropriate person that this change should be made.

If the regional panel or the appointed representative of the Desung Care and Conduct Officer determines that the complaint was deliberately made on false grounds and that it constituted an act of harm, the regional panel will work with the individuals involved to establish the most effective way in which amends can be made. Such amends may include protecting the reputation of the person against whom the false complaint was brought.

If, on the basis of a preliminary examination, it becomes clear that there is not a sufficient basis on which to take the complaint forward, the person bringing the complaint will be notified and asked if

there are other ways in which the Shambhala community could assist them with their situation. The International Care and Conduct Panel could refer the person to the Office of Societal Health and Well-being or to the Desung, and would conclude their involvement with the case.

### **13. Providing a Path Forward for All Concerned**

All parties involved in a complaint must feel as though they have a path forward following the outcome of a Care and Conduct process. The regional and international panels will work collaboratively to ensure systems of care are in place for those who have been harmed, those who caused the harm, and when appropriate, the community.

Specifically, as regards the person who has caused harm, he/she is entitled clear and direct behavioural feedback as well as a way to bring their behaviour to the path of Dharma. When suspension of teacher or leadership duties has occurred, it should be made clear in writing how their case will be followed up, and by whom. The International Care and Conduct Panel will be responsible for determining how the situation will be monitored, and will be responsible for stating the terms of reinstatement.

### **14. Confidentiality**

It is important to ensure that no one involved in the process is subjected to unsubstantiated and harmful gossip, and to create a dignified and concentrated container. This is important both for the person(s) bringing the complaint and for the person(s) against whom the complaint is made. In either instance, false perceptions and possible stigmatization associated with such accusations may inhibit the parties from confiding in anyone, which can have harmful consequences. Therefore, the principle of confidentiality is applied.

The principle of confidentiality begins when the person making the initial allegation speaks with the first office holder. This office holder is bound by confidentiality except as provided for above in section 4 of the policy.

The principle of confidentiality means that the matter is not discussed with people who are not involved in the process, but may include discussions by the parties with counsellors or close confidants, to whom the principle of confidentiality also applies. The principle of confidentiality should be explained to all those involved and an agreement to respect confidentiality should be obtained from each person prior to their making oral or written statements. The principle of confidentiality also applies to local sangha leaders or governing bodies who are aware of the complaint.

This confidentiality principle also applies to the Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being, the Desung Care and Conduct Officer and the panels with the acknowledgment that there may be a need to disclose essential information as part of this process. Safeguarding the Well-being of all individuals involved will be a guiding principle for all actions.

### **15. Limits to Confidentiality**

All parties involved in a Care and Conduct case should be aware that there are limits to confidentiality when the possibility of physical violence is present. If at any point within the complaint process an officer of Shambhala is made aware of a situation that involves a threat of physical harm to self or other, there may be a duty to warn the relevant local authorities and/or the person being threatened as described in section 4. In such cases, either the Desung Care and Conduct Officer or the Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being should be contacted immediately. They will assist in determining the best course of action.

#### **16. Refusal to Participate in the Care and Conduct Process**

A Shambhala office holder who unreasonably refuses to participate in this process may in their absence be deemed unfit, on the grounds of a lack of confidence, to hold a particular office, and be suspended or have their participation in the community limited in some way.

#### **17. Appeals**

Anyone involved in the case may make a written appeal and email it to [CareAndConduct@shambhala.org](mailto:CareAndConduct@shambhala.org). The appeal must be received within 30 days after receipt of the panel's written report. Members of the Shambhala Board of Directors will appoint an appeals committee. The decision of appeals committee is final.

#### **18. Closing a Case**

Care and Conduct cases may be closed at the discretion of the Panel once they feel the matter has been fully resolved. A case that has been closed may also be reopened when deemed appropriate by the Panel.

#### **19. Storage of Care & Conduct Case Records**

It is the responsibility of the Desung Care and Conduct Officer to maintain and store current and past case records.

#### **20. Reporting to the Shambhala Mandala**

The Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being or a member of the Shambhala Board of Directors shall periodically report about the work of the Care & Conduct Panel to the Shambhala community. This will not involve citing individual names, but will be done in a manner that enables the community to understand the issues involved, the outcome, the lessons to be learned and particular themes that have emerged.

## View of Care and Conduct

In the teachings of the Shambhala and Buddhist traditions, specific practices and instructions are provided to guide us in our commitment to personal transformation, sane and compassionate sangha, and the creation of enlightened society in the world at large. These include: The Shambhala Sadhana, The Five Precepts, The Four Immeasurables, and The Six Paramitas, among others. These practices should be regarded as useful reference points for discussion of the issues that follow. In all instances of conflict or complaint, it is essential to remember that a number of causes and conditions have come together. The result is suffering on the part of all involved. In the case of a person who feels they have been harmed in some way, it is part of our responsibility to offer care and support. Often what is needed immediately is spontaneous listening and unconditional attention. If the person is experiencing distress, we need to ensure that they are provided with an environment that supports them in stabilizing their mind and dealing with the situation. The practice of authentic leadership requires us to find ways of helping each other without aggression: provoking each other's innate wisdom and intelligence rather than imposing opinions or personal views on others. This responsibility includes working with individuals who may be experiencing personal difficulties which lead them to disrupt the practice of others or make it impossible to provide an appropriate contemplative environment.

### **Compassionate Transformation**

The meditation and other practices given to our community have the ability to heighten and purify intense emotions and behaviours that can otherwise be harmful to ourselves and others. Each person experiences and expresses this process in their own distinctive way. It is natural therefore that we will experience various displays of troubled personal and social behaviour that each individual has to work with as part of his or her path. Ignorance and confusion tend to make us unaware of the effect our behaviour has on others. The forms and disciplines of the Shambhala Buddhist path create a container in which this process can unfold enabling all practitioners to be protected as this heightening and purification takes place.

At the same time, the path of the bodhisattva warrior involves personal and group discipline. Discipline is cultivated during formal meditation, oryoki practice, the contemplative arts, Kasung practice and other forms of meditation-in-action. This discipline is essential for two reasons. First, it is part of the process of learning to work skillfully with intense human energy on the path of Warriorship and the journey to enlightenment. Second, personal discipline is essential in a community that provides an environment for teaching, practice and study.

People need ways to deal with complaints regarding harm as well as ways to handle conflict. Procedures for dealing with complaints must take into account the interests of the complainant; otherwise complainants often do not take action.

## Care and Conduct Procedures

### Determining if the Situation Meets the Criteria for a Complaint to the International Care and Conduct Panel

The International Care and Conduct Panel receives complaints about situations in which there is an allegation of harmful conduct on the part of a Shambhala office holder.

- a. Harmful conduct can be understood as behaviour that could be unlawful, in violation of specific vows, in violation of appropriate boundaries between teachers/leaders and students/members and/or constitutes a pattern that may have harmfully affected a range of individuals. (See policy sections 7 and 8 for more detail.)
- b. Please see the appendix for a list of Shambhala office holders.

### Making a Complaint

If you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of a Shambhala office holder, please speak with a local leader such as the Centre Director or Group Coordinator, Rusung, Desung, or Societal Health and Well-being Representative. The office holder who receives your complaint will then refer it to the International Care and Conduct Panel's Desung Care and Conduct Officer, a position in the Shambhala mandala specifically established to assist with this procedure, as well as to the Centre Director.

If for any reason you do not feel comfortable filing your complaint with a local leader, you may directly contact the Desung Care and Conduct Officer who handles all incoming complaints on behalf of the International Care and Conduct Panel. Please see the appendix for contact information.

### Allegations of Criminal Behaviour

The existence of a Shambhala process for responding to complaints within the Shambhala community does not preclude the rights or obligations of individuals or office holders to report violations of the law to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Individuals and office holders are directed to be aware of and comply with applicable local requirements to report violations of law, if any.

### Duty to Warn

If at any point within the complaint process an officer of Shambhala is made aware of a situation that involves a threat of physical harm to self or other, there may be a duty to warn the relevant local authorities and/or the person being threatened. In such cases, either the Desung Care and Conduct Officer or the Director of the Office of Societal Health and Well-being should be contacted immediately. They will assist in determining the best course of action.

## **The Work of the International Care and Conduct Panel**

Upon receipt of a Care and Conduct complaint, the Panel will:

- a. Determine if there is a basis for the complaint to be investigated.
- b. If there is not sufficient basis, inform the complainant.
- c. Inform the heads of the appropriate Pillars that a complaint has been made.
- d. If there is sufficient basis, ensure that proper assessment and investigation is carried out. This may include the appointment of a regional panel. (See policy section 12.)
- e. Offer all parties the opportunity for support during the Care & Conduct process.
- f. If a regional panel is appointed, inform the parties who will be on the panel. If there is an objection to the composition of the regional panel, the Desung Care and Conduct Officer should be contacted in writing. He/she will have deciding authority regarding the objection.
- g. Investigate the complaint using interviews and other forms of assessment.
- h. Report in writing the outcome of the investigation, including specific outcomes for all parties involved. This may include measures to decrease the likelihood that such violations would occur in the future.
- i. Determine what information will be shared, and with whom, concerning the outcome of the case.
- j. Determine a path forward for all concerned, including the person(s) harmed, the person who caused the harm, and in some cases the local community.
- k. When the person who has caused harm has received specific behavioural requirements in order to be reinstated to their office, it is the responsibility of the Panel to follow up and make certain those requirements have been met. This would be a requisite for reinstatement of office. (See policy section 13 for more detail.)

## **Appeals**

Anyone involved in the case may make a written appeal and email it to [CareAndConduct@shambhala.org](mailto:CareAndConduct@shambhala.org). The appeal must be received within 30 days after receipt of the panel's written report. Members of the Shambhala Board of Directors will appoint an appeals committee. The decision of the appeals committee is final.

## Appendix

### 1. International Care and Conduct Panel Members

Desung Care and Conduct Officer, Dan Peterson  
Acharya Susan Skjei  
Kalapa Court representative, John Sennhauser

### 2. Contact Information

Dan Peterson, Desung Care and Conduct Officer - [peterhana.dan@gmail.com](mailto:peterhana.dan@gmail.com)

3. Shambhala Office Holders: Office holders in Shambhala include but are not limited to the following:

- Pillar of Government - Kalapa Council, Kalapa Executive, Centre Directors, members of the Mandala Council, members of Land Centre and Shambhala Centre Executive Committees and Governing Councils

- Pillar of Practice and Education - Acharyas, Shastris, international and local Directors of Practice and Education, authorized Teachers, Meditation Instructors, Guides, Assistant Directors, Practice and Education administrators and Program Coordinators. This also applies to program staff for the duration of each program, course, class, and event, etc. with which they are involved.

- Pillar of Protection, the Dorje Kasung - Dorje Kasung holding a command post that lasts more than 24 hours (including Garsung, Rusung, non-commissioned officers, and all line command), as well as any officers and non-commissioned officers who hold a substantive rank (whether or not they currently hold a command post), and active-duty Kasung.

- Pillar of Economy office holders.

- Members of the Kalapa Court and Kalapa Envoys.

#### 4. To Be Displayed at All City and Land Centres:

Each city and land centre is directed to create a document that includes the following text, and to display it in an easy-to-view location at the centre. See section 1 of the Care and Conduct Policy, page 3. Please frame and display this nicely. In addition, the text could be included on informational brochures about the Centre. When possible, providing generic contact information that will not change over time is recommended.

Shambhala is committed to a practice, study, and work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. It is each person's right to be free from harassment, mistreatment, and discrimination. Each individual has the right to practice, study, and work in an atmosphere that is free from abuse of any type, including sexual, verbal and emotional abuse.

In addition to being bound individually and as a community to basic Shambhala and Buddhist standards of conduct, we are also citizens of the larger communities in which our centres are located worldwide and, therefore, must abide by public laws. These include but are not limited to laws pertaining to alcohol, drugs, and sexual conduct.

If any individual is concerned that the behaviour of a member of the Shambhala community, including any of its office holders, may not have been in accordance with this statement of principles, please contact the Director of this Centre, the Rusung or Desung of the Dorje Kasung, or any appropriate person in the local leadership. Any such communications will be handled in accordance with the procedures set down in Shambhala Care and Conduct, a copy of which is available at this Centre.

----- Shambhala Centre:

Director: ----- phone number: -----

Rusung: ----- phone number: -----

Desung: ----- phone number: -----



## 5. Care and Conduct Oath of Understanding and Adherence

As an office holder in Shambhala, I have read and understand the Care and Conduct Policy. I am familiar with the definition of harmful behaviour as described in sections 7 and 8, and will refrain from these actions.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the Care and Conduct Policy pertains to my current role(s) as an office holder in Shambhala, as well as to any future roles I may hold.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that this policy is binding to all Shambhala officer holders whether they sign the Oath of Understanding and Adherence or not. I will adhere to this policy and support fellow office holders to also adhere to this policy.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that if a complaint is lodged against me I may be temporarily suspended from the duties of my role pending the outcome of an investigation.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Position (s) held:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_