University of California, Riverside, School of Medicine

Institutional Policy

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

It is the policy of the University of California, School of Medicine, that its residents conduct themselves in a professional manner, refrain from engaging in unethical or disruptive behavior and resolve conflicts in an appropriate manner at all times.

Residents are expected to report all disruptive behavior or harassment that is directed at them, or that they observe, to the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education.

Residents who report disruptive or unethical behavior will be protected from reprisal or retaliation.

PURPOSE
Professional behavior creates an environment that promotes safe and high-quality patient care and engenders a constructive learning environment. Physicians, along with all healthcare providers, have an ethical and professional duty to maintain a patient care environment that promotes the safe care of patients and fosters learning.

DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES
The definitions and examples given are not intended to be all inclusive, but are given to provide guidance.

Examples of Professional Behavior:
- Clearly identifies oneself to patient and staff
- Maintains a clean, neat appearance
- Maintains composure
- Treats patients with dignity and respect
- Collaborates with other members of the healthcare team and treats them with respect
- Answers questions and explains the patient’s plan of care to patient, family (with patient’s permission) and healthcare team members
- Answers phone calls and pages in a timely and courteous manner
- Respects cultural and religious differences of others
- Is truthful in verbal and written communications
- Communicates differences in opinion and good faith criticism respectfully in the appropriate forum
- Is on time for meetings and appointments

Disruptive Behavior:
Disruptive behavior may be viewed along a spectrum. Although there is no agreed upon definition and the term “disruptive” is sometimes interchangeable with the term “abusive,” it generally refers to a style of interaction with physicians, hospital personnel, patients, family members or others that interferes with patient care. Such behavior may be expressed verbally by using foul or threatening
language, or through non-verbal behavior such as facial expressions or manners. (AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, Report 2-A-00).

Following are some examples of Disruptive Behavior:
- Conduct that could be characterized as harassment or discrimination. (See the policy on Harassment)
- Verbal threats of violence, retribution or lawsuits
- Verbal outbursts
- Insults, verbal comments or criticism intended to belittle or berate others
- Arguing in front of patients and families
- Physical actions that threaten others such as throwing or knocking down objects
- Inappropriate physical touching or contact

*This policy was approved by the Graduate Medical Education Committee on March 16, 2011.*

Mahendar S. Koch, MD, MACP
Associate Dean, Graduate Medical Education
Designated Institutional Official

**RELATED POLICY**
Resolution of Resident’s Grievance