Care and Conduct
Complaints Report
2018-2020
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Shambhala mandala is committed to creating an 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.¹

As a global organization, Shambhala is committed to accountability, transparency and inclusivity. This report contains data with regards to the complaints received by the International Care and Conduct Panel from 2018 until Shambhala Day of this year (2021) as filed under the [2018 Care and Conduct Policy](https://shambhala.org/files/2018/12/Shambhala-Care-and-Conduct-Dec-2018.pdf).

Publishing complaints data is beneficial in multiple ways. An analysis of the data supports the Care and Conduct team in determining how best to prevent harm in the future, identifying specific areas of concern, monitoring trends that may be occurring, and informing prevention strategies. Publishing the complaints and findings is part of organizational accountability, and taking responsibility as a community. We hope that this report contributes to an environment where individuals feel confident in coming forward with concerns and reporting situations of misconduct at all levels of the mandala.

The stated purposes of the 2018 Care and Conduct policy are: 1) To ensure safe and respectful Shambhala communities and to protect the well-being of individuals within those communities, 2) To investigate any allegation of a Shambhala office holder causing harm, 3) To care for all concerned when harm has occurred, and 4) To take appropriate measures to ensure that harm does not occur again.

For more information about the 2018 Care and Conduct Policy, in effect until Shambhala Day 2021, see the [Shambhala Community Care and Conduct website](https://communitycare.shambhala.org).²

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1. **Scope and Limitations**


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² The Shambhala Community Care and Conduct website is: https://communitycare.shambhala.org.
It does not provide descriptions or analyses at the level of individual complaints, cases or regions, nor will it normally address country-specific data, rather, this Report focuses on the global aggregate level.

As stated in the 2018 Care and Conduct Policy, one of the purposes of the policy is to investigate any allegation of a Shambhala office holder causing harm (for a list of those who meet the definition of “office holder,” see the 2018 CC policy appendix, page 17). Therefore, if the complaint or concern involved non-office holders, it did not fall under the jurisdiction of the International Care and Conduct panel and is not included in this report.

2. **CARE AND CONDUCT 2018-2020**

2.1 Care and Conduct Panel

The Care and Conduct Panel is composed of the following members: Dan Peterson, the Desung Care and Conduct Officer, John Sennhauser, (previously) the Kalapa Court representative, Claudia Arnau and Ute Reinhart.

2.2 How a complaint is filed and addressed

The Care and Conduct panel responds to *allegations of harmful conduct* on the part of a Shambhala Office holder. Complaints include the following allegations about (which is by no means an exhaustive list):\(^4\)

- Behaviors that could possibly be unlawful.
- Actions that appear to violate specific vows taken by teachers, meditation instructors, program directors and coordinators, staff, and other office holders in Shambhala (please see Care and Conduct Policy 2018 for a comprehensive list of Shambhala Office holders).
- A possible pattern of behavior that may have harmfully affected a range of individuals.
- Causing a level of disturbance within the community that requires a formal response.
- Behavior that violates appropriate interpersonal boundaries and/or constitutes abuse of power. These include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment, financial

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malfeasance, threatening behavior, discrimination, and verbal/emotional abuse including screaming, namecalling, shaming, intimidation, and bullying.

Although the process of filing a complaint has changed with the new Code of Conduct policies, for the purpose of this Report complaints were generally handled in the following way: After speaking 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 received the complaint then referred 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 Center Director. If for any reason the reporter did not feel comfortable filing their complaint with a local leader, they would directly contact the Desung Care and Conduct Officer who handled all incoming complaints on behalf of the International Care and Conduct Panel. Complaints were sent to this email address: careandconduct@shambhala.org.

2.3 Confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality begins when the person making the initial allegation speaks with the first office holder. It 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. Safeguarding the well-being of all individuals involved will be a guiding principle for all actions.

3. SYNOPSIS OF COMPLAINTS

3.1 Complaints received by the Care and Conduct Panel (2018-2020)

From 2018 to Shambhala Day 2021, the International Care and Conduct Panel received 32 complaints. The following is a brief description of the type of complaint and the panel’s finding for each each.

Definitions of findings:

- **Confirmed:** There was a complete complaint filed and when the complaint was investigated, the information was corroborated. The panel then applied rebalancing or
protective measures, such as suspending authorizations, mandatory training, ongoing monitoring, etc.

- No Finding: The complaint either didn’t fall under the Care and Conduct Policy, or the information in the complaint could not be corroborated.
- Complaint not filed: The complainant reported a situation/incident, but did not pursue or agree to a formal complaint process with the panel.
- Pending/in appeal: The complaint process has not been completed because there is missing information, one of the parties has not participated in the process, or the decision has been appealed.

Table 3.1: Complaints received by the Care and Conduct Panel (2018-2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF COMPLAINT</th>
<th>NUMBER REPORTED</th>
<th>FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying and harassment</td>
<td>3 reports</td>
<td>1 report = confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 reports = no finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual misconduct</td>
<td>17 reports</td>
<td>4 reports = Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 reports = No finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 reports = Complaint not filed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 reports = pending/in appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child abuse</td>
<td>0 reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>0 reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse or misuse of power</td>
<td>9 reports</td>
<td>4 reports = No finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misconduct Type</td>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Fraud, misuse of funds                              | 0 reports | 2 reports = Complaint not filed or incomplete  
3 reports = pending/in appeal                       |
| Other types of Misconduct (as defined by the reporter) | 3 reports | 2 reports = No finding  
1 report = pending                                     |

3.2 A way forward after a complaint has been filed.

In any community or society, mistakes, misconduct and misunderstandings occur. These situations need to be addressed and people need to be protected.

If a complaint was confirmed, protective and rebalancing measures were put in place as appropriate. The intention of protective measures is to provide protection of people in the community from potential future misconduct and confusion. Protective measures may include suspension of role or position of authority, limits or restrictions on participation in programs or at the centre, etc. The intention of rebalancing measures is to provide a possibility of education or healing for the individuals involved and the community. Rebalancing measures include mentoring, training, counselling or therapy, an apology, restorative justice process, etc. Protective measures and rebalancing measures may be applied together.

If a Respondent refuses to engage with the process, then protective measures may be applied as necessary.

For each misconduct that was reported to the panel, an attempt was made by panel members to identify a variety of supports and related resources that would be helpful to both the reporter and the respondent. Between 2018 through 2020, there was 1 attempt at mediation, 1 situation of structured monitoring, 4 referrals to a support team, including support by the Dorje Kasung, 3 referrals to the Practice and Education team, 1 referral to the Governance team, and 2 referrals to training and education.
4. **SHAMBHALA DAY 2021 ONWARDS**

In Shambhala, the well-being of its community members, the vast majority of whom are volunteers, is of the utmost importance. Shambhala’s Code of Conduct is a foundation for the Shambhala community in the manifestation of Enlightened Society.

As of Shambhala Day 2021, the new Code of Conduct policies and processes are in effect. Information about the new Code of Conduct policies and procedures is published on the Code of Conduct Hub. This is the home of the general Code of Conduct as well as the five new policies and supporting information about the process of filing a complaint, background checks, and ongoing training. You will also find information about the council members, code of conduct facilitators, and how to get involved yourself (e.g. giving feedback, and volunteering). **If you have a concern or want to file a complaint under the new Code of Conduct, you can contact a Code of Conduct Facilitator, and read “What to do If you have a Concern.”**

As a resource for the community, the Code of Conduct Support Group developed a document outlining the process and rationale for the creation of the new Code of Conduct. For more information please read “Revising the Care and Conduct Policy.” This document contains information about the current and previous policies and process, highlighting differences and rationale of changes to the policies.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the information contained in this report, please contact the Director of Community Care and Conduct at tara.templin@shambhala.org.

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5 The Code of Conduct website is: https://code-of-conduct.shambhala.org.

**Date:** April 22, 2021  
**Approved by:** International Care and Conduct Panel, April 12, 2021  
**Written By:** Tara Templin, Director of Community Care and Conduct