

Stanford Social Neuroscience Laboratory

Values, Norms, and Code of Conduct

2023-2024

Community Standards

Values, Norms, and Code of Conduct

The SSNL is above all a community — of researchers and scholars and, importantly, of individuals with varied identities, backgrounds, and experiences. As such, we strive to foster a safe and supportive environment in which all members feel that they belong and are valued.

We recognize that advancements in science are contingent on the open exchange of ideas and that such an exchange is only possible when all participants respect each other's perspectives. With that, the SSNL is committed to fostering a community in which all members — regardless of age, race, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability, or any other aspect of one's identity — feel a sense of safety and support. All members of the SSNL are expected to behave in a manner that promotes a cooperative environment which is open to all people and ideas.

This community standards document, agreed upon by members of the SSNL, outlines expectations that contribute to an open and safe community (broken down into our values, norms, and code of conduct).

Values

Inclusion

Our lab is committed to continuously building a community and environment where members of all identities and backgrounds can thrive, as researchers and as people. This is not only crucial to advancing justice, but also to the advancement of science, which is best served by exchange across diverse perspectives. With that in mind, the SSNL is committed to fostering a research community where people of all identities feel a sense of safety and support.

Academia has long failed to provide an equitable or inclusive environment, especially for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), first generation college and low income (FLI), and LGBTQIA+ communities, who face racism, discrimination, and other structural barriers. Within psychology and biomedical sciences, participant samples are also skewed toward WEIRD (White, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) samples, which limits the generalizability of our work.

We are committed to supporting members of underrepresented groups in science and to being active allies to members of groups we do not belong to, for example holding regular online [professional development seminars](#) aimed at aiding those from underrepresented or low-income backgrounds in entering academia. We further aim to focus—whenever possible—on recruiting

representative and inclusive participant samples in our research. All members of the SSNL are expected to behave in a manner that promotes an inclusive environment for all.

Curiosity, Humble Skepticism, and Intellectual Development

Lab members are encouraged to openly ask questions and strive for intellectual humility and growth. We try to be curious not only about the broader world around us but also about each other's work and perspectives.

Our lab uses diverse methods and investigates a diverse array of questions. Though the person down the hall might have interests that diverge from our own, we cultivate curiosity about the phenomena they study, the methods they employ, and the insights about which they are passionate.

We are willing to (respectfully) challenge each other, and to listen openly to others' challenges while attempting to interpret their intentions in the best light possible. We strive to openly provide feedback and encourage each other to do our best work, and to grow from the feedback that others provide. We assume—and expect—the best intent from others in our community, even during disagreement.

We are ultimately here to grow and learn. Lab members are encouraged to support and promote each other's intellectual and career aspirations and to encourage each other to thrive in our personal lives.

Open and Transparent Science

Science advances only when scientists work with integrity to ensure their work is transparent and reproducible. We participate in an open research community by reporting our research choices in clear and transparent ways, acknowledging aspects of our work that are exploratory versus confirmatory, engaging in pre-registration and internal replication, and publicly sharing our data, stimuli, and code whenever possible.

We acknowledge that the research we do has the potential for tangible social benefit. We are interested in advancing knowledge, not just for its own sake, but with the hope of bettering public understanding of social relationships, wellbeing, and each other. With that, we aim to be aware and responsible of public accountability, potential conflicts of interest, intellectual integrity, and the possible social consequences of our research activities.

Regarding academic integrity, lab members are expected to cite the authors of any existing work from which we borrow intellectual content. It is important that we give credit where credit is due and that we do not directly or indirectly assume ownership of another's original ideas.

Well-being and Mutual Support

Academia too often promotes a lifestyle of hyper-competitiveness and work-life imbalance, which can lead to stress, illness, and isolation. It also stifles creativity and can ironically undermine the very insights we hope to produce. At the SSNL, we strive to work hard but also to make time for ourselves, and to cultivate interests and community beyond our work lives.

Beyond “self-care,” we also promote “[other care](#),” building a community in which we support each other. We aim to be generous to one another in domains where we excel and to lean on each other as we work on areas of weakness.

In addition, we aim to be attentive and compassionate towards the personal and academic struggles of our lab mates. We know that the thriving of the community depends on the thriving of each individual person, and that too many people suffer in silence when something is wrong. There are university resources available for those struggling with mentally, emotionally, or physically or environmentally, and those are outlined on the Resources pages at the end of this document.

Mentorship & Mutual Growth

Mentorship and collaboration are central to our understanding of mutual growth. We build relationships across different skill areas and experience levels in the lab, sharing expertise and empowering younger scholars.

We work towards our common goal of rigor while ensuring that criticism is work-directed, not person-directed. Disagreement can expand our thinking and improve our research — but healthy disagreement is built on a bedrock of care and respect for our colleagues and collaborators. Together, we can work to maintain a psychologically safe environment in which everyone feels like they belong and are valued. We are ultimately here to grow and learn.

Setting and Celebrating Goals

We try to set lofty (and attainable) goals, and work hard to achieve them. We are restless in our pursuit of great ideas, insights, and evidence.

As a lab, we encourage our researchers to set individual goals in relation to their projects. If you need help in coming up with attainable, timely, and suitably challenging goals, Jamil or a senior lab member can help you with this. Together, we are focused on advancing, synthesizing, and transmitting scientific knowledge for the benefit of the academic and global community.

Additionally, our lab loves to celebrate its members’ accomplishments, so be sure to let your lab mates know of any successes — such as making a project milestone, learning a new skill, or facilitating a meaningful mentorship moment — so that we can [capitalize](#) on your successes with you!

Norms

Open Communication

All members of the SSNL are welcome and encouraged to openly discuss issues about or relevant to the lab, be they interpersonal, intrapersonal, or related to our work. If you have any questions, concerns, or insights about how we can improve our community, please reach out to Kylie - she'd love to hear from you!

Authorship

We encourage a collaborative culture in the lab, and it is likely that multiple members will be working together on projects. Collaborations can also occur between labs at Stanford or with researchers at other institutions. In all cases, we expect all lab members to treat collaborators, their time, and data with respect.

Authorship should be discussed frankly and early during the collaborative process. Each author is expected to have:

- Made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; **or** the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of the data; **or** the creation of new software used in the work; **or** have drafted the work or substantively revised it;
- **AND** to have approved the submitted version (and any substantially modified version that involves the author's contribution to the study);
- **AND** to have agreed both to be personally accountable for the author's own contributions and to ensure that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work, even ones in which the author was not personally involved, are appropriately investigated, resolved, and the resolution documented in the literature.

Undergraduate RAs are eligible for authorship if they meet the above criteria. Authorship contributions should be stated where appropriate in the manuscript.

We acknowledge that the trajectory of a research project can be difficult to predict, so authorship should be an ongoing discussion. Project leads should be mindful of who has contributed to the project and offer authorship as appropriate. At times, a researcher might also decline authorship, if they feel that they have not made substantial contributions.

This authorship statement is adapted from the guidelines from Nature Research Journals¹, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors², and the Council of Science Editors³. We recommend checking the 3 sources below for more detailed information.

¹<https://www.nature.com/authors/policies/authorship.html> ²<http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html> ³<https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-2-authorship-and-authorship-responsibilities/>

Know Your Resources

Sharing knowledge between members of the lab is an important part of our work as academics. The “Wiki” platform is an excellent way for us to capture our lab’s diverse skills and knowledge bases in a way that is fairly permanent yet easy to change. Most lab protocols are documented in great detail in the Wiki. Check out what we have collected so far, and follow the instructions on the first page to help out in improving the site! #didyoucheckthewiki

Meetings with Jamil

Jamil meets regularly with senior lab members, but is always open to chatting with anyone from the lab community. Please feel free to reach out!

Though not mandatory, Jamil appreciates when people send agendas and / or any data / writing on which they want feedback by the night *before* meetings, so he can prepare.

Response Time

Timely response to email is expected (ideally within 24 hours for intra-lab communications) , and we do our best to be punctual for lab meetings and events. If you are running late for a meeting or event, be sure to notify a fellow SSNL member by email or text. Similarly, if you cannot attend a meeting or event, please inform Jamil and/or Kylie ahead of time.

Respect for Administrators

We can show our gratitude to administrative and support staff (Finance, HR, etc.) by getting them what they need, exactly how they need it, in a timely manner (again, ideally within 24 hours of requests) .

Delegate Responsibilities Appropriately

All members of the research team should be given tasks that they are approved, trained, and qualified to complete. This way, things get done right the first time.

Value All Contributions

Research is a team effort. All members of the team bring something to the table and deserve recognition and appreciation for their contributions, big and small.

Lab Social Events

To help us work together to accomplish great things in social and affective neuroscience, our lab holds bi-weekly social events where lab members can hang out, have fun and get to know each other. Kylie oversees this process, so if you have ideas for an event and/or are interested in helping set one up, she’d love to hear what you’re thinking!

Code of Conduct

Expectations

The SSNL expects all members to communicate respectfully and deliver feedback to one another in a constructive manner. This expectation holds for all forms of interaction, including online and face-to-face. When expressing disagreement or dissent, be sure to deliver these communications respectfully and with acknowledgement of alternate points of view.

Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Harassment

The SSNL does not tolerate any forms of harassment. With that in mind, it is important to discuss what harassment can look like and outline the available channels for reporting.

The following definitions of harassment are borrowed from the Social Affective Neuroscience Society (SANS) code of conduct:

"Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Behavior and language that are welcome and acceptable to one person may be unwelcome and offensive to another. Consequently, individuals must use discretion to ensure that their words and actions communicate respect for others. This is especially important for those in positions of authority since individuals with lower rank or status may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, debilitates morale, and therefore, interferes with work effectiveness. The following are examples of behavior that, when unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment: sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; a display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit jokes; unnecessary touching.

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic [...] includes, but is not limited to the following: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group."

Reporting Violations of Community Standards

Jamil and Kylie are both available to discuss any concerns that arise with respect to community standards. Whether those concerns involve other SSNL members or individuals not directly affiliated with the lab, please know that we are here to listen and provide support

to the best of our abilities. Having said that, it is important to note that Jamil, Kylie, postdocs, and full-time RAs are mandated reporters of Title IX violations.

Who are Mandated Reporters?

All university faculty and staff who regularly work with students in a teaching, advising, coaching, or mentoring capacity are required to report instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship (dating or domestic) violence, and stalking to the Title IX Office. In other words, Jamil, Kylie, postdocs, and full-time RAs are mandated reporters under Title IX.

What Does This Mean?

Mandated reporters are required to notify the Title IX Office of violations. These reports are not anonymous, and Stanford does not guarantee that they will be kept confidential. In rare cases, Stanford may proceed to a Title IX investigation despite requests for confidentiality.

Title IX Office

Kingscote Gardens (2nd floor)
419 Lagunita Drive
Stanford, CA 94305
Phone: 650-497-4955
Email: titleix@stanford.edu

Anonymous, Confidential Resources

Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Crisis Line YWCA Silicon Valley

Phone (available 24/7): 800-572-2782

Confidential Support Team Stanford University

Phone (available 24/7): 650-725-9955

The Bridge Peer Counseling Center Stanford University

Phone (available 24/7): 650-723-3392

Counseling and Psychological Services (for students) Stanford University

Phone (available 24/7): 650-723-3785

Ombuds (also handles general conflict resolution)

Stanford University
Phone: 650-723-3682