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| 1. **NAME** of the resource / tool
 |  **Best Start Lancaster Code of Conduct** |
| 1. **WHAT** is the purpose of the resource / tool?
 | A code of conduct helps groups establish clear expectations and agreement regarded expected behavior at meetings or when representing the group elsewhere, and also defines consequences for persons whose conduct does not adhere those standards.This code of conduct was structured to lead the conversation with members by stating the purpose or mission statement of the group, emphasizes the behavior they expect but also establishes the behavior that won’t be tolerated. It outlines a process for addressing code violations, including a warning system and mediation panel to manage recurring or serious offenses. |
| 1. **WHO** developed the resource / tool? (If it was adapted from an existing document, please include a citation for the original source.)
 | This document was developed by Capacity Builder Araceli Simeon for Best Start Lancaster. Source documents include:* The mission statement comes from the specific Best Start community.
* The introduction and 15 expected behaviors come from Antelope Valley Partners for Health’s code of conduct.
* The consequences, warnings, mediation panel, and rest of document was developed by me, influenced by Disruptive Person Letters school districts issue to parents and language used in restorative justice models.
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| 1. **HOW** should the resource / tool be used?
2. *What circumstances are ideal/appropriate?*
3. *By whom and when?*
4. *Is a particular skill set or special preparation needed?*
 | 1. This tool can be used by a group as a template to adapt for their own group. It is used resolve recurring inappropriate behavior by members or address situations where conflicts have become disruptive to group functions.
2. For the tool to be effective, it must be adapted and approved by the group members that will be upholding conduct standard. All members are asked to affirm their commitment by signing the form.

When the code of conduct is violated, the group facilitator and/or leaders (chairs) are responsible for following through with implementation, by giving warnings and establishing the mediation panel if needed. 1. Ideally, the group facilitator would have experience managing conflict, and following these types of protocols. If the group facilitator does not have experience, it is recommended to partner with others (supervisors, and group leaders) to plan and coordinate how to carry it out, prepare to respond to different reactions they may get from the individual involved, and the other community members.
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| 1. **WHY** is this resource being recommended? (What makes is especially effective or useful for community-based work?)
 | Conflict is a natural occurrence in groups. Without a code of conduct, groups may find it difficult to address or resolve persistent conflict and unacceptable behavior in a fair, objective manner. Without such a policy, members behaving inappropriately can claim they are being singled out or discriminated against when the group tries to discipline them or revoke membership. Having a policy and implementing it uniformly, protects the group from such claims. |

**Best Start Lancaster Mission, Values, and Code of Conduct**

Best Start Lancaster’s (BSL) mission is to reduce child abuse in the Antelope Valley by increasing awareness, advocating for solutions, and supporting (educational, recreational, prevention, and/or intervention) programs for all families so that children grow healthy, happy, and resilient.

At Best Start Lancaster we value and are committed to conducting our work with honesty and integrity, in accordance with high ethical standards, and with respect for each other and those with whom we work with. This code of conduct sets out the basic rules, standards and behaviors necessary to achieve those objectives. As Community Partnership, we ask each Best Start Lancaster Member and Leader to:

1. Recognize that every member of the BSL Partnership makes a unique and important contribution regardless of job, role, or title.
2. Continually support the effort of others within the BSL Partnership and collaborate effectively when interfacing with other members in the community.
3. Treat others with dignity, respect and compassion; respecting differences in background, experience, culture, religion and ethnicity.
4. Encourage positive behaviors.
5. Provide positive constructive feedback to correct unacceptable behavior.
6. Act courageously and responsibly and are truthful and authentic to those served.
7. Serve passionately as a BSL leader– protecting and acting on behalf of the best interests and welfare of others in all situations.
8. Maintain a professional attitude when working with community, parents, partnership members, and staff from other organizations.
9. Represent Best Start, First 5 LA, and partner agencies in a positive manner both at meetings, events and when out in the community, or cyberspace.
10. Continue to learn and seek new knowledge to enhance my skills and ability to serve.
11. Accept leadership direction and embrace constructive criticism as a means to improving.
12. Provide ideas for improvement and constructive criticism to the appropriate internal forums for the purpose of improving our work, services we provide.
13. Take responsibility for his or her own actions without blaming others.
14. Utilize resources, equipment, and supplies efficiently and with cost awareness.
15. Demonstrate accountability as an individual and team member while dealing with internal business or projects and while serving the community.

As a BSL member, you are not alone. If there is ever a situation that you are not able to take care of, or come across a hazardous condition please call on others (i.e. Capacity Builder, Guidance Body Chair(s), First 5 LA staff) immediately for assistance or guidance.

**Consequences for Not Upholding BSL’s Mission, Values, and Code of Conduct**

Best Start Lancaster members will not tolerate fighting, swearing, threats, harassment, and similar unprofessional behavior in Best Start-related activities (i.e. meetings, events, conferences) or any other public forum including social media.

**Warnings**

Members behaving inappropriately toward others will be given up to three verbal or written warnings by Guidance Body Members and/or First 5 LA staff or contractors (i.e. Capacity Builder) to correct the behavior. If the behavior persists or endangers another person’s safety, the member will be asked not to return to the Partnership until the situation is reviewed with a mediation panel.

**Mediation Panel**

In situations when conflict persists all the affected parties will be asked to participate in one or more mediation sessions with a panel of at least 3 representatives (i.e. First 5 LA staff, contractors, Guidance Body Members or other impartial parties). Individuals serving on the panel cannot have conflict of interests and will receive training on conflict resolution and restorative justice principles.

The purpose of the panel is to listen to each side of the dispute, review the facts of the situation, identify the root cause(s) of the problem, and engage with the affected parties to find solutions to the problem(s). The intent of this panel is not to declare a guilty party and impose punishment but rather to find ways to foster a culture of respect within Best Start. This requires a process of self-reflection, accountability for own actions, restoring those harmed, mending relationships, and helping individuals build their capacity to resolve problems in a constructive manner. The recommendations from the panel and agreements by the group will be documented and reviewed periodically, at a frequency determined by the group.

Failure to participate in a mediation process or to agree to most of the resolutions recommended by the mediation panel will result in the individual(s) losing membership status from BSL and being asked not to return to Best Start-related activities.

**Best Start Lancaster Community Partnership Member:**

Please sign below to indicate that you have read this document and that your conduct will reflect the values and will follow the rules, standards and behaviors in the Best Start Lancaster Community Partnership code of conduct, so that together we achieve the mission. If there is ever conflict, we will resolve the situation according to the steps outlined in this document.

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BSL Member Name BSL Member Signature Date