N3C Community Guiding Principles
& Procedures

Version History

Version	Description of changes
All versions	https://zenodo.org/record/3978729#.YId8YH1KijA This DOI represents all versions, and will always resolve to the latest one.
1.0-2020-08-06	● First version
2.0-2021-06-11	● Mutual respect and communication etiquette

This Community Guiding Principles document outlines expectations of every N3C community member, which includes institutions and individuals who use N3C resources, expertise, and data. The N3C community is committed to providing a welcoming and inspiring environment for all community members. These principles were established by the N3C Community in an unprecedented effort to encourage and enable a highly collaborative research environment to address one of the worst health crises of our time. N3C Community members are expected to honor these guiding principles, be open to questions, reserve judgement, treat each other with respect, and foster engagement.

N3C is built on principles of Partnership, Inclusivity, Transparency, Reciprocity, Accountability, Security, and Mutual Respect:

● **Partnership:** N3C community members are trusted partners committed to honoring the N3C community guiding principles and Code of Conduct

● **Inclusivity:** N3C is open to any organization that wishes to contribute data, code, and ideas, as well as anyone who registers to use N3C data to conduct COVID-19 related research, including citizen/community scientists

● **Transparency:** Open processes and reproducible research is the hallmark of N3C and good

scientific practice. Access to data is project-based and focused on COVID-19 research questions. Descriptions of projects are posted publicly and are searchable to promote collaborations.

- **Reciprocity:** Contributions are acknowledged and results from analyses, including provenance and attribution, are expected to be shared with the N3C community.

- **Accountability:** N3C community members take responsibility for their activities and hold each other accountable for achieving the N3C objectives and acting through good scientific practices.

- **Security:** All activities are conducted in a secure, controlled access cloud-based environment, and are recorded for auditing and attribution purposes.

- **Mutual respect:** Communications should be professional, concise, clear and relevant. Follow proper communication etiquette articulated below. Avoid excessive conflict, unprofessional arguments, ad hominem attacks, and/or ridicule over chat and in messaging.

Multiple unsolicited or aggressive activity that attempts to manipulate or disrupt the N3C experience will not be tolerated. This includes any kind of communication, such as public/private chatting, email, or verbal communication where others have asked for the communication to stop or have declared that the communication desist due to their discomfort.

Harassment will not be tolerated. N3C supports the NIH statement on anti-harassment: https://www.nih.gov/anti-sexual-harassment

Violation of the policy may result in corrective action, and temporary or permanent suspension of N3C participation in domain teams, committees, and/or N3C account access. This decision will be made by N3C leadership.

Ethics Statement

The N3C community members are expected to follow all laws, regulations, and their organization's policies related to the responsible conduct of research. Further, members will respect and protect patient privacy and other interests by minimizing risks of harm and maximizing potential benefits to individuals or groups through inclusivity and equity in research design and outcome dissemination. It is expected that community members consider the effects their research could have on vulnerable populations, communities, and society and not use N3C resources for research that is discriminatory or stigmatizing of individuals or communities.

In keeping with the Guiding Principles stated above, the N3C community will uphold the highest standards of publication ethics and best practices, by appropriately attributing and citing works and contributions (Partnership, Inclusivity, Reciprocity), and developing and disseminating original works that uphold scientific integrity, promote the rapid advancement of scientific findings, and bolster public trust in research (Transparency, Accountability, and Security).

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

We encourage the widest possible community of investigators and organizations to participate in N3C, and we are committed to building a community for all. Although this list cannot be exhaustive, the N3C community honors diversity in race, ethnicity, culture, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical size, language, national origin, immigration status, political beliefs, profession, religion, socioeconomic status, family status, educational level, and mental, technical, or physical ability.

Communication Etiquette

Implementation of minimum standards for appropriate communication can result in meaningful exchange across groups. The N3C community communication etiquette thrives to promote positive interactions across N3C including but not limited to email, in person and virtual meetings, and messaging.

Keeping on Track

- *Keeping Relevant.* It is recommended that meetings have agendas or topics for discussion. Attendees should ask questions and provide comments **relevant** to the discussion. If the question or comment is not relevant to the topic, ask at the beginning of the meeting if it can be addressed after the planned meeting topics.

- *Adhere to a Timebox*. Everyone should adhere to meeting **start and end times**. If you are a key attendee or on the agenda, and you will be late or can not make the meeting, inform the meeting leader. Allow for adequate time to conduct the meeting and for members to move to their next activity. Also, stay within your timebox for meeting agenda topics.

Audio and Visual Presence

- **Mute** your audio when you are not speaking. Be thoughtful of when you speak. Be courteous, and allow others to complete their thoughts and reduce interruptions.

- Be present in meetings. Turning on your **video** is a message to the virtual team that you are present. Participants are encouraged to turn on their video when speaking.

Public and Private Messaging

- *Messages/Chats* should be professional, concise, clear and relevant. Avoid conflict, arguments and ridicule over chat and in messaging.

- Messaging/Chatting can be disruptive for the speaker, the audience and members of the team. Refrain from messaging and visual gestures that are disruptive or do not add relevance to the conversation. Contribute substantive comments at the appropriate time.

- *Private chat and messaging.* Use private chat responsibly and courteously. Private chats can be used to not disrupt the meeting if socially appropriate.

- Please note that meetings are recorded which includes private chats.

Respect and Communicate team and personal boundaries.

- Respect individuals' communication preferences. For example, if someone prefers to communicate through public chat, then it is recommended that individuals use that method. It is expected that such requests be honored immediately.

Resolving Issues through Community Arbitration

The N3C community is an open and positive collaborative environment, where researchers from various cultural and regional backgrounds bring diverse opinions, communication styles, skill sets and experiences. Misunderstandings due to miscommunication can happen. When this happens, we will work towards a positive outcome. Many times, it may be a misunderstanding that can be quickly worked out directly with the individual.

The hope is that issues do not arise. In the event that issues arise, you witness an issue, or you feel uncomfortable, the N3C Community seeks to help address them where possible. An N3C Community "Response Team" of 2-3 individuals nominated by the community, will serve as community arbiters to aid resolution of concerns and to escalate to NIH if relevant. If a community member experiences any concern, then they may raise it to a Response Team contact. As part of the N3C Community, members are expected to respect and consider in good faith recommendations offered by the Response Team and to contribute to finding and implementing workable solutions. Of note, all concerns reported will be handled with discretion and will receive serious attention. It is expected that any differences of opinion will be resolved through good faith, constructive dialogue among all involved individuals.