Resolution of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the

Blind and Visually Impaired: July 2018

**Ethical Communication**

**Resolution Number 2018 - 3**

Author: Rebecca Sheffield

Whereas the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is the leading national organization representing professionals in the field of blindness and visual impairment, including practitioners, personnel preparation faculty, and researchers;

Whereas the accuracy and authoritativeness of information endorsed and/or distributed by AER’s national office, chapters, divisions, and representatives to AER members and to the public reflects upon the professionalism and rigor of the field of blindness and visual impairment;

Whereas AER newsletters, social media accounts, and listservs are valuable tools for disseminating information among, to, and by AER members and the field of blindness and visual impairment;

Whereas the internet and social media enable rapid and wide dissemination of information communicated in AER’s name, including research-related information such as recruitment for research studies and publication of research findings; and

Whereas the AER Code of Ethics is a “guide that reflects the commitment of professionals within this field to act ethically,” including the following:

* AER members adhere to the principles of “fidelity and integrity – professionals are loyal, honest, truthful, and keep their promises to consumers. They establish and maintain trusting relationships with their consumers. They maintain ethical standards of behavior and manage conflicts of interest. They also engage in ethical behavior with colleagues, and employers… They accurately represent themselves and their abilities to the consumers they serve.”
* (7.01) “AER Members will not make public statements that are false, deceptive, or fraudulent concerning their research, practice, or other work activities or those of persons or organizations with which they are affiliated.”
* (13.02) “AER Members will take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues.”

Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, by the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), in convention assembled July 28, 2018, that this organization:

1. urges the national office, state chapters, divisions, and members of AER to carefully consider the *AER Code of Ethics* as it applies to any and all information distributed in any format, including newsletters, listservs, social media accounts, conference presentations, etc;
2. affirms that the AER code of ethics compels AER representatives, members, chapters, and divisions, to consider the reliability and truthfulness of information disseminated as representatives of the field of blindness/visual impairment;
3. affirms that the AER code of ethics compels AER representatives, members, chapters, and divisions to avoid disseminating unverified, misleading, or outdated information;
4. affirms that the *AER Code of Ethics* compels AER representatives, chapters, and divisions to disclose and distinguish when an outside organization has paid to place information in a newsletter or other AER communication;
5. affirms that the *AER Code of Ethics* compels AER representatives, chapters, and divisions to clearly indicate when AER communications contain opinions, advocacy, and/or other information which have not been endorsed by AER or the responsible AER chapter/division;
6. encourages AER’s national office, state chapters, and divisions to promote and share information which advances the rights of persons with disabilities and to avoid promoting materials which are inconsiderate of the “respect for personal rights and dignity” of people who are blind or visually impaired;
7. urges the AER national office, state chapters, divisions, and members of AER to avoid automated/unscrutinized processes of curating articles and website links for newsletters and/or social media; and
8. encourages AER’s national office, state chapters, and divisions to establish advisory committees and/or processes as necessary to support the quality and accuracy of communications using AER resources (newsletters, listservs, social media accounts, etc.).