



Adopted 8/21/25

# “Vets Healing on the Fly” Code of Conduct for all Participating Veterans and Volunteers

## Guidelines for Respect, Safety, and Community Wellbeing

The following Code of Conduct has been established to ensure that all participants, volunteers, staff, and partners of our veterans with disabilities fly fishing therapy program can engage in meaningful, healing experiences while upholding the values of respect, safety, and inclusion. Our mission is to foster a supportive environment where the therapeutic power of fly fishing and associated activities can be fully realized, enhancing the quality of life for veterans living with disabilities.

## 1. Purpose and Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all individuals involved in our organization, including veterans, volunteers, staff, instructors, sponsors, and collaborators. It encompasses all activities, events, outings, and communications, whether in-person, online, or in written correspondence.

## 2. Core Values

- **Respect:** We honor the dignity, experiences, and perspectives of every individual.
- **Inclusivity:** We welcome veterans of all backgrounds and abilities and strive to make our programs accessible to all.
- **Safety:** We are committed to maintaining physical, emotional, and psychological safety throughout all activities.
- **Compassion:** We approach each other with empathy, patience, and kindness, recognizing the unique journey of every participant.
- **Stewardship:** We respect the natural environment, practicing responsible fishing and conservation.



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### 3. Participant Responsibilities

- Engage in all activities with a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.
- Acknowledge and honor each participant's right to privacy and confidentiality regarding personal experiences and health information.
- Promptly inform staff or volunteers of any health concerns, physical limitations, or accessibility needs that may affect participation.
- Adhere to guidance from instructors, staff, and volunteers on fly fishing techniques, safety protocols, and environmental stewardship.
- Respect boundaries, both physical and emotional, and be mindful of language and behavior that may affect others.
- Refrain from the use of alcohol, illegal substances, or any behavior that may compromise safety or wellbeing during program activities.

### 4. Volunteer, Staff, and Instructor Conduct

- Model exemplary behavior and uphold the principles of this Code of Conduct at all times.
- Foster a welcoming atmosphere, providing accommodation and assistance as needed to ensure full participation for veterans with all types of disabilities.
- Maintain professional boundaries and refrain from any conduct that could be perceived as favoritism, harassment, or discrimination.
- Actively listen to participants' concerns, feedback, and suggestions, and respond with respect and timeliness.
- Report any incidents, safety hazards, or breaches of conduct to program leadership promptly.
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participants, including their medical history, contact information, and personal stories.

### 5. Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

- We do not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind, including but not limited to that based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or veteran status.
- Any form of bullying, intimidation, or exclusion is strictly prohibited.
- Concerns about discrimination or harassment may be reported to program administrators with confidence that they will be addressed discretely and appropriately.



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## 6. Environmental Ethics and Fishing Practices

- Observe all local, state, and federal regulations regarding fishing licenses, catch limits, and protected species.
- Practice catch-and-release techniques where required or appropriate, ensuring the welfare of fish and preservation of aquatic habitats.
- Avoid littering and proactively clean up after all outings, leaving waterways and natural spaces better than we found them.
- Respect private property and obtain permission before accessing non-public lands or waters.
- Participate in conservation efforts and educational initiatives that promote sustainable fishing and habitat restoration.

## 7. Health, Safety, and Accessibility

- Participate only in activities for which you feel physically and mentally prepared.
- Use all equipment safely and as instructed, reporting any malfunctions or hazards immediately.
- Wear appropriate attire, including protective gear, as advised for specific environments and weather conditions.
- Adhere to all site and activity-specific safety guidelines, including water safety, first aid procedures, and emergency communication protocols.
- Request accommodation when needed, and support others in accessing adaptive equipment or assistance.
- Promote a culture of support, encouraging peers and notify staff of any signs of distress or need for assistance.

## 8. Confidentiality and Privacy

- Respect the confidentiality of all participants' personal, medical, and therapeutic information.
- Use discretion when discussing program participation, particularly regarding therapeutic experiences or sensitive matters.



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## 9. Conflict Resolution

- Address conflicts with patience, understanding, and a commitment to finding positive solutions.
- Seek support from program leadership when unable to resolve issues independently.
- Engage in restorative conversations, focusing on learning, growth, and healing rather than blame or punishment.
- Respect all decisions made by program leadership regarding conduct, participation, and safety.

## 10. Commitment to Growth and Healing

- Embrace the spirit of fly fishing and its associated activities as a form of therapy, recognizing its power to foster calm, connection, and renewal.
- Support and celebrate the progress and achievements of fellow veterans, acknowledging that healing is a personal and ongoing journey.
- Participate actively in group settings, workshops, and outings, sharing knowledge and encouragement.
- Remain open to learning new techniques, perspectives, and ways of engaging with both nature and the therapeutic process.

## 11. Accountability and Enforcement

- All participants, volunteers, and staff are expected to uphold this Code of Conduct.
- Violations may result in counseling, suspension, or termination of participation, depending on severity and context.
- Reports of misconduct will be investigated confidentially, fairly, and promptly, with the aim of restoring safety and trust within the community.
- Program leadership reserves the right to amend the Code of Conduct as needed to respond to evolving needs and best practices.



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## 12. Affirmation

By participating in Vets Healing on the Fly program, you affirm your commitment to these principles. Together, we can create a safe, inclusive, and healing space in which the simple act of casting a line becomes an opportunity for recovery, camaraderie, and hope.

Let this Code of Conduct be both a guide and an inspiration, as we honor the courage and resilience of our veterans with disabilities, and the transformative power of nature, community, and fly fishing.