

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION 1:  
CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT  
SUMMARY POST

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## **SUMMARY POST**

Ingold's (2024a) initial post on "Abusive Workplace Behavior" identified six Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) (N.D.) ethical breaches, and flagged each as social, professionalism or legal. Max's unethical behaviour toward Diane triggered four, and her superior, Jean, elicited two unprofessional breaches—by enabling abuse rather than enforcing accountability. Mapping the ACM (2018) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to the British Computing Society (BCS) (N.D.) Code of Conduct identified that the ACM focused more on ethics, and the BCS more on UK 2010 Equality Act compliance (Karim, 2021).

There were three feedback areas: ethics, psychological safety, and enforcement.

### **Ethics**

Mutebe (2024) recognised Ingold's (2024a) catalogued ethics violations, however, Botha (2024) questioned if Diane behaved unethically by not reporting beyond her superior and posited that she dismissed advice due to arrogance as per Milyavsky et al. (2017). Given the six ethical breaches, this could exemplify reframing due to "victim blaming" and "responsibility shifting" (LaVan & Martin, 2021).

### **Psychological Safety**

Ethical behaviour is key to psychological safety, with a wide range of impacts. Ingold (2024a) identified innovation and knowledge sharing, Chamane (2024) raised risk reporting misconduct, and Ngugi (2024) focused on mental health—impacted negatively by toxicity, and positively by support and fairness.

### **Enforcement**

Ethics codes have limits (Chamane, 2024). Ingold (2024b) observed that while both the ACM and BCS provide expulsion as a deterrent, ACM uses “should”, while the BCS uses “shall” (British Computing Society, N.D.; ACM, 2018). Regardless, membership revocation is the extent of their power. Ethics codes are “soft laws”, possibly resulting in disciplinary action, as opposed to “hard laws”, which can be prosecuted (Weinbaum et al., 2019).

## **Conclusion**

Unfortunately, ethics and psychological safety remain guidelines. As witnessed by the UK 2010 Equality Act, only “hard law” can protect human rights (Allen, 2021).

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