

CODE OF CONDUCT

for

Breaking the Silence

Staff Members



ব্রেকিং দ্য সাইলেন্স

Breaking the Silence

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Introduction

BTS is a non-profit, non- political organization established in 1994 through committed efforts of some of the prominent development activist in Bangladesh and subsequently registered as a legal body in 2000 with the Department of Social Services (DSS) in 2000 and NGO Affairs Bureau in 2001. Much of the work was done voluntarily by the founder members to break the silence in the community. The members of BTS have taken upon themselves to raise awareness to protect the children from sexual abuse.

BTS envisions a protective environment in the society and state for promoting child rights. In line with the vision and mission and from contextual analysis, BTS has identified four strategic areas: a) Enhanced children capacity for establishing their rights, b) Community mobilization for collective actions for child protection, c) Advocacy for policy development reform and implementation and d) Institutional Capacity Enhancement of BTS. Following thematic approaches, BTS had initiated several programs & activities under the following heads to address violence against women and children.

In accordance with vision, mission and core values, Breaking the Silence (BTS) is committed to maintaining maximum standards of ethical conducts among all of BTS employees, and expects that all staff members act in a professional manner, considering the core values of respect, integrity, modesty, commitment, and excellence while performing their organizational roles and responsibilities. This code of conduct is based on the very vision, mission, and values of Breaking the Silence. It provides a framework of BTS's expectations of employees in several important situations, as well as narrates general descriptions of all the major points mentioned in the document. This manual is a living document, meaning subject to change over time. Its practical value and importance lies in the ability and communication of each and everyone involved with BTS - members of the Governing Board, employees, committees, volunteers - in applying these codes in their work.

Goal of the Code of Conduct

The overall goal of developing a code of conduct is to provide an appropriate framework to address legitimacy, transparency and clarity of internal processes, accountability and representation, professional standards and performances, and internal cohesion of Breaking the Silence.

Objectives of the Code of Conduct

- The effectiveness in the quantity, quality and responsiveness of Breaking the Silence.
- The independence, transparency and reliability of the institutional structures of Breaking the Silence.
- The adherence to Breaking the Silence mission as well as set of core values, guiding principles, policies.



Strategies to Achieve the Objectives:

The objectives code of conduct shall be achieved through the following strategies:

- Staff would appropriate the code which defines the organisation's identity. The code will be translated in terms that are meaningful to the employees in their daily activities.
- Staff will internalize the provisions, enact the code as to behave according to its values and principles.
- The application of the code would be controlled and violations adequately sanctioned, while causes of deviations will be understood and addressed, which may lead to code's adaptations.
- Communication should be established between Breaking the Silence and its stakeholders on how the organization lives up to its values and standards of performance.

1. Conduct of Staff Members

- a) **Work Manner:** By accepting appointment with Breaking the Silence all employees agree to work in a responsible, respectful, productive and dignified manner. All employees should be loyal to the organization and stay active to accomplish the organizational objectives.
- b) **Corrective Measures:** Breaking the Silence shall use some corrective measures to motivate its staff members to improve the behavior as well as their performance.
- c) **Minor Offense:** For a minor offense or for deterioration of any employee's performance level or behavioural integrity level, a meeting between the employee and the relevant supervisor or a designated person will be conducted to resolve the situation informally as soon as possible. In some cases when documentation may be necessary, the supervisor with consultation of second supervisors of the concerned employee, will issue an advisory letter and send a copy to personnel file with HR.
- d) **Major Misconducts:** Any of the following acts on the part of an employee will amount to major misconduct-
 - Willful insubordination or disobedience to any lawful and responsible order of the supervisors.
 - Participation in strikes or abetting, inciting, instigating violence or adopt a go-slow work model.
 - Theft or fraud or dishonesty in connection with BTS's property or property of another.
 - Taking or giving bribes or illegal gratification.
 - Habitual late attendance for a long time without taking permission or giving reasons.
 - Breach of any terms and conditions of service rules or employment or any law applicable to BTS or any rules made there under.

- Without proper approval, collection or receiving any BTS money except as sanctioned by policies or rules of BTS or authorized by Executive Director, Breaking the Silence.
- Without proper approval by Executive Director-Breaking the Silence, doing consultancy for or employment with other organisation/s.
- Riotous, disorderly, aggressive, indecent or vulgar behavior by the employee within Breaking the Silence premises and encouraging such activities by others.
- Breach of any rules or instructions, for the maintenance or running of the office.
- Habitual neglect of work, or willfully lying or neglecting office work, deceiving office or BTS staff members.
- Doing secret discussion, fabrication or plan for harmful or degrading any staff members of Breaking the Silence.
- Deceiving office by doing uninformed/unapproved personal work either in BTS or outside BTS - in the name of doing official work (such as meeting, workshop, seminar, etc) or a short break for personal work outside (such as banking matter, tax matter, etc).

2. Grounds for Disciplinary Action

Without prejudice to the other provisions contained in these rules, a staff member who commits any or more of the following will be subject to disciplinary action:

- Commits a breach of these rules/disciplines contained herein.
- Is found to be negligent, inefficient or corrupt at work and in performing assigned responsibilities.
- Is threatening, intimidating or assaulting to any other staff member of Breaking the Silence.
- Knowingly does anything prejudicial to the interest of Breaking the Silence.
- Contravenes instructions issued to him/her in connection with official work.
- Is guilty of any other act of misconduct or insubordination.
- Is convicted of a criminal offence by a court.
- Is engaged, or reasonably suspected of being associated with others engaged in subversive activities and whose retention in service is, therefore, considered prejudicial to national security.
- Is habitually absent without leave request or intimation for 5 (five) consecutive working days.
- Is habitually late attendant for a long period of time.

- Is involved in falsifying or tampering with, damaging or carrying loss of BTS's official.
- Is engaged in organisational political for damaging other staff member's career.

3. Penalties/Disciplinary Action

There shall be two kinds of penalties, which may be imposed under these regulations, namely: minor penalties and major penalties.

Minor Penalties - The following are the minor penalties:

- Censure;
- Withholding of increment or promotion for a certain period of time as decide by the SMT;
- Recovery from pay of the whole or part of any loss caused to the organization by negligence or breach of rules.

Major Penalties - The following are the major penalties:

- Demotion to a lower post or grade;
- Termination from service;
- Recovery from pay any pecuniary loss caused to Breaking the Silence by negligence or breach of contract;
- Removal/Dismissal from service;
- Compulsory retirement.

4. Anti-Fraud and Corruption Conduct

Employees are expected to follow certain rules:

- Act with integrity, honesty and propriety in all their dealings as a BTS representative and lead by example.
- Carry out duties to the best of their ability for the interest of Breaking the Silence and not to take advantage of any situation for personal gain, for themselves, members of their family or friends.
- Take the risk of both internal and external fraud seriously and to follow systems and procedures designed to prevent or detect fraudulent activities.
- Secure all passwords, information, documents, money, equipment etc in control which can be stolen or used to per perpetrate fraud.

As part of its culture, Breaking the Silence will provide clear routes by which concerns can be raised by both employees and management in regard to fraud and corruption and necessary actions against them as per rules.

Senior management is expected to deal swiftly and firmly with those who defraud BTS and who are corrupt in their act and behaviour. BTS, including members and senior

management, should be robust in dealing with financial malpractices, exploitation of the organisation and suppression of fellow staff members. Breaking the Silence has in place both the internal and external audits and due diligence practices, which review overall activities including reports of any significant investigations and the management responses to the recommendations having been put forward.

5. Use of Organisation's Assets and Available Funds

Breaking the Silence employees are responsible for the proper management of all BTS assets, funds or other property entrusted to them. BTS equipment and property, including files, documents and software, etc are provided for BTS work and may not be removed from office premises, or accessed, except in the regular course of business. All are expected to treat the organisational property with the same care and respect as a person would do for his/her own, and are required to return BTS property in good condition prior to his/her separation from the organisation. While ordinary wear and tear is expected, any damage or loss of BTS property should be reported promptly to the line manager and HR head. Any damage due to negligence is not acceptable to BTS and the organisation may ask for compensation against such damage. It is strictly prohibited that BTS staff members will not use any office equipment, property or vehicles for personal use. In case of emergency need for personal use, permission has to be sought from the HR.

6. Cyber Security and Digital Devices

This section deals with all things digital at work. Breaking the Silence wants to set some guidelines for using computers, tabs, phones, our internet connection and social media to ensure security and protect its assets as well as organisation's core ethics and values.

Internet Usage

Breaking the Silence internet connection is primarily for its official purposes. But, BTS staff can occasionally use the connection for personal purposes as long as it doesn't interfere with his/her job responsibilities. Also, Breaking the Silence expect its staff to temporarily halt personal activities that slow down the internet connection (e.g. uploading photos) if asked to.

Staff member of BTS must not use internet connection to:

- Download or upload obscene, offensive or illegal material.
- Send confidential information to unauthorized recipients.
- Invade another person's privacy and gain access to sensitive information.
- Visit potentially dangerous websites that can compromise BTS network and computers' safety.
- Perform unauthorized or illegal actions, like hacking, fraud or buying/selling illegal goods.

Cell Phone

Breaking the Silence allow use of cell phones at work. But, BTS also wants to ensure that staff devices won't distract them from his/her work or disrupt BTS workplace. BTS asks its Staff to follow a few simple rules:

- Use cell phone in a manner that benefits BTS work.
- Keep personal calls brief and use an empty meeting room or common area so as not to disturb your colleagues.
- Avoid playing games on your phone or texting excessively.
- Don't use your phone for any reason while driving an organisation vehicle i.e. organisation's motorbike.
- Don't use phone to record confidential information.
- Don't download or upload inappropriate, illegal or obscene material using BTS internet connection.
- Also, staff must not use his/her phone in areas where cell phone use is explicitly prohibited.

Email

Email is essential to Breaking the Silence work. BTS staff member should use organisation email primarily for work, but BTS allow some uses of staff's organisation email for personal reasons.

- **Work-related use:** Staff can use his/her organisation email for work-related purposes without limitations. For example, staff can sign up for newsletters and online services that will help them in his/her job or professional growth.
- **Personal use:** Staff can use his/her email for personal reasons as long as they keep it safe, and avoid spamming and disclosing confidential information. For example, staff can send emails to friends and family and download ebooks, guides and other safe content for his/her personal use.

Organisation's General Expectations:

No matter how staff uses his/her organisation email, BTS expects its staff to avoid:

- Signing up for illegal, unreliable, disreputable or suspect websites and services.
- Sending unauthorized content or emails.
- Sending insulting or discriminatory messages and content.
- Spamming other people's emails, including his/her coworkers.
- In general, use strong passwords and be vigilant in catching emails that carry malware or phishing attempts.

- BTS Management/Supervisor reserves the right to monitor/check any organization devices with the consent of concerning Management without prior notice as part of monitoring and organizational safety.

Social Media

BTS wants to provide practical advice to prevent careless use of social media in its workplace. BTS addresses two types of social media uses: using personal social media at work and representing organisation through social media.

Using personal social media at work

BTS staff members are permitted to access their personal accounts at work. But, BTS expects its staff to act responsibly, according to policies and ensure that staff stays productive. Specifically, BTS asks its staff to:

- Discipline them. Avoid getting sidetracked by one's social platforms.
- Ensure others know that one's personal account or statements don't represent organisation. For example, use a disclaimer such as "opinions are my own."
- Avoid sharing intellectual property or confidential information. Staff should ask their manager or PR first before they share organisation's news that's not officially announced.
- Avoid any defamatory, offensive or derogatory content. Staff may violate organisation's policy if he/she directs such content towards colleagues, beneficiaries or partners.

Representing Breaking the Silence through social media

If staff members handle organisation's social media accounts or speak on organisation's behalf, BTS expects them to protect organisation's image and reputation. Specifically, staff should:

- Be respectful, polite and patient.
- Avoid speaking on matters outside his/her field of expertise when possible.
- Follow confidentiality and data protection and observe laws governing copyrights, trademarks, plagiarism and fair use.
- Coordinate with Management/HR/Social Media Admin when staff is about to share any major-impact content.
- Avoid deleting or ignoring comments for no reason.
- Correct or remove any misleading or false content as quickly as possible.

7. Conflict of Interest Conduct

In work, conflict may arise between individual and/or group interests of Breaking the Silence. The staff members need to disclose and discuss such conflict and resolve in a manner in keeping with the interest of BTS. For the purposes of this manual, a staff member's family includes a spouse, brother or sister, parents, child or live-in partner. A conflict of interest may arise in a variety of situations wherever BTS interests, such as relying on staff duties of loyalty and confidentiality, compete with the personal or other professional activities or engagements of any BTS staff member. A clear conflict of interest arises when an employee or a member of his/her family directly or indirectly:

- Gets monetary or other commercial benefit or is in a position of authority, regulator, influence or governance as to any party doing business with Breaking the Silence, programmes or related entities and as an BTS staff member a person is involved or potentially influence that transaction.
- Participates in BTS or related entity in recruitment, evaluation, award or administration of a contract, loan, purchase, sale, investment order, donation or other transaction that will directly or indirectly benefit employee or his/her family.
- Stands to gain personally or individually from any transaction in which BTS, a BTS programme or a BTS related entity is a party.
- Accepts gifts, favours or anything of monetary value from BTS donors or vendors, including contractors, (except for unsolicited gifts of a nominal value, training, travel, materials, or other items provided for the benefit of BTS with supervisor approval).

In that case a neutral person or committee may be appointed to review the situation including conflicts of interest if appropriate or necessary.

The staff members are not permitted to solicit, obtain, accept, or retain any personal benefit from any supplier, vendor, staff of partners, beneficiaries or any individual or organisation doing or seeking business with BTS. No staff member of BTS shall maintain an outside business or financial interest, or engage in any outside business or financial activity, which conflicts with the interests of BTS, or which interferes with the staff member's ability to perform job responsibilities fully. Nor any staff member may benefit directly or indirectly from a third party, that furnishes products, materials, or services to BTS.

8. Confidentiality and Transparency Conduct

All Breaking the Silence employees must treat and register information obtained in the service of BTS with confidentiality, when its nature calls for it or when this is explicitly requested, and will not use any such information and materials to further a private interest. This refers to all verbal or written communication including, but not limited to, work created as part of your job, financial data, computer files, contracts, procurement materials (vendor lists, purchase orders, etc), marketing and donor information (donor names, mailing lists, contributions, etc), programme materials (project reports, fund

applications, etc), personnel or staff information (personnel files, salary information, etc), and general organisational (corporate) documents (internal policies, procedures, meetings minutes, documents, notes, files). All are expected to protect and keep applicable information in strict confidence and practice a reasonable degree of care to prevent disclosure of any information regarding BTS in any manner adverse to the interest of or detrimental to BTS, or those with BTS works for. The staff members are strictly prohibited from reproducing any confidential information for use inside or outside of BTS for any purpose whatsoever other than the performance of his/her duties at BTS. It is also expected that all staff members will be transparent in any dealings which require transparent conducts without hiding anything. Any staff member, violating confidentiality and transparency, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to punishable level and including dismissal, for knowingly or unknowingly revealing information of a confidential nature. The staff members are expected to undertake to remain faithful to this commitment even after separation from Breaking the Silence.

9. Staff Relations Conduct

- Breaking the Silence staff members will treat each other with respect, modesty, recognition and consideration, with special emphasis on gender equality and equality of each other irrespective of sex, faith, identity, status, professional category and any other criteria.
- They will communicate and consult with each other openly, honestly, modestly and collegially and in a manner that assists each of the staff members to fulfill their duties and responsibilities faithfully, effectively and efficiently, and with commitment.
- If any staff member behaves roughly, rudely and/or with disrespect, then he/she would be warned by the administration, if necessary, repeatedly. A constant behaviour of such kind may set the grounds for dismissal from the organisation.
- BTS staff members should respect the privacy and private lives of other colleagues when dealing with/discussing personal matters/information.
- All staff members should be committed to ensuring fullest possible participation of all staff members irrespective of status and position - in planning and implementation of our work.
- Before making any decision regarding any staff member, if it may impact upon that staff member, an adequate consultation must be done before reaching any conclusion.
- BTS staff members are also requested not to gossip about or show interest in private affairs at office premises. It should be borne in mind that gossip about private affairs may jeopardise one's personal life the impact of which may be detrimental to others. Therefore, gossip is absolutely prohibited.
- It is also expected that no staff member will try to impose his/her belief, learning, idea or taboo on others. Moreover, no staff member should make any

gesture, sound and mimicking that may disregard, disrespect, irritate, disturb or undermine anyone.

- All senior staff members are encouraged to show empathy and affection towards the junior staff members and reversibly the junior staff members will show respect and modesty towards the senior staff members. Modesty should be the basis for such relationship.
- BTS staff members are discouraged to discuss or whisper in pair or in group any unfounded or fabricated issues that may hamper the prestige and reputation of any employee. It is also strictly prohibited for all staff members to fabricate or construct any unfair issues or plans against any employee and communicate the same to others with the purpose of degrading or suppressing the employee for fulfilling someone's own individual interest.
- If such practice is detected and continues even after warning it will be deemed as setting the grounds for the dismissal of the personnel doing such act. BTS management also ensures that any attempt of placing unfounded or fabricated issues will be reprimanded and dealt with strongly forthwith.

10. Use of Breaking the Silence Machinery and Vehicles

- BTS staff members should optimise the best utilisation of all machineries (i.e. photocopier and printer).
- Regarding proper use of vehicles the staff members should avoid inefficient travel to and from BTS office to any place of events or field areas and keep the number of field/programme visits to the optimal level.
- All concerned are requested to try to accomplish a number of tasks by a single visit and make the best use of time and money, doing realistic plan ahead.
- The staff members are encouraged to coordinate their plans and programmes with other projects/departments/units through proper internal communication.
- Employees must not drive BTS vehicles or their own vehicles while on BTS business, or operate machinery or other equipment, while under the influence of alcohol or prescription drugs that may cause drowsiness, or otherwise impair their ability to drive safely.
- To do so may set the grounds for dismissal from the organisation.

11. Individual Behaviour in the Workplace

All staff members are required to practice the following behaviour at office seriously:

Individual desk management: BTS staff members are required to keep their desks and work stations neat and clean. They are requested not to keep unnecessary things on the desk, not to post notes on the partitions, walls/glasses for an extended time period. In case of absolute requirement, one can keep paper files in own file cabinets or drawers. Staff members are also requested not to ask Office Helpers to organise employee's desk

or work station. Every employee is responsible for managing his/her respective desk, files and office spaces. Usage of other's office desks, work stations, floors around individuals' desks and other parts of the office space as storage is strongly discouraged. In case of project or other required materials, the staff members are requested to coordinate with Admin to assist them.

Sound level: It is imperative that no disruptive sounds are made by BTS staff members that may cause disturbance to others' work. It must be borne in mind that a big chunk of BTS's work needs silent environment for its workers and therefore BTS staff members always need to maintain a quiet environment strictly in the office premises. To reduce the extent of disruption due to open space environment in the office, every staff member is required to keep their voice to a minimum level and to refrain from doing any loud activities. As part of our job one may use his/her desk for having a short low noise discussion with any colleague for a while, but this should not be long and regular practice in any way. If anyone needs a long discussion with someone or a group or team then they have to use meeting rooms. Loud one-to-one or over phone discussion is strictly prohibited. Moreover, if anyone wants to listen to song and watch video they should use headphones for suppressing the sound level.

Work at night/weekend/holidays: BTS staff members can access the office from Sunday to Thursday from 09:00 - 17:00. Everyone is expected not to come to office too early and do not stay in the office after office hours. It is also strongly discouraged to attend office on weekends and holidays unless it is absolutely necessary. It is not only unhealthy but also requires huge utility and other administrative costs to keep the office open on/during non-office hours/days. In case of extreme requirement, pre-approval in writing from Admin Section and relevant supervisor will be required.

Light, fan use: To save energy and proper utilisation of natural day light, staff members are required to keep the electric lights off as much as possible. Fans can be switched on, when required. The staff members are requested to switch off all electronic devices used by him/her before leaving office every day to avoid any hazardous incident and wastage of power and to save cost.

12. Safety and Security of Staff

The staff members are always required to keep and carry ID cards with them while in office and visiting any office/other places for official purpose. The staff members will ensure their personal safety i.e. driving license, helmet while using office vehicle e.g. motorbike. To violate so by staff members may set the grounds.

13. Outside Activities and Employment

While conducting BTS business and other affiliations outside BTS, all staff members are required to comply with all laws, policies and acts of the land; to be essentially fair with

respect to rights, interests and responsibilities of others; and to protect BTS's reputation through accountable conduct.

BTS staff members will not be engaged in any activity or transaction or acquire any position or function, whether paid or unpaid, that is incompatible with or detracts from the proper performance of his/her duties, and that may bring BTS as a whole into disrepute. In case of doing consultancy a staff member will need to go through proper approval process.

14. Visitors at the Workplace

Official visitors at office are allowed, but personal visitors are discouraged. However, occasionally staff members may receive personal visitors at office or at workstation. A staff member should make sure that his/her visitor does not disturb the work of others. He/she will be responsible for the conduct of the visitor while the latter is at BTS premises. The staff member receiving the visitor/s for both official and personal is responsible for the visitor's conduct and to make sure that s/he does not move around in any direction/work stations other than the intended location.

The staff members may sometimes need to bring their children to the office. Out of respect for other colleagues, employees are requested to keep this to minimum events. Children should be kept in the presence of their guardians at all times while he/she will be in the office premises.

15. Child Protection Policy¹

All staff members should be required to sign a code of conduct regarding the protection of children, the behaviour expected of them and their responsibilities in relation to the children they come into contact with as a result of their work with the BTS.

16. Responsibilities

All staff members of Breaking the Silence will be responsible to follow the manual and cooperate with Admin department and their colleagues in other units for smooth operation of the office. Any intentional breach of and negligence in observing this manual will be taken very seriously by the management authority and necessary measures or actions will be taken in line with the existing relevant policy manuals of BTS. All are encouraged and requested to follow the code of conduct articulated herein and avoid any unpleasant consequences by intentionally or unintentionally violating it.

This manual is effective as on 20 Aril, 2019.

¹ Child Protection Policy of Breaking the Silence