

Fostering a Culture of Respect

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

- a) To confirm Provincial Health Services Authority's (PHSA) commitment to a culture of respect across all our areas of work;
- b) To promote and maintain a work environment in which all persons are treated with respect and dignity, and which is free from discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- c) To ensure timely resolution of disrespectful conduct through clarifying conversations; and
- d) To outline the options, processes and resources for reporting and addressing disrespectful conduct, discrimination, harassment or bullying.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, directors, students, medical staff, researchers, physicians, residents, fellows, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, employees of academic institutions, visitors, clients, patients, and families of PHSA.

2. Policy

Creating a psychologically safe workplace that fosters mutual respect and is free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment are important priorities of PHSA. The benefits of a respectful workplace include positive patient/client experiences, greater job satisfaction and higher productivity and engagement. PHSA, its Board of Directors and leadership team, is committed to fostering a culture in which all staff demonstrate personal and professional integrity, promote an ethical environment and strive for professional excellence.

All persons associated with PHSA are accountable for their own conduct and must conduct themselves in a civil, respectful, cooperative and non-discriminatory manner at the workplace and at work-related gatherings.

This policy has been written using the principles of a just and trusting organizational culture and it is complementary to the Safe Reporting Policy; the Safe Reporting Policy states PHSA's commitment to support and protect individuals who report wrongdoings of which they are aware.

PHSA has zero-tolerance for disrespectful behaviour, discrimination, bullying and harassment.

PHSA has the right to investigate incident(s), with or without the person's consent, where there are concerns about the alleged disrespectful conduct or discrimination, bullying and/or harassment.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 PHSA Board Members & Senior Leadership

- Foster a safe work environment free from disrespectful behaviour
- Model appropriate workplace and respectful behaviour, free of discrimination, bullying or harassment

- Develop, implement and communicate this policy, and have fair and timely procedures to address allegations or concerns brought forward under this policy
- Provide training for staff and supervisors/manager to recognize the potential for bullying and harassment, the procedures for reporting and the processes available for resolution

3.2 Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Department Heads

- Foster a safe work environment free from disrespectful behaviour
- Model appropriate workplace and respectful behaviour, free of discrimination, bullying or harassment
- Respond to situations as they arise in a manner that is consistent with this policy and its associated processes and resources, including conducting and/or participating in investigations as required
- Support the training for staff to enable the understanding of the policy, procedures for reporting and processes available for resolution
- Advise human resources of all complaints made pursuant to this policy

3.3 Employees, Medical Staff, Students, Researchers, Volunteers

- Engage in respectful behaviour to support a workplace free from discrimination, bullying, or harassment
- Report disrespectful behaviour, bullying, or harassment, and adhere to other PHSA policies that require injury, illness and patient safety event reporting as applicable
- Participate in any investigations undertaken under this policy

3.4 Human Resources

- Educate and promote awareness of this policy and its associated resources and procedures
- Assist, advise and provide guidance to managers/supervisors in consistent application of the policy
- Counsel staff on their rights and options
- Ensure appropriate action is initiated in a timely manner with respect to complaints
- Facilitate discussion and/or conduct or coordinate investigations as required
- Track reports of complaints brought under this policy, monitor trends and advise leadership on areas of the organization that may require broader intervention

4. Options for Reporting Disrespectful Behaviour, Discrimination, Bullying and/or Harassment

Incidents or complaints should be addressed or reported as soon as possible, and within six (6) months of the incident. The unique circumstances of each complaint will determine the appropriate steps to take in its resolution; the goal is to resolve situations of alleged discrimination, bullying, or harassment as soon as possible, in a fair, constructive, and respectful manner.

4.1. Options for Advice or Guidance

Those who wish to seek advice may contact respect@phsa.ca or respect@bcehs.ca and a human resources representative will contact you within three (3) business days to follow up with your query. The individual will be provided with the opportunity to confidentially debrief the experience and be provided with options for addressing concerns. Discussing matters and bringing concerns forward does not commit the individual to filing a complaint under this policy.

You can also speak to your leader or refer to the PHSA 'Fostering a Culture of Respect Handbook' and/or the 'Fostering a Culture of Respect' education series available on the LearningHub.

4.2. Options for Reporting

An individual can report concerns about inappropriate conduct to their Leader/designate, or a human resources business partner or to respect@phsa.ca or respect@bcehs.ca.

NOTE: A staff member may seek the assistance of a union steward or physician colleague at any point in the process.

5. Sequential options for Resolving Disrespectful Behaviour, Discrimination, Bullying and/or Harassment

5.1. Clarifying Conversation

If an individual experiences conduct that they feel is disrespectful, discriminatory or may be bullying, they are encouraged to have a clarifying conversation(s) with the other person(s) to identify and resolve the concerns. The earlier the problem is addressed and discussed, the better chance of it being resolved and the inappropriate behaviour stopped.

The individual should also refer to the PHSA 'Fostering a Culture of Respect Handbook' and/or the 'Fostering a Culture of Respect' education series for further information about clarifying conversations. Assistance can also be sought through respect@phsa.ca or respect@bcehs.ca.

5.2. Reporting to a Leader/Designate

If an individual feels uncomfortable engaging the other individual directly, they may report to their leader / designate and/or HR business partner with the concern(s). If one or both of the persons involved are physicians, the matter must also be referred to the medical department head for resolution.

The leader/designate may contact human resources to assist with the matter. The goal is to understand and resolve the issue so that all persons conduct themselves in a civil, respectful and

cooperative manner.

If the person who is the subject of the concern is the individual's direct supervisor or manager, they may contact their supervisor's leader and/or the HR business partner for follow up.

5.3. Formal Fact Finding Process

A formal fact finding process may be appropriate; this will be determined in consultation with human resources. A written submission to initiate a complaint, outlining the facts, must be provided to human resources and/or human resources may conduct an intake interview. A senior leader within human resources, in consultation with legal, will decide the appropriate steps to be taken and whether or not escalation to a full investigation is required.

In the case of complaints about members of the medical staff, the medical department head / designate will follow the processes set out under the disciplinary sections of the medical staff bylaws and medical staff rules where applicable.

5.4. Other Resolution Processes

This process does not preclude individuals from advancing complaints through the applicable collective agreements, relevant professional bodies, the BC Human Rights Tribunal or WorkSafeBC. In the event individuals file complaints outside of this policy, PHSA reserves the right not to proceed with the options outlined here.

6. Witness and Third Part Complaints

Third party complaints (complaints from someone other than the complainant) will typically require an identifiable complainant to move forward, unless information provided indicates legitimate perceived risk of serious harm to an individual or group. Human resources will assess the situation to determine the best steps to ensure the safety and dignity of all individuals within PHSA.

7. Violation of this Policy

Any person found to be disrespectful and/or discriminatory at work or work-related gatherings may be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, cancellation of contract and/or revocation of privileges pursuant to applicable health authority processes. Remedial interventions may include but are not limited to:

- communication skills training
- anger management training
- education on cultural diversity
- counseling through PHSA's employee & family assistance program
- education and treatment for substance abuse

For patients / residents / clients (including family members and visitors) found in violation of this policy, PHSA may impose restrictions up to and including removal from PHSA facilities if determined appropriate in the circumstances.

8. Bad Faith Complaints

Complaints that are made in bad faith may lead to discipline for the complainant. An example of a bad faith complaint would be if a person has “made up” a complaint to cause trouble for another person.

9. Retaliation

Any interference with an investigation, or retaliation against a person who has filed a complaint, or a respondent or witness, will result in disciplinary action.

10. Confidentiality

No information will be disclosed by any person during the investigation or resolution of a complaint under this process except as necessary to enable due process under this policy or to protect the persons, public, and/or assets of PHSA.

Any allegation or formal complaint under this policy will be considered personal information “supplied in confidence” for the purpose of Section 22(2)(f) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The substance of investigative reports and meetings held by those in authority to make a decision on the disposition of the complaint will be protected from disclosure to third parties in accordance with Section 22(2)(f) and Section 22(2)(h).

11. Record and Disposition

All written file material will be kept in confidence in human resources. For complaints made in good faith, no record of the complaint, the investigation or the decision will go in the complainant’s employee file. If there is no finding of evidence to support the complaint, no documentation regarding the complaint will be placed in the respondent’s employee file. If there is a finding to support the complaint, the incident and corrective action will be recorded in the respondent’s employee file as appropriate. In the case of bad faith complaints, the incident and corrective action will be recorded in the complainant’s employee file as appropriate.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the policy statements, associated processes, and resources remain clear, relevant and practical for PHSA.

13. Definitions

Bullying and Harassment includes any inappropriate conduct or comment that the person knows or reasonably ought to have known would cause the receiver to be humiliated or intimidated, but excludes any reasonable action taken by the employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of staff or the place of employment.

Disrespectful Conduct includes inappropriate behaviour, bullying or harassment directed against another person that a reasonable person knows, or ought to know, would cause offence, humiliation, or intimidation. It includes any conduct that results in injury or threat of injury including, but not limited to, acts of aggression, verbal or written threats, or vandalism to personal property.

Discrimination is comments or conduct that would constitute a breach of the BC Human Rights Code. The BC Human Rights Code makes it unlawful to discriminate on certain grounds. The protected categories include: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, political belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or having been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to employment.

Psychologically safe workplaces are those that promote employees' psychological well-being and actively work to prevent harm to a worker's psychological health, including in any negligent, reckless or intentional ways; psychological safety is the absence of harm and/or threat of harm to mental health and well-being.

14. Supporting Documents

- [Safe Reporting Policy](#)
- [Standards of Conduct Policy](#)
- [Code of Ethics Policy](#)
- [Managing Disrespectful, Violent or Aggressive Behaviours of Visitors Including Family Members](#)
- [WorkSafeBC: Bullying and Harassment](#)

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