



The Journey Neighbourhood Centre

Your neighbourhood centre

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Harassment & Violence Policy

Introduction

The Journey has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for employees, volunteers, participants and visitors that is free from harassment and violence. The Journey considers harassment and violence as unacceptable behaviours and it will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Reports of harassment and violence will be investigated promptly and confidentially.

As a general rule, The Journey will ensure the following:

- Any observed contravention of this policy is immediately advised to the Manager
- The offending staff member or volunteer is to be counselled by the Manager.
- Where necessary, a conciliation process between the relevant parties may be initiated by the Manager, Executive Director or Board Chair.
- Confidentiality except where legally required to report the incidents

Any persons found to have been the cause of harassment or violence can expect to face disciplinary action, which may include summary dismissal.

The Journey is committed to guarding the rights and dignity of all staff, volunteers, participants and members of the community. While the Human Rights Code specifically references employees, those rights are extended to all who serve at The Journey.

Definitions

Basic Rights

“Every person who is an employee has a right to freedom from harassment in the workplace by the employer or agent of the employer or by another employee because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability.” – Human Rights Code, Ontario

Harassment

Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome; Human Rights Code – s.10.1

Harassment, within the above definition, may consist of one or a combination of the following:

- Is uninvited or unwelcome
- Often involves abuse of power
- Is likely to cause a hostile or uncomfortable workplace by humiliating someone, seriously embarrassing them, offending them or intimidating them

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment means any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature, whether on a one-time basis or in a continuous series of incidents that: might reasonably be expected to cause offence, embarrassment or humiliation; or might reasonably be expected to be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment, services, or on any opportunity for training or advancement.

Sexual Harassment, within the above definition, may consist of one or a combination of the following:

- Jokes, suggestions or comments of a sexual nature
- Offensive hand or body gestures
- Offensive staring or leering
- Unwelcome physical contact such as brushing against a person, patting, touching or fondling
- Unwanted advances, interest, propositions or demands
- Unwelcome comments about a person's sex life or physical appearance
- Sexual Assault (a criminal offence)

Other Forms of Harassment

Verbal, Physical and Visual harassment means any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture or contact, whether on a one-time basis or in a continuous series of incidents that: might reasonably be expected to cause offence, embarrassment or humiliation.

Verbal Harassment

- Foul or obscene language
- Derogatory comments
- Demeaning jokes or slurs
- Intimidation, threats

Physical Harassment

- Practical jokes
- Pushing, shoving, aggressive behaviour
- Physical interference with work or movement
- Abuse or assault

Visual Harassment

- Obscene gestures
- Demeaning posters, cartoons, graffiti or drawings which are shown to an individual, or a group, or displayed in plain view
- Distribution of material, telephone calls, emails, screen savers, images from the internet, photographs or other objects which may be offensive

Responsibilities

The Journey will:

- Provide a workplace that is free from harassment and violence
- Ensure a supportive, comfortable and productive environment
- Ensure compliance with legislative requirements
- Provide information, instruction, training, supervision and awareness of the appropriate and acceptable standards of behaviour
- Provide support and assistance to employees and volunteers and ensure that staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding harassment and violence
- Handle complaints immediately, seriously, with sensitivity and confidentially except where legally required to report.
- Prevent the victimisation of anyone involved in a harassment or violence complaint

Employees and Volunteers are to:

- treat colleagues and community members with respect and dignity
- ensure their behaviour does not constitute harassment or condone circumstances that may allow such to happen
- ensure individuals do not suffer from harassment or violence
- ensure they do not act in an inappropriate manner towards other staff, volunteers, visitors or community members
- Report all known or observed harassment to the Manager or Executive Director
- Actively contribute to a harassment and violence free environment

Application of the Policy

This policy is applicable to The Journey in all its operations and functions including those situations where employees and volunteers are required to work off site.

If an individual(s) believes they are being harassed, they should:

1. Immediately make the individual(s) aware that the behaviour is unwelcome and ask him/her to stop.
2. Report the incident to Manager, Executive Director or Board Chair.
3. The employee/volunteer has a choice of either discussing the problem (in the case of an informal concern) or submitting a formal or written concern.
4. The confidentiality of the individuals concerned will be maintained, except where there is a legal obligation to report. An investigation into the incident(s) will be undertaken immediately. If the employee/volunteer requires support or advice, they should contact the Manager, Executive Director or Board Chair.

5. In some cases, the problem may be corrected in an informal manner. The Manager and employee/volunteer may discuss the concern with everyone who is involved, develop an action plan and check with all concerned periodically to ensure the problem is being or has been resolved. In other cases, the employee/volunteer may wish to put the concern in writing. A full investigation will be carried out, and every effort will be made to resolve the problem in a fair and timely manner.
6. If the investigation reveals the occurrence of harassment/violence or other unacceptable conduct, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination.
7. Should the investigation fail to find fault, both parties will be notified of the results of the investigation.

All employees and volunteers also have the right to contact the Ontario Human Rights Commission to file a complaint of harassment after the internal process has been completed, but may file during the process if the process is taking a long period of time. Incidents can also report to the police either in person or anonymously via crime stoppers. The Journey Manager, Executive Director or Board Chair are available for support and advice.