

Avenue II **Safety** & **Health Week** Newsletter

May 6-11, 2024

Together we can create **safe workplaces** and **communities**

Volume 3, Issue 2

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

Harassment

Harassment, which can include bullying (not covered by the Human Rights Code), is a course of repeated vexatious (annoying) comment(s) or conduct that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, as unwelcome and that takes the form of repeated comments, language, conduct, gestures, or contact which could reasonably be deemed as offensive, embarrassing, intimidating, degrading; and/or humiliating to the recipient; and/or affects a person's dignity or psychological or physical integrity; and/or results in a harmful work environment.

It includes any behavior, including bullying, which would constitute a form of discrimination under Human Rights Legislation on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, citizenship, sexual orientation, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, receipt of public assistance, or conviction for which a pardon has been granted.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Manipulation, intimidation, or isolation
- Berating/belittling an individual
- Repeated unwarranted criticism which is not part of a managing performance process
- Undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip that is not true
- Physical gestures intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate an individual

Bullying does not include:

- Occasional differences of opinion, non-aggressive conflicts and problems in working relations;
- Workplace counselling, managing under-performance and other action in accordance with Avenue II policy and procedures.

Reasons people may not stand up for themselves

- Lack of knowledge about bullying
- Fear that no one will believe them
- Fear of getting others into trouble
- Fear that nothing will be done
- Fear that they or the complaint won't be taken seriously
- Fear of reprisals from the perpetrator—especially if it is a supervisor or instructor
- Fear that they will be told they "asked" for it
- Fear of being blamed or ridiculed
- Afraid they will be told to "lighten up"
- Fear of getting a bad reputation

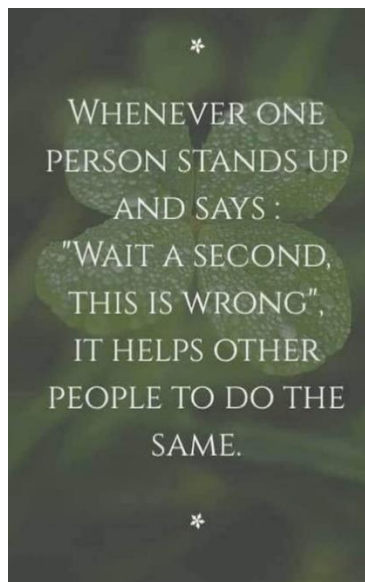
- Fear of appearing incompetent or unable to handle difficult situations
- Fear of being labelled a “troublemaker”
- Feeling alone or isolated, that no one else objects to the behaviour
- Feeling embarrassed or humiliated by the behaviour
- Often cannot believe what is happening and feels responsible
- Fear for loss of their job
- Frightened to assert their rights

Avenue II commitment

Avenue II has a commitment to a safe and harmonious workplace:

- Every employee is entitled to be treated with respect and to work in an environment free of demeaning comments and actions.
- Everyone shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible to ensure the workplace is free from discrimination, violence and harassment.
- It is recognized that this behaviour is unacceptable in the workplace.
- It is everyone’s responsibility to prevent a safe workplace free of harassment and bullying. If you see it happening you have the responsibility to report it.

For more information, please visit Policy HR030.



Everyone has the right to feel safe and live free from gender-based violence

Gender-based violence or harassment is committed against someone based on their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender, and most often targets women, transgender people, and gender non-conforming or non-binary people.

The workplace impacts of gender-based violence and harassment are significant, affecting not only the individuals involved, but the workplace community and the organization as a whole. Everyone in the workplace can play a role in preventing and responding to gender-based violence and harassment, and there are many benefits to effectively addressing these issues in the workplace.

If someone discloses gender-based violence or harassment to you, your role is to support them through the process of disclosing and help the survivor access any additional supports they need, including the option to report to the workplace. It is important to respond in a way that is appropriate and recognizes the impacts of violence:

- Listen actively. Let the survivor tell you as much or as little as they want, at their own pace, without interrupting.
- Mirror the language they use and do not ask for unnecessary details.
- Avoid overreacting to what they tell you; keep the focus on them.
- Believe what they are sharing with you and show them that you believe them. Your role at this time is not to determine exactly what happened.
- Reassure them that the incident was not their fault and help them understand that what they are feeling is valid and normal for someone who has experienced gender-based violence.

More information

Workplace harassment: information for workers

www.ontario.ca/page/workplace-harassment-information-workers

Avenue II Policies & Procedures

www.avenueii.com/policies-and-procedures