



## Promoting a Workplace Free From Harassment and Violence (policy)

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### Foreword

Violence in the workplace is an issue that affects all employees across the health care continuum.

Based on the definitions found in this policy, workplace violence can include harassment.

The Douglas Institute is committed to:

- Implementing a work environment where all individuals affected by this policy are treated with dignity and respect.
- Taking all preventive, deterrent and necessary measures to prevent situations and behaviours that might result in violence or harassment.

The policy applies to all work-related incidents when they occur on the work premises. It also applies to incidents outside the work premises when they have an impact on the work.

### Definitions

**Harassment** is any physical or psychological vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures, that affects the dignity or psychological or physical integrity of a person protected by this policy and that results in a harmful work environment for this person. A single serious incidence of such behaviour that has a lasting harmful effect on this person may also constitute psychological harassment. Harassment includes, among other things, violence, physical harassment, psychological harassment, sexual harassment and mobbing. A non-exhaustive list of examples of harassment is provided in Appendix 2.

**Violence** is defined as incidents in which a person is threatened, abused or assaulted in circumstances related to his or her work. This definition includes all forms of harassment, bullying, intimidation, physical threats, or assaults, robbery and other intrusive behaviours.

There are four (4) categories of workplace violence:

- Type I (criminal intent): The individual committing the act has no connection with the workplace.
- Type II (client): A client, visitor or family member of a patient in the workplace becomes violent toward a worker or another patient.
- Type III (among workers): The individual committing the act is an employee or former employee of the workplace.
- Type IV (personal relation): The individual committing the act has a personal relationship with an employee.

### Statement

- Violence or harassment in the workplace is prohibited and the Douglas Institute shall not tolerate

any exceptions in this regard.

- This policy does not limit the authority of managers with regard to conflict management, performance evaluation, management of labour relations, application of administrative or disciplinary measures, organization of work, and division of duties.
- Any complaint of violence or harassment shall be treated expeditiously and impartially. A formal investigation shall be held unless the complaint is resolved informally or by mediation.
- Any individual violating this policy shall be subject to administrative or disciplinary measures, including possible dismissal or termination of contract. Individuals who adhere to the policy in good faith shall not be subject to any reprisals. The same holds true for witnesses. A frivolous complaint however, namely one made in bad faith, is considered a violation of this policy.
- The complaint file is also sent to the local complaints and service quality commissioner if it falls within his or her jurisdiction, but this does not prevent the application process of this policy from being started, if deemed necessary by the General Administration or the Human Resources Directorate, unless there are legal instructions to the contrary.
- When a complaint involves a member of the Conseil des médecins, dentistes et pharmaciens (CMDP), it is sent to the local complaints and service quality commissioner who then forwards it to the medical examiner in accordance with the appropriate procedure.

## **2. Roles, Responsibilities and Rights of Managers and Individuals Affected by the Policy**

- All individuals affected by this policy must maintain and promote standards of conduct so that work is carried out in a workplace free from harassment or violence.
- The Douglas Institutes expects the cooperation of all concerned and encourages individuals affected by this policy to voice their disapproval regarding a behaviour outlined in this policy and to adhere to this policy. When necessary, these individuals may submit a complaint in order to resolve internally any problem related to this policy despite other possible measures such as a union grievance or recourse before specialized administrative tribunals or civil tribunals.

### **Manager**

- Ensure that this policy is understood and respected so that its objectives are met.
- Provide, whenever possible, support to the victims, witnesses and staff members.
- If the victim is a patient and if applicable, notify the legal representative as soon as possible – if the patient is unable to seek recourse – that an act of violence or harassment has been committed toward the patient that he or she represents.
- If the victim is a patient and if applicable, immediately notify Employee Relations of the Human Resources Directorate and notify, at the same time or after the event, the local complaints and service quality commissioner. Next, refer the patient or his or her legal representative, where applicable, to the Commissioner so that the patient (or representative) understands his or her rights and recourse in the event that an employee abuses a patient.
- Implement the means necessary to foster a harmonious workplace and environment free from violence or harassment.
- Identify the potential risks of violence and harassment in the workplace.
- Intervene quickly and put an end to any situation that has the potential for violence or harassment.
- Conduct a post-event review with any person involved in or affected by the situation.
- Propose awareness-raising, prevention and training activities for staff in collaboration with other persons and introduce follow-up measures and take corrective action when needed.

### **Employee**

- Notify his or her immediate supervisor when he or she experiences violence or harassment.
- Provide a work setting that is free from violence and harassment.
- Help identify workplace risks and notify his or her immediate supervisor.

### **Patient**

- If able, the patient may notify his or her representative, an advocate, a unit manager or the local complaints and service quality commissioner, of any form of violence that he or she experiences or witnessed, without fear of reprisals. The patient can request the help and support of the

Beneficiaries' Committee of the Institute or any person of his or her choice.

### **Occupational Health and Safety Committee**

- Ensure follow-up with the employees.
- Inform the managers of internal and external assistance resources that they may have recourse to depending on the situation (e.g. employee assistance program).
- On request, provide support in organizing a post-event follow-up or debriefing session with the consultants of the Employee Assistance Program and the department concerned.
- Evaluate the prevention elements or any corrective measures for reducing the risks with the departments concerned.

### **Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC)**

- Develop a yearly plan of action for the issues identified.
- Issue recommendations and evaluate the measures implemented.

### **3. Confidentiality**

Except as necessary to investigate the complaint or to take disciplinary action, the Douglas Institute and any persons participating in the complaint process must preserve the confidential nature of any information. Accordingly, no information is recorded in the file of the persons concerned, except when an administrative, disciplinary or other decision is made.

#### **Attachment**

[Appendix 2 - Examples of harassment.pdf](#)

#### **Related Links**

[Procedure Harassment or Violence Complaint](#)

[Civil Code of Québecs](#)

[Charter of human rights and freedoms](#)

[Code of ethics](#)

[Post-Event Assistance Policy \(in revision\)](#)

[Intervention Process - Post-Event Assistance \(in revision\)](#)