

Workplace Bullying and Harassment Overview

The Canadian Institute of Workplace Bullying Resources.

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Presenting to **NCSW** NOVA SCOTIA COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

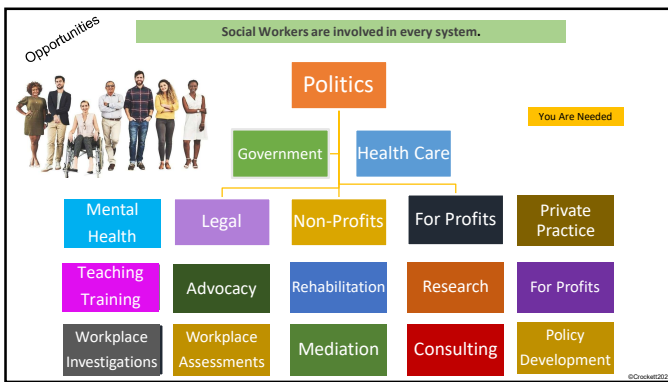
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Promoting Psychological Safety in the Workplace

Workplace bullying can't exist where it isn't tolerated.

We are survivors and thrivers of workplace bullying, here to inspire other social workers to speak out, reach out, and help create the changes needed for safety in all professions, industries, and communities.

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Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplaces

Definition:

A workplace that promotes workers' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health including negligent, reckless, or intentional ways

Psychological health and safety in the workplace —
Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation

<https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/>

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Harassment and Violence in Workplaces Research Report (April 202)

2022 MARCH Respect-at-Work-Report-ENGLISH.pdf
Western Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

Demographics Surveyed

4,878 responses to the online survey, the majority (86%) of the sample were employed in permanent work. The remaining were in temporary employment (9%) or casual, seasonal, or "other" employment contracts (5%).

wide range of industries, education (23.3%), health care and social assistance (20.1%), and public administration (17.1%). Every province and territory in Canada participated in the survey, with the highest rates of participation coming from Ontario (50%), British Columbia (17%), and Alberta (9.5%).

Age ranging between 20 – 59 years old

Women (75%); men (23%) and gender-diverse (2%). LGBTQ2S+ community (13%). Living with one or more disabilities (26%). Born in Canada (85%). Majority identified as white (82.7%); Indigenous (3.2%), East/Southeast Asian (2.9%), Black (2.1%), South Asian (2.1%), Latino (1.3%), Arab West Asian (0.7%), with 3.4% indicating that they did not identify with any of the categories listed.

Results

(71.4%) experienced at least one form of harassment and violence or sexual harassment and violence, in the two years prior to completing the survey.

(65%) experienced at least one behaviour or practice of harassment and violence at work in the past two years.

(43.9%) experienced at least one behaviour or practice of sexual harassment and violence in the past two years while at work.

(26.5%) experienced at least one form of work-related online harassment in the past two years

Gender-diverse individuals are more likely to report experiencing all forms of harassment and violence. This was most pronounced for sexual harassment and violence: 73% of gender-diverse respondents experienced this form of harassment and violence compared to 46% of women and 38% of men.

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Definitions and Terminology

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Terminology

<p>Psychological Hazards</p> <p>Psychological Harassment</p> <p>Psychological Violence</p> <p>Psychological Injuries</p> <p>Psychological Threat</p> <p>Workplace Bullying</p> <p>Harassment</p> <p>Discrimination</p> <p>Racism</p> <p>Violence</p> <p>Domestic Violence (workplace)</p>	<h4 style="text-align: center;">Legal Terms</h4> <p>Target -> <u>Complainant</u></p> <p>Bystander -> <u>Witness</u></p> <p>Offender -> <u>Respondent</u></p>
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- Gaslighting
- Micro-Managing
- Lateral Violence
- Mobbing
- Micro-Aggressions
- Toxic

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Canadian Federal Law Effective January 1, 2021

Bill C-65 defines harassment and violence as any action, conduct or comment, including of a sexual nature, which can reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness to an employee, including any prescribed action, conduct or comment.

"Every Canadian has the right to work in a healthy, respectful and safe environment. The government of Canada is committed to ensuring that all federally regulated workplaces, including the public service, are free from harassment and violence of any kind," says Jean-Yves Duclos, president of the Treasury Board of Canada.

<https://www.hrreporter.com/employment-law/news/bill-c-65-to-take-effect-jan.-1-2021/330862>

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Canadian Provincial & Federal Legislation

CCOHS	British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
<p>Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could psychologically or 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people.</p>	<p>Bullying and harassment includes inappropriate conduct or comment that a person knew or reasonably ought to have known would be humiliating or intimidating. The conduct may be written, verbal, physical, online, or electronic, a gesture or display, or any combination of these.</p>	<p>Workplace harassment may include bullying, intimidating or offensive jokes or intimidating phone calls, emails, or other communications. It also includes workplace sexual harassment. A worker could be harassed at work by a customer, client, patient, student, co-worker, supervisor, or a stranger.</p>	<p>What about us?</p>

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Canadian Governments, **Federally** and **Provincially**, have passed and amended legislation across Canada to address the issue of **harassment and violence in the workplace:**

1. Federal Legislation - Bill 65
2. British Columbia Legislation
3. Alberta Legislation
4. Saskatchewan Legislation
5. Manitoba Legislation
6. Ontario Legislation
7. Quebec Legislation
8. Newfoundland & Labrador Legislation
9. New Brunswick Legislation
10. PEI

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Thank you for your inquiry. Regarding bullying and harassment in the workplace, unfortunately there is nothing in the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Acts or Regulations that deals specifically with workplace bullying, harassment, or demeaning attitudes by supervisors or co-workers.

There is a Violence in the Workplace Regulation but that is applicable to only certain industries and the information can be found at: <https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohsviolence.htm>

If you believe anyone in the workplace is acting in a manner that you believe is physically threatening to you, you are encouraged to contact your local police. In terms of the OHS laws in Nova Scotia, depending on the nature of the workplace, a Violence Risk Assessment may be required by the Violence in the Workplace Regulations. Once a risk assessment is completed, the outcome may indicate the need for a Violence Prevention Plan. The information contained in the above link will help to determine this.

As a suggestion I would consult with your union (if applicable), your supervisor/management team, and/or your Health and Safety Representative or Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) to see what they can do. Lastly the "bullying" and "singling out" of a certain employees and "avoidance" of other employees may represent contraventions under the Human Rights legislation. More information from the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission can be found at: <https://humanrights.novascotia.ca>


Regarding employment rights, please refer to the Nova Scotia Labour Standards legislation here: <https://novascotia.ca/lae/employmentrights> and/or contact the Labour Standards division directly by either phone: 1-888-315-0110, or by email: LabourStandards@novascotia.ca

The Safety Branch
Email: SafetyBranch@novascotia.ca

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Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act and Code

- **Employers have a duty** to take all reasonable steps to protect workers from being injured in the workplace – both physically and **psychologically**.
- They must ensure the workplace is free from **psychological hazards** that could cause harm to workers mental health.




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Linda Crockett's Definition



Four Factors

1. A variety of tactics...
2. used over a period of time...
3. with or without conscious intent ...
4. resulting in some form of harm.



Examples: repeatedly embarrasses, diminishes, humiliates, harms confidence, self worth, self-esteem, silences with shame, minimizes accomplishments, damages relationships and/or reputations, sense of safety, and increases isolation.

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Psychological Harassment

.....is an *insidious* form of abuse

Often occurs when no one can witness it.

Is often difficult to prove.

Involves an Imbalance of Power

Complicated, Multi-Layered.

Each Case is Unique

Series of Negative actions, behaviors, & practices

Silence and shame enables abuse to continue

Witnesses fear coming forward.

Can cause serious harm.

Linda Crockett
Promoting Psychological Safety in the Workplace

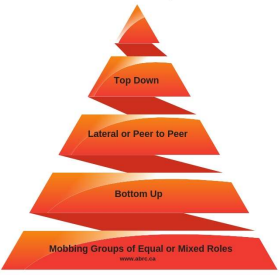
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Psychological Harassment is an abuse of power

Research shows up to 74% of bullying comes from leadership.

This research gives us the solution!

Power Comes In Many Forms



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Tactics and Behaviors of Psychological Harassment or Psychological Violence



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Tactics

Gossip, humiliate, embarrass or isolate, the targeted employee(s).	Telling lies, undermining – relationship sabotage	Verbal aggression: yelling, calling names, making verbal threats, using inappropriate jokes, or offensive teasing
Over-monitoring of work which can be experienced as an act of intimidation & control. Sends message of incompetency.	Excessive or unjustified criticism: under guise of support	Name calling offending a person's characteristics or habits
Trivial fault finding or mocking them: causing embarrassment	Using personal information to humiliate someone.	Breaking Confidence

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Micro-Aggressions


Definition of Microaggression: **an unintentional and subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a minority group.**

Examples of Microaggression in a sentence.


1. "You're pretty for a dark-skinned girl"shows microaggression.
2. A situation where someone tells a person who is LGBTQ that they don't "seem gay" or some other similar phrase.
3. "Woman enters the room, and the patient assumes that she is a nurse instead of a doctor."

Microaggressions refer to **everyday verbal or non-verbal snubs or derogatory actions — whether intentional or unintentional — directed toward individuals of marginalized groups.**

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-are-microaggressions-4843519>



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Campaign of Psychological Violence, Or Gaslighting

- Giving false information or direction and then denying it.
- Making derogatory, intimidating, comments and threats, and denying it.
- Their actions do not match their words i.e.: charming one moment, rageful or bitter the next. Unpredictable. Keeping target confused.
- Attempts to have others align with them. Make others believe the target is the problem i.e., mentally unstable, or incompetent
- Everyone else is to blame, everyone else is a liar.

Wearing people down - over time - with all of the above.


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A few reasons why people gossip, negatively tease, shun, exclude, spread rumours.




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First, Bullies or Harassers...

*exist in all ages, cultures, and **all** forms of employment (professional, retail, or trades), and communities.*

Examples of causes:

- They may have been trained by their leader to be an aggressive authoritarian leader. Often rewarded for their actions i.e., promotion, bonuses.
- They may have a history of unresolved abuse i.e., previous target who learned to survive by bullying first.
- Parent role model and teach or encourage aggressiveness.
- Suffer from a physical illness, or mental illness.
- Most often lack self insight, unable or unwilling to recognize the harm on others.
- Narcissistic, Psychopath, Sociopath.



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Best Tool for Prevention? Self-Insight



How Well Do You Treat You?

- We all have stories.
- We all have wounds.
- We all need self insight, self love, and self compassion.

"What we need is accountability. And it starts here —with me and with all of us in this room."
Devlyn Stralmore, Director of Randlerston Association of Health Professionals.

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Self Insight, Self Awareness
- Self Monitoring
- Emotional Regulation
- Self Trust, Self Confidence
- Self Worth, Self Care
- Work life Balance
- Healthy Diet, Healthy Sleep
- Exercise, Breath Well!
- Self Development – self regulation
- Communication, soft skills,
- Knowing your limits, triggers, needs.




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Hurt People - Hurt People The Oppressed->Oppress Others



A Powerful Truth:
Confident, competent, happy people,
do not bully, harass, gossip, or sabotage others.



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Risk Factors for Employees and/or Students


COVID

Lack of mentoring and monitoring for those in authority.	Subtle Threats of Replacement or Blocking Graduation.	Unaware of their legal rights and resources.	Extreme High Stress, Increasing Pressure, Unrealistic Deadlines.
Abuse of Power Sabotaging Reputations to hold a high performing student back for own agenda.	COVID increased risks for bullying harassment	Anxiety, panic, depression, fears, confusion, loss of safety	Favoritism and/or Nepotism, Competition
Lack Social Skills/abilities, Lack of Soft Skills	Unaddressed Negativity/Hostility, Rude/Disrespectful	Unresolved staffing issues	Lack of Follow Through on Existing Policies

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Physical and Psychological Implications





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Impact on the Mind and Body

The Costly Injuries of Workplace Bullying





Psychological


Fear, Confusion, Anxiety, Panic, Unsafe, Ruminating Thoughts, Loss of focus/concentration, Problems with Memory, Self Doubt, Isolation, Grief/Loss, Depression, Hopelessness, Suicidal Ideation, Adjustment Disorder, Flashbacks, PTSD

Physical

Insomnia, Fatigue, Tense, sore muscles, TMJ, Headaches, Migraines, Long term chronic stress means a weakened immune system: Colds, Flus, Viruses and other problems e.g. Cardiac Problems, Gastrointestinal Issues e.g. GERD, Ulcers, Chrons, IBS

Trauma of Betrayal
Internal and External Systems Betrayal

Linda Crockett MSW, RSW, SEP



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Why people don't speak up?

Stigma Shame, Fear, keeps Us Silent. Sadly, Silence Enables Abuse.



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FACT

Bystander intervention is known to be the most effective strategy when dealing with harasser or bully.

© Hillier, S. Schneider and A. Estrada. Reactions to personal and bystander sexual harassment experiences (2021). Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

.....if you witness an act of harassment or bullying, or subsequently told about an act of harassment or bullying.

Bystanders Suffer Too!

- There are Valid Reasons for Their Silence!
- Seen the process fail for others.
- Were bullied in the past.
- Overwhelmed (personal and/or professional) life issues.
- Have a fear of conflict due to past experiences.
- A friend is the bully.
- Fear of losing their job and health benefits.
- Trust is gone.

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Common Traits in Employees who are Targeted.

Why me?

- Dedicated, loyal Go-To workers/ doers**
Prefer to follow rules, policies/ethics.
Hardworking, multi-taskers
High standards / expectations
- Overachievers/Insecure**
Can be politically naïve
Strong sense of ethics, justice
Work is there Identity
- Not perfect! Never deserving of abuse.**
Anyone can be a target

Hear Canadians Workers Share their Stories "On the Record"

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? ? ? ?
What Can I do? ? ?

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Policies and Procedures

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Review your Workplace Policies & Procedures

These are your guidelines on:

Steps to follow:

- > Be sure to record that you have followed them. Always place safety first.
- > Become familiar with your policies and procedures and keep them easily accessible.
- > Contact OHS if you do not have policies or if they are outdated. You can report anonymously.

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Good Documentation is Important

www.tralapp.com

1. Dates, times, who was present?
2. What happened? Describe the behaviors and experiences.
3. Who was involved? Who witnessed?
4. Where did the behaviors occur?
5. How frequent are the behaviors?
6. What did you do? What happened as a result?
7. What was the impact on you?
8. Who have you shared this with? i.e. HR, Doctor, Union

It's Good for your Mental Health

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Documenting is good for Your Mental Health ©Crockett2021

CLARITY
Credibility is important when we see he said/she said cases. Clarity helps people to stay clear and offer responses which help them to demonstrate consistency and credibility. It also protects them from falling into self crippling self doubt, stay confident, stable, and more effectively manage their stress levels

CONFIDENCE
One of the first things to be impacted. When this happens, people are knock off balance. Confidence is going to be extremely important in these cases. Documenting and having those records organized will decrease stress and allow them to rest, feel more at ease, less anxious.

COURAGE
While one's character, reputation, and source of income is under attack, courage is going to be needed. Every "self care" decision matters and documenting early onset, is an important self care practice!

COMPLAINT
Whether your client plans to report abuse or not, have them commit to documenting regardless. They may change their minds. They will be very grateful they did. No matter what, they will still need their clarity, confidence, and courage to manage what is happening to them.

Employees need to find ways to feel in control and recognize their own power again... however, and whenever possible

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What would you do if you were accused of bullying?

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If you are accused of bullying

1. FIRST > LISTEN and THANK them for coming to you.
2. Ask to clarify the concerns and then document it.
3. Take time to reflect and gather feedback from others who know you.
4. Determine what behavior changes are required
5. An apology is helpful if you agree your behavior has been offensive
 - An apology can help even if you disagree about the nature of your behavior: "I am sorry you experienced me this way."
6. Report to or ask for help from your supervisor and HR if you have concerns about the allegations

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What do you need to consider when you plan to confront or talk to the bully?

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Don't approach someone about their behaviours of bullying if and when...

Safety Comes First, Always!

If you feel you are not safe. You have the right to refuse to a hazardous situation. This includes a psychological hazard.

Talk to Human Resources, Union, or someone who is knowledgeable in this area, **and safe.**

Never approach when you are upset or angry. Wait until you are calm, and rational.

Never approach in a busy place where people are watching. Select a quiet location with people nearby. Bring along a witness/support person if you prefer.

The timing and place is important.

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Resource Options, Legal Issues and Consequences

Human Rights Complaint
Victim(s) can file a Human Rights complaint against your organization. Human Rights conciliator will investigate the complaint on behalf of the complainant

OHS Complaint
Victims can file a OHS complaint against your organization. OHS investigators will investigate the complaint. You can call for information, and you can file reports anonymously.

Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman
1-800-670-1111
www.ombudsman.novascotia.ca
See how to make a complaint.

Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act
www.beta.novascotia.ca/public-interest-disclosure-wrongdoing-act-overview

Lawsuit
Victim(s) can file a lawsuit against your organization

Cost: Legal fees, time spent responding to lawsuit, potential judgment against organization (or settlement), most court proceedings are public

Criminal Investigation
Victim (or your organization) could file a police report and conduct of person may be investigated / prosecuted if it violates the Criminal Code (i.e. sexual assault)

Cost: Legal fees, time spent responding to investigation and prosecution, time spent testifying, most rulings are public

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Impact On The Organization




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Impact on Your Workplace

Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) conducted an integrative literature review of the impact of workplace bullying on organizations. They found impacts in the following areas


- Productivity:** increased absenteeism, decreased performance, missed deadlines, loss of creative potential, increased workplace errors
- Costs:** increase in health-related issues, increase in health plans and worker compensation claims, increased turn-over (necessitating the need for recruitment, marketing, interviewing and training)
- Culture:** poor peer relationships and ineffective teamwork, lowered moral, toxic culture, decrease in organizational commitment
- Legal:** wrongful dismissal lawsuits, harassment and discrimination claims (as well as increased costs of Arbitration and Grievances).
- Reputation:** higher incidents of workplace bullying are associated with lower customer relationships, lower creativity and lower productivity which together can result in a negative reputation.

Bartlett, J. & Bartlett, M. (2011). Workplace bullying: An integrative literature review. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 13, (1), 69-84



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Costs and Impact on Organizations



Work adversely impacts their emotional health

- They are more dissatisfied with their current job
- They are more dissatisfied with the organization
- They are fearful at work
- Work is a source of stress
- Less committed to the organization
- Employees are more likely to leave the organization


Demerly & Neesham, 2008



- Loss of good employees and recruitment, retraining costs.
- Increase in costs for insurance, medical and mental health
- Loss of productivity and damage to the company reputation

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Employer Responsibility



Sec 3(1) Alberta OHS Act

Every Employer shall ensure



- (c) That none of the employer's workers are subjected to or participate in harassment or violence at the work site
- (f) That health and safety concerns raised... are resolved in a timely manner



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employer responsibilities cont....



- Create a safe process for employees to file a complaint
- Address complaints in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.
- Prevent bias and favoritism by contracting a third-party investigator or arrange for an organization assessment.
- Offer information and resources to employees.
- Keep policies current.
- Follow through on your policies - consistently
- Provide training to your leaders, and staff.
- Maintain consistency with training new hires on all workplace policies.

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Employees Responsibilities

- Always work respectfully.
- Communicate concerns re: improper or offensive behaviors Immediately.
- Know that they have the right to expect prompt action from their employer.
- Know they are entitled to be treated without fear of reprisal, embarrassment, or shame in their workplace.
- Participate in a Problem Resolution Process.
- Continue personal and or employment skill development.

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....training packages continued...

- What you and/or your clients need to know about Workplace Investigations
- Steps to consider when addressing Workplace Bullying
- Complaints triage mode - Safety Must Always Come First
- What are the steps you should take when an employee or client makes a complaint?
Example: never force them to confront the respondent (bully)
- Seniors Bullying, Disablism Bullying,
- Domestic Violence Survivors Returning to Work
- Indigenous Workplaces and Communities: First Nations, Metis and Inuit
- Customized Strategies for Organizations
- Safe Confidential Resources of Individuals.

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We confess, we are biased, we need social workers
Joining this movement now more than ever!
Contact Linda Crockett if you are interested!

"professional social workers will be well equipped to advocate for policies that advance the well-being of others. The processes and skills outlined in this article can be applied to any social justice issue and population that professional social workers serve",

Bird, M. (2016). Social justice advocacy in the belly of the beast: An illustration of policy change for social work. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 31(2) 257-262.



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A possible resource for you!



Website: <http://equitywatch.ca/equitywatch/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/363143447494380/members>

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Recommended Reading

- What is a Betrayal Trauma? What is Betrayal Trauma Theory? [Jennifer J. Freyd, PhD](#)
- DePrince, A.P., Brown, L.S., Cheit, R.E., Freyd, J.J., Gold, S.N., Pezdek, K. & Quina, K. (2012). *Motivated forgetting and misremembering: Perspectives from Betrayal Trauma Theory*. In Bell, R. F. (Ed.), *True and False Recovered Memories: Toward a Reconciliation of the Debate (Nebraska Symposium on Motivation 58)* (pp 193-243). New York: Springer.
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- [https://Sereda, Terrance. \(2020\) Mapping Workplace Bullying Behaviours to Moral Disengagement](https://Sereda, Terrance. (2020) Mapping Workplace Bullying Behaviours to Moral Disengagement)
- [Trauma informed mediation. https://www.resolitics.com/resolitics-blog/2015/3/20/trauma-informed-mediation-001-guidance-for-mediators-and-ombuds-working-in-traumatized-communities](https://www.resolitics.com/resolitics-blog/2015/3/20/trauma-informed-mediation-001-guidance-for-mediators-and-ombuds-working-in-traumatized-communities)
- https://www.ted.com/talks/dawn_kuhlman_trauma_informed_mediation

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recommended reading continued

- PRIMA-EF: Psychosocial Risk Management Excellence Framework <http://www.prima-ef.org/>
- British standard: <http://www.mtpinnacle.com/pdfs/Guidance-on-the-management-of-psychosocial-risks-in-the-workplace-1.pdf>
- Canadian Standard: <https://www.csagroup.org/article/canca-21003-13-bnq-9700-803-2013-r2018/>
- Australian Standard: https://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1119465/work-related-psychological-health-and-safety-guide.pdf
- New Zealand: <https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/bullying>
- A psychologically safe work environment is defined as one that allows no significant injury to employee mental health in neglectful, reckless or intentional ways and in which every reasonable effort is made to protect the mental health of employees
- Psychological harassment is also referred to as psychological violence and may be defined under workplace violence policies.
- Psychological safety n — the absence of harm and/or threat of harm to mental well-being that a worker might experience. French: sécurité psychologique. [Reference: Guarding Minds@Work (adapted wording) (see Annex G.)] Note: Improving the p

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Litz, Brett T.; Stein, Nathan; Delaney, Eileen; Lebowitz, Leslie; Nash, William P.; Silva, Caroline; Maguen, Shira (December 2009). "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans: A preliminary model and intervention strategy". *Clinical Psychology Review*. **29** (8): 695–706. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2009.07.003. PMID 19683376

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<https://mobbing101.wordpress.com/2013/02/08/bullying-mobbing-ptsd-and-moral-injury/>

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