

# Respectful Workplace Policy & Guide to Resolving Workplace Conflicts

## Questions & Answers

### Q1. Why does HPEI have a Respectful Workplace Policy?

- A. Health PEI is committed to providing a workplace in which all healthcare workers can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. Disrespectful behavior undermines an individual's self-respect and adversely affects work performance and well-being. It also reduces the productivity and effectiveness of the health system. The [Respectful Workplace Policy](#) can be found on medworxx.

### Q2. What is a respectful workplace?

- A. A **respectful workplace** is one that values:
- Diversity and the human rights of others related to their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, any physical or mental disability and sexual orientation;
  - The dignity of the person;
  - Courteous and considerate behaviour toward others;
  - Positive communication between people;
  - Collaborative working relationships;
  - Safety from disrespectful, discriminating, bullying and harassing behaviour; and
  - The need to learn and practice conflict resolution and respectful workplace skills.

### Q3. What is disrespectful behaviour?

- A. Actions or comments that are inappropriate, demeaning or otherwise offensive and which create an uncomfortable, hostile and/or intimidating work environment. Types of behaviours considered disrespectful include: discrimination, harassment, and workplace violence.

### Q4. What is not considered disrespectful behavior?

- A. Disrespectful behaviour does not include:
- a. The legitimate and proper exercise of the Employer's right to supervise or manage. Collective Agreements outline the rights of managers. Managers and supervisors have the responsibility of managing employee performance and this could result in the development of performance improvement plans or appropriate progressive discipline.
  - b. Routine interaction including interpersonal conflicts or difficulties from time to time. Sometimes minor disagreements occur due to personality conflicts. It is important to intervene early to work past any differences because, over time, unaddressed conflict can escalate.
  - c. Occasional curtness or lack of friendliness, unless the curtness or lack of friendliness is so persistent or intense and individualized that it creates an uncomfortable, hostile and/or intimidating work environment, or constitutes harassment.

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**Q5. Will there be education and training available on the Respectful Workplace Policy and resolving conflict in the workplace?**

- A. Yes, the Wellness and Safety team and the Human Resources team will be available to provide training sessions related to the policy and the effective use of the Respectful Workplace Guide to Resolving Conflicts. An online training module has also been developed.

**Q6. What should I do if I feel disrespected?**

- A. Anyone who feels they are experiencing disrespectful behaviour is encouraged, if reasonable, and safe, to directly ask the individual concerned that the behaviour stop immediately, because it is not acceptable or respectful. This usually addresses the issue quickly and is one of the best ways to help the individual who is causing the concern to understand what is offensive. You can also consult your supervisor/manager, the Wellness and Safety Team, or your Human Resources department for further guidance.

**Q7. What is Health PEI's Respectful Workplace Guide to Resolving Workplace Conflicts and how can I access a copy of the Guide?**

- A. The guide is available on the Staff Resource Centre at <https://src.healthpei.ca/respectful-workplaces> or you can request a hard copy from your supervisor/manager, the Wellness and Safety Team or your Human Resources Department. The guide is meant to be a helpful tool outlining effective techniques, skills and attitudes for addressing and identifying conflict among co-workers. The guide speaks to the importance of early intervention and provides communication strategies.

**Q8. What are the expectations of Health PEI employees in a Respectful Workplace?**

- A. Everyone has a responsibility and a role to play in creating and maintaining a respectful workplace. Roles are outlined in the policy and guide for healthcare workers (all health PEI employees), managers and supervisors, Health PEI (Employer), CEO, and Human Resources. Please consult the policy or guide for further details on the expectations for your role.

**Q9. What should I do if I witness disrespectful behavior?**

- A. Do not participate in the disrespectful behavior and if you feel safe, ask that the disrespectful behavior not be continued. If you observe someone else being treated in a disrespectful manner, offer support by informing them of their options and the conflict resolution services available to them. It is important to encourage them to bring their concerns to the attention of the other party or an appropriate person (supervisor and/or manager or Human Resources) who can help. If your offer is refused and you feel that the disrespectful behavior is negatively impacting your workplace, bring your concerns to the attention of your supervisor/manager.

**Q10. What is mediation?**

- A. Mediation is the use of a third party to meet with the parties involved in the conflict (together or separately) in an attempt to resolve the concerns and to build agreement on how interactions will occur into the future. The focus is on rebuilding relationships. Mediation services may utilize internal resources or outside service providers depending on the circumstances. An individual from Human Resources, a manager, or other employer representative may serve in this role.

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**Q11. What is the process for filing a formal complaint?**

A. Formal complaints must be made in writing and are to be completed by using the form provided in the Respectful Workplace Guide to Resolving Conflicts, or by submitting written particulars that contain the following information:

- The nature of the allegation;
- The name of the accused;
- The relationship of the accused to the complainant;
- The date and a detailed description of the incident(s), and
- If applicable, the names of witnesses.

The formal complaint is to be forwarded to the Director of Human Resources in a sealed envelope marked “CONFIDENTIAL.”

**Q12. What happens if I get accused of being disrespectful?**

A. You will be notified of the nature of the complaint and will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

**Q13. Who reviews and decides how far a complaint will go?**

A. Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Director of Human Resources will determine whether an investigation is required.

**Q14. If I report disrespectful behavior, will my co-workers find out that I was the one to report?**

A. To protect the interests of everyone involved, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire complaint process, to the fullest extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances. Confidentiality does not mean anonymity because witnesses may be involved.

**Q15. Will my employment be affected if I file a formal complaint?**

A. Every healthcare worker has a right to bring forward a legitimate concern under the policy. The employer will not tolerate:

- Interference with the right to make a complaint under the Respectful Workplace Policy;
- Interference with any investigation under the Respectful Workplace Policy; or
- Retaliation against a complainant, respondent, witness, or any other person involved in any complaint or investigation under the Respectful Workplace Policy.

Interference or retaliation may include direct contact between the parties, and more subtle actions such as shunning, reassignment, spreading of rumors, and breaches of confidentiality. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, being taken by the employer.