

## **POLICY:**

The CRC recognizes the potential for violence, harassment and abuse in the workplace exists for employees and volunteers and is committed to the prevention of workplace violence, harassment and abuse. The management of CRC is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

The CRC will not tolerate any type of violence, harassment or abuse within the workplace or during work-related activities. The CRC will make every reasonable effort to identify all potential sources of risk and will take whatever steps are reasonable to protect workers and volunteers from workplace violence, harassment and/or abuse.

This policy applies to all persons interacting with CRC staff and volunteers in any program. All CRC employees are expected to uphold this policy and work together to prevent workplace violence, harassment and abuse.

This policy is intended to prevent workplace violence, harassment and abuse and deal with any incidents. This may be directed at the employee by another employee, a program participant or the public.

Nothing in this policy prevents or discourages an employee from filing an application with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario on a matter related to Ontario's Human Rights Code within one year of the last alleged incident.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

Workplace Violence is (as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act):

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker.
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.
- A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

Additionally violence may include: verbal abuse, threat, physical attacks, psychological abuse, assault, sexual abuse, sexual assault, near miss, poisoned work environment or violence arising from domestic situations that might cause injury to a worker.

Workplace Harassment is (as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act) a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known

or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment does not have to relate to a form of discrimination set out in the Human Rights Code.

Verbal abuse is the use of vexatious comments that are known, or that ought to be known, to be unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening, or degrading to another person including swearing, insults or condescending language.

Threat (verbal or written) is a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on any person or property by some unlawful act. A direct threat is a clear and explicit communication distinctly indicating that the potential offender intends to do harm, for example; "I am going to make you pay for what you did to me." A conditional threat involves a condition, for example; "If you don't leave me alone you will regret it." Veiled threats usually involve body language or behaviours that leave little doubt in the mind of the victim that the perpetrator intends to harm.

Physical attacks include hitting, shoving, pushing, biting, pinching or kicking the victim, or inciting an animal to attack.

Psychological abuse is an act that provokes fear or diminishes an individual's dignity of self-worth that intentionally inflicts psychological trauma on another.

Assault is any intent to inflict injury on another, coupled with an apparent ability to do so; any intentional display of force that causes the victim to fear immediate bodily harm.

Sexual abuse is any unwelcome verbal or physical advance or sexually explicit statement, such as jokes, displays of pornographic material, pinching, brushing against, touching, patting, or leering that makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or uncomfortable, thus interfering with work performance.

Sexual assault is the use of threat or violence to force one individual to touch, kiss, fondle or have sexual intercourse with another.

Near miss is an act of striking out, but missing the target.

Poisoned work environment is a hostile and abusive work environment resulting from harassment by comment or conduct that ridicules or demeans an individual or specific group of employees; for example, racial slurs or derogatory comments about sexual orientation.

## **LEGISLATION:**

This policy references and adheres to responsibilities under the following legislation:

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act, ROS 1990, C 0.1*

- *Child and Family Services Act*, RSO 1990, c C.11
- *Child Care and Early Years Act*, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, Sched. 1
- *Human Rights Code*, RSO 1990, c H.19

## **PROCEDURE:**

The Executive Director will ensure that this policy is implemented and maintained and that all workers are aware of violence hazards and are properly trained to protect themselves.

### **i. Supervisors**

- To respond to all allegations and incidents of violence, harassment and abuse in a timely and appropriate fashion
- To assess the risk of violence, harassment and abuse of employees.
- To inform employees of the risks of violence, harassment and abuse including: Provision of personal information pertaining to a person with a history of violent behaviour if:
  - the worker can be expected to encounter that person in the course of his or her work; and
  - the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury
- To ensure appropriate training of employees on recognition of hazards
- To adhere to this policy and the supporting program. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring measures and procedures are followed by workers and that workers have the information they need to protect themselves.
- To verbally report all incidents that meet the following criteria to the Executive Director:
  - Physical violence
  - Threats against personal safety
  - Harassment on protected grounds
  - Incidents that could reasonably be expected to interrupt the safe delivery of services or jeopardize the personal safety of the employee
  - Instances or allegations of abuse

### **ii. CRC Employees**

- To report all incidents of workplace violence, harassment and abuse promptly
- To participate in education and training programs regarding workplace violence, harassment and abuse
- To understand and comply with the Workplace Violence, Harassment and Abuse Prevention Policy
- To work in compliance with this policy

- Raise any concerns about workplace violence, harassment and/or abuse and report any violent incidents, threats or harassment
- To report all incidents to their Supervisor using a *Harassment Complaint Form*

### **iii. General Investigation Guidelines**

The Supervisor may enlist the assistance of the Executive Director. The Supervisor may use the *Harassment Follow up Form*.

If a Supervisor receives an allegation that involves themselves or one of their peers they will make their immediate Supervisor aware of the report. The immediate Supervisor will involve other management employees in the investigation, as appropriate.

The results of the investigation will be forwarded to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will ensure communication of potentially dangerous situations associated with the report to all staff potentially affected by the reported incident. The Executive Director is also responsible to inform the employee who made the report of the outcome of the investigation to the extent necessary to optimize future safety from similar incidents.

### **iv. Contact**

In the case of any suspected criminal activity or action, the Police may be contacted and staff members have the right to call Police at any time if they feel they have been the victim of a criminal act.

### **v. Response**

On completion of the investigation management will take all necessary steps to ensure appropriate measures are taken to safeguard employees and curtail the violence, harassment or abuse. This process may include but is not limited to:

- Progressive discipline of employees up to and including termination of employment
- Suspension, reevaluation, redesign or termination of services
- Mediation and counseling for affected individuals
- Reassignment of work duties

No report of workplace violence or risks of violence, harassment or abuse, made in good faith, will be the basis of reprisal against the reporting employee.

Every effort will be made to support employees who are victims of violence, harassment or abuse in order to return them to regular employment.

## **vi. Training**

Each employee will receive training on this policy and the procedures employees should follow to minimize exposure to workplace violence, harassment and abuse. Employees will also be informed of the process to identify and report any incidents involving violence, harassment or abuse. Employees will receive immediate training and information on any workplace specific hazards that are identified.

This policy will be reviewed with employees annually.

## **vii. Identified Risks**

Employees of CRC work in many different environments and therefore are exposed to a wide variety of risks to personal safety. Employees may be exposed to violence from program participants, other staff or the public.

The most common form of violence to employees is verbal abuse.