



Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy

Purpose:

Caledon Community Services (CCS) recognizes the fundamental importance of safeguarding its assets, both human and physical. In this regard, CCS will discover, meet and constantly strive to exceed its statutory and business obligations in protecting the health and safety of its staff, volunteers, program/student placements, and clients. CCS will aim to reduce the risk of violence or harassment (including of a sexual nature), or other threats to the well-being of staff, volunteers, program/student placements, and clients by providing training and education in the provisions of this policy. New staff, volunteers, and program/student placements will receive training in Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention during the orientation process. Training will be reviewed by staff and volunteers on an annual basis.

Policy:

Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the Workplace or during CCS events or any function affiliated with CCS whether carried out by staff, volunteer, program/student placement, client, vendor or visitor, will not be tolerated.

Staff, volunteers, program/student placements found to have committed such acts will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any staff, volunteer, program/student placement alleged to have violated this Policy may be required to leave the premises or other workplace site until an investigation can be initiated or completed. Non-employees engaged in violent acts or threats of harm on the premises will be reported to the proper law enforcement authorities. For a list of conditions that may pose a significant risk to CCS and staff by non-employees, refer to the Withdrawal of Services to a Client Policy.

Definitions:

Section 1 (1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act R.S.O. 2009 defines harassment as: *“Engaging in 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”*. It includes any behaviour that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms or abuses a person and may include office gossip and bullying.

The Act defines workplace violence as:

- a) *“an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker”*,
- b) *“the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker”*;
- c) *“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”*.

The Act defines ‘workplace’ as: *“any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works”*. In a community service agency such as CCS this would include (but not necessarily be limited to): premises leased or owned by CCS, staff offices, hallways and client apartments in Supportive Housing buildings, private client homes throughout the community, authorized routes of travel between community locations while in the course of employment, other sites used for special staff events such as Annual Staff Retreat (for the duration of the event only), etc.

Procedures:

Right to Refuse Unsafe Work: (Risks that are inherent to the essential duty of the staff, volunteer, or program/student placement’s job are exempt from the Right to Refuse)

- If the staff, volunteer, or program/student placement believes that the risk to workplace violence is likely to endanger his or her safety, the staff, volunteer, or program/student placement has the right to refuse to work.
- Upon refusing to work, the staff, volunteer, or program/student placement shall promptly report the circumstances of his or her refusal to their immediate manager or designate. The staff, volunteer, or program/student placement shall then remain in a safe place, accessible to their manager until an investigation into the matter is completed.

Obligation to Report:

- Staff, volunteers, and program/student placements have an obligation under this Policy to immediately report to their immediate manager or designate any situations that may lead to violence or harassment, and to call for immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur. Staff, volunteers, and program/student placements should not take any personal initiative or intervene when witnessing a violent event.

Reporting and Documentation:

- Once reported, the immediate manager or designate must complete an Incident Investigation Report within 24 hours as outlined in the Workplace Incident Investigation Policy. This process will identify corrective action and assign responsibility for any follow-up actions, where applicable. The Incident Investigation Report will be filed according to the guidelines outlined in the Workplace Incident Investigation Policy.

Domestic Violence:

- It is the responsibility of each CCS staff, volunteer, or program/student placement to provide information regarding domestic violence that may expose any stakeholder to the risk of physical injury in the workplace.
- No employer, manager or director shall disclose more personal information than is reasonably necessary to protect the stakeholder from physical injury.
- Upon becoming aware of a potential threat due to domestic violence, CCS shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of staff, volunteer, or program/student placement.

Role of Health and Safety Committee:

- The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) is responsible for assisting the employer in reviewing workplace violence and harassment policies and reviewing incidents of violence to provide recommendations on how future incidents can be avoided.

Role of CCS Management:

- CCS will conduct thorough investigations of all violence-related incidents and take appropriate corrective, disciplinary or remedial action. Please refer to the Workplace Incident Investigation Policy for steps outlining the identification and follow-up of corrective action.
- CCS will take a proactive role in integrating safe behaviour into all daily operations, ensuring that all CCS stakeholders are properly trained and educated regarding their obligations and rights.

Procedures needed to call for immediate assistance will vary based on the specific work site and the specific circumstances of the situation. Please refer to procedures for “Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention.”

References:

Occupational Health and Safety Act: <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/>
Health and Safety: Workplace Incident Investigation Policy
Incident Investigation Report
Withdrawal of Services to a Client Policy

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