

## Policy for the prevention of violence, harassment and discrimination in the workplace

July 2025

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

At Brain Canada Foundation (“Brain Canada”), we are committed to fostering and promoting a healthy, safe, fair, and equitable workplace, free from all forms of violence, harassment, and discrimination. All Brain Canada Team Members must treat each other in a fair, dignified, and respectful manner. Violence, discrimination, and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. If necessary, Brain Canada will take

prompt and appropriate measures, including offering support and intervening, to put an end to such behaviours.

Violation of the Policy could lead to disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Policy are as follows:

- Affirm Brain Canada's commitment to preventing and stopping any incidence of violence, harassment, or discrimination in the workplace, including any form of psychological, sexual, linguistic or discriminatory harassment.
- Ensure the safety, and the physical and psychological well-being of all Brain Canada Team Members and specify the measures implemented to prevent harassment, including information and training programs.
- Establish the principles of intervention applied at Brain Canada when a harassment complaint is filed, or when a situation of violence, harassment, or discrimination is reported to Brain Canada or their designated representative.

## **3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

### **3.1 Who is covered under the Policy and who must comply with the Policy?**

#### **Who is Covered Under the Policy?**

The following Team Members are fully covered under the Policy: they must comply with the Policy and may benefit from the Complaint Resolution Procedure:

- Employees of Brain Canada, including contractual employees, managers, and executive Team Members.
- Students and interns.
- Volunteers with whom Brain Canada has signed a Volunteer Services Agreement.
- Members of the Board of Directors and Committees.

(Hereafter referred to as “Team Members.”)

#### **Who Must Comply with the Policy?**

- Any person external to Brain Canada must also comply with this Policy when interacting with a Team Member. This includes, but is not limited to, suppliers, consultants, partners, invited speakers, panelists, donors, applicants, researchers, and other third parties.
- Brain Canada expects its suppliers to have a policy or administrative framework that aligns with the objectives outlined in Section 2 of this Policy.

### **3.2 Where and when can the Policy be applied?**

The workplace includes all locations where Team Members are performing their work, on-site and off-site, during and after normal working hours. The Policy also applies to work-related events, conferences,

social events, etc. The Policy applies whenever and wherever Team Members may be performing their Brain Canada duties.

### **3.3 Does the behaviour have to be in person?**

No, the Policy covers both in-person interactions and electronic communications, including emails, instant messages, text messages, videoconferences, and social media.

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

Definitions of violence, harassment, and discrimination may vary across Canadian provinces, and some provincial legislations do not provide specific definitions of these terms as they apply to the workplace. Brain Canada is committed to complying with all applicable provincial legislations and adopting practices that meet or exceed the highest standards to prevent workplace violence, harassment, and discrimination. The following definitions are provided as examples derived from provincial legislations and will guide Brain Canada in fostering and promoting a workplace free from all forms of violence, harassment, and discrimination.

### **VIOLENCE**

#### **4.1 What is workplace violence?**

Workplace violence is defined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* of Ontario (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01>) as:

- *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; or*
- *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.*

This definition of workplace violence is broad enough to include acts that would constitute offences under Canada's Criminal Code.

Violence that occurs outside the workplace, but which has an impact on the working environment, including working relationships, may also be considered violence in the workplace.

#### **4.2 Examples of behaviours constituting workplace violence**

- Physical: use of force against a person, assault, property damage.
- Verbal: insults, shouting, threats.
- Psychological: offensive and demeaning remarks, rumours.
- Symbolic: aggressive or threatening actions expressing intent to injure or harm, inappropriate or degrading attitudes.

Workplace violence includes sexual violence. It also includes domestic, spousal or family violence which is carried over into the workplace.

### 4.3 What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is defined in the Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety (<https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/s-2.1>) in Quebec as:

*Any form of violence targeting sexuality or any other misconduct, including unwanted gestures, practices, comments, behaviours or attitudes with sexual connotations, whether they occur once or repeatedly, including violence relating to sexual and gender diversity.*

### 4.4 Examples of sexual violence at work

- Unnecessary physical contact, including inappropriate touching.
- Making gender-related comments about someone's physical characteristics.
- Rough or vulgar language related to sexuality, sexual orientation or gender.
- Leering or inappropriate staring.
- Verbally abusing, threatening or taunting someone based on gender or sexual orientation.
- Demanding hugs, dates or sexual favours.

### 4.5 What is spousal, domestic or family violence?

Spousal, domestic or family violence is considered workplace violence when it involves a person who has a personal relationship with an employee (e.g., spouse, former spouse, family member, etc.), and can cause or attempt to cause physical or psychological harm to that employee at work or threaten to do so.

### 4.6 Examples of spousal, domestic and family violence at work

- Following or waiting outside the employee's workplace.
- Sending or making written threats (e.g. sending threatening emails or text messages).
- Uttering verbal threats either directly or by phone, or through a third person.
- Damaging the employee's property.

## HARASSMENT

### 4.7 What is harassment?

Workplace harassment is defined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01>) 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.*

Bullying and harassment is defined in the Policy for the Workers Compensation Act of British Columbia (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-policies/policies-for-the-workers-compensation-act#SectionNumber:P2-21-2>) as:

*(a) including any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but*

*(b) excluding any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.*

Forms of workplace harassment include psychological, sexual, and discriminatory harassment. It includes such behaviour defined as bullying, cyberbullying, mobbing, and personal harassment. In general, harassment involves repeated acts. However, a single serious act that has a lasting harmful effect on an employee or has negative consequences may constitute harassment.

#### **4.8 Examples of workplace harassment**

- Offensive comments or jokes.
- Bullying or aggressive behaviour.
- Inappropriate staring.
- Isolating or making fun of a colleague.

#### **4.9 What is psychological harassment?**

Psychological harassment is defined in the *Act Respecting Labour Standards* (<https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/n-1.1>) in Quebec as:

*Any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures, that affects an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that results in a harmful work environment for the employee. For greater certainty, psychological harassment includes such behaviour in the form of such verbal comments, actions or gestures of a sexual nature. A single serious incidence of such behaviour that has a lasting harmful effect on an employee may also constitute psychological harassment.*

#### **4.10 Examples of psychological harassment**

- Humiliating comments, degrading or offensive words, disparaging remarks, threats.
- Repeated insinuations, repeated attempts to isolate or exclude a Team Member.
- Belittling a Team Member in front of their colleagues or constantly discrediting their work.
- Making remarks, jokes, or innuendos that demean, ridicule, intimidate or offend.
- Spreading damaging and false gossip or rumours, ridiculing, invading a person's privacy.
- Mocking a person's convictions and tastes.
- Spreading false accusations about a person.
- Rude, belittling or sarcastic comments.
- Abusive, belittling or intimidating phone calls, emails, notes, etc.
- Baiting or unreasonable teasing. For example, singing derogatory songs and inserting the person's name or using cruel nicknames.
- Mean practical jokes.
- Deliberately and unreasonably isolating or excluding from work discussions, communication or other work-related activities.
- Ignoring the person.

#### **4.11 Examples of behaviours not constituting harassment**

- Evaluating contribution and probation period.
- Applying and imposing disciplinary measures (such as notices, warnings, etc).
- Disagreements, misunderstandings, miscommunication and/or conflict situations.
- Comments that are objective and intended to provide constructive feedback.

- Difficult work conditions or changes to the organization.

#### **4.12 What is sexual harassment?**

**Sexual harassment** is defined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01>) as:

*Engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making it is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.*

A single instance of this behaviour could be considered sexual harassment if it is serious enough to have lasting effects.

#### **4.13 Examples of sexual harassment**

- Remarks, whistles, comments, allusions, jokes or insults of a sexual nature, including commenting on someone's physique.
- Unwanted physical contact like caressing or pinching.
- Showing pornographic pictures or other degrading images of a sexual nature.

#### **4.14 Linguistic harassment or discrimination**

Since June 1, 2022, employees have an explicit right to a workplace free of harassment or discrimination related to the use of French at work.

Quebec Charter of the French language (<https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/c-11>) provides that:

*Every employee has a right to a work environment free of discrimination or harassment because the employee has no or little command of a language other than the official language, because the employee claims the possibility to express himself in the official language or because the employee has demanded that a right arising from the provisions of this chapter be respected.*

*The employer shall take reasonable means to prevent such conduct and, if such conduct is brought to the employer's attention, to make it cease.*

### **DISCRIMINATION**

#### **4.15 What is discrimination**

Discrimination means treating someone differently, differentiating, excluding or preferring them, because of their personal characteristics that are prohibited grounds for discrimination in the Charte des droits et libertés de la personne (<https://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ShowDoc/cs/C-12>), in the Ontario Human Rights Code (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>), in the British Columbia Human Rights Code ([https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00\\_96210\\_01](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96210_01)), or in Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/human%20rights.pdf>) such as:

*race, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic or national origin, language, citizenship, creed, political convictions, social condition, religion, identity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, civil status, marital status (including single status), family status, physical and/or mental disability or handicap or any means to palliate a handicap.*

#### **4.16 Examples of discrimination**

- Refusing to hire or promote someone based on their race or ethnicity.
- Paying employees of different genders different salaries for the same work.
- Denying job opportunities or promotions to individuals with disabilities.
- Firing an employee after they disclose their pregnancy or intention to take parental leave.
- Excluding individuals with mental health conditions from workplace activities or assignments.
- Creating a hostile work environment through the use of racial slurs or offensive language.
- Treating employees differently based on their age, particularly during recruitment or layoff processes.

#### **4.17 What is discriminatory harassment**

Discriminatory harassment is also considered harassment if it is based on any prohibited grounds for discrimination in the *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* in Quebec, in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, in the *British Columbia Human Code*, or in the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act* such as:

- Race, colour, ethnic or national origin.
- Age, language, sex, pregnancy, civil status.
- Gender identity or expression, sexual orientation.
- Religion, social condition, political convictions.
- A handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap.

#### **4.18 Examples of discriminatory harassment**

- Subjecting an employee to derogatory comments or jokes based on their sexual orientation.
- Epithets, slurs, jokes, negative stereotyping or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or any other prohibited grounds for discrimination.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMITMENTS**

### **5.1 What's Brain Canada's Policy statement?**

Brain Canada does not tolerate or accept any form of violence, harassment or discrimination, including:

- From managers towards employees, students, interns, or volunteers.
- From employees towards their managers.
- From Board members towards employees.
- Between Team Members.
- From any person external to Brain Canada towards Team Members.

Any violent or harassing behaviour may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including immediate dismissal. A person who makes false accusations with the intent to harm is also subject to appropriate disciplinary measures.

## **5.2 What's Brain Canada's responsibility regarding the Policy?**

Brain Canada is committed to take reasonable measures to:

- Offer a work environment free from any form of violence, harassment, and discrimination.
- Prevent or, if applicable, stop situations of violence, harassment or discrimination by:
  - Promoting respect.
  - Maintaining open communication.
  - Implementing a procedure for handling complaints and reports related to situations of violence, harassment or discrimination.
  - Intervening quickly and appropriately with corrective actions whenever there is a case of violence, harassment or discrimination.
  - Ensuring anyone who raises an issue or makes a complaint is offered on-going support and guidance and that the complaint procedures are followed.
- Communicate the Policy on Brain Canada's website and Human Resources Directory, to make it accessible to anyone who is covered by the Policy, and/or who must comply with the Policy.
- Provide mandatory training programs to employees on the Policy, and on violence, harassment and discrimination, including:
  - Provide an annual training to employees on the Policy, and on violence, harassment and discrimination.
  - Provide onboarding training to new employees on the Policy, and on violence, harassment and discrimination.
- Consult Team Members on specific situations in their work environment that may create conditions leading to harassment.
- Hold exit interviews with departing employees to understand the reasons for their departure.
- Appoint Sophie Marquis, Human Resources Consultant, as the designated person by Brain Canada for handling reports and complaints regarding violence, harassment and discrimination ("Designated Person"). Her email address is [sophie.marquis@braincanada.ca](mailto:sophie.marquis@braincanada.ca). In her absence or inability to act, Anne-Marie Papineau, Director of Legal Affairs and Governance ([annemarie.papineau@braincanada.ca](mailto:annemarie.papineau@braincanada.ca)) will serve as her replacement.
- Ensure that the Designated Person is duly trained for their responsibilities and has the necessary skills and tools at their disposal to process and follow up on complaints or reports.

## **5.3 What are the Designated Person's responsibilities regarding the Policy?**

- Inform Team Members about the Policy.
- Receive complaints and reports.
- Evaluate each request and recommend appropriate actions or interventions (e.g., individual meetings, mediation, investigation), based on the context.
- If necessary, carry out an investigation without delay and in an objective, neutral and impartial manner or, if they are not available or if they do not have the skills required to do so, to entrust responsibility to an external investigator to preserve the impartiality of the intervention and ensure its quality.

- Determine who will be the qualified person responsible for the intervention.
- Ensure follow-up to support the individuals involved and confirm that the intervention has achieved the desired outcomes.

#### **5.4 What are the managers' responsibilities regarding the Policy?**

- Review the Policy and follow the standards outlined.
- Ensure respectful working relationships within their team.
- Take seriously any situation involving violence, harassment, or discrimination.
- Ensure support is provided to any Team Member by providing information on the Policy and referral as required.
- Inform the Designated Person of any complaint brought to their attention or any behaviour that may be considered violence or harassment.
- Assist in investigating complaints.
- Act in an exemplary manner.

#### **5.5 What are the Team Members' responsibilities regarding the Policy?**

- Review the Policy and follow the standards outlined.
- Show respect, courtesy and dignity to all Team Members and to any person external to Brain Canada, on-site or off-site, and electronically.
- Quickly advise their manager or the Designated Person if they are being subjected to any form of violence, harassment or discrimination, or if they witness any behaviour outlined in the Policy.

#### **5.6 What are the responsibilities of any other person outside Brain Canada?**

- Review the Policy and follow the standards outlined.
- Show respect, courtesy and dignity to all of Brain Canada's Team Members.
- Report to the Designated Person any situation of violence, harassment or discrimination experienced or brought to their attention.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEHAVIOUR DURING WORK-RELATED SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

### **6.1 What are Brain Canada's recommendations for behaviour during work-related social activities to promote a respectful and safe environment?**

- Treat all Team Members with respect.
- Avoid condescending behaviour, inappropriate jokes, or gestures that could be misinterpreted.
- Respect personal boundaries and each person's space.
- Avoid unsolicited physical contact.
- Drink responsibly, and respect other Team Members' choice to abstain if they wish
- Avoid sensitive and/or controversial topics, such as politics, religion, and personally sensitive subjects.

- Don't share photos, videos, or comments on social media without the consent of those involved to respect participants' privacy.

## **7. COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

### **OPTIONAL INITIAL INTERVENTIONS**

#### **7.1 Requesting the person concerned to stop the violence, harassment or discrimination**

Whenever possible and if they feel comfortable, the Team Member experiencing workplace conduct contrary to the Policy may, where appropriate in the circumstances, specifically communicate to the person concerned that their behaviour is unacceptable and request that it must stop. They should also note the date and details of the incident(s), as well as the steps they have taken to try to resolve the situation.

#### **7.2 Reporting the situation to your manager**

Whenever possible and if they feel comfortable, the Team Member experiencing workplace conduct contrary to the Policy may report the situation to their manager. This reporting to their manager provides an opportunity to discuss the problematic behaviour and explore potential resolution mechanisms. The manager will take all appropriate measures, including promptly notifying the Designated Person.

### **REPORTING A COMPLAINT**

#### **7.3 Reporting a complaint**

If an initial intervention is not desired or if the violence, harassment or discrimination continues, the Team Member should report the situation to the Designated Person so that problematic behaviours can be identified, and appropriate actions can be taken. A complaint can be made verbally or in writing, by submitting a detailed [Complaint Form \(Schedule A\)](#).

Any person witnessing a situation of violence, harassment or discrimination is strongly encouraged to report the incident to the Designated Person.

The Designated Person who receives the formal complaint shall immediately inform the Chief Executive Officer.

#### **7.4 Processing the complaint**

Brain Canada is committed to:

- Handling the complaint or report as quickly as possible.
- Preserving the dignity and privacy of the parties involved, including the person who made the complaint, the person subject to the complaint, and any witnesses.
- Ensuring that all parties involved are treated with humanity, fairness, and objectivity, and that adequate support is provided to them.

- Protecting the confidentiality of the intervention process, including any information related to the complaint or report: Anyone who reports or files a complaint under the Policy file should be assured that their concerns will be handled with discretion, sensitivity, and confidentiality. Confidentiality must be respected by all involved parties. However, it is understood that certain information may be disclosed to third parties as necessary for processing the complaint or conducting the investigation. The Designated Person will ensure that all relevant documents and information are secured in physical or electronic locations with restricted access, limited to those who need it as part of their duties. Any documentation or physical evidence related to a report or complaint of violence, harassment, or discrimination will be kept for two years after the final decision regarding the complaint and destroyed afterward.
- Offering to hold a mediation meeting with the parties involved, with their consent, to resolve the situation. If necessary, conducting an investigation promptly and objectively, or assigning the responsibility to an external investigator. The parties involved will be informed of the outcome of this process.
- Taking all reasonable measures to resolve the situation, including appropriate disciplinary measures as needed. Any Team Member who violates the Policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures. The applicable measure will be chosen based on the severity and consequences of the act(s), as well as the prior record of the employee responsible.

### **7.5 Abusive complaints**

No Team Member will be intimidated or unfairly treated in any respect if they reference the Policy to resolve an issue. On the other hand, any Team Member who makes unfounded accusations of harassment, discrimination or violence in bad faith may be subject to disciplinary or administrative measures, up to and including dismissal for a serious reason.

### **7.6 Retaliation or reprisals**

In the context of handling and resolving a workplace violence, harassment or discrimination situation, no one should suffer harm or be subject to retaliation. Any form of revenge or reprisal against a Team Member who references the Policy or who is involved in the investigation of a complaint (including witnesses) is considered a serious offence and shall be subject to appropriate administrative or disciplinary measures, up to and including an immediate dismissal. Any Team Member who believes to be the victim of any form of reprisal should rely on the Complaint Procedures outlined in the Policy.

**SCHEDULE A**  
**BRAIN CANADA**  
**VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT, AND/OR DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM**

<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	
Last Name:	First Name:
Title:	
Phone number at work: ( ) _____	
Phone number at home: ( ) _____	

\*If you do not have enough space to complete any of the sections of this form, please feel free to add additional pages as schedules.

<b>WHO COMMITTED THE ACT(S) OF VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION</b>	
Name:	Name:
Title:	

<b>SUMMARY OF THE FACTS</b>
<b>TELL US WHAT HAPPENED.</b> (List the facts, circumstances, events, words and actions that you believe constitute violence, harassment or discrimination.)

**WHO WITNESSED THIS? List the full name and titles of witnesses, and provide details of what facts, circumstances, events, words and actions they witnessed)**

1.

2.

3.

4.

**WHEN? (Specify dates and time of the event(s))**

**WHERE? (Specify the location(s))**

**DESCRIBE THE EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE SITUATION(S) ENCOUNTERED**

--

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

**I formally file a complaint in accordance with the Policy for the Prevention of Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination in the Workplace of Brain Canada in relation with the above facts.**

**I declare that the information provided in this form is true and to the best of my knowledge.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Acknowledgement of receipt**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name, Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received on (date)