



February 25, 2013

Honourable Glen Abernethy
Minister of Human Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
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Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

Workplace Bullying

Research on bullying tells us that at least **40%** of all employees are affected by the destructive behavior of workplace bullying. According to the Workplace Bullying Institute: "Many places of work consciously or unconsciously endorse, perhaps even encourage, bullying behavior. In fact bullies frequently get promoted or they are often not dealt with directly, as the workplace culture does not know how to address such behavior."

Research has shown that there are workplaces in which bullies thrive. In these environments, bullies can indulge their worst behavior and get away with it. Research has also shown that management may be wary of standing up to the bully for fear of losing the bully's performance, not knowing that it's not an either/or situation. What is not understood is that high performance workplaces can exist symbiotically with bully-free environments.

Anti-bullying programs teach that some of the key actions to stop bullying are: People must recognize bullying behavior; Speak out at the time; and Stand by those who are being bullied and support them.

In order to stop workplace bullying, it is essential that GNWT employees can "stand by those who are being bullied and report bullying behavior." Currently, the GNWT's interpretation of their Harassment Policy only allows an employee to make a complaint about harassment which has directly occurred to the complainant.

Workplaces which do not have policies and procedures for witnesses to report bullying increase the risk for employees who suffer from vicarious trauma. Vicarious trauma is the process of change that happens when employees care about other people who have been hurt, and feel committed or responsible to help them. Over time this process can lead to changes in their psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being when they are unable to help or have a sense of justice.

As a solution, we as members of PSAC, strongly recommend the GNWT to:

- Upgrade its *Safety Act* and regulations to match Part 20.1 of the *Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* (which is current "industry standard" for dealing with harassment, bullying, and other forms of workplace violence).

- Create a new Violence Prevention Policy that allows GNWT employees to make a complaint about any workplace bullying that they are experiencing and/or witnessing.
- Modify its management training program to incorporate a module on workplace bullying so that managers-in-training can identify the various types of workplace bullying; the adverse health effects of workplace bullying upon the employees; and that they realize that bullying is not an acceptable management tool in the GNWT workplace.
- Create an anti-bullying program to teach GNWT employees how to recognize bullying behavior; understand the adverse health effects that bullying can cause; and teach them about what their rights are under the new legislation, new regulations, and new policy.
- Create supportive programs for those who want to self-disclose that they are struggling with letting go of bullying behavior.

In closing, we are offering assistance in the development of a new policy and the revision of existing legislation. We look forward to your response.

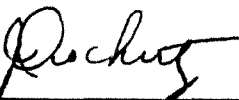


David Bob, President
PSAC NORTH NWT Area Council

PSAC NORTH NWT Area Council is comprised of the following:

PSAC NORTH NWT Aboriginal Peoples Committee
PSAC NORTH NWT Access Committee
PSAC NORTH NWT Pride Committee
PSAC NORTH NWT Racially Visible Committee
PSAC NORTH NWT Regional Women's Committee
PSAC NORTH NWT Health and Safety Committee

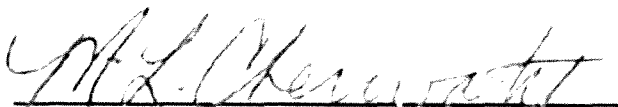
Letter endorsed by:



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