



Know Your RIGHTS

Human Rights in the NWT and Yukon.



*Northwest Territories
Human Rights Commission*



Yukon
HUMAN RIGHTS
Commission

What's inside

Page 3

Let's talk about discrimination

Page 4

NWT and Yukon laws protect your rights

Page 5

Protected areas

Page 7

Protected grounds

Page 18

Harassment

Page 19

People have different needs

Page 20

Areas and grounds go together

Page 22

Making a complaint - questions and answers

Page 23

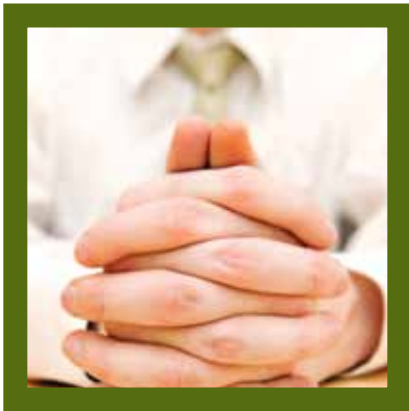
Where to get help

Let's talk about discrimination

These people have been discriminated against.

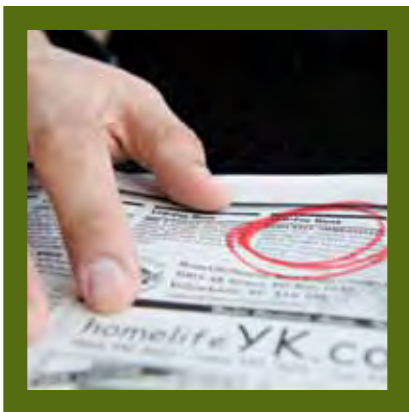
Have you ever been discriminated against?

What did you do about it?



Dave:

I have epilepsy. I applied for a job. During the interview, I told the boss about my epilepsy. He said, "I don't think you will be able to do the job." I did not get hired.



Leroy:

I called about an apartment for rent. I went to see it right away. The landlord looked at me. She said, "Sorry, we don't rent to people like you."

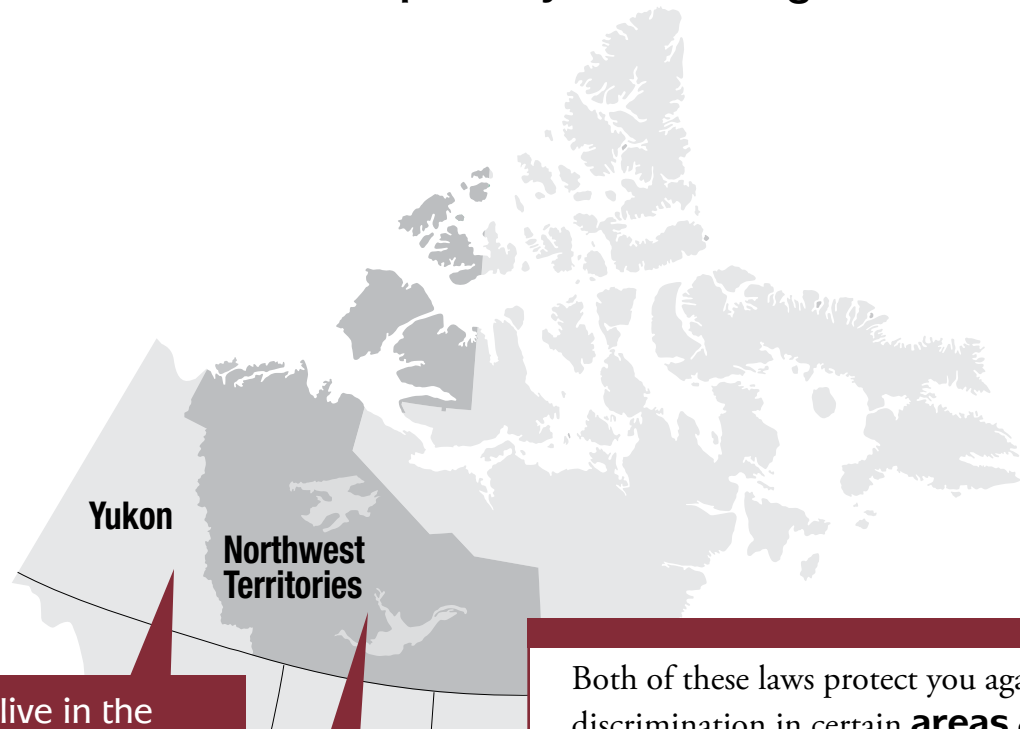


Jenny:

A guy I work with sometimes stands close to me when I am at my desk. He puts his hands on my shoulders. He makes jokes about sex. He knows I don't like it. I think I am being sexually harassed.

NWT and Yukon laws protect your rights

The NWT and Yukon have laws to protect your human rights.



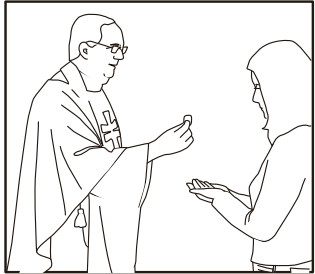
If you live in the Yukon, you are protected by the ***Yukon Human Rights Act.***

If you live in the NWT, you are protected by the ***NWT Human Rights Act.***

Both of these laws protect you against discrimination in certain **areas** of your life. For example, working or renting a place to live.



Both of these laws also have protected **grounds**. People cannot discriminate against you on certain **grounds**. For example, your religious beliefs.



Protected areas

Human rights laws in the NWT and Yukon protect you in these **areas** of your life:

1. Working

This **area** includes when you look for a job and when you have a job.

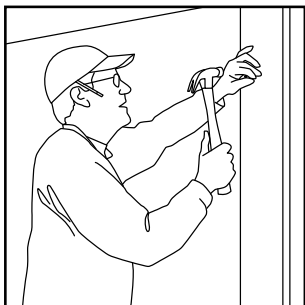
Job ads, job applications, and interviews

For example:



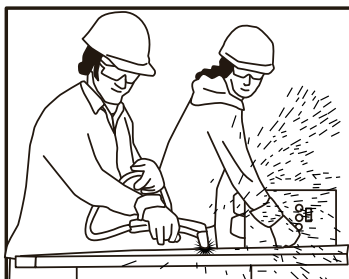
How you do your job

For example:



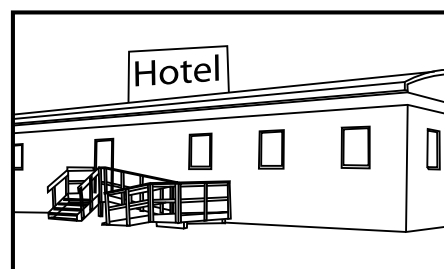
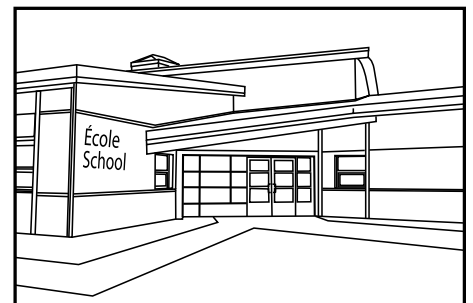
Equal pay for the same work

For example:



2. Public goods and services

For example:

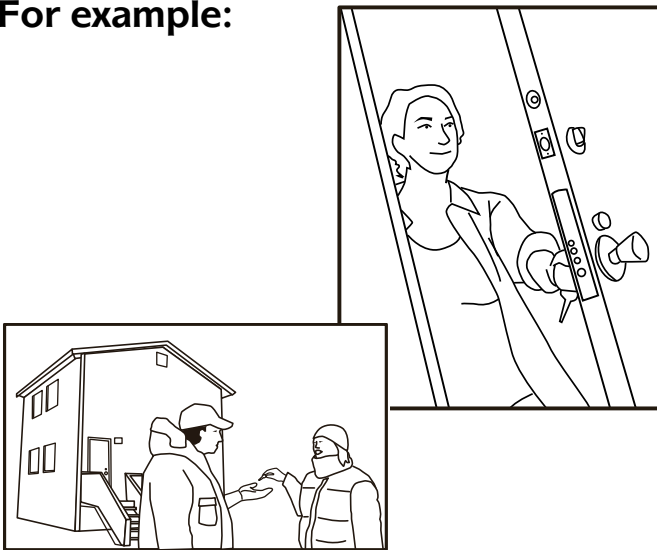


Protected areas

Human rights laws in the NWT and Yukon protect you in these areas of your life:

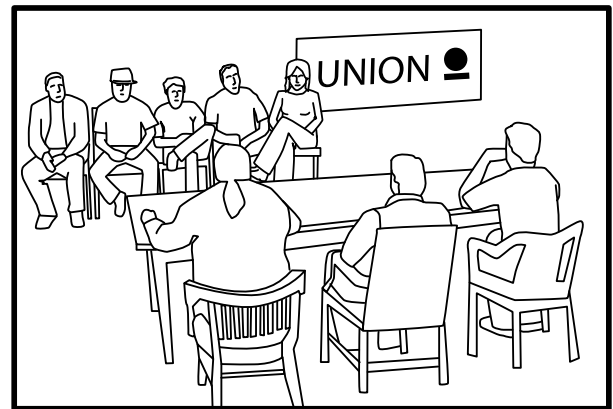
3. Renting

For example:



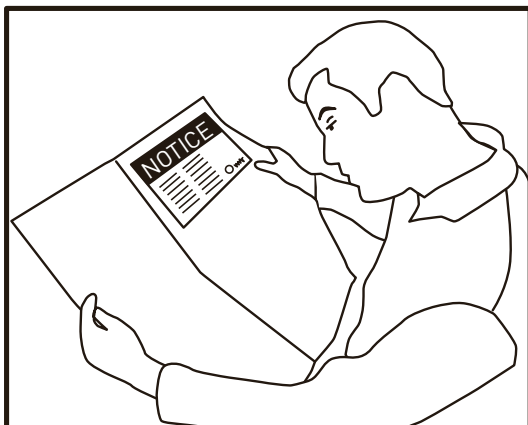
4. Membership in trade unions and workers' associations

For example:



5. Publications and notices (NWT only)

For example:



6. Public contracts

For example:



Protected grounds

Human rights laws in the NWT and Yukon protect you from discrimination based on **grounds**. For example, a person's race and religion. People cannot discriminate against you based on these **grounds**:

1. Race and colour

People cannot discriminate against you because of your race or the colour of your skin. For example, a person can be First Nations, Métis, Asian, Black, or White.

Leroy's story

I moved to a new community. I looked at the apartment ads every day. One day, I called a landlord. I went to see the apartment. The landlord looked at me. She said, "Sorry, I don't rent to people like you." I think I was discriminated against because I'm Aboriginal.



Leroy

2. Ancestry, ethnic origin and first language

People cannot discriminate against you because of your ancestry, ethnic origin, or first language. For example, some people's ancestry or ethnic background is Vietnamese, Inuit, Somalian, or Ukrainian. Some people's first language is Gwich'in, Chinese, or French.

Rosemary's story

My mother Rosemary doesn't speak English well. She got sick. She went to the health centre. She didn't understand everything the nurse said to her. She asked for an interpreter. The nurse didn't get her one. I think she was discriminated against because of her ancestry and first language.



Rosemary

Protected grounds

3. Place of birth and nationality

People cannot discriminate against you because of your place of birth or nationality. For example, some people were born in Korea or South Africa. Some people's nationality is Japanese, American, Lebanese or German.

Joseph's story

I was born in the Philippines. Sometimes my co-workers say that people from other countries should go back where they came from. They say people from other countries take jobs away from local people. I think I am being discriminated against because of where I was born.



Joseph

4. Religion or creed

People cannot discriminate against you because of your religion or creed. For example, a person might be Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Bahá'í or practice Aboriginal spirituality.

Fahima's story

I am a waitress at a restaurant. I am Muslim. I wear a head scarf called a hijab with my uniform. For me, the hijab is part of my religion. One customer makes fun of my hijab. He tells other customers I shouldn't be allowed to wear it. I am going to talk to my boss about it. I think I am being discriminated against because of my religion.



Fahima

Protected grounds

5. Sexual orientation

People cannot discriminate against you because of your sexual orientation. A person might be:

Heterosexual

A person who likes the opposite sex.

Homosexual

A person who likes the same sex.

Bisexual

Someone who likes both sexes (men and women).

Derrick's story

I am a high school student. I am gay. Sometimes I get bullied by other students. They call me “fag” and “homo” when I walk down the hall. Sometimes they push me into lockers. I am tired of being treated this way. I think I am being discriminated against because of my sexual orientation.



Derrick

It is against the law to discriminate against someone who you think is gay, even if the person is not gay.

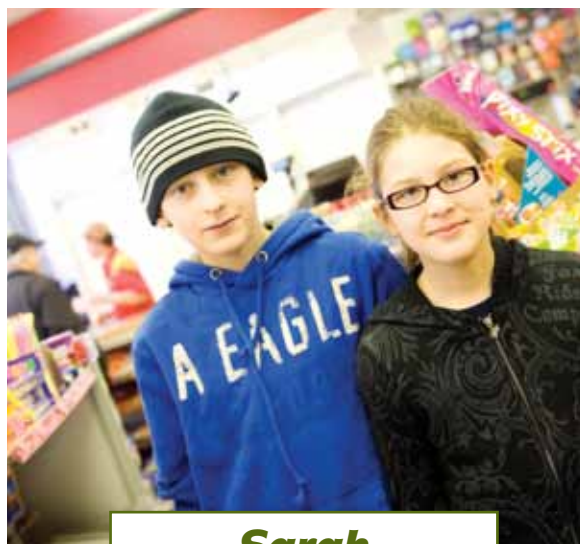
6. Age

People cannot discriminate against you because of your age.

Employers cannot make you retire just because you are 65.

Sarah's story

I am 13 years old. My friends and I went into a store. The store owner told us to leave. We weren't doing anything wrong. We asked her why we had to leave. She said that she doesn't like groups of teenagers in the store. We think we are being discriminated against because of our age.



Sarah

Protected grounds

7a. Disability (physical)

People cannot discriminate against you because of your disability.

A disability can be physical or mental.

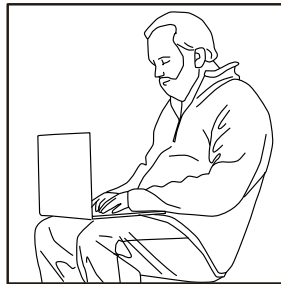
There are many kinds of **physical disabilities**.

For example:



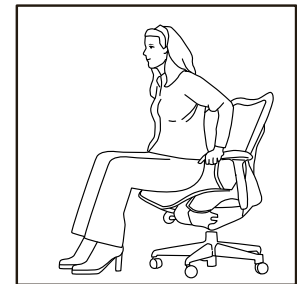
Jane

Jane has multiple sclerosis. She is in a wheelchair. She takes a handi-van to work.



George

George is blind. He has a computer that reads letters and newspapers to him.

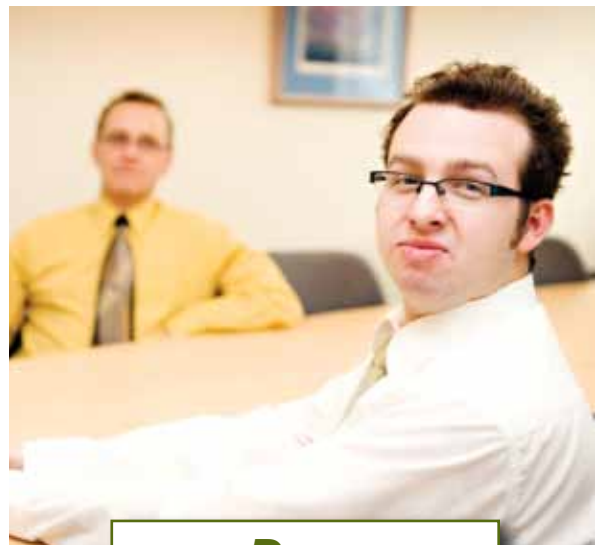


Lynn

Lynn has a bad back. Her boss got her a new chair to help stop the pain.

Dave's story

I have epilepsy. I applied for a job. I got an interview. During the interview, the boss asked me if I had any medical conditions. I told him I have epilepsy. He said, "I don't think you will be able to do the job." I didn't get hired. I don't agree with the way I was treated. I can do the work. I think I was discriminated against because of my disability.



Dave

Protected grounds

7b. Disability (mental)

There are many kinds of **mental disabilities**.

For example:



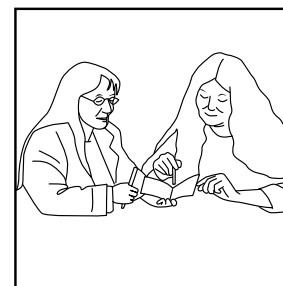
John

John has dyslexia. This is a learning disability. He needs extra help at school.



Don

Don has bipolar disorder. He takes medication. He sees a mental health counsellor.



Mary

Mary has fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. She needs help managing her money.

Sally's story

I am a college student. I have depression. I often feel sad and hopeless. I have trouble concentrating. I am unable to hand my assignments in on time. I gave my instructor a doctor's note that said I need more time to do my work. My instructor said no. I think I am being discriminated against because of my disability.



Sally

Protected grounds

7c. Disability (addiction)

A drug or alcohol addiction is also a disability.

Mark's story

I am an alcoholic. I haven't had a drink for 5 years. Lately, I have been really stressed out. I started to drink again. I missed a lot of work. My boss had a meeting with me. I told him I was an alcoholic. I told him I had started drinking again. I asked him for time off to go for treatment. He fired me. I think I was discriminated against because of my disability.



Mark

8. Gender identity (NWT only)

People cannot discriminate against you because of your gender identity. Gender identity means feeling like a man or a woman.

Some people are transgendered.

For example:

A man who has become or wants to become a woman.

A woman who has become or wants to become a man.

Gabrielle's story

My name is Gabrielle Sky. I was born a man. But I have always felt like a woman. Sometimes I dress like a woman. Doctors are helping me to change into a woman. People often find it hard to accept transgendered people. It's normal for people to be afraid of what they don't understand. By sharing my story, I hope that people will accept us for who we are.



Gabrielle

In the Yukon, transgendered persons are protected under the ground SEX (gender).

Protected grounds

9. Sex (gender)

People cannot discriminate against you because you are a man or a woman.

Jim's story

I saw an ad for a day care worker. I called to find out more about the job. The person I talked to said, "I am surprised a man is applying for this job." I put in an application. I didn't get the job. I didn't even get an interview, even though I have experience. I think I was discriminated against because I am a man.



Jim

People cannot discriminate against you because you are pregnant. People cannot discriminate against you because you are on maternity leave.

Nora's story

I went on maternity leave. During my leave, I was fired. My boss told me there wasn't enough work. I found out later that my boss hired someone else to do my job. I think I was discriminated against because I was on maternity leave.



Nora



Karen is pregnant.
She is a cook's helper.
Read about Karen on pages 14 and 19.

Protected grounds

10. Family status

People cannot discriminate against you because of who you are related to. For example:

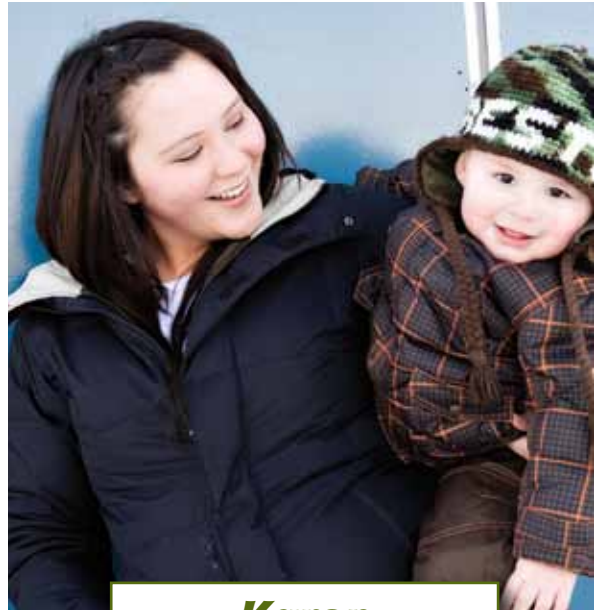
Someone cannot refuse to give you a service because they do not like your family.

An employer cannot refuse to hire you because of who you are related to.

People cannot discriminate against you because you are a parent.

Karen's story

I have one child, and I am expecting a baby. I need a bigger place to live. I called a landlord about an apartment for rent. He told me I couldn't live there because I have a child. He said only adults are allowed in the apartment building. I think I was discriminated against because I have a child.



Karen

11. Marital status

People cannot discriminate against you because of your marital status. For example, being single, married, divorced, widowed, or common-law.

Darlene's story

I applied for a supervisor job in my company. The job has more hours and travel. My boss said the job would be better for someone who is single. She said the extra hours and travel would be hard because I am married. I feel I didn't even get a chance. I think I was discriminated against because I am married.



Darlene

Protected grounds

12. Family affiliation (NWT only)

You cannot be discriminated against because of the family you belong to. This could be your adopted family. It could also be a family that you are close to.

Adele's story

I applied for housing. I didn't get in. It seems like the people who get into housing are all related to the housing worker. I think I was discriminated against because of who I'm related to.



Adele

In the Yukon, Adele could file a complaint under family status.

13. Political belief, political activity or association

People cannot discriminate against you because of your political beliefs, activities and associations.

For example, a person might belong to a political party like the Liberals, NDP, or Conservatives.

Brian's story

Sometimes we talk about politics at lunch. One day, I got into a political argument with my supervisor. Now he complains about my work. He gives me all the clean-up jobs. I think I am being discriminated against because of my political beliefs.



Brian

Protected grounds

14. Social condition (NWT only)

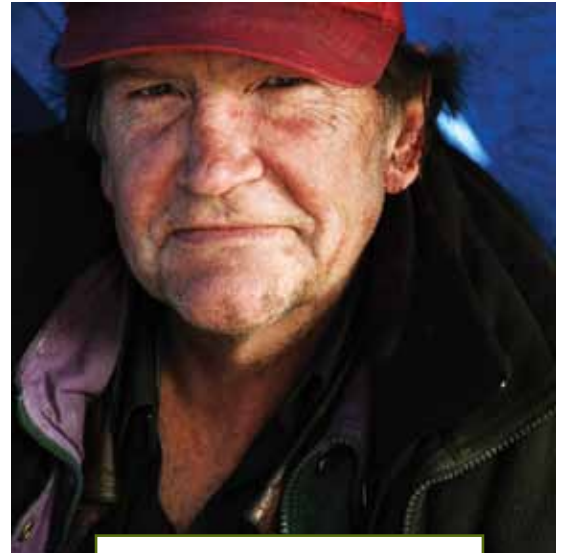
People cannot discriminate against you because of your social condition. For example:

Patrick has a low paying job. He lives in public housing.

Susie did not finish high school. She does not read or write very well. She has a hard time finding work.

Don's Story

I am homeless. I went to a restaurant to have lunch. The waitress made me pay for my lunch before I got it. I asked her why. She told me it was because I am homeless. Everyone else in the restaurant got to pay after they ate. I think I was discriminated against because of my social condition.

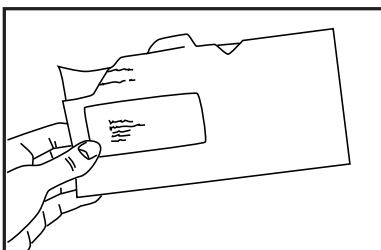


Don

15. Source of income

People cannot discriminate against you based on your source of income.

For example:



Dave

Dave is on social assistance.

Mary

Mary gets a disability pension.

George

George is on employment insurance.

Corinne's story

I am on social assistance. I am looking for a new apartment. A landlord told me he doesn't rent to people on social assistance. I don't agree with this. I was a good tenant. I always paid my rent on time. I think I was discriminated against because of my source of income.



Corrine

Protected grounds

16. Criminal charges or criminal record (Yukon only)

People cannot discriminate against you because of criminal charges or a criminal record. For example, a store can't tell someone to leave because the person has been charged with a crime or has a criminal record.

Phil's story

Five years ago, I was convicted of a crime. I did time. I went back to school and got my GED. I have worked a lot since then. Last month, I applied for a new job. I passed the interview. They did a criminal records check. I didn't get the job because of my record. I don't think this is fair. I think I was discriminated against because of my criminal record.



Phil

Sometimes it is okay for employers not to hire people because of their criminal charges or records. For example, when a person convicted of theft doesn't get hired for a job that handles money.

17. Pardoned criminal conviction (NWT only)

People cannot discriminate against you because of a pardoned criminal conviction. People who have criminal records may be able to get a pardon.

In the NWT, Phil could file a complaint if he had a pardon for his conviction.



Harassment

Harassment can be words or actions that are unwanted. For example, rude comments, jokes, insults, threats, using dirty words, and touching.

Harassment upsets people. It can make them feel angry, embarrassed, or afraid.

Human rights laws in the NWT and Yukon deal with harassment when it is about one of the grounds of discrimination.

For example: insults about a person's race, jokes about a person's religion, touching someone in a sexual way.



If you are being harassed, you can call your Human Rights Commission to find out if the Commission can help you.

If you think you are in danger, you can also call the police.

Jenny's story

A guy I work with sometimes stands close to me when I am at my desk. He puts his hands on my shoulders. He makes jokes about sex. He knows I don't like it. I feel like quitting my job. I think I am being sexually harassed.



Jenny



Fahima was harassed because of her religion. Read about Fahima on page 8.



Derrick was harassed because of his sexual orientation. Read about Derrick on page 9.



Joseph was harassed because of where he was born. Read about Joseph on pages 8 and 21.

People have different needs

People have different needs. For example, a worker who is blind has different needs than other workers.

Employers and landlords must try hard to accommodate peoples' needs.

Places that give public services also have to try hard to accommodate peoples' needs.

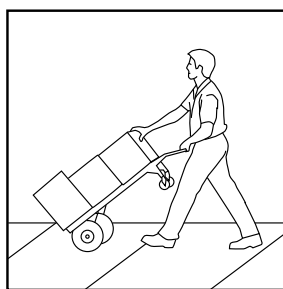
Accommodation is when things are done differently so that peoples' needs are met.

Human rights laws in the NWT and Yukon cover needs that are about a protected ground.

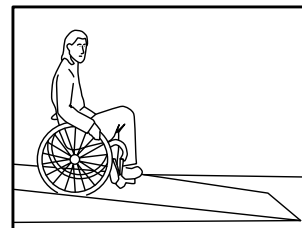
For example:



I have a drinking problem.
I need time off work to go
for treatment.



I hurt my back. I can't
do heavy lifting.
I need lighter duties.



I use a wheelchair. I need
a ramp to get into the
building where I work.

Karen's story

I am a cook's helper. I am 6 months pregnant. My ankles swell when I am on my feet for too long. I can't carry heavy things. I told my boss about it. I gave him a doctor's note. My boss understood. He gave some of my job duties to my co-workers. He gave me a stool to sit down on while I make sandwiches and salads.



Karen

Areas and grounds go together

Corinne's story

Corinne was discriminated against in the **area** of renting. The **ground** is social condition or source of income.

I am a single parent with one child. I am on social assistance. I am planning to go back to school. I want to get a good job to support my child.

I have to find a new place to live. I looked at a place that was in my budget. I filled out the application form. I put down I was on social assistance. The landlord told me he doesn't rent to people on social assistance.



Corinne

This made me feel very upset. I was a good tenant. I always paid the rent on time.

My friend told me I should call the Human Rights Commission.

I called and talked to someone.

I learned about my rights.

I talked to the landlord. He said he still wouldn't rent to me. I am going to make a human rights complaint.



Areas and grounds go together

Joseph's story

Joseph was discriminated against in the **area** of work. The **ground** is place of birth.

I was born in the Philippines. I have lived in the Yukon for 12 years.

Sometimes my co-workers say that people born in other countries should go back where they came from. They say people from other countries take jobs away from local people.

This upsets me. It makes me feel like I don't belong.



Joseph

I asked my co-workers not to say those things. I told them that I come from another country.

My friend told me I should talk to my boss.

My boss had a staff meeting. He talked about human rights in the workplace. He talked about how it is important to treat people with respect.

Things are a lot better at work now.



Making a complaint – questions and answers

**Q: I want to make a complaint?
What do I do?**

A: You can call your Human Rights Commission. A staff person at the Commission will listen to you. The staff person will tell you if the human rights law covers your situation. The staff person will explain the steps of a complaint. Then you can decide if you want to go ahead with your complaint.

Q: I find it hard to write. Can I still make a complaint?

A: Yes. A staff person at the Commission can write out your complaint for you. You can also ask a friend or family member to help you.

Q: Can my boss fire me because I make a complaint?

A: Your boss should not fire you because you make a complaint. Contact your Human Rights Commission if you are fired.

Q: How much time do I have to make a complaint?

A: In the NWT, you have 2 years to make a complaint. The 2 years starts on the last day you were discriminated against.

In the Yukon, you have 18 months to make a complaint. The 18 months starts on the last day you were discriminated against.

Sometimes, these time limits can be longer.

Q: Does it cost money to make a complaint?

A: No. Making a complaint is **free**.

FREE



Where to get help



**Northwest Territories
Human Rights Commission**

Toll Free1-888-669-5575
Yellowknife.....(867) 669-5575
Fax(867) 873-0357
Emailinfo@nwthumanrights.ca
Websitewww.nwthumanrights.ca

Mailing addressP.O. Box 1860
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P4



**Yukon
HUMAN RIGHTS
Commission**

Toll Free1-800-661-0535
Whitehorse(867) 667-6226

Fax(867) 667-2662
Emailhumanrights@yhrc.yk.ca
Websitewww.yhrc.yk.ca

Mailing address101-9010 Quartz Road
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2Z5

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The situations in this publication are fictional.
The people who appear in this publication are models.

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