



5.0 Human Resources

5.5 Workplace Conduct

5.5.2 P Respectful Workplace Policy

1.0 Introduction

VIHA's Vision, Purpose and Values provide the foundation for developing a respectful workplace culture.

C·A·R·E will guide everything we do:

Courage: to do the right thing, to change, innovate and grow.

Aspire: to the highest degree of quality and safety.

Respect: to value each individual and bring trust to every relationship.

Empathy: to give the kind of care we would want for our loved ones.

Respect is identified as one of our Values and reflects a shared core belief in valuing each individual and bringing trust to every relationship. Our Values relate to a Respectful Workplace culture as:

The **Courage** to take on difficult conversations, in **Respectful** and **Empathetic** ways as we **Aspire** to build the workplace in which we all wish to work.

The Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) is committed to:

- ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination and harassment and supported in managing workplace differences; and
- providing an environment that respects and promotes human rights and personal dignity.

Island Health supports the principle that all individuals, patients, clients, residents and visitors are entitled to a work and service environment that is free from any form of discrimination and discriminatory harassment.

Island Health supports the maintenance of Respectful Workplaces by providing:

Issuing Authority: Kathy MacNeil, Executive Vice President, Quality, Safety and Experience

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Note: This policy replaced 5.5.2 Human Rights, 5.5.2PR Human Rights Processing and Resolution Procedures for Complaints and 5.5.10 Dispute Resolution

- Education about human rights, harassment, bullying, appropriate behaviour in the workplace and dispute resolution;
- A process for informal resolution of respectful workplace complaints;
- A process for the reporting and investigation of respectful workplace complaints, including discrimination and discriminatory harassment; and
- Interventions to strengthen the relationships and work of teams.

Island Health's approach to maintaining a **Respectful Workplace** is outlined in this document and is comprised of:

- Section 2.0 – [Scope](#)
- Section 3.0 – [Policy](#)
 - [3.1 – Respectful Conduct in the Workplace](#)
 - [3.2 – Human Rights: Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment](#)
- Section 4.0 – [Definitions](#)
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 - [5.3 – Sexual Harassment](#)
- Section 6.0 – [Related Policies and Procedures](#)

2.0 Scope

This policy applies equally to all persons associated with Island Health (collectively defined as “Individuals”) including:

- Employees of Island Health, and those involved with its affiliated programs and agencies, including students;
- CEO, executives, management, and supervisory employees;
- Members of the Island Health Board of Directors;
- Volunteers of Island Health;
- Contractors;
- Physicians with privileges at any Island Health site;
- Medical staff including physicians on contract, residents, and clinical trainees;
- Post secondary faculty and support staff who work at Island Health facilities; and
- Individuals authorized to access Island Health information, Island Health information systems or Island Health equipment.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Respectful Conduct in the Workplace

Individuals are responsible for conducting themselves in a respectful manner in the workplace and at work-related activities. Failure to maintain respectful conduct will lead to discipline up to and including termination of employment, revocation of admitting privileges and/or cancellation of contract.

3.2 Human Rights: Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment

Island Health prohibits any behaviour that results in discrimination and erodes understanding and mutual respect. Individuals found to be in violation of Human Rights may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment or withdrawal of privileges for medical staff.

Patients, residents, clients or visitors found to be engaged in conduct constituting discriminatory harassment will be subject to remedy up to and including removal of visitation rights or discharge.

Any remedy that results from a founded complaint of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, must comply with standards of fairness and due process.

Individuals are also responsible for reporting any violations of this Policy to their workplace or physician leader and to participate in appropriate initiatives to improve respect within their work units.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 A Respectful Workplace is characterized by:

- Polite behaviour – Courteous and considerate behaviour toward others;
- Inclusion – Of people with different backgrounds, cultures, strengths and opinions;
- Inclusion for the purpose of this Policy means welcoming people with diverse backgrounds into the workplace. Behaviours include but are not limited to: working to understand cultural differences; working constructively with employees who have been accommodated as a result of the employer's duty to accommodate; and valuing others' differing styles and contributions. For more information, please reference the Social Responsibility Statement (Page 5 of the Code of Conduct);

- Freedom from disrespectful, discriminating, bullying and harassing behaviour;
- Constructive Management of Differences – Differences are understood to be a fact of life and are managed through conflict management and dispute resolution processes;
- Support – Individuals are supported to learn and practice dispute resolution and respectful workplace skills; and
- Support for the purpose of this Policy means coaching, in-service training and/or internal or external intervention designed to bring dispute resolution skill and respectful workplace knowledge to a work unit.

4.2 Personal Harassment

Personal harassment is any behaviour by a person directed against another person that a reasonable person would know or ought to know would cause offence, humiliation or intimidation, where the conduct serves no legitimate work-related purpose.

Such behaviour includes but is not limited to: making derogatory comments to or about another person, swearing, yelling, inappropriately interfering in another person's work, derogatory gestures, embarrassing practical jokes, ridicule, gossip, heedless disregard or denial of another's rights, improper use of power or authority, stalking or physical assault.

Gossip can include slander, which is defined as making false and damaging statements about another individual.

4.3 Bullying

Bullying is any repeated or systematic behaviour – physical, verbal or psychological including shunning – which would be seen by a reasonable person as intending to belittle, intimidate, coerce or isolate another person.

Personal harassment and/or bullying does not include acceptable social banter in the workplace. Nor does it include actions occasioned through the exercise in good faith of management's rights for bona fide operational requirements or progressive corrective discipline in a manner that is respectful for those involved.

5.0 Human Rights: Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment

5.1 Discrimination

Discrimination is unfair differential treatment of an individual or group, whether intended or not, on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age or unrelated criminal

conviction. Discrimination of this nature imposes burdens or obligations on an individual or group that serves no legitimate work purpose.

5.2 Discriminatory Harassment

Discriminatory harassment is also a form of discrimination where abusive, unfair, offensive, or demeaning treatment of a person or group of persons under any of these categories has taken place, and:

- Has the effect of interfering with an individual's work or participation in work-related activities; or
- Creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for work or participation in a work-related activity.

The BC Human Rights Code can be accessed using the following link:

http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96210_01

It is important to note that both forms of discriminatory conduct are breaches of this Policy; and may also constitute breaches of the British Columbia Human Rights Code.

5.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is:

- Conduct or comment of a sexual nature made by a person who knows or ought reasonably to know that such conduct or comment is unwanted or unwelcome; or
- Expressed or implied promise of a reward for complying with a request of a sexual nature; or
- Actual reprisal or an expressed or implied threat of reprisal for refusal to comply with such a request; or
- Conduct or comment of a sexual nature which is intended to, or has the effect of, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

6.0 Related Policies

- Island Health's Medical Staff Bylaws
- Island Health's Medical Staff Rules (Professional Conduct and Disruptive Behaviour)
- <https://intranet.viha.ca/pnp/pnpdocs/respectful-workplace-procedures-addressing-human-rights-complaints.pdf>