



**CANADIAN  
BLIND  
HOCKEY**

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CANADA**

## **CANADIAN BLIND WORKPLACE ANTI- VIOLENCE HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARRASMENT PROCEDURES**

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| <b>Classification:</b> BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY     |                                            |
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## **Please note:**

Any reference to CBH throughout this document is inclusive of Canadian Blind Hockey and "employees and volunteers" includes participants, special guests and all parties involved with a CBH program and/or event.

### **REPORT AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

Taking appropriate action to deal with violence, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace is everyone's responsibility. This document provides you with important information to assist you in dealing with situations of this nature that may occur in your workplace.

#### **Reporting Violence, Harassment, Sexual Harassment or Bullying**

If you are either directly affected by or witness to any violence, bullying or harassment in the workplace, it is imperative for the safety of all CBH employees, volunteers and participants that the incident be reported without delay. Reporting any violence or potentially violent situations should be done immediately to management. Your report should include:

- The approximate date and time of each incident you wish to report;
- The name of the person or persons involved in each incident;
- The name of any person or persons who witnessed each incident; and
- A full description of what occurred in each incident.

#### **Taking Action if You are Harassed or Sexually Harassed**

Harassment will not go away on its own and may get worse. Do not be intimidated. You have a right to resolve the issue without fear of retaliation or prejudice. You also have a responsibility to present the issue in such a way as to respect the rights of other employees.

#### **Your Responsibilities**

1. Decide how you want to proceed if harassed. Take action.
2. Decide if you want to have someone present during any investigation.
3. Keep a record of each incident of harassment, noting where and when it occurred, what was said or done, and any witnesses or other evidence.
4. Offer suggestions for resolution.
5. Keep the matter confidential until there is a resolution.

#### **Summary of Options**

If you feel you are being harassed, sexually harassed or bullied, you may choose any of the following internal options:

##### **1. Informal Procedure**

- **Speak Up!** Make it known to the individual(s) responsible that the behaviour is offensive and must stop. State clearly and firmly that you want a particular behavior to cease. This is not a time to be polite or vague. The harasser may not realize that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive and in many cases will stop when asked.
- Discuss the situation with the Executive Director or President of the Board of Directors.
- If you feel you cannot speak up, talk to Executive Director or President of the Board of Directors to get information and support on how to deal with the situation.
- Send a written message to the harasser. This can often succeed in stopping sexual harassment. Include a factual account of the offending behavior, describing how you felt about it, and state simply that you want that particular behavior to stop. Keep the letter polite, low-key and factual and private. You may not get a response to your letter, but the troubling behavior might stop right away.
- Do not feel guilty. Lack of action on your part may be interpreted as acceptance and harassment may continue.
- Keep records or a journal of the incident(s) and save any letters, email, or notes you have about the situation if the harassment persists. Harassment is often distinguished by a pattern of unwanted action over a period of time. Record dates, places, times, witnesses and the nature of the harassment, what was said when and how you responded. This record will support you in a formal harassment complaint.

**However:** There may be circumstances where it will be difficult or awkward to ask the person to stop the behaviour, or you may have told the harasser to stop but the behaviour has continued. In that case, you should pursue Option 2.

#### **Tips on how to Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment and Harassers**

- Do the unexpected: Name the behavior. Whatever she/he's just done, say it, and be specific.
- Hold the harasser accountable for his/her actions. Don't make excuses for him/her; don't pretend it didn't really happen. Take charge of the encounter and let people know what he/she did. Privacy protects harassers, but visibility undermines them.
- Make honest, direct statements. Speak the truth (no threats, no insults, no obscenities, no appeasing verbal fluff and padding). Be serious, straightforward, and blunt.
- Demand that the harassment stop.
- Make it clear that all women/men have the right to be free from sexual harassment. Objecting to harassment is a matter of principle.
- Stick to your own agenda. Don't respond to the harasser's excuses or diversionary tactics.

- His/her behavior is the issue. Say what you have to say, and repeat it if he persists.
- Reinforce your statements with strong, self-respecting body language: eye contact, head up, shoulders back, a strong, serious stance. Don't smile. Timid, submissive body language will undermine your message.
- Respond at the appropriate level. Use a combined verbal and physical response to physical harassment.

## **2. Request an informal review and resolution**

An informal approach is appropriate when you wish to have someone's assistance to address your concern and where you believe that there is a good chance of resolving your concern in this way. In the event your alleged harasser is your supervisor you may wish to report the incident to one of the other contacts listed below.

Report the incident to any one of the following contacts and request informal review and resolution:

- the Executive Director
- the President of the Board of Directors

The individual hearing the concern will take the following actions:

- 1.** Explain the options (personal action, informal resolution, formal complaint, or provincial human rights complaint) available to you and discuss with you what action you wish to take.
- 2.** Inform you that the alleged harasser must be informed of the allegations made against him or her should you wish to pursue your concern, either with the assistance of the manager or as a formal complaint.
- 3.** Should you choose to take action, then the informal review and resolution will proceed, as agreed upon by you and the person with whom you discussed your concern.
- 4.** In the situation where you decide not to pursue your concern, but the person hearing it believes, in his or her judgment, that it should be pursued, then the person hearing the complaint must inform you that he or she (the manager) has a management responsibility to act and will be initiating a formal investigation.

**Remember:** The purpose of taking this option is to obtain information, voice concern, and develop a way to deal with the problems with the assistance of others. If this approach is unsuccessful, a formal complaint may be filed that will result in a full investigation.

You may also request the services of a facilitator to assist through dialogue of the matter. The role of the facilitator is to enable dialogue between the parties to a workplace problem so that they can explore options for its informal resolution.

If the above approach is unsuccessful, you can still proceed to a formal complaint.

### 3. Formal Procedure – making a formal complaint

A formal complaint is appropriate when you believe that a full investigation by a third party (internal or external) is the best way to address your concern. A formal complaint may also be appropriate when the alleged harasser is your supervisor and you do not feel comfortable or able to address your concern through an informal review. You must provide a written complaint by completing the “**Harassment Complaint Form**” [Workplace Harassment Complaint Form](#) that you request from either the Executive Director or the President of the Board of Directors.

- Formal investigation is begun when the details of the complaint are submitted in writing.
- The complaint does not have to include a detailed account of the incidents of harassment. Its purpose is to state that you believe there has been harassment by a particular person or persons and you wish the matter to be formally investigated.
- Formal complaints must be filed within a reasonable time from when the incident took place.

Your complaint should include:

- The approximate date and time of each incident you wish to report;
- The name of the person or persons involved in each incident;
- The name of any person or persons who witnessed each incident; and
- A full description of what occurred in each incident.

#### WHAT **NOT** TO DO

- **Do not blame yourself.** Sexual harassment is not something one brings on oneself.
- **Do not delay.** Waiting to act in cases of sexual harassment only increases the probability that the harassing behavior will continue.
- **Don’t wait to seek help.** Being quiet about sexual harassment enables it to continue. Chances are very good that you are not the only one who has been harassed. Speaking up may prevent others from being harmed.

Commented [MC1]: @Matt Morrow I am trying to figure out if this should be posted on website, or just available through you/or make me the Health and Safety advisor of the team?

## **IF YOU ARE ACCUSED OF HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR BULLYING**

### **Your Rights**

Being accused of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying does not mean that you are necessarily guilty of it.

- You have the right to contact a lawyer at your own expense or any other person for assistance.
- You have the right to know who has raised the concern and the nature of the allegations made against you through the investigation process during the resolution of both informal and formal complaints.
- You have the right to submit a written response within two weeks of receiving the complaint or respond directly during the formal investigative process.

## **RESPONDING TO A COMPLAINT**

### **Informal Resolution**

1. Treat the allegations seriously and stop any behaviour that has been identified to you as being offensive.
2. Recognize that the person approaching you may find it difficult to do so. Do not make the situation worse by ignoring or trying to make the person feel guilty.
3. Lack of response on your part may be seen as failure to take the issue seriously.
4. Work with the person who has approached you to try to resolve the issue immediately.  
Contact the Executive Director or President of the Board of Directors.

### **Formal Resolution**

If a formal complaint is made against you, an investigation will take place. The procedure is intended to be fair and provide an opportunity for both parties to take part in the investigation and state their positions.

1. You will be informed of the allegations against you.
2. You will be given every opportunity to respond to allegations made against you.
3. Complaints will be investigated by a trained investigator in a timely way. Confidentiality is part of the process.

### **Investigation**

Once a written complaint has been received, CBH will complete a thorough investigation. Harassment should not be ignored, as silence can and often is interpreted as acceptance. Employees or volunteers will not be demoted, dismissed, disciplined, or denied a promotion, advancement, or employment opportunities because they rejected sexual advances or because they lodged a

complaint when they honestly believed they were being harassed or discriminated against.

Furthermore, CBH will ensure that an investigation appropriate to the circumstances is conducted when CBH becomes aware of the incident through the worker who allegedly experienced the harassment or through another worker.

CBH may seek the assistance of an External Investigator should the following exist:

1. The allegations have an "eww" factor.
2. There is a high-profile person involved and the stakes are high.
3. The parties or subject matter is "too close for comfort".
4. The allegations are serious and there is uncertainty about how to proceed.
5. The investigation has a high likelihood of legal challenge.
6. The need for impartiality when there is an institutional bias that cannot reasonably be overcome.

For the purpose of this section, the following definitions apply:

**Complainant** – the person who has made a complaint about another individual whom they believe committed an act of violence, discrimination, or harassment against them.

**Respondent** – the person whom another individual has accused of committing an act of violence, discrimination, or harassment.

The investigation will include:

- Obtaining a Description of the Incident/Claim.
- Conducting an Investigation into the Incident/Claim.
- Interviewing the Complainant.
- Informing and interviewing the Respondent.
- Interviewing witnesses or any other person who may have knowledge of the incidents related to the complaint or any other similar incidents.
- Resolving the Complaint.

A copy of the complaint, detailing the complainant's allegations, is then provided to the respondent.

- The respondent is invited to reply in writing to the complainant's allegations, and the reply will be made known to the complainant before the investigation proceeds further.
- The company will protect from unnecessary disclosure the details of the incident being investigated and the identities of the complainant and the respondent.

- During the investigation, the complainant and the respondent will be interviewed, as will any possible witnesses. Statements from all parties involved will be taken and documented, and a decision will be made.
- If necessary, the company may employ outside assistance or request the use of legal counsel.
- Employees will not be demoted, dismissed, disciplined, or denied a promotion, advancement, or employment opportunities because they rejected sexual advances of another employee or because they lodged a harassment complaint when they honestly believed they were being harassed.
- Upon completion of the investigation, Canadian Blind Hockey will inform both the complainant and respondent in writing of the findings of the investigation and any corrective action that has been or will be taken as a result of the investigation.

If the complainant decides not to lay a formal complaint, senior management may decide that a formal complaint is required (based on the investigation of the incident) and will file such documents with the person against whom the complaint is laid (the respondent).

If it is determined that harassment in any form has occurred, appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken as soon as possible.

### **Seeking Immediate Assistance**

Canada's *Criminal Code* addresses violent acts, threats, and behaviours, such as stalking. The police should be contacted immediately when an act of violence has occurred in the workplace or when someone in the workplace is threatened with violence. If you feel threatened by a co-worker, volunteer, contractor, student, vendor, visitor, client, or coach, an immediate call to "911" is required.

### **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

There is no exact method to predict when a person will become violent. One or more of the following warning signs may be displayed before a person becomes violent, but they do not necessarily indicate that an individual will become violent. However, a display of these signs may trigger concern as they are usually exhibited by people experiencing problems. If you ever have concerns about a situation which may turn violent, alert your supervisor immediately and follow the specific reporting procedures provided. It is better to err on the side of safety than to risk having a situation escalate.

#### ***The following are warning indicators of potential workplace violence:***

- Verbal, nonverbal, or written threats – or intimidation, explicit or subtle
- Expression of a plan to hurt self/others
- Feelings of persecution, expressed distrust, especially with management
- Fear reaction to employee among coworkers/clients
- Expression of extreme desperation over family, financial or personal problems

- Unable to take criticism of job performance
- Displays of unwarranted anger
- Violence toward inanimate objects
- Sabotaging projects, computer programs or equipment
- Holding a grudge against a specific person; verbalizing a hope that something will happen to him/her
- Intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior
- Numerous conflicts with customers, co-workers, or supervisors
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace, making inappropriate references to guns, or making idle threats about using a weapon to harm someone
- Direct or veiled threats of harm
- Substance abuse
- Extreme changes in normal behaviors

#### **What to do when faced with a violent or a potentially violent situation**

If you notice a colleague or co-worker exhibiting some or all of the above behaviors, report it to your supervisor immediately. It is not your responsibility to determine if there is a real threat, or to provide counseling or assistance to the individual. It is, however, your responsibility to report it so that the qualified professionals at CBH can assess and deal with the situation. If violence is imminent or actually occurring, report the details to the police.

#### **If someone is angry or hostile:**

- stay calm and listen attentively
- maintain eye contact
- be courteous and patient
- keep the situation in your control
- discreetly signal a co-worker or a supervisor that you need help
- do not make any calls yourself
- have someone call security

#### **If you are a supervisor and you are informed that someone is exhibiting some of the warning signs listed above:**

- Talk to the individual; try to find out what the problem is and how it can be resolved. Do not delay in addressing the issue; very often violence can be prevented if the underlying problem is dealt with expeditiously and not allowed to escalate.
- Take disciplinary action if the behaviour warrants it; make it very clear to the person that violent, threatening or intimidating behavior of any sort will not be tolerated. Ensure the individual understands the parameters of acceptable behaviour and the sanctions for breaching those parameters.
- Refer the individual to the Employee Assistance Program.

- Consider moving the individual elsewhere or offering paid leave as a temporary solution while the problem is being sorted out.
- If the individual has threatened violence to someone, or others are in fear of their safety, refer the matter immediately to the nearest supervisor/manager/board member. This includes if the individual does not agree to address the behaviour and any underlying problems.
- If there is immediate threat of violence, or violence is occurring, notify the police immediately. If it is not safe for you to do so, try to signal to someone else to get help.

The most effective way of protecting yourself from workplace violence is to recognize the warning signs and report every incident, no matter how minor, so that immediate action can be taken to address the situation. Dismissing them as bravado may cost lives. CBH will listen to your concerns and will take appropriate action.

#### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND STALKING IN THE WORKPLACE**

When domestic violence follows an employee into the workplace such that the employee is being stalked, harassed, or abused at work by a domestic partner, or other personal acquaintance, preventative measures should be taken:

- Keep the abuser out of the workplace by screening telephone calls, making the victim's work space physically more secure, instructing security guards or receptionists, etc.).
- Assist the victim in receiving counseling.
- Support the employee in obtaining police protection or a restraining order against the abuser (in some cases, an employer may seek a restraining order of its own barring the abuser from its premises).
- Be flexible in allowing time off for medical treatment or court appearances.

**Please note:** Discrimination against victims will **NOT** be tolerated.

#### **Observable Behavior that may Suggest Possible Victimization\***

- Tardiness or unexplained absences
- Frequent and often unplanned use of leave time
- Anxiety
- Lack of concentration, change in job performance
- A tendency to remain isolated from co-workers or reluctance to participate in social events
- Discomfort when communicating with others
- Disruptive phone calls or e-mail
- Sudden or unexplained requests to be moved from public locations in the workplace
- Frequent financial problems indicating a lack of access to money
- Unexplained bruises or injuries

- Noticeable change in use of makeup (to cover up injuries)
- Inappropriate clothes (e.g., turtleneck worn in the summer)
- Disruptive visits from current or former intimate partner
- Sudden changes of address or reluctance to divulge where employee is staying
- Acting uncharacteristically moody, depressed, or distracted
- In the process of ending an intimate relationship; breakup seems to cause the employee undue anxiety
- Court appearances
- Being the victim of vandalism or threats

#### **ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES TO HELP DE-ESCALATE THREATENING BEHAVIOR**

- Project calmness, move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently
- Encourage the person to talk; listen closely and patiently
- Maintain a relaxed but attentive posture
- Position yourself at an angle to the person rather than directly in front
- Arrange yourself so your access to emergency exit is not blocked
- Acknowledge the person's feelings
- Ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area, or to move outside
- Use delaying tactics to give the person time to calm down, such as offering a drink of water (in a paper cup)
- Point out choices, break big problems into smaller ones
- Avoid sudden movements and maintain 3 – 6 feet distance
- Call the police when it is safe to do so
- Call manager/supervisor and report

#### **Recommendations for Victims DURING an Incident of Workplace Violence**

The following are intended to help victims thwart the maneuvers of an aggressor in most incidents of external workplace violence.

1. **Do not provoke the aggressor** or group of aggressors. By staying calm and keeping your cool, you avoid working up the aggressor and igniting tension.
2. **Be firm and give short answers** such as "Yes. No. That's possible." Speak clearly and slowly without raising your voice.
3. **Do not argue or contradict the aggressor.** Listening calmly to your aggressor will help him or her blow off some steam.
4. **Leave the product or documentation that causes the aggressor's frustration alone.** Picking it up could make matters worse.
5. If possible, **try to bring the discussion back to the problem at hand.** Try to be understanding and to resolve the conflict by proposing a solution that gives the aggressor an honourable way out.

6. If possible, **ask for help from a co-worker if**, after a few minutes and several attempts at conciliation, **your aggressor does not calm down**. An aggressor's unpredictable behaviour is often caused by alcohol or drug use.
7. **Avoid physical retaliation at all costs**, unless it is your last resort in self-defence. If you feel threatened, give the aggressor what he/she wants.
8. **Never put your own safety at risk**. Maintain a reasonable distance from the aggressor. Avoid any sudden movements or any seemingly threatening gestures such as pointing your finger.
9. **Take notes** about each episode of violence: date, time, place, behaviour (whether it was a repeated attack, whether you were alone or isolated, humiliating remarks, injustice, abuse, etc.), names of witnesses and other useful information.
10. **Talk about** the incident with co-workers you trust or family members. If they witnessed the incident, ask them to take down notes about the behaviour of the aggressor or group of aggressors.
11. If necessary, **screen your calls**; keep track of names, dates and messages.

#### **Measures to Take AFTER an Incident of Workplace Violence**

1. **Encourage the victim to denounce the aggressor** and file a formal complaint.
2. **Ask the victim to write a report** on the aggressor from the notes taken on each episode of violence: date, time, place, behaviour (whether it was a repeated attack, whether they were alone or isolated, humiliating remarks, injustice, verbal or physical abuse, etc.), names of witnesses and other useful information. Use an Event Report Form.
3. **Conduct an investigation** on the aggressor or group of aggressors.
4. If you feel it is important, do not hesitate to **inform the police** about the event and give precise details.
5. **Make sure that proper legal and disciplinary measures are taken** against the aggressor or group of aggressors.
6. **Activate the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**, including counselling from psychologists and other experts through individual consultation, group therapy or telephone help lines.
7. **Set up measures** to help the victim take control and go back to work: encourage the victim to talk about the ordeal with co-workers, superiors, family members and friends, and to seek their comfort and support.
8. **Offer support in indemnity claims or legal matters** involving the victim as well as other employees and/or family members concerned.
9. **Keep a record of all workplace violence incidents** in the organization. Document all incidents to be able to analyze and identify sensitive sectors that are more vulnerable or exposed to violence.
10. **Strengthen existing prevention measures** after determining how and why the workplace violence occurred despite the prevention measures.

## **PREVENTION TIPS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

- **Be aware, calm and confident**

This will prevent most attackers from actually selecting you as their victim. Make sure your body language and attitude let people know that you know they are there without acting afraid or challenging them. Move as if you are sure about where you are going. Sit or stand as upright as you can. Turn your face towards the people so they understand that you are aware of their presence.

- **Take charge of the space around you**

This will decrease the attacker's opportunity to get close to you. If you are in an isolated area, move away from people who seem like they might be a threat to you. The "I'm OK, You're OK" approach works most of the time. Just leave cheerfully and get to a safe place. If someone is being rude, or calling you to come over, you could act as if there is no problem. Smile, wave and say something neutral ie. "Hi" or "No thanks" or "Sorry, no."

If someone starts to confront you and you can't leave, take charge by setting a boundary. Put your hands up in front of you like you are making a wall and get yourself into balance. Tell the person politely and assertively what you want. If someone is being predatory, make it clear that you are not an easy victim. "Stop right there...Turn around and leave." If someone is being competitive, make it clear that you are not a challenge. "I don't want any trouble. I just want to leave."

- **Use a calm, firm, loud voice and strong, neutral body language (without fists waving)**

A one-handed boundary can be just as effective as a two-handed boundary. Simple short words such as "Stop! Leave now!", "Leave," or even just "No!" can be very effective as long as you look and sound like you mean it.

- **Know where safety is and how to get help**

Have your cell phone programmed to the local police. Always have a plan for where you would go if you have a problem. Be willing to make a scene and order bystanders to call the police or come to your aid. Be willing to embarrass, inconvenience, or offend other people in order to protect your well-being.

- **Know how to set boundaries with people you know**

Be prepared to tell people you know what is and is not okay with you even if it hurts their feelings or makes them upset. Your safety and self-esteem are worth causing anyone inconvenience, embarrassment, or offence. Problems should not be secrets, so talk issues over with people you trust.

- **Identify and take the power out of your triggers**

Common triggers are bad words and foul language, insults, scary words and threats, or confusing words and feeling sorry for someone. When we are exploding with feelings, we cannot think clearly. Make sure what you do is a decision based on what is really happening, rather than an automatic reaction or a habit.

- **Leave if you can**

Yell for help and get away right away when you have an opening to do so.

## **IF YOU WORK ALONE**

The following working alone situations have different hazards that may put employees at risk. Best practices include proper employee training and having an effective communication system so that employees who are working alone can easily contact someone in case of an emergency.

### **1) Employees who handle cash.**

**Cash handling** – reduce the amount of cash on hand by handing over to supervisor. Post signs notifying the public that limited cash is kept on the premises. Use electronic payment systems to limit cash. Vary the time of day the cash is moved or stored and if possible, install a locked safe and post signs to indicate the worker has no access.

**Good visibility** – sales counter location should be visible from all four sides from both inside and outside of the sale area. It should be located where there is good visibility. Indoor lights should be bright and working properly. Doors and windows should be cleared to allow good, two-way visibility of cash handling area.

### **Robbery Prevention**

- Robbers prefer to get in and out quickly when they notice there are no other customers. This can refer to a CBH pop up store or donation stand. Employees should be away from the sales counter when no sales are being made as this makes the business a less attractive target.
- Robbers do not like to be identified. Employees are encouraged to greet and make eye contact with everyone that enters the store.
- Keep the cash to a minimum. Have it collected by your supervisor.
- Keep alert at all times. Notice what is going on around you.

**Escape and access routes** – the side or back door should be locked at all times with consideration given to the fire code in each arena or CBH setting. This will prevent intruders from entering the area undetected.

**Security systems** – where available, please ensure they are working.

### **In the Event of a Robbery**

- ✓ **Remain cool and calm** and handle the entire procedure as if you are making a sale. Most robberies last under two minutes. The longer it takes the more nervous the robber becomes so keep it short and smooth.
- ✓ **Listen carefully** to what the robber says and obey instructions.
- ✓ **Don't fight.** Do not use weapons. Don't jeopardize your own safety or that of co-workers. Don't be a hero.
- ✓ **Give** the robbers all the cash or merchandise they want. Your life and health are worth much more.
- ✓ **Do not delay or argue.**
- ✓ **Warn** the robbers of any surprises. Inform them about workers in a back room so they are not startled if someone appears.
- ✓ **Observe** what the robber is wearing, their size, coloring, mannerisms and distinguishing characteristics but do not stare.
- ✓ Observe which direction they go and what type of vehicle they are driving.
- ✓ **Call police** and give them information you have.
- ✓ **Do not touch** the crime scene or disturb evidence. Ask witnesses to wait for police. Call any other designated person who should be notified according to your store procedure.

### **2) Employees who Travel to Run Programs and Events.**

Employees who work in the community are at particular risk for all types of violence due to unpredictability of the environment and having to travel in the community. Proper assessments of the community and the environment should be conducted prior to the first visit to recognize and control potential hazards. As such, this will reduce the unpredictability of the work environment and increase the safety of CBH employees.

When assessing, consideration should also be given to violent or aggressive behaviour on the part of a participant that may result from both participant and staff related issues:

- Communication difficulties e.g. inability to express needs verbally to staff.
- Health problems e.g. physical illness, pain
- Fear e.g. not being informed of changes
- Environment e.g. amount of people, noise levels, room temperatures
- Emotional, psychological, psychiatric e.g. feelings of frustration or depression
- Poor self-esteem
- Experience of abuse
- Limited knowledge or lack of information provided to staff about triggers for individual client
- Unsuitable workplace practices e.g. set times for services, activities with little flexibility, no opportunity for client choice
- Poor match between staff skills and client needs

## **Warning Signs of Escalating Behaviour by Participant/Customer**

**Confusion** - Behaviour that indicates the individual is bewildered or distracted. The individual may seem unsure of what to do.

What to do:

- Listen to concerns
- Ask clarifying questions
- Supply facts

**Frustration** - Behaviour that indicates resistance to information, impatience or a sense of defeat. The individual may try to bait you.

What to do:

- Relocate to a quiet, safe location
- Reassure person
- Be sincere in an attempt to clarify

**Blame** - Behaviours which escalate. The individual may find fault with other's actions, accuse you, hold you responsible or blame you. This is the start of a potentially hazardous situation.

What to do:

- Disengage and bring another person into the discussion where possible.
- Use a team approach.
- Draw client back to the facts
- Use probing questions to indicate an attempt to understand.

**Anger** - Characterized by a visible change in body posture. Actions may include pounding fists, pointing fingers shouting. This signals very risky behaviour.

What to do:

- Use venting techniques (ie. deep breaths, slowly count to ten, use your senses, take a moment to think about the situation, etc.)
- Don't offer solutions
- Don't argue with comments made
- Prepare to evacuate or isolate
- Contact supervisor or security

**Hostility** – The threat of physical action appears imminent. Acts of physical harm or property damage. Out of control behavior signals the individual has crossed the line.

What to do:

- Disengage and evacuate
- Attempt to isolate person if it can be done safely.
- Alert help and leave if possible.

### **3) Employees and volunteers who travel with participants during programs or events (ie. drivers).**

**Safe driving** – employee must have full concentration on the road when travelling alone. Sufficient rest time should be allotted when travelling on a long trip.

**Equipment and Supplies** – ensure that vehicles are regularly maintained and contain appropriate first aid and emergency supplies.

**Travel Plan** – travel plan should be submitted to the supervisor to track the whereabouts of employees travelling to remote locations. This also helps assessing the rest time available to the employee travelling long distances alone.

**Communication** - schedule check-in/check-out points with designated contact person to and after leaving the designated location according to the travel plan. Cellular phone should be available at all times and proper resources available for use (ie. phone list of who to call in the case of emergency). In the event that contact person fails to receive communication from employee as scheduled or is unable to contact them, they should take further steps (e.g., contact nearby colleague or other contact to travel to work site; contact police if appropriate and necessary).

### **4) Employees who are at risk of a violent attack because their work site is isolated from the public view (ie. after hours and weekends).**

Employees working alone on location should ensure no intruders are able to access the building.

**Communication** – Ensure they are near a phone for contact with others/police if necessary.

**REMEMBER:** CBH handles incidents of violence/potential violence and harassment on a “zero tolerance” basis. Should you encounter a situation of this nature, it is important to remain as calm as possible and know your options.

#### **Tips for working off-site safely:**

##### **“Do”:**

- Arrange to meet participants, new acquaintances in a 'safe' environment where other people are around, such as a restaurant, hotel lobby, or their office/workplace.
- Wear comfortable, professional clothing and practical shoes which will enable you to leave quickly if necessary.

- Always wear CBH branding. It will show that you are acting in an official capacity and that you are an employee doing your job.
- Always take your cell phone with you and keep it in a place you can access quickly.
- Be alert and make mental notes of your surroundings when you arrive at a new place.
- Maintain a 'reactionary gap' between yourself and the person (e.g., out of reach of the average person's kicking distance). Increase the gap by sitting across from each other at a table, if possible.
- If you are referring to written material, bring two copies so that you can sit across from them, not beside.
- Ask a colleague or "buddy" to come with you if something makes you feel uneasy. Tell your supervisor about any feelings of discomfort or apprehension about an up-coming meeting.
- Keep records and indicate if the client or patient is known to be aggressive, hostile or potentially violent. Do not leave out incidents that make you feel apprehensive.

**"Do Not":**

- Do not enter any situation or location where you feel threatened or unsafe.
- Do not carry weapons of any type, including pepper spray. Weapons can be easily used against you and are illegal in some jurisdictions.

**Tips for Check-in Procedure**

It is important that a check-in procedure be in place. Decide if a verbal check-in is adequate, or if the employee must be accounted for by a visual check.

For most "lone" workers, the telephone will be the main source of contact. If you work at a desk or station, have a telephone close by. If you are away from a main office or work station, the use of a cell phone is very helpful. If a cell phone is unreliable in your area, be sure to have alternative methods of communication available (such as use of public telephones, site visits or satellite technology).

When travelling out of the office, the main contact person should know the following details:

- Destination.
- Estimated time of arrival.
- Return time or date.
- Contact information.
- Mode of travel (public transit, car, plane, etc.).
- Alternate plans in the event of bad weather, traffic problems, etc.