

Feeling safe and supported on clinical placement

A guide for students and trainees

The ACT public health service is committed to providing a safe, supportive and harmonious workplace, where everyone has the right to be treated fairly and with respect. All students and trainees on placement with ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD), Canberra Health Services (CHS) and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB) have the same right as employees to feel safe and supported in the workplace.

Appropriate workplace behaviour is the responsibility of everyone. All employees, students and trainees must uphold the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct¹ and values for their specific organisation. Diversity is respected, incidents of harassment and discrimination are addressed, and complaints are treated seriously, promptly and confidentially.

This guide offers a summary of some different types of undesirable behaviours; and identifies the actions you can take should you experience this whilst on placement.

Workplace discrimination² refers to any policy, procedure, rule, regulation, decision or practice at work that leads to an individual or group not being treated equally to the rest of the workforce.

Direct or indirect workplace discrimination is unlawful on the basis of:

- race; colour, national or ethnic origin, immigrant status;
- sex, pregnancy, marital status, breastfeeding;
- age;
- disability;
- sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status;
- religious belief or political conviction;
- trade union activity or membership associations;
- profession, trade, occupation or calling.

Harassment² involves any form of behavior that is unwelcome, offensive, humiliating, or threatening. This can include creating an atmosphere that is offensive, humiliating or threatening. Harassment may have occurred even when there was no intention to cause offence.

Bullying³ can cover a broad range of overt subtle behaviours. Workplace bullying is unreasonable, undesirable behaviour at work that generally meets each of the following criteria:

- it is repeated;
- it is unwelcome and unsolicited;
- it occurs between workers of an organisation (i.e. it is internal as opposed to being client initiated or initiated by a person outside the organisation);

- a reasonable person would consider the behaviour to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening; and
- it has the potential to cause harm to those experiencing this behaviour.

No employees, supervisors, managers, students or trainees are to discriminate, bully or harass others whilst working or on placement

You have a right to feel safe and supported whilst on placement; and should be encouraged to discuss or report any incidents of harassment or discrimination whilst on placement.

What should students and trainees do?

If you believe you have experienced undesirable behaviour in the workplace, firstly, you should try to resolve matters informally by speaking with the person who has behaved inappropriately in a timely manner. You should respectfully tell the person how their behaviour has affected them and ask them to stop.

If you do not feel comfortable speaking directly to the person concerned or feel this was not enough, avenues to raise an issue or complaint include⁴:

- Discuss the matter with your clinical educator, clinical facilitator or a line supervisor/manager;
- Approach the Employee Advocate if on placement at ACTHD or CHS. Email CHS.EmployeeAdvocate@act.gov.au or call 5124 3656. Their role is to provide sound, considered and consistent information and guidance to employees and students;
- Talk to a Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Contact Officer. They can offer you support and information in management and preventing bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Contact information is available on the intranet;
- Approach the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). There are several providers who are available to employees and students or trainees. Contact information is available on the intranet;
- Contact the ACTHD Clinical Placement Office on (02) 5124 5887;
- Contact your education provider.

Further information

The ACT Discrimination Act 1991 – ACT Legislation Register

www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1991-81/current/pdf/1991-81.pdf

ACT Human Rights Commission, GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT, 2601

Email: human.rights@act.gov.au;

Tel: 02 6205 2222; Victims Support contact number: 1800 822 272 (free call)

ACTPS Employment Portal – Resolving Workplace Issues

<https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/employment-framework/workplace-behaviours/resolving-workplace-issues>

References

¹ACT Public Service. Code of Conduct

http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/363230/codeofcond2012_2013edit_wtables.pdf

²ACT Health. Information Sheet: Definitions for Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy and SOP

³ACT Government. Final Report on the review of Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework, May 2015

<https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/employment-framework/workplace-behaviours/the-respect,-equity-and-diversity-red-framework>

⁴Canberra Health Services. Complaints Process – Employee Behaviour

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