



Purpose:

- The Respectful Workplace Procedures are an addendum to the [Respectful Workplace Policy](#), and outline the procedures for volunteers to use for addressing respectful workplace concerns.

Context:

Island Health offers programs and services on the unceded and traditional territories of the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka’wakw Peoples.

As a signatory to the 2015 Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility, Island Health is committed to addressing the ongoing impacts of colonialism and Indigenous-specific racism in order to provide a culturally safe, inclusive, healthy and respectful environment.

The organization is committed to strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion to enable excellence in health and care for everyone, everywhere, every time. Through these commitments, Island Health strives to deliver the highest possible standard of care and to promote safe workplaces.

Scope:

- Audience: This policy applies equally to all persons associated with Island Health (collectively defined as “Individuals”) including:
 - Members of the Island Health Board of Directors;
 - CEO, executives, management and supervisory employees;
 - Employees of Island Health, and those involved with its affiliated programs and agencies, including students;
 - Volunteers of Island Health;
 - Contractors;
 - Physicians with privileges at any Island Health site;
 - Medical staff including physicians on contract, resident and clinical trainees;
 - Post-secondary faculty and support staff who work at Island Health facilities; and
 - Individuals authorized to access Island health information, information systems or equipment.
- Environment:
 - Island Health-wide
- Indications:
 - When addressing respectful workplace concerns brought forward from volunteers
 - For situations that involve patient/client or visitor behaviour towards an “Individual” as defined above, please refer to the [Domestic, Targeted Violence in the Workplace Policy](#), [Visitors who Pose a Risk to Health and Safety in Health Care Facilities](#), and [Workplace Violence Prevention Program](#).

Outcomes:

- Following the processes outlined in these procedures will allow individuals to raise their respectful workplace concerns in a manner that will provide an objective review of the concern, options for addressing the issue, and appropriate remedies that will support a respectful work and volunteer environment for all individuals.

1.0 General

- Island Health is committed to promoting an environment that is physically, psychologically and culturally safe for all individuals. In the event that disagreement or interpersonal conflict should occur while a volunteer is fulfilling their role, these procedures provide navigation to all parties regarding Island Health’s Respectful

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP
					Page 1 of 9



Workplace processes for responding to respectful workplace concerns including allegations of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

- These procedures are underpinned by Island Health’s desire for all individuals, wherever possible, to be supported in working through their differences together, maintaining an environment of respectful disagreement and constructive management of conflict. The ultimate goal is greater shared understanding, mutual respect, and a productive, rewarding work and volunteer environment that supports our mission, vision, and values.

1.1 Reporting a Concern

- Volunteers have the right to report their concerns and to have those concerns resolved in a timely and appropriate fashion. Whenever reasonable and safe, direct, local and restorative approaches to resolve matters are preferable as they focus on rebuilding and repairing relationships.

1.1.1 Reporting concerns regarding staff, medical staff, volunteers and other workers

- If you have attempted to address a concern through immediate and direct resolution (or with support from a leader or delegate), but have not been successful; **or** if you have a reasonable basis for not attempting to address the concern through immediate/direct approaches (i.e. it would not be safe to do so or it involves your leader) you should report your concern by emailing respectfulworkplace@islandhealth.ca. A member of the Respectful Workplace team will contact you to complete a consultation and assessment of your concern.

1.1.2 Reporting concerns regarding patients, clients and/or visitors

- Volunteers wishing to report concerns of violence, bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour from patients, clients and/or visitors should report the behaviour to their immediate supervisor or manager. The supervisor or manager will follow up and determine an action plan to eliminate or address the concern. The supervisor or manager will record the report and the actions taken in the Patient Safety Learning System (PSLS).

2.0 Procedure for Addressing Respectful Workplace Concerns

- The following information is meant to inform/assist volunteers seeking to address a respectful workplace concern. Every situation is different and will need to be handled appropriately based on the context. There are a number of approaches that might be taken to attend to concerns that fall within the scope of the Respectful Workplace Policy. Island Health has the right to make decisions regarding resolution approaches to address respectful workplace concerns that are brought forward.

2.1 Local Level Resolution

- **Immediate and Direct Resolution**
 - Anyone who believes they are being subjected to disrespectful behaviour is encouraged, if reasonable and safe, to speak directly with the individual(s) demonstrating the behaviour of concern. Addressing the behaviour quickly and directly is one of the best mechanisms to bring about resolution. The following process may be considered:
 - a. Ask the other person to meet at a convenient time and in a private place to engage in cooperative problem-solving. You may choose to have someone with you to act as a witness, observer and support. The Respectful Workplace team can provide conflict coaching to assist you in preparing for direct resolution conversations. They support Island Health’s respectful workplace processes, and can be contacted by emailing respectfulworkplace@islandhealth.ca with a request for support.

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP



- b. Raise the issue with the other person in a way that helps the other person understand the concern and achieve resolution by:
 - Describing the troubling behaviour and the impact from your point of view; be prepared to be specific about behaviours;
 - Listening to the other person’s perspective – don’t assume, ask them to share their point of view;
 - Exploring your respective interests (i.e., needs, concerns, hopes);
 - Creating options for solving the situation; and
 - Developing an agreement that meets as many as possible of the interests.
- c. Determine if the issue is successfully resolved:
 - If the issue is resolved, no further steps are taken.
 - If the issue is not resolved, or if the person refuses to participate, request a meeting with your leader, or in their absence, a delegate.

2.2 What Happens After a Report is Made

- The following will take place if a report is made to the Respectful Workplace team (respectfulworkplace@islandhealth.ca):

2.2.1 Consultation, Assessment and Determination of Next Steps

- Once a report is received, a member of the Respectful Workplace team will contact the person who has reported the concern for a consultation.
- The consultation is to understand the nature of the concern, what steps the individual may have taken so far, what other processes may be underway and what support the individual is seeking. Respectful Workplace may require the individual to submit written confirmation of their concern. Respectful Workplace will gather this information and assess the concerns in relation to the Respectful Workplace Policy and applicable legislation and regulation in order to determine the appropriate process needed to attend to the issue(s) raised.
- There are times in which more information is needed before a decision can be reached around process. In these cases, Respectful Workplace will request consent for additional information gathering and discussion with others as appropriate.
- The Respectful Workplace team member will review options and determinations around process with the individual. If an individual disagrees with the decision/determination of the Respectful Workplace team member, they may ask for a review of the decision by the Manager, Wellness & Psychological Safety. There may be times when a Respectful Workplace team member is required to initiate action without volunteer consent, if significant risk of psychological and/or physical harm exists.

2.3 Spectrum of Resolution

- Approaches to resolution may include, but may not be limited to:
 - a. Guidance to support direct resolution by the individual, including referral to resources/training
 - b. Facilitated conversation supported by the manager or Respectful Workplace and/or Enhanced Medical Staff Support
 - c. Mediation using external mediators
 - d. Referral outside of Respectful Workplace for issues that do not fall within the scope and mandate of the Respectful Workplace Policy
 - e. Workplace assessment

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP
					Page 3 of 9



f. Investigation

- There may be times when one approach commences and a re-assessment is warranted to consider another approach within the spectrum of resolution. Examples of reasons for a re-assessment could include that new information has come forward, or a process undertaken has been unsuccessful in resolving the concern. In these circumstances, the Respectful Workplace team member will re-assess and communicate changes in process to the appropriate parties.
- **Direct Resolution**
 - Respectful Workplace may assess the concern as being appropriately resolved through further conversation. This might include coaching with the individual to prepare for a conversation or providing support to the leader to help resolve the situation.
- **Facilitated Conversations**
 - Facilitated conversations are supportive and voluntary processes with a goal of helping people resolve or better manage conflict by looking for mutually agreeable solutions. Facilitated conversation may be considered appropriate in the following situations:
 - the situation does not meet the threshold for investigation or other process
 - as an outcome of an investigation
 - both parties to the concern are willing and able to participate in the process
 - an objective and skilled resource can be identified to facilitate the conversation.
 - Respectful Workplace will seek consent from the individual bringing forward the concern to notify appropriate stakeholders who can support resolution. If both parties agree to participate in a facilitated conversation, an appropriate facilitator will be assigned, either internal or external to the organization. Information about the steps and process of a facilitated conversation will be reviewed with each party by the facilitator.
 - Following a facilitated conversation in which agreement is reached, Respectful Workplace will close the file and will notify both parties when this is done.

2.4 Investigations and Workplace Assessments

2.4.1 Investigations

- All respectful workplace complaint investigations will follow the principles of fairness, thoroughness, timeliness and confidentiality. If a complaint investigation is required, Respectful Workplace will determine if internal or external resources are necessary to ensure that an appropriate, fair, objective process occurs. Respectful Workplace will receive consent from the complainant to bring the complaint forward to the investigator, except in cases where consent is not required to proceed. Respectful Workplace is responsible for explaining the process of investigation to the complainant, including that their complaint information will be shared with the respondent as part of the process.
- When concerns are reported, Island Health retains the right to initiate an investigation, or other formal review process, without the complainant’s consent if there are sufficient concerns regarding the physical or psychological impact of the alleged behaviour.
- Where an internal investigation is deemed appropriate, Respectful Workplace will refer to the Respectful Workplace Investigation Team for an investigator to be assigned to conduct the process. Where an investigation using an external resource is deemed appropriate, Respectful Workplace will engage an external investigator.
- Investigations will observe timeframe provisions outlined in the relevant collective agreement and occupational health and safety legislation.

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP
					Page 4 of 9

- The following steps will occur in any respectful workplace investigation:
 - The scope and mandate of the investigation will be established by Respectful Workplace.
 - The parties (complainant and respondent) will be notified of the investigation and information will be provided about the process.
 - The complainant, respondent and any relevant witnesses will be interviewed by the investigator. Individuals may have union or other support attend with them for interviews. Medical staff members (including medical leaders) are entitled to support from another member of the medical staff, or a representative from the Medical Staff Association (MSA or legal counsel from the Canadian Medical Protection Association [CMPA]).
 - The respondent will receive particulars of the complaint in advance of a meeting with the investigator. This is intended to provide the respondent the opportunity to be aware of and respond to the complaint.
 - The investigator will analyze the evidence, make decisions with regards to findings and conclusions and prepare a report.
 - The outcome of the investigation will be shared with the complainant and respondent in a conclusion letter.
- Further supports will be provided as needed for any measures being implemented as a result of the investigation, including any actions needed to restore relationships, reputations, etc.

2.4.2 Roles and Responsibilities in Investigations

- Respectful Workplace:
 - Assess complaints of bullying and harassment and discriminatory harassment on behalf of Island Health and determine the response.
 - Case management of respectful workplace investigations, including notification to the complainant and respondent.
 - Ensure investigation procedures are followed.
 - Receive the investigation report from the investigator and share conclusions with the parties and appropriate leadership.
 - Maintain the confidential investigation file.
- Complainant/Respondent/Witnesses:
 - Cooperate in the investigation process and provide any details of incidents they have experienced or witnessed.
 - Conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner, participate fully and in good faith, and respect others' rights to personal dignity, privacy and confidentiality.
- Union (when complaint involves an employee):
 - Support employees by attending relevant meetings and investigative interviews at the request of the employee.
 - Employee consent is required prior to any disclosure of respectful workplace information to a representative, including a union representative.
- Investigator:
 - Conduct investigations in accordance with these procedures and best practice and provide a written report with conclusions to Respectful Workplace.
- Leader and Human Resources (when complaint involves an employee):

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP
					Page 5 of 9



- Support the parties in an investigation by monitoring well-being and the need for interim measures to ensure safety in the workplace.
- Interim measures may be imposed during the complaint resolution process to ensure the work environment is safe and service within the involved area is not compromised. These measures will be determined and implemented by the appropriate leader in consultation with relevant parties (e.g., Human Resource Partners, Occupational Health and Safety Advisors, Unions, Professional Practice, and Professional Associations).
- Support the investigation process by facilitating individuals’ participation in the investigation (i.e. release for meetings).
- Following an investigation in which there are findings of a policy violation, leaders with the support of their Human Resources Partner will take appropriate actions within a reasonable time frame to address the findings and to prevent reoccurrence. Measures taken will be relayed back to Respectful Workplace for file closure.

2.4.3 Remedies

- There are a range of remedies that may be offered and will depend on the findings and conclusions of the investigation, and may include, but are not limited to:
 - Oral and/or written apology from the respondent and/or Island Health;
 - Any administrative changes that are appropriate as determined by Island Health;
 - Education or training;
 - Re-orientation to the Respectful Workplace policy, procedures and its purposes;
 - Transfer;
 - Corrective processes up to and including termination of the volunteering agreement without notice;
 - Efforts to restore any lost reputation;
 - Efforts to restore relationships; and/or
 - Any other remedies determined to be appropriate by Island Health.
- In circumstances where the investigator determines the complaint was made in bad faith or found to be vexatious, vindictive, false or frivolous, appropriate action will be taken which could include corrective action for the Complainant, up to and including dismissal.

2.4.4 Closure and Follow-up

- The complainant(s) and respondent(s) involved in the investigation will be informed of the findings and conclusions.
- It is recognized that experiences with behaviour contrary to Island Health’s Respectful Workplace Policy can be difficult for the complainant, respondent and any other parties involved. Island Health is committed to providing support, information and opportunities for follow-up, as well as evaluation of its processes for handling respectful workplace concerns. The following recommendations might be included as part of evaluation and follow-up:
 - Individuals who have engaged in processes may provide feedback to Respectful Workplace at any time;
 - Leaders may provide additional support for their unit/team, which may include, but is not limited to:
 - Communication to the team or unit that the situation has been resolved and actions to remedy the complaint have been taken;
 - Additional debriefing supports assessed to be appropriate in the circumstances.

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP
					Page 6 of 9



Respectful Workplace Procedures for Volunteers

5.5.5PR

Procedures are a series of required steps to complete a task, activity or action



- Leaders may reach out to the Respectful Workplace team and Human Resources to explore options for support;
 - Leaders and/or individuals may request further education and training on the Respectful Workplace Policy and its objectives from Respectful Workplace; and/or
 - Leaders can request support from Organizational Development through their Human Resources Partner.
- Respectful Workplace may request formal feedback on the process from the complainant and respondent within six months of complaint closure.

2.4.5 Workplace Assessments

- A workplace assessment is a process whereby members of a working group are individually and confidentially interviewed or surveyed in order to gather information related to the culture, practices or behaviours in the work unit to identify the root cause(s) of conflict and team resilience to identify possible areas for improvement. Workplace assessments do not result in findings or conclusions about specific behaviours or individual actions, but do provide valuable information about the perceptions and perspectives of a working group that can be used to inform recommendations for intervention and support to build a healthy and productive team. These processes may be initiated by Respectful Workplace in situations in which it is clear that there are problematic dynamics within a working group, but there is no clear complaint that could be investigated or clarity about what is occurring. It is possible that a volunteer could be asked to participate in a workplace assessment, or that a workplace assessment could be initiated in response to complaints brought forward by volunteers.

2.5 Considerations

2.5.1 Time Limits to File Complaints

- Complaints can be submitted up to one year from the date of the last incident. A complaint that does not meet this time limit may still be accepted for consideration under these Procedures if circumstances warrant an extension of this deadline.

2.5.2 Confidentiality

- To protect the interests of the complainant(s), the respondent(s), and any others who may be involved, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practicable and appropriate considering the individual circumstances. Information that must be shared will be disclosed on a “need to know” basis. Parties to a complaint, including witnesses, are not to share information or discuss the details of the complaint. All information relating to the complaint (including content of meetings, interviews, results of investigations and other relevant information) will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to carry out the procedures under the Respectful Workplace Policy and related policies, or as required by law. Individuals are not to share the details with others in the workplace, including whether or not they have spoken to the investigator.

2.5.3 Consequences of Retaliation

- Any retaliation against any party involved in a complaint or complaint resolution process will not be tolerated and may lead to corrective action, up to and including dismissal.

2.5.4 Vexatious and Bad Faith Complaints

- A vexatious complaint is one made without sufficient grounds in which the intent of the complainant is to annoy (vex) or embarrass the respondent. If the evidence demonstrates a reasonable basis for filing and pursuing a complaint, it will not be deemed as vexatious. Note that a complaint determined to be unfounded is not vexatious. A bad faith complaint is one in which there is evidence that the complainant intended to

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP
					Page 7 of 9



mislead or there is the presence of ill-will in bringing forward the complaint. Vexatious and bad faith complaints may only be determined through an investigation.

2.5.5 Withdrawal of a Complaint

- At any time during the course of an investigation, the complainant may choose to withdraw their complaint without penalty unless the investigator finds that the complaint was frivolous, vexatious, vindictive, false or made in bad faith or in the event that the nature of the complaint creates an obligation on the employer to investigate to ensure the health and safety of persons at the workplace or to comply with applicable laws.

2.5.6 Record Keeping

- All records of complaints, including any and all oral or written information gathered, received or compiled shall be maintained in a secured confidential file. Investigation records do not form part of an employee file. Anonymous data, however, shall continue to be recorded for statistical purposes only. Access to confidential records shall be governed by relevant privacy legislation. All requests for records should be directed to Island Health’s Information Stewardship, Access and Privacy (ISAP) department at FOI@islandhealth.ca.

2.5.7 Multiple Proceedings

- Island Health recognizes that a person who reasonably believes that their rights are being violated may have a number of other avenues available to address their concerns in addition to those outlined in these procedures, including filing a complaint with British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal, filing a complaint to relevant professional bodies, or pursuing private proceedings.
- In the case where an individual has opted to exercise their rights under more than one avenue of redress, Island Health, at its discretion, may stop its processes under the Respectful Workplace Policy and Procedures pending the outcome of the other proceedings. In that case, both the Complainant and Respondent will be notified.

2.6 Appeals Procedures

2.6.1 Grounds for Appeal

- A respondent or complainant may submit an appeal to the Respectful Workplace Appeals Committee (RWAC) regarding a respectful workplace investigation. The appeal must be based on one or more of the following acceptable grounds:
 - The investigator incorrectly determined that the conduct, which was determined to have occurred, constituted a violation of the policy.
 - The appellant has material evidence that was not reasonably available at the time of the investigation and there is a substantial likelihood it would affect the outcome.
 - There was a breach or unfair application of procedure that was not adequately remedied during the process.
- **Requirement of a Written Submission**
 - A request for appeal must be submitted in writing to the Respectful Workplace Appeals Committee inbox (rwappeals@islandhealth.ca) within 45 business days from the appellant’s receipt of their conclusion letter.
 - This submission must include:
 - A statement of the ground(s) for appeal;
 - A statement of facts relevant to the ground(s) for appeal;
 - A statement of the relief sought; and
 - Copies of documents on which the appellant relies.

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP
					Page 8 of 9



- An appeal that does not meet this time limit may still be accepted for consideration under these procedures if:
 - Circumstances warrant an extension of this deadline; or
 - The delay in filing the appeal request was incurred in good faith; or
 - No substantial prejudice will result to any person because of the delay.
- **Determination of Whether an Appeal will Proceed**
 - Upon receipt of the request for appeal, a determination will be made about whether the appeal will proceed. It may be decided that the information presented by the appellant does not fall within this appeal process. In this situation, written notification will be provided within 30 business days to the appellant that the appeal cannot proceed and reasons for this decision will be provided.
 - Where it has been determined that an appeal will proceed, the appellant will be notified, in writing, within 30 business days, of this decision.
- **Respectful Workplace Appeals Committee Review (RWAC) of the Record**
 - The RWAC is an objective committee assigned to navigate Respectful Workplace appeals. The RWAC is comprised of the Vice President, People, the Executive Medical Director, Medical and Academic Affairs, the Executive Director of Health, Wellness and Safety and Ability Management, as well as an Operational Executive Director, or their delegates. Upon confirmation that the appeal will proceed, the RWAC will conduct the appeal via a review of the record. An appeal will not be a re-hearing of the complaint and will not include a further investigation by an appointed investigator.
- **Respectful Workplace Appeals Committee Appeal Decision**
 - The RWAC will make a decision on the appeal within 45 business days from the date of the letter notifying the appellant the appeal will proceed. The RWAC will notify the appellant, in writing, of the appeal decision.
 - The RWAC may accept or dismiss the appeal in whole or in part. Where the appeal in whole or in part is accepted, the RWAC will provide a new decision or recommendation for next steps. Also included in the letter will be reasons for the appeal decision.

3.0 Related Island Health Policy Documents

- [Respectful Workplace Policy](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Procedures for Employees](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Procedures for Medical Staff, Resident Doctors and Medical Students](#)
- [Safe Reporting Policy](#)

Maintained by:	Health, Wellness, Safety and Ability Management				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2024-Feb-21	Last Reviewed:	2023-Nov 03	First Issued:	2021-SEP
					Page 9 of 9