

APPENDIX 24a – DIGNITY AT WORK STATEMENT

All NICVA employees have a basic right to be treated with respect and dignity at work. Good business practice demands that we eliminate all behaviours that could create serious conflict and disharmony. NICVA has developed this statement in order to promote a spirit of teamwork and cooperation among all of our employees. We aim to provide a psychologically healthy work environment, an environment of mutual respect.

NICVA has a grievance and disciplinary procedure, which deals with the repercussions of disrespectful behaviour as well as other disciplinary and grievance matters. However, through the Dignity at Work Statement, we endeavour to create a climate which will work proactively by eliminating disrespectful treatment of all staff.

We ask that all NICVA employees treat their co-workers, supervisors and staff with the respect, honesty, consideration and cooperation they seek from them. Specifically, we ask that each employee refrain from making statements that others might find upsetting and statements that create a hostile work environment. These particularly include offensive remarks, jokes and derogatory statements directed at another's age, sex, race, religion, national origin or physical appearance. While these statements are often not intended to be harmful, their effects can be detrimental.

This policy is intended as a guide for maintaining effective interpersonal relationships. The Executive Committee firmly supports this policy and will make every effort to ensure its implementation.

Equality of Opportunity

NICVA is fully committed to eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity. We believe that where equality of opportunity exists all staff work in a more rewarding and less stressful environment, one where discrimination, prejudice and harassment are not accepted, and one more likely to enhance performance and achievement.

NICVA seeks to promote and maintain an inclusive and supportive work environment that respects the dignity of staff and assists in helping them achieve their full potential. NICVA encourages a work environment in which personal harassment of any kind is known to be unacceptable, and one in which individuals have the confidence to complain without fear of reprisals. No one in NICVA is expected to endure offensive, intimidating or bullying behaviour and the harassment of one member of staff by another will not be tolerated.

Your Responsibility

It is the responsibility of every staff member of NICVA to help achieve this inclusive and supportive environment. You can do so by making sure that your own conduct does not cause offence or misunderstanding:

Think about how you can interact with colleagues; is there anything you could improve upon? For instance consider:

How do you speak to others?

What language do you use? What tone do you use?

How do you ask for things from others?

Is your request reasonable? Is it an appropriate request? How would you feel if someone asked you to do this?

Is there someone in the work place you don't get along with? Have you ever considered that your attitude has contributed to this? Have you considered changing the way you interact with them? Being more positive, more courteous, and more patient?

Could any of your jokes be considered offensive? For example jokes about minority groups or sexual orientation are not only offensive to people from those groups. Remember taste is a very subjective thing. What may not be in "bad taste" to one person may be to another. Be sensitive to words which may be offensive to particular groups of people. If this is offensive to some people, consider if you should use this language in the workplace at all.

How do you react when others ask you to do things? Do you say you are too busy? It's not my job? Are you ever unaccommodating or disobliging? Remember it's part of everyone's remit to be cooperative and helpful to each other, to take on reasonable duties which fall within your skills and competencies and to manage your time in order to prioritise duties effectively.

Harassment

Personal harassment is difficult to define in terms of acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. It is important to understand that even behaviour which is not intended to cause offence or distress may do so. However it must be borne in mind that differences of attitude or culture and the misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what seems like harassment to one person may not seem so to another.

The defining features, however, are that the behaviour is offensive, hostile or intimidating to the recipient and would be regarded as harassment by any reasonable person. It may consist of behaviour taking place over a period of time or a single incident, but in all cases it involves an unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited act which makes the recipient feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, humiliated, unsafe or frightened.

Sexual harassment involves unwanted sexual attention, which emphasises sexual status over status as an individual or colleague. We tend to think first of women being harassed by men, but it may occur between members of the same sex or men being harassed by women. Harassment is especially serious when the alleged harasser is in a position of power over the person being harassed.

A woman may also be subject to sexual harassment were a person engages in unwanted conduct that is related to her sex or that of another person. This relates to a woman being treated less favourably on grounds of her sex because she is disliked and not because she is a woman. For example where male colleagues dislike a female colleague and put something on a high shelf to make it harder to reach. Such conduct may be sex related harassment on the basis that it is related to the woman's sex, because women are on average shorter than men and therefore this treatment is related to gender.

Harassment on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation may take place when individuals are perceived to be of a particular sexual orientation. This type of harassment may also be complicated by the fact that in order to complain about it or confront it, the individual may have to be open about their sexuality or gender identity with colleagues (perhaps for the first time).

Racial and religious harassment occurs when someone's actions or words, based on race, religion, colour, ethnic or national origins, are unwelcome and violate another person's dignity or create an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.

Disability harassment may be defined as behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, relating to a mental or physical disability, which is directed to an individual or group, which is directed to an individual or group, which is found to be offensive or objectionable.

Harassment on the grounds of age may be described as treating a person differently because of their youth or mature age.

Bullying

Bullying may be defined, as offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and abuse of power which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable. As with all forms of harassment, it is the impact on the individual and not the intention of the perpetrator, which determines whether bullying has occurred.

Bullying is most commonly associated with an abuse of power, most typically by a manager in an employment relationship; however, other power relationships may equally lead to bullying by colleagues or a group of people who target an individual.

Dealing with Bullying

Speak to your line manager, Human Resources Manager or Director of Corporate Services for advice or information in confidence on dealing with cases of bullying. They will help to resolve issues if you wish and act as a channel for formal complaints. NICVA has a harassment policy that sets out the procedure for dealing with complaints of harassment or bullying. (Appendix 24)

Managing Others

Effective leadership and management are based on respect, trust, support and encouragement. Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees who report to them perform to an acceptable standard. Legitimate monitoring of an employee's behaviour or job performance does not, therefore, normally constitute bullying.

It is reasonable to expect a manager to carry out these functions in a fair, firm and consistent manner. Carrying out these functions does not constitute an act of bullying or harassment, although some staff may feel anxious whilst the procedures are ongoing.

It is important to differentiate between firm, fair management and bullying behaviour, but some examples of what is considered firm/fair management are as follows:

- Being consistent and fair.
- Being determined to achieve the best results, but being reasonable and flexible.
- Knowing their own mind and clear about own ideas, but willing to consult with colleagues before drawing up proposals.
- Insisting upon high standards of service in quality of and behaviour in the team.
- Willing to discuss in private any perceived under performance before forming any views or taking action, and does not apportion blame on others when things go wrong.
- Will ask for views, listens and assimilates feedback.

- Consistently demonstrates sensitivity to the behaviour to get the optimum work outputs.
- Consistently demonstrates fair behaviour irrespective of where work takes place and regardless of numbers of staff present.

Mutual Respect

How we can avoid offending the people we work with?

- Not having loud telephone conversations
- Cleaning up after yourself in the staff kitchen
- Not showing up late for meetings
- Not looking at a co-worker's computer screen over his or her shoulder
- Neglecting to say please and thank you
- Taking the last of something without replacing it
- Talking behind someone's back
- Asking someone to lie for you
- Blaming someone else when you are at fault
- Taking credit for someone else's work
- Asking a staff member to do something unrelated to work, i.e. errand runs
- Trying to convert others to your political or religious beliefs
- Opening someone else's mail without permission
- Sending unwanted email
- Avoiding telling offensive jokes
- Having a condescending attitude toward others
- Using language which others may find offensive
- Being moody, bad tempered or taking personal problems or stress out on colleagues or staff

Gossip

Gossip is an unavoidable presence in all workplaces. But, it can have its place and can be beneficial. The office grapevine can be a conduit for carrying important news. When that is the case, everyone can benefit from paying attention to the bits of data that trickle down, provided this does not breach any confidentiality or confidences.

However, damaging gossip is unwelcome anywhere. Always be aware that gossip can spread false information. Gossip is often about or at the expense of someone and is not in the ethos of mutual workplace respect. For example, if you feel that another staff member is abusing or disregarding NICVA's policies and procedures or being treated inconsistently by managers at a detriment to other staff, then raise this in a formal manner, with your line manager, HR Manager, Director, or Chief Executive so it may be investigated. Whispering and gossiping with other staff about unfounded allegations will not be tolerated. However, where staff bring issues of concern in a factual and non-malicious manner your line manager, HR Manager, Director, or Chief

Executive these will be investigated and dealt with accordingly and the staff member will suffer no detriment for reporting any issue in good faith.

Conclusion

Harassment or bullying of any type is not tolerated at NICVA. We want to provide a work environment where everyone is comfortable and where all employees have a basic right to be treated with respect.