



Policy to address psychological harassment

Introduction

Where does this policy to address psychological harassment come from?

It is the end result of 20 years of efforts made by the Church in Quebec to better identify and understand the implications of violence in the family and the Church. These efforts have resulted first in the release, in 1987, of a discussion paper by the Social Affairs Committee of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec and in a series of sessions under the theme: A legacy of violence.

These sessions have made members of the Social Affairs Committee realize that there was violence also within the Church. The Committee has developed an action plan to identify and counter such violence. The work of the Committee and of The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec gave rise to a paper entitled *Violence et harcèlement en milieu de travail, Paramètres éthiques en intervention pastorale* (Violence and harassment in the workplace. Ethical parameters for pastoral action). This paper referred to the Word of God, to studies published by specialists such as Alphonse Borras, on sections 81.18 to 81.20 of the Quebec Act Respecting Labour Standards and sections 9 and 10 of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

Thereafter, the ACBQ asked each diocese, fabrique and diocesan corporation to set a policy on psychological harassment prevention and resolution in their pastoral endeavours. This policy is inspired by the policy set up by the archdiocese of Rimouski.

Rodhain Kasuba, v.g.
Rodhain Kasuba, Vicar General

Gatineau, November 15, 2018

Policy¹ to address psychological harassment

Archdiocese of Gatineau

1. Preamble

- 1.1. The Roman Catholic Archiepiscopal Corporation of Gatineau develops its own policy on psychological harassment in order to ensure in its operations the proper conditions for the respect of each person's integrity and for equality among all people.

This policy will apply also to the fabriques of the archdiocese of Gatineau, under section 6 of the Act Regarding Fabriques.

- 1.2. The implementation of this policy demonstrates a common will to show no tolerance to any kind or case of psychological harassment.
- 1.3. This policy makes out an indispensable work tool in the event where such a situation would occur at any level. Its distribution is thus essential to make every workplace aware of its responsibilities.

2. Definition

Psychological harassment is thus defined:

“For the purposes of this Act, ‘psychological harassment’ means any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures, that affects an employee’s dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that results in a harmful work environment for the employee. For greater certainty, psychological harassment includes such behaviour in the form of such verbal comments, actions or gestures of a sexual nature.”

“A single serious incidence of such behaviour that has a lasting harmful effect on an employee may also constitute psychological harassment.”² # 81.18

This definition also applies, in this policy, to any volunteer cooperator.

¹ The wording of this policy was largely inspired by the policy of the Archdiocese of Rimouski.

² Act Respecting Labour Standards, 81.18

2.1. Components of psychological harassment

To confirm psychological harassment, the four components of the definition must be present and proven:

- any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated conduct;
- hostile or unwanted conduct;
- verbal comments, actions or gestures, that affects an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity;
- a harmful work environment

2.2. Behaviour that may or may not constitute psychological harassment

Harassment may take on different forms³:

- prevent a person from speaking;
- isolate a person;
- despise a person;
- discredit a person;
- threaten and attack a person;
- destabilize a person.

What does not constitute psychological harassment:

- the standard implementation of the right to manage;
- labour disputes that are well managed;
- work related stress;
- difficult working conditions and professional constraints

2.3. Scope

This policy applies to all human resources of the Roman Catholic Archiepiscopal Corporation of Gatineau and the fabriques of the Archdiocese of Gatineau (see item 1.1), paid or volunteer.

Psychological harassment may occur between persons on the same level or different hierarchical levels. It may also come from a person from outside the organization (a visitor, a provider). People involved may be an individual or a group.

2. Values and foundations of this policy

3.1. The implementation of this policy is based on:

- wholehearted respect of the physical, psychological, moral and spiritual integrity of the person;
- tolerance regarding differences, seen as an asset and not a threat;
- justice and equity;
- solidarity, mutual support and courtesy.

³ Commission des normes du travail. Guide de sensibilisation à l'intention des employeurs et des salariés. *Un milieu de travail sans harcèlement psychologique, c'est l'affaire de tous!* (Labour Standards Board. A Guide to raise awareness of employers and workers. A workplace without psychological harassment: an objective for all of us!) p. 5-6.

3.2. The first reference for Christians is the Word of God. Regarding the phenomenon of violence, harassment and discrimination, one could quote many texts which set up all human relations in mutual love and fraternity in Jesus Christ. For example:

“I give you a new commandment: love one another; you must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognise you as my disciples.” John 13 34-35

“There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither slave nor freeman, there can be neither male nor female -- for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3 28

3.3. Civil society, in its Charter of rights and freedoms, makes it plain enough:

- “Every person has a right to the safeguard of his dignity, honour and reputation” (Sect. 4).

3. Implementation of the policy

4.1. The effectiveness of any policy rests on the capacity of the organization to circulate as widely as possible its messages, to raise awareness among its sectors and build up a complaints handling process.

4.2. The Roman Catholic Archiepiscopal Corporation of Gatineau and the parish fabriques of the Archdiocese of Gatineau build up processes to:

- act quickly when a claim of psychological harassment is filed;
- put an end to the situation;
- handle the complaint adequately

To this end, they set up a Diocesan Committee for complaints processing

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. The Bishop of the Diocese

- Approves the policy and encourages its implementation throughout the diocese
- Appoint the members of the Complaints Processing Committee, including the person in charge of the committee
- Takes action so that corrections be applied, as a follow-up to the Complaints Processing Committee, to validate a case of harassment, violence and/or discrimination.
- Releases the names of committee members and of the person in charge of the committee.

5.2. The Vicar General

- Coordinates the implementation of the policy for the whole diocese
- Proposes education, information, training and prevention activities.

5.3. The employer

- Maintains a work atmosphere favouring dignity, self-esteem and personal integrity.

- Adopts the policy by signing a commitment statement (annexed), returns a copy to the Chancellery and makes sure it is implemented.
- Circulates the information on the policy to staff members and all those who cooperate in his mission.
- Sees that every new collaborator in his mission be informed of this policy and its application.
- Takes action quickly to counter any form of harassment, violence or discrimination experienced by a person who cooperates in his mission.
- May be represented on the Complaints Processing Committee
- Cooperates with people assigned to complaints processing to help collect relevant information if needed and ensure a follow-up with the victim and the presumed perpetrator of acts of harassment, discrimination or violence.
- Cooperates with the person assigned by the Bishop to the implementation of corrections deemed appropriate.

5.4. The director of each sector

- Provides counselling and support services to all persons affected by this policy.
- At the request of the Bishop, cooperates to the implementation of corrective actions.

5.5. The Complaints Processing Committee

5.5.1. Role

- Receives complaints, collects relevant data and handles them confidentially
- Determines if complaints are admissible and substantiated.
- If the complaint is justified, recommends to the Bishop corrective actions deemed appropriate.
- Cooperates in the implementation and annual assessment of the policy
- Takes part in some training and information activities planned by the diocese.

5.5.2. Membership

- The committee is made up of three persons assigned by the Bishop
- The employer affected by a complaint may assign a fourth person to take part in the processing of the complaint
- Report to the Bishop

6. Support and complaints processing mechanism

6.1. Preliminary steps

- The individual who believes he/she is the victim of harassment under the terms of this policy states to the person deemed responsible for this harassment that his/her behaviour is undesirable and unacceptable
- If this proves to be impossible or if the situation goes on, the person must inform his/her immediate superior or line manager or his/her substitute, if any, so that corrective action be taken. This step aims at correcting quickly and efficiently the situation. If the person

filing a complaint may not, for several reasons, talk to the superior or substitute, he/she may then contact directly the person in charge of the Complaints Processing Committee, or the Vicar General, who will have the complaint sent to the person in charge of the committee.

- The person who files a complaint must not suffer any harm due to her complaint

6.2. Handling of a complaint

6.2.1. If the preliminary step fails, the person (s) who want (s) that action be taken must lodge their request, imperatively in writing, and submit it to the person in charge of the Complaints Processing Committee or to the Vicar General of the Diocese. One may also file one's complaint with his/her line manager.

The person who lodges a complaint may ask for assistance to any individual of his/her choice to assist him/her in the procedures, help him/her to write down his/her complaint and submit it to the Complaints Processing Committee.

6.2.2. The members of the Complaints Processing Committee meet, within 15 working days, the person (s) concerned.

6.2.3. If the complaint is found unsubstantiated, the person in charge of the Complaints Processing Committee informs the plaintiff, stating the grounds of such decision.

6.2.4. If the complaint is upheld, the members of the Complaints Processing Committee must examine, with the person (s) asking that action be taken, his/her (their) expectations and potential solutions regarding the situation

6.2.5. The members of the Complaints Processing Committee make sure that all persons involved in the actions taken understand the confidentiality requirements governing this policy.

6.2.6. If the parties reach an agreement, the person in charge of the Complaints Processing Committee hands a copy of the agreement to the Bishop and makes sure that the documents used for the setting of this agreement may not be used in another procedure.

6.2.7. If no agreement is reached, the committee informs the Bishop and submits him his recommendations. The bishop decides on the corrective actions to apply

6.2.8. The committee ensures a follow-up in a reasonable timeframe (between 4 and 8 weeks), with the person who filed a complaint, to make sure the situation is corrected and that person does not suffer any harm due to the move he/she has made

6.2.9. The internal complaints handling procedure does in no way deprive the person of his/her right to lodge a complaint with the Commission des droits de la personne or directly with the police or the courts. However, the person who takes this approach may not resort at the same time to internal mechanisms for addressing complaints

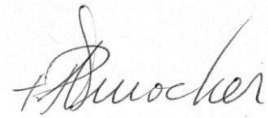
7. Generalities

- 7.1. A member of the Complaints Processing Committee who feels he/she is in a conflict of interests must be replaced by a substitute
- 7.2. Also, a member of the Complaints Processing Committee who would be a respondent in a complaint is excluded from the committee while the complaint is being addressed.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. The policy to address psychological harassment should contribute to an improvement of the workplace and to the maintenance of an atmosphere conducive to the person's respect and integrity

Released in Gatineau, on this fifteenth day of November of the year Two Thousand and Eighteen



Mgr Paul-André Durocher
Archbishop of Gatineau



Pierre-Paul Périard, d.p.
Chancellor

FORM TO FILE A COMPLAINT FOR HARASSMENT

Any complaint must be sent to the Complaint Processing Committee and contain the following items:

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| The reasons that make you believe that you are suffering harassment: |
| A detailed description of the situation: |
| Specific facts: |
| Name of a few witnesses who could confirm your statements: |
| Correcting actions you are asking for: |
| What you are expecting as a remediation for the harm suffered: |

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Date _____

ANALYSIS GRID OF A COMPLAINT

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|--|
| Nature of facts, words, gestures criticized: |
| Substantiation of the facts (other than impressions or perceptions), their validity: |
| Witnesses who could confirm the facts: |
| Scrutiny of witness evidence and consistency found: |
| Reliability of witness evidence: |
| Actual personal or professional impact on the plaintiff: |
| Impacts to the organization : |
| Assessment of the facts as to what is socially acceptable or not: |
| Consistency of the ruling with prior decisions of the Committee: |

Summary : Make a reasonable judgment in light of known facts and with the greatest possible impartiality, taking into account both individual and organizational aspects.

COMMITMENT FORM

The Roman Catholic Archiepiscopal Corporation of Gatineau, the fabriques and other corporations reporting to the Catholic Bishop of the Archdiocese of Gatineau (see 1.1 of the Policy) commit themselves by filling the following statement:

Every person who is involved in the realization of the mission and the pastoral project of _____ (*name of the organization*) has a right to be treated with respect and has a responsibility to treat others the same way. The _____ (*name of the decision-making authority, eg: parish fabrique members*) adopts this policy and is committed to a zero tolerance policy on violence, harassment and discrimination.

Proposed by _____

Seconded by _____

Carried at the meeting of _____

(*date*)

Signatures _____

(*chairman/chairwoman*)

(*secretary*)

Return to the Chancellery at the following address:

**Gatineau Diocesan Centre
180 boul. Mont-Bleu
Gatineau (Québec) J8Z 3J5**
