

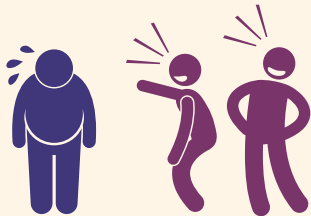


How to Promote a Discrimination-Free Workplace

For HR and Managers



Nearly **1 in 10** workers have experienced discrimination



The sad truth is that many workers across Canada feel stigmatized by their coworkers, and don't feel psychologically safe to address it with their employers. Particularly, those with disabilities or visible minorities face daily challenges just by being themselves at work. As such, your employee's mental health might suffer if they're excluded by their coworkers or simply treated differently; this can ultimately demoralize your staff.

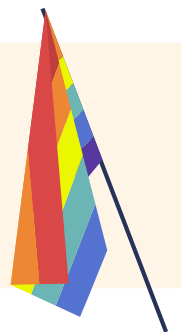
Who is at risk?

Employees may be susceptible to harassment and inequitable treatment due to their:

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Physical or intellectual disability

Characteristics that make your employees unique can be used against them by those who lack the understanding, compassion or acceptance that everyone deserves.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community are more than twice as likely to be discriminated against



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What does discrimination look like?

There are many, equally devastating, ways discrimination can occur, including:

- Feeling ignored
- Feeling uncomfortable or unwanted
- Gossip or inappropriate jokes/comments
- Too much or too little work
- Denying promotions or training

However stigmas are formed and discrimination subsequently results, it's important to understand that your employees might infer passive or active forms of aggression differently. That's why sensitivity and inclusivity should be upheld inside and outside of the workplace.

Remember that work events and special occasions (especially celebrations where alcohol is consumed) are not exempt from appropriate behaviour. It's your responsibility to establish inclusivity at all social events by making and encouraging healthy decisions and the equal right to participate, e.g., hosting a holiday party instead of a Christmas party.

What can you do to make a change?

Negative stereotypes and other forms of prejudice negatively impact our sense of security and belonging. So, how can you make an active effort to combat discrimination in your workplace?

Here are three key tips:

1. **Develop a training program:** Create an educational curriculum, either in-person or online, as part of your employee onboarding and continuous training programs.

Although most employees think they understand what constitutes discrimination, they might be surprised to learn that certain behaviours can be perceived as hostile.

2. **Encourage employee disclosure (if they're willing):**

Welcome employees from diverse backgrounds to share what makes them unique rather than encouraging them to hide their differences.

Improve communication by allowing employees to share their voices in a positive and receptive environment.

3. **Make inclusivity part of your work culture:** Ensure your entire staff knows that discrimination is unacceptable and that all employees should and will be treated as equals.

Build a psychologically safe workplace

Encourage your employees to adopt an open and receptive environment so that everyone feels safe to:

- ✓ Share ideas and concerns
- ✓ Ask questions
- ✓ Admit mistakes
- ✓ Take calculated risks

Once successful, your staff will embrace one another's opinions and perspectives to innovate, be more productive, and simply enjoy coming to work every day.

Following these tips, you'll be better able to provide your organization and its staff with a work environment that promotes not only inclusivity but also workplace satisfaction. After all, when employees feel safe and understood, your office – virtual or physical – will be a proud place of harmony.

To learn more about Homewood Pathfinder's Employee Assistance and Mental Health services, as well as our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion principles, please visit: <https://homewoodpathfinder.com/>