



Policy Title: Harassment Prevention and Resolution	
Approved by: S.O.A.R. Board of Directors	Approval Date: 5 June 2019

Survivors of Abuse Recovering (S.O.A.R.) is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and respectful environment for all volunteers, members, peer supporters and peers which is free from discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment.

Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment are defined in the **Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (2013)** as follows:

- **Discrimination** – means discrimination as defined by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (2013): *For the purpose of this Act, a person discriminates where the person makes a distinction, whether intentional or not, based on a characteristic, or perceived characteristic, referred to in clauses (h) to (v) of subsection (1) of Section 5 that has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations or disadvantages on an individual or a class of individuals not imposed upon others or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other individuals or classes of individuals in society. 1991, c. 12, s. 1.*
- **Harassment** - harassment, for the purpose of this Policy means unwelcome comments or conduct consisting of words or actions that disparage or cause humiliation, offense or embarrassment to an individual or class of individuals on any grounds protected against discriminatory action under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, which may negatively affect performance or mental or physical health. In this context, harassment is a form of discrimination.
- **Sexual Harassment** - as defined in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act:
 - (i) vexatious sexual conduct or a course of comment that is known or ought reasonably to be known as unwelcome,
 - (ii) a sexual solicitation or advance made to an individual by another individual where the other individual is in a position to confer a benefit on, or deny a benefit to, the individual to whom the solicitation or advance is made, where the individual who makes the solicitation or advance knows or ought reasonably to know that it is unwelcome, or
 - (iii) a reprisal or threat of reprisal against an individual for rejecting a sexual solicitation or advance. 1991, c. 12, s. 1; 2007, c. 41, s. 1.

While it is not possible to list all the circumstances which would constitute discrimination and harassment, the following are some examples: derogatory comments related to race, gender expression, sexual orientation or ability; excluding someone from an activity based on race, gender expression, ability or sexual orientation; unwelcome sexual advances, coerced sexual acts, leering, deliberate brushing up against another person in a suggestive manner, sexually aggressive or suggestive comments.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All S.O.A.R. volunteers, members, peer supporters and peers are responsible for:

- Treating all persons in an inclusive manner that respects an individual's dignity, values, beliefs and differences.
- Taking appropriate action to ensure any form of discrimination and/or harassment is not tolerated or condoned.



Policy Title: Harassment Prevention and Resolution	
Approved by: S.O.A.R. Board of Directors	Approval Date: 5 June 2019

The S.O.A.R. Board of Directors will take appropriate action as needed to address any form of discrimination and/or harassment of which they become aware, whether or not a complaint is filed.

The S.O.A.R. Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Taking steps to create an environment free from discrimination and harassment
- Treating all persons with respect and dignity and setting a positive example
- Providing S.O.A.R. volunteers, members, peer supporters and peers with information about the Harassment Prevention and Resolution Policy
- Reviewing all cases of discrimination and/or harassment
- Taking appropriate action
- Reviewing this policy every 5 years to ensure consistency with overarching legislation.

PROCEDURE

The following principles are intended to help individuals confronted with discrimination and/or harassment.

Procedures and/or appropriate action may be, but not limited to, the following:

- Safety of persons present is the top priority
- Anyone can submit a complaint to the S.O.A.R. Board of Directors
- Incidents of discrimination and/or harassment are best resolved at the closest possible level to the situation
- Direct communication between parties involved when possible and safe
- Seek help, advice and assistance from others within the S.O.A.R. organization
- Bring concerns forward to the S.O.A.R. Board of Directors
- Persons can choose to remain anonymous; however, anonymous complaints can limit the board's actions regarding resolution of the complaint

The Complaint Process

Selection of the Investigators

The Board of Directors will investigate all complaints related to this policy. In ensuring the integrity of the investigation, factors such as, but not limited to, the following, will be considered when determining who will be assigned to conduct the investigation:

- Bias and/or perceptions of bias
- Conflicts of interest and/or perceptions of conflicts of interest
- Safety of all parties
- Gender; culture, age, religion and other aspects of diversity and sensitivity
- Number of investigators (there will always be two (2) chosen)
- Competence and availability of the investigators



Policy Title: Harassment Prevention and Resolution
--

Approved by: S.O.A.R. Board of Directors
--

Approval Date: 5 June 2019

Investigative Timeline

- All investigations will occur on a timely basis
- All parties involved in the investigation will be informed of the results and recommendations; a copy of which will be placed in their file.

Findings to Board

- The final report of findings will be sent to the Board of Directors
- Recommendations will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for review, decision making and follow up

References

Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (2013)