

# March 2024 Environmental Scan



# 'Hostility has only escalated': Two Brampton councillors speak out about harassment they face on the job

Two Brampton councillors are speaking out about the harassment and sexism they've had to face while on the job, and say it's only getting worse.

At a council meeting Wednesday, Coun. Rowena Santos and Coun. Navjit Kaur Brar made a presentation ahead of International Women's Day — which is on March 8 — saying they face harassment on a daily basis.

The councillors say they are speaking out about the vitriol they experience to effect change, and to shine a light on the behaviour that women in politics are forced to endure. As an example, Santos pointed to former mayor of Gatineau, France Bélisle, who resigned last month because of what she called an "often hostile" work environment.

"The hostility has only escalated," Santos said. "As women in leadership roles, we're already working two to three times as hard just to constantly prove ourselves to other people."

# Substantial Investment to Prevent Gender-Based Violence through Outreach, Education and Awareness Initiatives

The Honourable Pam Parsons, Minister Responsible for the Office of Women and Gender Equality, today announced the awarding of \$405,125 for nine community organizations to carry out important violence prevention work in the areas of outreach, education and awareness.

The funding is provided under the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence, a four-year bilateral agreement the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has signed with Women and Gender Equality Canada, resulting in \$13.6 million in new funding to invest in violence prevention-related initiatives throughout the province.

St. John's Status of Women Council is receiving \$38,000 to expand and promote the Empowering Them e-course. This free, publicly accessible course teaches participants how to think differently about the myths and stereotypes surrounding gender-based violence, recognize the signs, and change behaviours with bystander intervention and check-ins.

Corner Brook Status of Women Council is receiving \$45,000 to enhance violence prevention outreach and develop resources and educational tools for prevention efforts involving the use of technology. These resources will be shared with partnering groups across the province.

# Nearly 6,000 Black employees at Tesla allowed to collectively sue for discrimination, harassment

Nearly 6,000 Black employees of Tesla Inc. have been granted temporary permission to proceed with a class action suit against their employer for failing to address discrimination and harassment, according to reports.

The Alameda County Superior Court handed down on Wednesday a tentative order to the factory workers of Tesla's Fremont plant allowing them to collectively sue their employer, Bloomberg reported.

According to the report, order cited Tesla's alleged "pattern of practice" of failing to take reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, noting that the issue was common among Black employees at the plant.

The lawsuit was first filed by Tesla employee Marcus Vaughn in 2017, who alleged that the plant's Black factory workers were subjected to racist conduct from colleagues and supervisors.

The employees' complaints to the human resources department were also unanswered, Bloomberg reported.

# Three IHSE members win recognition from Canadian Association for Medical Education

Three faculty members of the Institute of Health Sciences Education (IHSE) have been announced as recipients of the 2024 Canadian Association for Medical Education (CAME) Certificate of Merit Award.

Carlos Gomez-Garibello, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine; Maryam Wagner, MEd, PhD, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences Education; and Meredith Young, PhD, Associate Professor and Associate Director (Research) at the IHSE received the award at a virtual event for CAME members on February 29, 2024.

The three were nominated for the award by their colleague, Robert Sternszus, MD, MEd, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Health Sciences Education. Prof. Young also nominated Prof. Gomez-Garibello and Prof. Wagner for the honour.

The award promotes, recognizes and rewards faculty across the country who are committed to medical education in Canadian medical schools.

Elizabeth Anne Kinsella, Director of the IHSE, described the recipients as, “leaders in clinical reasoning, validity measures, and much more.”

# Violence 'escalation' frustrates ADSB educators

Reports of student violence against Algoma District School Board staff are up about 30 per cent over a four-year span.

Board brass say the number reflects a surge in enrolment between 2019 and 2023 and stepped-up efforts to encourage employees to log acts of aggression in schools.

Union leaders and workers say the violent acts are affecting learning in the classroom, while some employees are waiting weeks to speak with principals about incidents.

Health and safety officer Chris Alfano told the board's trustees reports jumped from the high 900s in 2019-2020 to 1,271 in 2022-2031. He did not refer to 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 statistics, saying they were affected by breaks in classroom instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're trying to come up with new strategies to lower these numbers," said Alfano during the Feb. 27 meeting. "We do realize that these numbers seem high and we don't take it lightly. We're continuously looking at new and inventive ways to lower our workplace violence numbers."

Staff affected by student violence complete a form online. That information is shared with their principal, who does a debrief with the worker, said Alfano.

# Calgary Police Service rife with sexual harassment, bullying, says ex-HR director

A former human resources director of the Calgary Police Service (CPS) has claimed that the workplace is rife with harassment, bullying and discrimination – and she experienced it firsthand.

In the two years she served as the head of the HR department at the service, Angela Whitney had men stand in front of her and block her while speaking in a meeting, she said in a Global News report. Sworn police members also showed disrespectful behaviour when she addressed HR issues, she said.

“Whenever I had to deliver messages – discipline, expectations and grievances, suitability hearings, investigations, things like that – it was very common that the men who were receiving messages from me or whatever it would be would intentionally stand up and stand over me,” she said in the report.

All these happened because she’s a woman and she was a civilian in the service, Whitney believes, according to the report.

“I was body shamed. I’ve had men scream-spitting (while) yelling, just spit coming out from just screaming at me,” she said. “There’s so much that I experienced.”

# Harassment at work rising, marginalized groups suffering most

Newly published Statistics Canada data analysis exploring harassment and sexual assault at work suggests many employers are not meeting their legal duty to protect workers.

This recently published analysis offers a new, deeper look at the experiences of Canadian workers from the 2020 survey on sexual misconduct at work, including marginalized groups and young workers.

Overall, nearly three in 10 women and two in 10 men reported experiencing harassment or sexual assault at work in the 12 months prior to the survey. This is a troubling upward trend when compared to data collected by Statistics Canada (Stats Can) in 2016 which found two in ten women and one of every eight men reported experiencing harassment at work in the past year.

Inappropriate sexualized behaviour was the most prominent type of harassment reported with 44 per cent of women and 29 per cent of men reporting such incidents. According to Stats Can, inappropriate sexualized behaviour includes inappropriate verbal and non-verbal communication, behaviour related to sexually explicit materials, and unwanted physical contact or suggested sexual relations. Thirteen per cent of women also reported experiencing a sexual assault at work, while three per cent of men reported the same.



# ‘Instances’ of bullying, harassment, discrimination in B.C. legislature: report

A report commissioned after former cabinet minister Melanie Mark had called the provincial legislature a “torture chamber” finds current and former members of body concerned about “instances” of inappropriate behaviour, including disrespect, bullying, harassment and discrimination.

About 10 per cent of current and former members surveyed as part of the report said they had experienced “regularly and from time to time” discrimination and unfair treatment based on family status and ethnicity. About 30 per cent said they experienced discrimination based on their gender, most prominently during Question Period. About 50 per cent of respondents said they had never experienced or witnessed discrimination.

The report used surveys of current and former members as well as a listening exercise done by external consultant ADR Education to make 17 recommendations. They include on-site child care, mandatory orientation and respectful workplace training for newly elected MLAs, an Indigenous ceremony to open each parliamentary session and more formal support to promote cross-party engagement through the creation of caucuses for specific groups.

# Steps toward procedural fairness in workplace investigations

With a rising number of employees raising allegations of workplace misconduct and pursuing wrongful dismissal claims, it is more important than ever for employers to conduct thorough and impartial workplace investigations that observe principles of procedural fairness. Failure to conduct a fair investigation can open employers up to litigation risk, and courts have not been shy to criticize employers for breaching principles of procedural fairness and their duty to act in good faith when conducting workplace investigations.

While there is no perfect formula for conducting a bulletproof investigation, there are a few key steps that employers can take to help protect the integrity of their investigations.

**Select a neutral and competent investigator:** A key element of procedural fairness is providing both the employee alleging misconduct (the complainant) and the employee accused of misconduct (the responding party) with an impartial factfinder to conduct a neutral and unbiased investigation. Although there is no universal test to determine whether an investigator or investigation is truly unbiased, Canadian courts have commented on the importance of neutrality in workplace investigations. In *Southern Chiefs Organization Inc. v. Dumas*, 2016 FC 837, Justice Diner stated that “the test for neutrality is whether the investigator approached the case with a ‘closed mind.’” In *Haarsma v. the Deputy Minister of National Defence*, 2013 PSST 5, another Canadian tribunal stated that “fairness requires that there be no reasonable apprehension of bias,” and summarized the test as: “Would a reasonably informed bystander looking at the process reasonably perceive bias on the part of one or more of the persons involved in the assessment of the complainant?”

# Sexual harassment runs rampant in skilled trades, YWCA study finds

A new report on the skilled trades in Nova Scotia describes workplaces rife with sexual and gender-based harassment, which its authors say is driving women away and contributing to a significant labour shortage. The YWCA Halifax surveyed 101 women and gender-diverse tradespeople last year, and more than 90 per cent of them reported being harassed at work at least once in their career.

The harassers were almost always men, and they often held positions of power in the workplace, according to the report released Friday. The findings are no surprise to Kat Williams, an apprentice carpenter who is working toward her Red Seal.

Verbal harassment from male colleagues, she said, has been a common experience in her 10 years on construction sites.

"Like, 'hey sweetie,' or someone hitting on me, or just saying something sexually inappropriate, joking with me in a really sexually inappropriate way ... they thought it was funny, but I did not," Williams said in an interview.

# Is my boss sexually harassing me? This AI chatbot could help you answer that question

"My boss keeps making lewd suggestions and keeps brushing up against me inappropriately, is this sexual harassment?"

"Yes, this would likely be considered sexual harassment," answers a new artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot, which aims to help people find out if they are being harassed in the workplace or at universities.

The tool was created by two women in the United Kingdom and will officially launch on International Women's Day, March 8. "One of the main reasons that people don't report sexual harassment is that they don't know whether they've been subject to it or not," co-founder Ruth Sparkes told Euronews Next.

"We wanted to create something that not only gave victims a voice but also helped institutions create safer environments".

The chatbot is a new addition to accompany an app called SaferSpace, founded by Sparkes and Sunita Gordon.

# Former Manitoba cabinet minister details alleged sexual assault by former MLA

A former Manitoba Progressive Conservative cabinet minister said on International Women's Day that she was sexually assaulted by a former MLA seven years ago, and that she faced consequences after coming forward.

In posts made Friday to the social media networks Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter), Sarah Guillemard posted a photo of her and some colleagues, stating, "This photo was taken on the evening I was groped by an older & former MLA."

The photo was taken March 5, 2017, and does not show the MLA who assaulted her, said the post by Guillemard, who was the legislative assembly member for the south Winnipeg riding of Fort Richmond from 2016 to 2023.

"The anger and rage was immediate, but so too was the realization that I had little power to do anything about it," she wrote Friday of the 2017 incident.

"This was just before the #MeToo movement, and I was a political nobody."

The post doesn't name the alleged groper, a choice Guillemard later told CBC News she made because her intent was to "encourage continued progress for all workplaces," rather than single one person out.

Guillemard said she told her husband and a few friends about the assault, but at the time there were few other avenues where she could pursue "meaningful consequences."

# Supreme Court judge orders St. John's to release amounts paid to city employees, Growlers

The City of St. John's must release the total amount it paid to employees in the wake of a series of workplace harassment complaints in 2021, as well as how much it forked out to the owners of the Newfoundland Growlers to resolve disputes with the team.

Those details were in the financial statements of St. John's Sports and Entertainment, which is owned by the city and operates the Mary Brown's Centre.

Supreme Court Justice Alexander MacDonald issued the ruling in a decision released last week and distributed Monday afternoon.

"There is an important principle at stake in this application," MacDonald wrote.

"The city owns the centre. The city is a servant of the taxpayers. Financial statements describe how the city spends taxpayers' money. The taxpayers should know how the centre spends taxpayers' money."

City officials had balked at releasing those amounts in the financial statements, after an access-to-information request by SaltWire Network, publisher of The Telegram.

# Industry says it's 'ready to fight' sexual harassment in skilled trades

Unions and trade agencies say a new report that highlights widespread sexual harassment in the skilled trades underscores the importance of ongoing work to bring gender equity to the sector.

Last week, the YWCA released a report that says an overwhelming majority of female and gender-diverse tradespeople have been harassed at work, typically by men in positions of power.

The non-profit organization said the harassment is driving women away from the skilled trades, and industry leaders need to commit to changing workplace culture, or risk floundering in an ongoing worker shortage.

Shannon Trites, executive director of the Automotive Sector Council of Nova Scotia, said change will not be easy, but she sees it as the only way forward.

"If you want to stay in business, you're going to need to increase and change the way you attract individuals to your business," Trites said in an interview.

# "WHY WOULD I COME BACK?": Nurses aren't taking up gov't's plan to return to health care system

Last month, the provincial government announced a plan to encourage former nurses to return to Manitoba's health care system. But according to the head of the Manitoba Nurses Union, the early reaction has been anything but positive.

That has also been reflected on the MNU's social media, including one retired nurse posting: "WHY WHY as a retired 64 year old would I want to come back to an unsafe environment."

"The reaction I got from nurses who reached out to me is exactly the same reaction as was in our comments section of that post is that this is not an incentive that would bring them back into the workplace," said MNU President Darlene Jackson. "Retired nurses left for a reason and to be very clear the situation hasn't gotten any better. What they're basically saying is: Why would I come back?"

On Feb. 28, Health Minister Uzoma Asagwara announced the province was working with three nursing regulatory colleges to create a streamlined path for former nurses to return to work. The interim changes would ensure former licensed practical nurses, registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses who worked in Manitoba's health-care system in the last five years and were in good standing with their regulatory college have a faster, more flexible pathway to return to their profession.



# GN revamps its harassment policy

Nunavut's Human Resources Department is overhauling the way it handles harassment complaints following a recent apology from the deputy minister of health and a commitment to improve working conditions within the department.

A new policy, currently in early stages of development, would create opportunities for employees to resolve complaints informally before proceeding to a formal investigation.

Megan Hunt's apology, contained in an all-staff memo sent last November, was in response to a report from Nunatsiaq News late last year where several current and former nurses alleged toxic work environments within Nunavut's health centres.

Nunatsiaq News also looked at how the Department of Human Resources handles harassment complaints and how the Government of Nunavut has struggled with these issues in the past.

Kristie Cronin, the deputy minister of human resources, confirmed that her department's work is related to Hunt's pledge.

Cronin said it also allows her department to examine why there are a lot of harassment complaints coming in from across the GN and how best to deal with them.

# RTO etiquette: Is Gen Z being bullied in the return to the office?

Gen Z are disproportionately reporting workplace bullying as their employers enforce return to office (RTO) policies, according to a survey.

Thirty percent of workers overall said their company's culture has been "toxic" since RTO was mandated.

But 38 percent of Gen Z respondents (18 to 24 years old) said they'd been bullied since returning to the office — and almost half (45%) said they've experienced "creepy" behaviour, found the survey of 557 employees by U.S. company Resume Builder. But what does "creepy" behaviour mean, from a legal standpoint?

It doesn't matter, said Shane Todd, partner and vice-chair of labour, employment and human rights at Fasken.

Regardless of how vague or general a complaint is, even if it's based on a feeling of an individual being "creepy", the response by employers should be the same.

# Nunavut working to overhaul harassment policy

Nunavut is in the early stages of revamping its rules around workplace harassment as it has received hundreds of complaints over the past seven years.

The territorial government is in the early stages of developing a policy that would create opportunities for employees to resolve complaints informally before proceeding to a formal investigation, according to a report from Nunatsiaq News.

This comes after, in November 2023, Megan Hunt, Nunavut's deputy health minister, apologized to her staff in response to allegations from current and former nurses that Nunavut's health centres are toxic work environments. Kristie Cronin, the deputy minister of human resources, confirmed this, according to the report.

“I want to take the time to acknowledge that recent publications in the media may be concerning to health staff both on a personal and professional level,” Hunt wrote in a memo addressed to all Department of Health staff, dated Nov. 2, Nunatsiaq News previously reported.

# Manitoba premier orders review of harassment policies

Premier Wab Kinew says he's ordered a review of the Manitoba government's harassment policies following former MLA Sarah Guillemard saying she was assaulted.

“What I'd like to see is just a continued upkeep of the standard that people are safe when they come to work in the public sector,” Kinew said Wednesday. Guillemard shared on International Women's Day on social media that she was groped by an older, former MLA, in 2017, just under a year after she was elected.

Guillemard explained in the post how she tried to find help within the legislature and PC Party, but instead found herself being asked not to share her story publicly all while responsibilities were being taken away from her.

“Ms Guillemard has my unequivocal support. The PC Caucus does not tolerate abuse, harassment, or violence in the workplace,” a statement to CityNews from opposition and interim PC Party leader Wayne Ewasko said. “After MLAs and their staff suffered 17 years of a toxic and unsafe work environment under the Manitoba NDP, Progressive Conservatives stood up and strengthened the Legislative Assembly's respectful workplace policy as well as the internal policies of our caucus.”

# Canadian Urban Libraries Council delivers lackluster toolkit to address workplace violence and harassment

Last year, the Canadian Urban Libraries Council, CULC, formed an ad hoc Safety and Security Working Group in response to the “unprecedented increase in the frequency and intensity of security and safety incidents” in public libraries. Recently, the group published a “Safety and Security Toolkit,” designed to share best practices “to manage safety and security,” or what CUPE calls incidents of workplace violence and harassment.

The toolkit is a collection of existing policies, procedures, practices, and templates, drawn from CULC member libraries. These resources may benefit library systems that are only beginning to implement measures to address workplace violence and harassment, or buttress those in systems that are looking for additional steps to take.

However, CUPE is disappointed that working group members didn’t look for new actions libraries could undertake since existing measures haven’t been able to stem the rate and severity of incidents involving violence and harassment.

# Banff town councillor facing sexual assault charges

RCMP is charging a Banff town councillor with sexual assault for an alleged incident in late 2023.

Hugh Pettigrew, 65, has been handed the charge regarding an alleged incident with a woman on Dec. 23. However, reports indicate Pettigrew denies the accusations.

During his first court date on March 13, the judge ordered a publication ban on any evidence that could identify the complainant. Pettigrew did not appear in court. Banff Mayor, Corrie DiManno addressed the matter on the town's website, saying council is "extremely concerned about the allegations," and they will respect the justice system process.

"Regardless of the outcome of this specific case, it is extremely important for Council to assert that any allegation of harassment, violence or abuse, by anyone in the workplace or in the community, is of highest concern that we should all take very seriously," her statement reads.

Regardless of the alleged behaviour brought forward, DiManno emphasized that they should be taken seriously. "No matter the degree of inappropriate behaviour that is alleged, or the location, the individual affected must be empowered to speak up, and the appropriate authorities must be given the opportunity to review the circumstances of the allegation," she said.

# College leaders reflect workplace culture, change starts at the bargaining table

As College Support Part-Time Divisional Executive Chair and Bargaining Team Chair, we are writing to the College Employer Council with grave concerns regarding the present state of college leadership and a culture permissive of sexual violence.

As you are well aware, recent events that occurred in an extremely public forum have called into question the integrity of leadership at Conestoga College. On February 13th, Conestoga's President John Tibbits made discriminatory remarks during a public forum at the college. These comments have been widely reported on, circulating via local and regional media in full view of the student and working body of Conestoga College and every other college in this province.

Tibbits' comments evoke misogynistic and sexist histories that are discriminatory towards sex workers and cast international students in a negative, and frankly racist, light. We cannot pay lip service to the idea of no tolerance for sexual misconduct and in the same breath allow for college leadership to normalize using discriminatory language. The language evoked by Tibbits is the tip of the iceberg: if such derogatory remarks are used freely in the public domain, what language and conduct occurs behind closed doors?

# FSIN faces forensic audit by Indigenous Services Canada over 'allegations' of misspending

An organization that represents the chiefs of 74 Saskatchewan First Nations is being subjected to a forensic audit by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

The director of ISC's assessment and investigation branch disclosed the audit to the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) executive in a March 15 letter obtained by CTV News.

In the letter, the ISC says it's performing a forensic audit of expenditures related to four separate funding agreements, dating from April 1, 2019 to present day.

“Note that the period of review is subject to change based on the findings of the audit,” the letter says.

In a statement to CTV News, an ISC spokesperson said the investigation stems from “allegations brought forward regarding the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations.”

“Following a review of the allegations, Indigenous Services Canada is planning to conduct a forensic audit.”



# Dan Schneider Denies Child Sexualization, Toxic Workplace Claims in ID's 'Quiet On Set' Docuseries

Former top Nickelodeon executive Dan Schneider responded to child sexualization and toxic workplace claims made in the Investigation Discovery's documentary series "Quiet On Set: The Dark Side of Kids TV," saying that if there was an "actual problem with the scenes" they would have been taken down by now.

"Everything that happened on the shows Dan ran was carefully scrutinized by dozens of involved adults, and approved by the network," read a statement from Schneider's representative. "If there was an actual problem with the scenes that some people, now years later are 'sexualizing,' they would be taken down, but they are not, they are aired constantly all over the world today still, enjoyed by both kids and parents."

The four-part series peels back allegations made against Schneider, the network and cast and crew who worked on several hit shows during the early '90s and 2000s, including "The Amanda Show" "iCarly," "All That," "Zoey 101," "Drake & Josh" and more. Most of the series Schneider created.

"Remember, all stories, dialogue, costumes, and makeup were fully approved by network executives on two coasts," the statement continued. "A standards and practices group read and ultimately approved every script, and programming executives reviewed and approved all episodes. In addition, every day on every set, there were always parents and caregivers and their friends watching filming and rehearsals. Had there been any scenes or outfits that were inappropriate in any way, they would have been flagged and blocked by this multilayered scrutiny. Unfortunately, some adults project their adult minds onto kids' shows, drawing false conclusions about them."

# Organized crime kidnappings in Calgary lead to cross-country investigation

Five men from cities across Canada are facing a combined total of 52 charges after a nine-month, cross-country investigation into organized crime kidnappings in Calgary.

Last May, two women were kidnapped in separate incidents that occurred within hours of each other, the Calgary Police Service said Monday.

In the first incident, a woman in her 20s was approached by an unknown man outside of her workplace in the city's northeast on May 2 and forced into a vehicle, according to police,

While investigating that case, police learned that a second woman, in her 50s, had been kidnapped at gunpoint from a southeast residence several hours after the first incident.

Police say the second kidnapping was retaliatory.

"Both of these kidnappings were sophisticated and planned events involving various levels of organized crime members, including those contracted from outside Calgary," said Staff Sgt. Roland Stewart of CPS's organized crime response unit.

"These incidents are alleged to have been the result of drug-related, organized crime conflict, and the victims were targeted as a result of their associations."

The women were taken to separate Calgary residences, rented through Airbnb, and were held for more than two days, police said.

Both women were assaulted multiple times before being released by the culprits, CPS said.

# Are Canadian employers supporting psychological health and safety? Maybe not, say workers

Many Canadians believe their employer is not equipped to support workers' psychological health and safety at work, according to a recent TELUS Health report.

Overall, 47 per cent of Canadians rate their company's culture around mental health favourably while 15 per cent have negative perceptions.

However, 36 per cent do not perceive, or are unsure, that harassment, bullying, unhealthy conflict, and other harmful behaviours are quickly and fairly resolved in their workplace.

And 37 per cent do not perceive, or are unsure, that their workplace is committed to ensuring employees can speak up about concerns without fear of punishment or humiliation.

“Workers reporting that their workplace is not committed to ensuring employees can speak up about their concerns and workers reporting that harassment, bullying, unhealthy conflict, and other harmful behaviours are not quickly and fairly resolved in their workplace are nearly twice as likely to report that their mental health adversely affects their productivity at work,” TELUS Health notes in its Mental Health Index for January 2024.

# Opposition questions P.E.I. government about harassment complaints

The P.E.I. government is promising to make data around harassment allegations within its workforce more public. The Official Opposition first raised the topic Tuesday in the legislature when Liberal interim leader Hal Perry tabled information he had obtained through a Freedom of Information request.

It showed two complaints were filed in 2021 by people who worked in the province's executive council office, the cabinet division of government.

But no other details were shared. Premier Dennis King, who is in charge of cabinet, said he knew nothing about the complaints.

On Wednesday, Finance Minister Jill Burridge brought back the breakdown of complaints across the public service in the last five years.

Those numbers included seven complaints in the 2020-21 fiscal year, and 14 in 2022-23.

King said Wednesday that the government acted on recommendations from the investigations and nobody signed a non-disclosure agreement.

Perry said complaints show the government is a "toxic workplace." He said there's nothing on the record showing the outcome of the complaints, or providing context around how many might reasonably be expected in the course of a year, in an organization the size of the P.E.I. government.

King said the opposition was on a "fishing expedition" and assured the legislature the government would be transparent with information.

# How to tell if you're being verbally or emotionally bullied at work

How can you tell if you're being verbally or emotionally bullied at work — and what should you do about it? Photo: Getty

Bullying at work is far more common than we think and there's a misconception that verbal or emotional abuse is always overt. Rather, it's often a pattern of subtle and insidious mistreatment that frequently goes unaddressed by employers.

Of a survey of employees from 131 companies in the UK earlier this year, 71% said they had experienced or witnessed bullying in the workplace. Another report, released by the software firm Culture Shift for Anti-Bullying Week, found almost one-quarter (24%) of employees in the financial sector have witnessed unacceptable behaviour in their workplace.

So how can you tell if you're being verbally or emotionally bullied at work — and what should you do about it?

“It's important to draw a distinction between a demanding boss with a temper and one who is a bully,” says psychotherapist Maryam Meddin, founder and CEO of The Soke, a clinic providing mental health and wellbeing services with professional coaching and career development.

# Workplace mental health service firm faces investigation

Claims about one of the UK's biggest providers of workplace mental health services are to be investigated by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), it has said.

BBC File on 4 has heard allegations that calls from vulnerable people to Health Assured were not always handled properly.

One caller claims he was advised "to go on a date" with his wife after he said he was having suicidal thoughts. Health Assured refutes the allegations.

Employee Assistance Programmes - or EAPs - are intended to help employees deal with personal problems that might impact their wellbeing and performance at work. Typically, they offer access to a helpline or short-term counselling services.

According to the UK Employee Assistance Programme Association, three quarters of the working population in the UK have access to one through their employer. The body describes EAPs as a "highly valuable resource to employees". File on 4 has spoken to 15 current and former employees of Health Assured, an EAP that provides support to 13 million workers in the UK and Ireland.

# OLRB Considers Employer's Disclosure Obligations Under OHSA After Workplace Harassment Investigation

In *Shannon Horner v Stelco Inc. Lake Erie (Shannon Horner)*, the OLRB considered, for the first time, an employer's disclosure obligations under section 32.0.7(1)(b) of the OHSA. Following the investigation of a workplace harassment incident, this section requires an employer to inform a worker, in writing, of the results of the investigation and of any corrective action that has been taken or that will be taken as a result of the investigation.

In *Shannon Horner*, the applicant filed a complaint with her employer, Stelco, alleging that she had been subject to harassment on social media by several of her co-workers. The allegations were investigated and Stelco advised the applicant verbally and in writing that her complaint was upheld and corrective action had been, or would be, taken. Stelco also advised that it intended to implement retraining.

The applicant took the position that Stelco's response was deficient and did not comply with the disclosure obligations under s.32.0.7(1)(b) of the OHSA. Specifically, she claimed the closure letter did not name the respondents, did not identify who in particular was found to have engaged in harassment as alleged, and did not identify who would be subject to corrective action, nor what corrective action and training would be administered. The applicant also took issue with the fact Stelco did not distinguish between harassment and sexual harassment in the letter.

# Feds' program for employees affected by harassment, discrimination must be independent, panel recommends

A panel tasked with looking into a new “restorative engagement program” to support workers who have experienced workplace harassment, discrimination and violence has delivered its recommendations to the government, which says it’s not yet sure what that program will look like or when it will be launched.

The government announced its plan to create a program for employees who had suffered harassment and discrimination to share their experiences in a “safe, confidential space” and to “contribute to systemic change” in 2022, with Budget 2023 including \$6.9 million in funding over two years for the design and development of the program.

Last October , Treasury Board President Anita Anand announced the creation of a panel of experts in clinical psychology, mediation, dispute resolution and restorative justice to put together a report with recommendations on how the program could work. Treasury Board said the panel’s work would come with a price tag of around \$550,000.

Now released, the group’s recommendations cover how the program could be governed, what form it could take and what services it could offer. It was written considering discussions and the written submissions of more than 70 networks and organizations, such as unions and federal departments, who shared their thoughts via an online forum between Oct. 31 and Dec. 8.



# TRU releases less redacted report on harassment investigation

Thompson Rivers University has changed its tune on transparency with the public. A year after publishing a heavily redacted version of a workplace investigation that cost more than \$1 million, the university is now releasing a near-full version of the 500-page report.

"It is clear that TRU's prior release of the extensively redacted report was insufficient to answer suspicions created by the allegations or to generate the trust in governance processes required to operate a public institution effectively in the public interest," a news release from the university issued today, March 25, read.

The report released in 2023 did not name the two executives who were under investigation. More than 400 pages of that report were completely redacted. Former and current faculty members complained in 2021 of sexual, racial, ageist and "personal" harassment from two university executives.

None of those complaints were substantiated against Matt Milovick, one of the two university executives who were investigated. Ten of 33 complaints against Larry Phillips, the former head of human resources, were substantiated. He was fired in December 2021, nearly a year after the investigation started.

# How AI takes workplace surveillance to another level

We all know that companies track what we do on work devices. If, for example, you're listening to this show right now on a company phone or laptop, your boss could probably find that out, assuming they wanted to. And now, the emergence of artificial intelligence means an AI-driven worker surveillance program may be logging everything you do, completely automatically, and then judging your performance based on whatever it's been told to look for.

Valerio de Stefano is the Canada research chair in innovation, law and society at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School. "The hype around artificial intelligence has convinced companies, employers, managers ... that they can basically outsource to AI some of the vital functions of management," says De Stefano, "this is a big misconception."

So should companies be allowed to fire you based on the advice of a piece of software? And if not, how can we stop them?

# Opa! A Reminder to Employers on the Importance of Proper Investigations

In *S.E. v 2474489 Ontario Inc. (o/a Opa! Souvlaki)* and Fahim Rahmatyan, an employee of a fast-food restaurant made allegations of discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment and sexual solicitation or advances. She also alleged that she was subject to reprisal when she brought these allegations to her employer, contrary to the Code.[1]

The employee claimed that she had been subjected to repeated sexual solicitation, inappropriate and unwelcome comments, and “jokes” of a sexual nature by her manager.[2] After hearing the employee’s complaints about the manager, the employer, without conducting an investigation, offered to move the employee to a different location. The employee refused this offer as it would have resulted in her being unemployed for a number of weeks as she transitioned to the new location.[3]

The manager’s behaviour did not stop and eventually culminated in the employee being sexually assaulted on two occasions. The employee again reported these events, to which the employer responded by stating that he would talk to the manager, but there was “nothing else he could do”.[4] When the employee then advised the employer that she could not attend her shift because she did not feel safe at work, the employer threatened to fire her for absenteeism. The employee did not return to work after this threat.

# Workplace review of Calgary police coming: oversight body

The Calgary Police Service will soon be undergoing a third-party review of its workplace, the police civilian oversight body said Wednesday afternoon. “While a lot of work has been done, we also know that problems persist,” Calgary Police Commission chair Shawn Cornett said.

She said the commission hasn’t seen the change they hoped previous efforts of reforming police workplace culture would produce, especially in areas of harassment and bullying, as measured by employee surveys. “The recent public allegations made by a former employee also raised serious concerns,” Cornett said.

The CPC chair said previous commissions publicly acknowledged issues in police workplace culture going back to 2011, and in 2016 started tracking how well employees felt bullying and harassment were being addressed. Eight years ago, the police commission also learned of a 2013 workplace audit whose recommendations were not fully implemented.

“We recognize that it’s time for a more fulsome evaluation of whether the actions taken to date are creating the desired change,” Cornett said. “While the details still need to be worked out, we have decided to bring in an outside expert to conduct a current review or audit of the Calgary Police Service workplace. This review will aim to determine whether the work done so far is moving the workplace in the right direction, what issues persist, and what needs to be done differently to further address bullying, harassment and discrimination.”

# It pays to be mean: A 40-year behavioral study confirms your worst fears—kids who bully go on to make the most money

If movies have taught us anything, it's that the school bully always gets their comeuppance before the end credits. Inevitably, their fall from grace will permeate into an adulthood of mediocrity and low income.

But in reality, a new study suggests that rather than becoming something resembling *Back to the Future's* Biff Tannen, the class jock is increasingly likely to become your future boss.

Academics at the University of Essex found children who exhibited behavior like bullying and throwing temper tantrums were likely to earn more money than other children in their 40s, according to a study published earlier in March.

The academics believe this behavior is more likely to come from an early acceptance of the dog-eat-dog world they're about to enter into. "On the other hand, problems with attention, emotions, and peer relationships tend to lead to poorer labor market outcomes," the authors wrote.

"It is possible that what is often identified as aggressive behavior is the adaptive response to a competitive environment."