

# October 2022 Environmental Scan



# On social media

- Harassment of journalists
- Workplace harassment in Ottawa Police Services





Paige Ellis

@paigesellis



There's something grimly poetic about being sexually harassed by a man in a hockey jersey while talking about alleged sexual misconduct by hockey players.



11:16 AM · Oct 6, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

5,056 Retweets 872 Quote Tweets 26.2K Likes





**Rachel Gilmore**  @atRachelGilmore · 6h 

Peter Sloly says that when he started as Chief with the Ottawa Police Service, it was clear it needed to be "significantly changed operationally, administratively ... there was a culture that was less welcoming, less inclusive, less diverse, less equitable."

 18

 20

 120



**Rachel Gilmore** 

@atRachelGilmore 

This impacted "workplace harassment, member morale," he said.

"Externally, that translated into a real or perceived level of trust in the broader community, but specifically in racialized and marginalized communities that the service wasn't in some cases appropriate enough."

9:42 AM · Oct 28, 2022 · Twitter Web App

1 Retweet 31 Likes





**Tonda MacCharles**  @TondaMacC · 6h ...

Replying to [@TondaMacC](#) and [@aballinga](#)

Sloly: the OPS he was recruited to lead "was less welcoming, less inclusive, less diverse, less equitable, and that had impacts on things like **workplace harassment** and member morale."



**Amanda Connolly**  @amandacconn · Oct 24 ...

In a press release announcing her appointment, Therrien is described as a "former executive of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada" and "recently, she was part of the review of four cases of **workplace harassment** within the RCMP."





it's gloria (미랑) @glooooooria · Oct 21



Another day of public legal education workshops with the Law Society of Nunavut & @RavenLawOttawa lawyers in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, talking about **harassment** in the **workplace** with youth, employers, & the community at large! #A2J #PLEI





# Expert panel: How employers, employees can mitigate workplace microaggressions

Microaggressions — everyone has heard them or may have even used them.

Defined as everyday verbal and behavioural slights against a person or group that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative feelings, these put-downs, assumptions and comments — regardless of intention — are hurtful, insulting and damaging to a person's self-esteem.

Especially prevalent in the workplace, microaggressions affect morale and productivity. They can take many forms and are part of the ongoing experience of discrimination experienced by many individuals in the workplace on a daily basis.

Research from Toronto Metropolitan University's Ted Rogers School of Management's Diversity Institute — and its work with other organizations supporting equity-deserving groups — has shown just how damaging microaggressions can be. The impact isn't just on job satisfaction or opportunities, but physical and mental health.



# Antarctic research stations rife with sexism and harassment, probe finds

Meredith Nash has spoken to a lot of Antarctic researchers, but she's particularly concerned about the young women just starting out in their careers.

Nash is the author of a new report that found a widespread culture of sexism and sexual harassment at Australia's Antarctic research bases. She conducted dozens of in-depth interviews and informal conversations with Antarctic workers.

"The ones that stood out for me the most were from PhD students, young women who were going to Antarctica for the first time," said Nash, the associate dean of diversity, belonging, inclusion and equity at Australian National University.

"They were so excited to collect data for their studies, and then they had a horrible experience down south. You know, they were either harassed, stalked [or] assaulted. And then, of course, they never came back," she told *As It Happens* host Nil Köksal.

Women seen as 'an inconvenience'

The report, which was commissioned by the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD), unveiled a workplace culture that is "predatory" and "objectifying," and that doesn't take women's needs into consideration.

# When is an emoji appropriate for business communication?

Nova Nicole uses Slack differently now. A leadership development facilitator who works in the tech industry, Ms. Nicole is no stranger to digital messaging at work. Since the onset of the pandemic, however, she's noticed a distinct shift in the way she uses the platform.

“We use it for everything; it's our main form of communication,” says Ms. Nicole, who is based in Blue Mountain, Ont. “But I do find it casual [compared to methods like email], so I work hard not to use it in lieu of conversation and connection.”

Usage of communication tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Google Chat exploded during the early days of the pandemic when companies had to quickly pivot to remote work, and these apps remain popular among the 26 per cent of Canadian workers who still work remotely at least some of the time.

While they may have been initially adopted for reasons of convenience and speed, these tools may also have sparked a more casual style of communication than what we've traditionally considered appropriate for the workplace.

According to market research company OnePoll, which conducted a poll of 2,000 American workers in 2021, “less than half of those surveyed said they ‘always’ use proper punctuation when messaging with colleagues (40 per cent), yet 31 per cent do ‘always’ use emoji.”

This makes sense, says Kris Tierney, head of HR and learning at the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA).

“Informal and even more emotive communication happens more often on collaboration tools like Slack and Teams than it does through email,” she says. “One of the biggest benefits of working in the physical workplace is engaging in informal, casual conversations and interactions – like watercooler conversations, coffee chats, shared lunch breaks or check-ins. In many ways, instant messaging and chat features in tools like Slack and Teams have also become the virtual watercooler in our remote and hybrid workplaces.”

# TTC hit with lawsuits as employees allege workplace bullying, harassment

Insults, discrimination, mental distress and a lack of support from leadership – these are some of the claims brought forward by Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) employees who say bullying and harassment have become commonplace in the publicly funded workplace.

CTV News Toronto has interviewed more than a dozen current and former employees who say they've witnessed or been subject to bullying, discrimination and intimidation.

Due to a shared fear of professional or legal repercussions, CTV News Toronto has permitted one of those employees to speak anonymously. Others have gone on-the-record or put their names in legal briefs.

Michael Getchell, a former assistant manager of the commission, told CTV News Toronto he was subject to bullying at the hands of two of his managers.

“There was an overwhelming sense of fear every morning I got up for work,” Getchell said of the time spent on the receiving end of the alleged behaviour. “I couldn’t sleep at night.”

# Electronic monitoring: Recent research and a looming legislative deadline

More specifically, research involving the meta-analysis of 70 studies published in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior Reports* found electronic monitoring is a source of stress, negatively impacting job satisfaction, leading to counterproductive work behaviour, and adding nothing to job performance.

Main justifications cited by employers for the use of monitoring technology are to observe and maintain employee performance and organizational operations. Examples of what they are monitoring range from worker attendance and attentiveness to tracking physical movements, productivity data, along with email and social media postings.

In summarizing their findings, the authors of this most recent research suggest, “These results question currently existing justifications for the use of electronic monitoring.”

Still, a growing body of research including a 2021 Ryerson University report (now Toronto Metropolitan University) shows an acceleration of electronic monitoring of employees, expanding even quicker because of the pandemic.

This same report found “Greater levels of perceived surveillance are correlated with higher negative attitudes toward this surveillance among employees. Monitoring tools perceived as excessive are also associated with higher employee turnover, absenteeism, weakened morale, reduced trust in management, and poorer relations between employees and employers.”

# Global Affairs broke rules by promoting executive who slapped, yelled at staff, watchdog says

The federal government's integrity watchdog has concluded that Global Affairs Canada committed gross mismanagement by failing to keep employees safe from an executive who slapped, pushed and yelled at staff.

A damning new report says Global Affairs conducted its own internal investigation five years ago and found executive Latifa Belmahdi breached its code of conduct.

Despite that finding, the department didn't monitor Belmahdi or stop her from continuing to mistreat staff and make inappropriate comments, the report says.

Instead, the department promoted Belmahdi in 2018 to a higher leadership role.

Public Sector Integrity Commissioner of Canada Joe Friday called the promotion a "serious error" and a "matter of significant importance."

# Global Affairs Canada mismanaged executive who berated, slapped staff: commissioner

OTTAWA — The watchdog for the federal public service has ruled that Global Affairs Canada committed "gross mismanagement" in the way it dealt with complaints about a senior employee accused of throwing objects, mocking colleagues and even pushing and slapping someone.

The report from Joe Friday, the public sector integrity commissioner, tabled in Parliament Thursday said an earlier internal investigation by the department also found the executive director yelled in the workplace and once introduced a team member as a "terrorist colleague."

The report concluded the department mishandled its response to the complaints, including by promising an action plan that was never put into place.

It said Global Affairs Canada promoted the executive, despite continued insults against staff, including comments about someone's weight and once referring to a training session as a "concentration camp" while speaking with a Jewish colleague.

The report said the executive testified during the investigation by the public sector integrity commissioner that she took the earlier findings seriously and was working hard to change, but the probe examined evidence suggesting the behaviour had continued.

# Winnipeg mayoral candidate responds to harassment allegations

Glen Murray, a candidate running for the 44th mayor of Winnipeg, spoke with Global on Thursday about accusations of workplace harassment during his time as leader of the Pembina Institute. The allegations were reported in a CBC News investigation and cannot be independently verified by Global News. Glen Murray denied the accusations, adding Pembina Institute had an anonymous harassment reporting system in place and no complaints were ever officially filed against him.

# FBI records show at least 665 employees left over sexual misconduct: whistleblower

Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley demanded that Congress review "the Justice Department's and FBI's failures," after gaining records from a whistleblower showing that there were at least 665 FBI employees who had faced investigation for sexual misconduct, and who left the agency between 2004 and 2020. This before any consequences were faced by those employees.

In a statement from Grassley's office, it was claimed that an internal memo from the Justice Department's Office of Disciplinary Appeals shows that from 2004 to 2020, "665 FBI employees, including 45 [Senior Executive Service (SES)]-level employees have retired or resigned following an FBI or [Justice Department Office of Inspector General (OIG)] investigation into alleged misconduct, but prior to [the Office of Professional Responsibility's (OPR)] issuance of a final disciplinary letter."

The statement also noted that the actual number of employees who left while being investigated for sexual misconduct could be significantly higher.



# New consequences for bad workplace behaviour coming to Nova Scotia Health

The head of surgery for Nova Scotia Health's central zone says new consequences for unprofessional behaviour should help prevent issues from escalating and confront conduct that's plagued the cardiovascular surgery division for more than a decade.

"I'm actually feeling very confident about our ability to institute change," Dr. Gail Darling said in a recent interview.

An external workplace assessment is underway after complaints about the behaviour of some surgeons, the way learners and support staff are treated, and a lack of action by senior officials to enact change. Reviews in 2010 and 2016 identified the need for a code of conduct with teeth to address behaviour one of the reports described as having no place in modern medicine.

While that review work nears completion, Darling has received the final report from a task force she commissioned to look into workplace conduct and consequences for unprofessional behaviour.

# Assault on Halifax paramedic shows need for more police intervention: union

The union representing paramedics in Nova Scotia says it will take a harder line on violence in the workplace after a man was accused of assaulting one of its members.

Halifax police say they responded to an incident Friday just before 8:30 p.m. at the QEII Hospital's emergency department.

The patient who had been brought in by EHS was "physically aggressive and throwing objects," eventually striking a paramedic, police say.

"It's not a reality that you want in your home, so I wouldn't expect that I would want it in our workplace," said Kevin MacMullin, business manager for the union representing paramedics, LifeFlight nurses and transport workers in Nova Scotia.

"We have to be safe. My members want to go home to their family members at the end of their shift."

# Why Workplace Well-Being Programs Could Be Wasting Money

For over a year, Activision Blizzard employees have protested against the company's poor handling of ongoing sexual harassment allegations. Now, an anonymous Jane Doe has filed yet another lawsuit against the gaming giant for sexual harassment, gender discrimination and sexual battery, among other complaints.

"For years, Activision Blizzard's open 'frat boy' environment fostered rampant sexism, harassment and discrimination with 700 reported incidents occurring under CEO Robert Kotick's watch," the lawsuit explains. "The sexual misconduct was often committed by executives and in the presence of HR." A report from the Wall Street Journal last year found that the CEO knew for years about rampant sexual harassment at the company, but failed to act.

In this case, the plaintiff alleges that a former product manager Miguel Vega sexually harassed her in the workplace for years; she says that he non-consensually groped and tried to kiss her at work, verbally abused her and insinuated that if she gave in to his sexual advances, she would get a raise.

# Law prohibiting workplace threats comes into play in Ontario

Canada's law prohibiting individuals from harassing health workers struck anew, this time leading to charges and an arrest warrant against the perpetrator. The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) issued an arrest warrant against a 58-year-old man from Windsor, who was charged with "hate-motivated offence of Harassing Communication, Harassment by repeated communication, Mischief and Intimidation of Health Service."

It came after he made "multiple threats" through the phone against an Ottawa-based family physician who appeared on a national television show to urge the public to keep wearing masks, The Canadian Press reported.

The man was charged thanks to a new legislation introduced by the Liberal government in 2021 that makes it illegal to intimidate healthcare workers or prevent them from administering care to their patients. This is the third time that the charge of intimidating health workers has been made against individuals, with the other from Peterborough, Ontario, in January, The Canadian Press reported.

# A mechanic who says he was fired after refusing to 'forgive and forget' a colleague's use of a racist slur is suing a Georgia county

A Black mechanic is suing a Georgia county who said he was fired after refusing to "forgive and forget" a co-worker's use of a racial slur.

A filing by the Department of Justice said Carlen Loyal, who worked for Bartow County, Georgia for at least 10 years, complained to his supervisor that a white co-worker sent him a text message using the N-word in 2019.

The lawsuit said the county's HR director, Robin Puryear, asked Loyal why the word was offensive and exposed him to "additional, severe racial harassment in front of the employee who sent the racist text message" during which time Loyal was told to "forgive and forget" the incident.

Loyal told his brother-in-law, Bobby Turner, about the incident, upsetting Puryear. Both men were fired by the county for misconduct two weeks after Loyal's initial complaint, per the filing.

The DoJ said the county violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by exposing Loyal and Turner to a racially hostile work environment.

# CUPE raises concerns about health-care staffing shortages in Sudbury, Ont.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has called on the Health Sciences North hospital in Sudbury, Ont., to hire 120 more staff to address shortages in health care.

"We're seeing a turnover rate of 14.95 per cent," said Dave Verch, first vice-president of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, CUPE.

"Unprecedented loss of health-care workers, experienced health-care workers, and we're just seeing so many more vacancies and the inability of hospitals to staff positions."

Verch has been visiting hospitals across Ontario, and said the issue of understaffing has been consistent in every city he has seen.

"Every hospital is telling us the same thing," he said. "Health care workers are just getting burnt out. So it's a very common thread we're seeing across the entire province."

# SNL's Try Guys skit misses the punchline

SNL missed the mark once again by punching down a situation more serious than they realize.

The Try Guys are a group of YouTube content creators formerly associated with BuzzFeed and now working independently. As the name suggests, the Try Guys' content is mostly about the four—now three—members exploring new subjects and trying new activities, using their unique, comical personas to relate to their audience.

The group has become well known in the world of pop culture over the years. So, when the news came out a few weeks ago that Ned Fulmer had been fired from the Try Guys for cheating on his wife, the internet exploded.

It exploded not just because Fulmer—the “wife guy”—committed the ultimate betrayal in a marriage, but because the affair was with a Try Guys employee.

Altogether, this gauntlet of news is overwhelming. While young adults are bound to comment on the scandal—and maybe even curate some memes about it—the majority of the discourse has acknowledged the inappropriate power dynamic involved in the affair.

Unfortunately, SNL did not.

# Report: Silver apologizes to Suns employees for enduring Sarver's workplace misconduct

NBA commissioner Adam Silver apologized to Phoenix Suns employees for enduring owner Robert Sarver's workplace misconduct, according to ESPN's Baxter Holmes.

"I'm incredibly empathetic to what many of you have lived through," Silver reportedly said.

Silver, who was in Phoenix for the Suns' season-opening win against the Dallas Mavericks, spoke to hundreds of employees for nearly an hour and took responsibility on behalf of the NBA, Holmes reports.

"To the extent that you feel let down by the league, I apologize. I take responsibility for that," he said, according to Holmes.

Silver came under heavy criticism for suspending Sarver one year and fining him \$10 million after an investigation found that he had engaged in workplace misconduct — a punishment many, including NBA stars LeBron James and Chris Paul thought fell short.

On Sept. 21, barely a week after receiving his suspension, Sarver announced he would sell the team, calling it "the best course of action."



# Embattled Rowing Canada signs with OSIC on heels of damaging independent study

Rowing Canada has signed an agreement to join Abuse-Free Sport, three weeks after an independent report revealed a toxic environment in the sport.

The national federation will be able to access the new Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner following a transition period that will end no later than Dec. 13.

“The sport community is in need of a consistent national safe sport program and this is a great step forward for everyone involved in sport in Canada,” said Jennifer Fitzpatrick, Rowing Canada’s director of partnerships and sport development. “We look forward to working with the (Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada).”

Canada’s women’s eight crew rowed to gold at the Tokyo Olympics, continuing the tradition of excellence in Canadian rowing. But athletes complained about a toxic environment beneath the surface, prompting a third-party investigation by Rubin Thomlinson LLP.

Three-time Olympic gold medallist Marnie McBean called the results of Thomlinson’s report “shocking.”

In an Instagram post, McBean quoted the report’s findings: Over 50 per cent of people surveyed describe their experience with RCA’s high-performance environment as negative; over 85 per cent of people surveyed witness, experienced or heard maltreatment; and over 25 per cent of those surveyed wouldn’t report maltreatment.

# You got this: How workplace investigators can handle interview anxiety

Interviewing parties and witnesses for workplace investigations is one of the most interesting parts of being a workplace investigator. Interviews can also be one of the most challenging aspects of workplace investigations, and as a result, can also be anxiety-inducing.

Whether you're new to workplace investigations or a well-seasoned investigator, it's normal to feel nervous for interviews. Perhaps you're getting ready to interview a challenging witness, or you're planning to talk to a respondent about a series of complex allegations. Maybe you're an introvert and speaking to people pushes you out of your comfort zone. No matter how worried you are about an interview, there are ways that you can effectively manage your anxiety and conduct an effective interview.

# 320 protection services officers will support safer workplaces for health-care workers

The Province is taking steps to build safer workplaces for health-care workers and patients by introducing a new security model across all health authorities, hiring more protection services employees and expanding funding to SWITCH BC, a new organization focused on addressing workplace safety.

About 320 in-house protection services officers and 14 violence prevention leads will be hired and will help create a safer environment for staff and patients.

“These actions will help ensure all health-care employees have safe and healthy workplaces, and that the patients who count on them are accessing care in a safe environment. Ensuring our health-care facilities are free of violence will not only help us recruit and retain health-care workers, but it will also improve patient care and continuity,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “Establishing SWITCH BC furthered our commitment to create safe and welcoming workplaces for our health-care employees, and this latest action empowers security personnel to support these efforts.”

The Province is providing health authorities with funding to establish a relational security model in 26 health-care settings and hire staff to support it. The new model ensures all security personnel have an acute awareness of patients and their surroundings, as well as how to anticipate, de-escalate and ultimately prevent aggression. It is based on trauma-informed practice, which integrates knowledge of how people are affected by trauma into procedures, practices and services to create a safer environment for staff and patients.

# With violence in health care rising, B.C. announces new protection service staff for high-risk facilities

The province has announced it will train 320 in-house protection service officers and 14 violence prevention leads to address increasing levels of workplace violence faced by health-care workers.

Health Minister Adrian Dix said the move, in which the new staff will be deployed to 26 hospital and mental health facilities across B.C., is an effort to improve the recruitment and retention crisis in the health care sector and will result in better patient care.

"Making our health-care facilities free of violence will ensure all health-care employees have safe and healthy workplaces and that the patients that count on them are accessing care in a safe environment," he said.

In roughly the past year there were 4,438 reported incidents of violence in the B.C. health-care sector, with 721 time-loss claims and WorkSafeBC compensation payouts of approximately \$7 million, Dix said.

# LEGAL RIGHTS BULLETIN: Reporting workplace sexual harassment

Sexual harassment at work is against the law in Ontario under both the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. However, it is not a thing of the past as much as we would like to think otherwise.

According to Harassment and Violence in Canadian Workplaces: It's [Not] Part of the Job, April 2022, 65 per cent of survey respondents experienced at least one behaviour or practice of harassment and violence at work in the past two years.

It can happen to anyone. Every situation is unique, and there is no right or wrong way to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace. In each case, there are choices you can make in how to respond to the harassment.

If you feel safe, and only if you feel safe, you could be direct with the harasser. Let the person know the conduct is unwelcome and must stop.

You could try to keep a written record of the incident(s) while the harassment is happening. Include actions, conversations, dates, times, the location, and people involved to help keep memories fresh and create an ongoing record of the harassment.

In a unionized workplace, the collective agreement will have built-in and prioritized human rights protections that you can research and act upon if you choose.

# Ottawa appoints monitor to oversee recommendations tackling sexual misconduct in the Forces

The federal government has appointed an external monitor to oversee its implementation of recommendations on sexual misconduct and culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Defence Minister Anita Anand said Monday that Jocelyne Therrien, a former executive in the Auditor General's office, has been working in her new role since Oct. 19. Therrien has conducted audits of federal entities, was part of a review of workplace harassment cases in the RCMP, and previously worked as a parole officer.

Therrien will oversee the implementation of recommendations from the final report of retired Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour, who conducted an external review of sexual misconduct in the military and who delivered her final report in May. Appointing an external monitor was one of those recommendations.

“Madame Therrien has extensive experience that will be useful in this role, including analyzing and auditing federal departments, and I look forward to working with her on the implementation of the recommendations,” Anand told reporters in Ottawa.

# Pronouns in the workplace: normalizing conversations around gender and inclusivity.

Gender identity and gender expression are protected grounds under human rights legislation both provincially and federally in Canada. Tribunals in both Ontario and British Columbia have addressed the lived experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the workplace and found that:

- Misgendering or the use of incorrect pronouns is adverse treatment with respect to employment;
- Transphobic slurs in the workplace can make employees fear for their safety; and
- An employer's failure to adequately respond to misgendering and outing in the workplace constitutes an adverse impact.
- The decisions are a reminder to employers that reports of discrimination and harassment in the workplace must be taken seriously. An employer's failure to reasonably investigate and appropriately address a complaint of discrimination can also constitute an adverse impact, and lead to monetary and non-monetary liability.

# When is a 'workplace joke' not a joke? Legal issues with office 'banter'

Cracking jokes in the workplace once in a while could help lighten the mood and ease the stress that comes with our jobs. However, a recent study showed that humour at work also has a dark side, negatively affecting morale. A paper published in the European Journal of Humour Research revealed that in one specific company studied, organizational humour exposed “control, power, and masculine dominance.”

“Humour was both controlled and controlling and masculine hegemonic power was reinforced through extreme and offensive humour,” the paper, published by Dr. Barbara Plester, Emily Brewer, and Tim Bentley, noted.

It's not all fun and games

In the researchers' study within four New Zealand-based organizations, one particular business caught their attention as it revealed a culture around organizational humour that was not entirely funny, which was not observed in any other studied companies.

The owner-operated small company had less than 30 people, and the researchers noted that such a workplace revolved around sexualised, controlling, and hierarchical humour. Yet, the employees in the company never considered these humours as forms of bullying.



# Howard Levitt: Harassment allegations turning into weapon of office politics

What is illegal harassment? Almost everyone seems to have a different definition. Most view it subjectively, but that is legally incorrect. Harassment is not in the eyes of the beholder. Increasingly, too many employees are alleging harassment at every workplace slight.

The Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA), similar to the law in most other provinces, makes clear that it is an objective, not subjective, test, defining harassment as: “Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome” That definition mirrors that of sexual harassment in human rights legislation.

The OHSA requires an investigation if there is genuine harassment alleged but, despite the preachings of the investigation lobby, this investigation need not and, in my experienced view, should not, be conducted by an outside investigator.

For the reasons provided in previous columns — including expense and delay; lack of knowledge of the company, its policies and culture; the appearance that a “hired gun” is being brought in; and the economic incentive to prolong and expand the assignment — it is seldom in the interest of an employer to use a third-party investigator.

# Quebec reality show contestants kicked out for bullying castmates

The expulsion of three candidates from the Quebec reality show *Occupation Double* for bullying has caused a stir in the media this week and has renewed a conversation on the issue.

The three outcasts, aged 24-27, caused a stir by their relentless efforts to exclude a member of their group during the show, behaviour often associated with a younger age group.

Bullying among adults is not well documented but can occur in a variety of contexts, such as in a romantic relationship, in the workplace or online.

According to the Quebec Institute of Public Health (INSPQ), bullying is a type of interpersonal violence that is characterized by “an unequal power relationship between the perpetrator and the victim,” as well as a repetition of actions deliberately intended to harm or cause harm.”

It’s difficult to determine whether a person becomes a bully because they were victims of bullying themselves or whether it is a result of other incidents in their childhood and adolescence.

# Reports

- Annual Report to Parliament on the Privacy Act
- Highlights from the Commissioner's 2021-2022 annual report for public servants
- Ministerial Statement – New Codes of Conduct Help Reduce Barriers for Women in Local Leadership Roles



# 2021-2022 Annual Report to Parliament on the Privacy Act and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act

This is a pivotal time for privacy. Digital technology, with its growing reliance on personal information, is part of every aspect of our lives. From the most complex – such as dealing with a global pandemic and preventing crime – to the most routine – buying coffee and using our phones to connect with each other.

Finding the right ways of protecting and promoting our fundamental right to privacy while harnessing these new technological opportunities will be a key challenge for Canada's institutions in the coming years. Indeed, Canada's federal public and private sector privacy laws will need to be modernized, both to respond and adapt to these societal and technological changes, and to keep pace with legislative developments in other jurisdictions domestically and internationally.

An important step towards meeting this challenge was taken by the government with the tabling of Bill C-27, the Digital Charter Implementation Act in June of this year. The Bill aims at modernizing the Personal Information and Electronic Documents Act and is a recognition by the government that Canadians need and expect modernized privacy laws. As Canada's new Privacy Commissioner, I look forward to providing my views on the proposed legislation to Parliament this fall.

# Highlights from the Commissioner's 2021-2022 annual report for public servants

The Privacy Commissioner of Canada's annual report to Parliament was tabled on September 29. In his message, Commissioner Philippe Dufresne describes the vision that will guide his mandate. He notes (A)s Commissioner, I will be promoting and implementing a vision of privacy that recognizes:

Privacy as a fundamental right;  
Privacy in support of the public interest and Canada's innovation and competitiveness; and  
Privacy as an accelerator of Canadians' trust in their institutions and a driver in their participation and contribution towards a robust digital economy.

This vision is based on the reality that Canadians want to be able to fully participate as active and informed digital citizens without having to choose between this participation and their fundamental privacy rights. Canadians should be able to benefit from the public interest and economic advances brought by the new technology with the reassurance that their laws and their institutions are there to appropriately safeguard and protect their personal information. In short, privacy is fundamental, it supports important public and private interests and it builds necessary trust.

## Takeaways

Workplace violence and harassment are serious matters for alleged victims, alleged perpetrators, and organizations with important responsibilities for workplace safety. It's therefore critical to ensure a clear alignment between how the limits on confidentiality are explained in policies and communications to individuals and when and how disclosures are actually made to carry out valid purposes.

For a disclosure to be a permissible "consistent use" under the Privacy Act, it must have a sufficiently direct connections to the original purpose for which the information was originally obtained such that an individual would reasonably expect it to be used in a particular manner.

# Ministerial Statement – New Codes of Conduct Help Reduce Barriers for Women in Local Leadership Roles

The following statement was read in the House of Assembly today by the Honourable Krista Lynn Howell, Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs:

Speaker, I stand today to congratulate the Town of Pouch Cove for being the first in the province to adopt a municipal Code of Conduct, as well as several other councils that have since achieved this important milestone.

Working to reduce gender-based harassment and barriers to professional advancement are critical steps towards increasing diversity and representation of women in municipal politics.

To that end, the Municipal Conduct Act was proclaimed into force on September 1, 2022, providing clear guidelines on how to effectively address issues of conflicts of interest and harassment and bullying in the workplace. This legislation will have a tremendous impact for women and gender diverse people who wish to work or run for local government.

Speaker, inherent in the legislation is the aim to reduce gender-based harassment, ensuring councils are more inclusive, and reducing barriers to women, gender diverse individuals, and other marginalized groups entering politics.