



# Appropos

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres

News from Michael Udy, Executive Director

## **SPECIAL EDITION**

### **A NEW APPROACH TO PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

*(Prepared by Henri Derome, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services)*

Modifications to the Act Respecting Labour Standards took effect on June 1, 2004. These changes are intended to prevent psychological harassment in the workplace. You will find in your pay envelope a pamphlet from the *Commission des normes du travail* with information for employees on these new legislative provisions. The pamphlet will help you understand the nature of psychological harassment in the workplace.

No form of harassment is tolerated in Batshaw Youth and Family Centres for any employee. Unfortunately, although not tolerated, the phenomena still exists. The employer has the responsibility to prevent and put in place corrective measures so as to create and maintain a work environment which is free from any form of harassment. However, no individual can drop this responsibility, because maintaining a healthy and respectful work climate is everyone's concern.

As you know, we have been working for over a year on the development of a violence prevention program, which will include all forms of violence, including harassment. It will give the organization a policy on prevention of violence, while reaffirming zero tolerance. This proposed policy will be the object of a consultation within the organization in the fall. In the interim, the measures described below are reinforced and/or introduced.

If you are faced with a situation of harassment, we recommend that you tell the perpetrator, from the start, that his/her behaviour is improper and ask that it stop immediately. If this is not possible or if the improper behaviours continue, you may seek help from your supervisor or another person that you trust and who can help you to remedy the situation. If this is not possible or if the situation persists, you may refer the matter to Human Resources. Maureen Cohen, Manager of Human Resource Planning, is responsible for Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). You may also bring this to the Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services, Henri Derome. The options described above do not have to be followed in the order they

are presented, you choose the one you are most comfortable with and which seems more appropriate to your situation. At all times, you have access to the Employee Assistance Programs.

We want to assure you that Human Resource Services will treat your situation confidentially. The goal of the intervention is to put a stop to harassment and to ensure a healthy workplace. An official complaint can be made at any time. The official complaint is submitted either to Maureen Cohen or Henri Derome. In addition to support measures to put in place, an official complaint will trigger an investigation. The person responsible for the investigation will have good knowledge of the concepts of harassment and will either come from Batshaw or another organization. The investigator will not be in a position of authority with, nor report to the parties involved in this matter. The investigation report will be submitted to Human Resource Services, and they will determine who will render a decision and take necessary action.

In the case of psychological harassment, unionized employees may at all times deposit a grievance. Non-unionized employees and managers may at all times deposit a complaint with the *Commission des normes du travail*. The labour relations processes will start. The Act foresees a maximum delay of 90 days from the last incident for the deposit of a grievance or complaint to the *Commission des normes du travail*. These latter procedures will also be considered as an official complaint to Batshaw Human Resource Services; the investigation as described above will then begin.

We hope that this information will help you first to understand the main points of the changes in the law aimed at the prevention of psychological harassment, and second to learn about the orientation of Batshaw Centres and the supports available to you. For more information, please contact Maureen Cohen in Human Resource Services. If you are the victim of harassment, we strongly urge you to take advantage of our support program; silence will only make matters worse.