

DECLARATION OF SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES AND COMPLAINT HANDLING



Help and Information Center
on Sexual Harassment in the
Workplace (GAIHST)

The purpose of this statement is to inform the victims of criminal offences amongst our clientele about the services offered and the handling of complaints internally.

1. Our Mission

GAIHST's goal is to empower people who are experiencing harassment at work so that they can regain their dignity and their self-confidence. These people are generally going through a period where they feel extremely isolated, humiliated, betrayed and devalued, both on a personal and professional level. This usually leads to emotional, social and sometimes even medical difficulties. The GAIHST is there to support its clientele in different ways.

GAIHST's main objective is to break the isolation and the wall of silence that surrounds people who are living or have lived through such situations, and to raise public awareness on the problem of harassment in the workplace. Our expertise is mainly in non-unionized environments within small and medium-sized businesses in Quebec.

2. Our Values Towards our Clientele

Respect

At GAIHST, respect for individuals is a fundamental value that guides the way we act and behave towards our clients and partners.

Demonstrating openness to others and their ideas, promoting harmonious relationships, expressing our opinions without offending others, and showing listening skills and empathy are all ways of affirming this value on a daily basis. In a broader sense, respect is demonstrated in our individual and collective commitments to deadlines, timelines and the application of organizational policies, as well as in our agreements with our clients.

Professionalism

At GAIHST, professionalism is at the heart of our mission. It is the duty of each employee to carry out his or her activities as a professional, i.e. with competence, rigour and ethics. Within the organization, professionalism is a value that allows us to stand out and maintain quality services. Keeping our knowledge up to date, seeking out learning opportunities, being open to constructive feedback, and evaluating our clients' satisfaction are all ways in which we maintain a high level of professionalism.

Equity

At GAIHST, all team members have a duty to act fairly, impartially and without discrimination. We are committed to providing the same level of quality service to clients in all circumstances. In this context, it is also everyone's responsibility to ensure that our clients and partners are treated in accordance with this fundamental value

3. Our Help Services

The Help and Information Department

The first contact between clients and our organization is through this department, which evaluates their needs and the services that can be offered.

Active listening and moral support

Clients can contact the counsellors and talk to them freely about situations of harassment experienced at work, in complete confidentiality. This gives the person the opportunity to confide in them. The Help and Information Department makes sure that they offer an attentive ear.

Technical assistance

Since putting together a file is not always an easy task, our counsellors can assist clients throughout the process. This assistance can take the form of transmitting general information on the procedures to follow, offering help with the documentation to be drafted such as a letter to the employer or to the respondent, filling out a complaint form, etc.

Cafés-rencontres

The "Cafés-rencontres" were set up to meet the needs of people who have experienced sexual, psychological and/or discriminatory harassment in the workplace, so that they can meet and exchange together. The objective is to break the isolation, to allow a discussion based on the sharing of common experiences, to promote mutual aid and support, and to provide information on relevant topics. The Cafés-rencontres are hosted by GAIHST's counsellors and interns.

The Complaints Department

Clients whose files are transferred from the Help and Information Department to the Complaints Department following a decision taken in a team meeting can be accompanied and/or represented in the steps that may result from a situation of harassment in the workplace and that fall under our expertise.

This department can offer assistance at various stages of a mediation or conciliation process, a review or contestation process, an investigation process and/or a hearing before an administrative court.

The services offered by the Complaints Department are reassessed at each stage of the file. The counsellors ensure that the clientele is informed of their rights and the different options available to them. They accompany the clients in the evaluation of their needs and help them identify the best solution for them.

4. Our Commitments

As an organization that assists victims of workplace harassment, including victims of criminal offences, we are committed to respecting the seven rights of victims of criminal offences under the *Act to assist persons who are victims of criminal offences and to facilitate their recovery* (LAPVIC):¹

- Right to participate;
- Right to be considered;
- Right to protection;
- Right to privacy;
- Right to information;
- Right to compensation and restitution of property;
- Right to support and accompaniment.

GAIHST takes the necessary steps to ensure that a climate of mutual trust prevails and that clients are treated with respect and courtesy. The staff strives to provide personalized and efficient service.

We are also committed to dealing with complaints received in a timely manner and with respect for the rights of the victims of criminal offences.

All information relating to a complaint and the identity of the individuals involved must be treated with care and discretion, to the extent possible, unless such information is necessary to review the complaint, to conduct an investigation or to take further action.

5. Victim of a Criminal Offence

According to the LAPVIC, "a victim is any natural person who, as a result of the commission of a criminal offence against him or another person, suffers physical or psychological injury or material loss, whether or not the perpetrator of the offence is identified, arrested, prosecuted or convicted."²

Thus, this statement is aimed at our clientele who falls into this category.

¹<https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/P-9.2.1>

²*Loc. cit.*

6. Complaint Handling

If you are a **victim of a criminal offence** and you feel that we have failed to meet our commitments or if you have any comments about our services, please do not hesitate to contact your counsellor. If you are not satisfied with the results of this process, you may contact our Executive Director. She will contact you *within seven working days* of the filing of your complaint.

Who is responsible?

When you make a complaint, the Executive Director is responsible for handling it. However, if the complaint is directed towards the Director, the GAIHST's Board of Directors may handle it.

Complaint procedure

If you wish to file a complaint, you can send an email to the Executive Director of GAIHST at: **cindy.viau@gaihst.qc.ca** or at **514-526-0789, extension 223**.

When you file a complaint with GAIHST's Executive Director, you have certain responsibilities:

- To give us complete and precise information on the nature of the complaint and the persons concerned;
- To provide us with the required information (date, nature, persons concerned, etc.) without delay.

In order for us to fulfill our commitments, we need your cooperation. The fact that you maintain a respectful relationship with our staff helps us to maintain these commitments to our clientele.

Receipt of the complaint

We are committed to informing the victim of the outcome of their complaint *within a maximum of 30 business days, after receiving the complaint*. However, please note that certain decisions or actions may be confidential in nature and in this case, will not be disclosed by the management.

7. Our Contact Information



Help and Information Center
on Sexual Harassment in the
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Opening hours:
Monday to Friday
from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

7245 Alexandra street, unit 305
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H2R 2Y9
514-526-0789
info@gaihst.qc.ca

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