



Fact Sheet

Addressing Workplace Behaviour

The Behaviour Codes and Standards requires Parliamentarians and their staff (employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*) to treat others with dignity, courtesy, fairness and respect, and without bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or assault, and discrimination.

Where a Parliamentarian, or a colleague, experiences or becomes aware of behaviour that may be in contravention of the Behaviour Codes and Standards, they may decide to speak directly to the individual in relation to their behaviour. This can sometimes be the most effective way at addressing the situation as the individual may not have realised the effect their behaviour is having on others and provides them with an opportunity to change their behaviour.

This guide has been designed to support Parliamentarians and/or an employee in preparing for and undertaking a conversation in relation to workplace behaviour.

Preparing for the conversation

Where a Parliamentarians and/or an employee chooses to deal with the situation, they should consider:

- acting as early as possible
- raising their concerns informally and in a non-confrontational manner
- not engaging in retaliatory behaviour
- focusing on the unwanted behaviour and how it makes them feel, rather than the person, and
- being open to feedback.

Consideration should also be given as to the logistics of the conversation such as:

- the time and place of meeting ensuring safety and whether the discussion should occur face to face or via phone
- whether to bring a note pad and pen or laptop to take notes from the conversation
- whether a third party (support person) should be present during the discussion, and
- conducting the discussion in a private space to maintain appropriate confidentiality.

During the conversation

During the conversation:

- calmly outline and explain to the other person the behaviour you consider inappropriate and ask that it stop
- be clear and specific about the behaviour in question, and have some examples prepared
- be open to any feedback the other person may provide about your behaviour, and
- consider suggesting an alternate way for them to behave that is more acceptable, however whether this is appropriate will depend on the circumstances.

If the other person becomes too emotional (aggressive/angry/upset), and/or the environment becomes unsafe, consider having a short break or terminating the meeting.

Ending the conversation

When ending the conversation, consider:

- summarising the conversation, any agreements that may have been made during the meeting, and next steps to be taken (for example, send a follow up email to summarise the issues discussed in the meeting, and/or raise it with the relevant employing Parliamentarian or the PWSS)
- arranging another meeting to follow up if necessary.

Following the conversation

After the conversation it is important to consider providing a written summary of the conversation to the other party to ensure no part of the conversation was misinterpreted.

Support

Speaking directly with an individual in relation to appropriate workplace behaviour can be challenging.

Support can be sought from:

- The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service on 1800 747 977 (option 1).
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) on 1300 360 364.

Conversation example

Hello, thank you for agreeing to meet with me. [Introduce support person if present]

I need to raise a sensitive matter with you today and would like to request that you first hear me out before responding.

I have been reflecting on when you did [describe action] on [date].

Your behaviour made me feel [describe how you felt/reacted] because [provide any further context to help the person understand your point of view].

I acknowledge that [acknowledge any circumstances that may have impacted on their behaviour, including anything which may have provoked or escalated the situation].

I object to this behaviour and don't consider that it is consistent with the Behaviour Codes and Standards. I respectfully request for your behaviour to stop, and it not be repeated to me or anyone else.

An alternate way to respond that I would consider acceptable would have been [discuss any preferences you may have].

I would like to move forward with a positive working relationship and not let this situation impact on our interactions in the future.

Would you like to make any comments, or do you have any feedback for me?

[summarise any agreements and next steps]

Thank you again for meeting with me today.