

Have you experienced or witnessed HARASSMENT or DISCRIMINATION?

Know Your Rights:

Harassment and discrimination have no place in our professions. As a licensing candidate, you have the right to be free from harassment and discrimination in your workplace setting. This right is expansive, and includes protection from such behaviour whether enacted by an articling principal, paralegal field placement supervisor, other lawyers, paralegals, office staff and/or clients. This protection flows from overlapping responsibilities, duties and obligations that are owed to you as a licensing candidate, such as those found in the Law Society of Ontario's *Law Society's Rules of Professional Conduct*,¹ the *Ontario Human Rights Code*,² and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*,³ among others.

Part of these protections include the duty enacted by the Law Society that each legal workplace of at least 10 licensees develop, implement and maintain a human rights/diversity policy that, at minimum, addresses fair recruitment, retention and advancement. Legal workplaces with nine or fewer licensees are also encouraged to create such a policy. In addition, every legal workplace, regardless of size must prepare and review a policy on workplace violence and harassment at least annually, under the *OHSA*. These obligations are in addition to the general prohibition against discrimination under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviours:

Despite the above, you may find yourself the subject of harassing or discriminatory treatment. Such treatment includes but is not limited to being the recipient of:

- Belittling or condescending comments or jokes in verbal or written form.
- Unwanted sexual behaviour. This includes unwanted sexual actions and comments.
- Discrimination related to your race, sex, creed, disability, age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, family status, marital status, gender expression, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- Criticism about your personal characteristics, including your appearance.

Available Resources:

If you have experienced or witnessed any instances of harassment or discrimination during your articling placement, LPP work placement, or paralegal education field placement, you are not alone. Resources are available to help you clarify and navigate these issues and to provide you with individual support. Please find a list of available resources on the following pages.

¹ www.lso.ca/lawyer-conduct-rules

² www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19

³ www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01

Available Resources

Resource	What it can do	What it cannot do	Contact information
Discrimination and Harassment Counsel	<p>A confidential and free service run independently from the Law Society that provides information and assistance to anyone who may have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment based on human rights grounds by a lawyer, paralegal, or student member of the Law Society.</p> <p>Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to your concerns • Clarifying the issues • Reviewing your options and avenues of recourse • Explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each option • Referring you to other resources that may be of assistance • Where appropriate, serving as neutral facilitator in mediation or conciliation to resolve complaints • Keeping all information confidential. This service does not share any information with the Law Society except for anonymous statistical data on the number and nature of contacts in the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide legal advice • Provide personal counselling services. 	<p>Website: dhcounsel.on.ca/en-ca</p> <p>Toll-free line: 1-877-790-2200</p> <p>E-mail: assistance@dhcounsel.on.ca</p>
The Articling Office	<p>Provides confidential guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articling related-issues • Finding a new placement • Terminating or transferring a placement • Seeking a compassionate abridgment • Understanding your rights and obligations under the Lawyer Licensing Process Policies • Where appropriate, contacting your Principal to address concerns constructively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide legal advice • Provide counselling services • Investigate a complaint about a Principal or other licensee. 	<p>Toll-free line: 1-800-668-7380 ext.3315</p> <p>General line: 416-947-3315</p> <p>E-mail: articling@lso.ca</p>
The Paralegal Education Office	<p>Provides confidential guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paralegal Education related issues • Understanding your rights and obligations under the Paralegal Licensing Process Policies • Where appropriate, contacting your Paralegal Education Program provider to address concerns constructively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide legal advice • Provide counselling services • Investigate a complaint about a field placement supervisor or other licensee. 	<p>E-mail: ParalegalEducation@lso.ca</p>



Available Resources

Resource	What it can do	What it cannot do	Contact information
Member Assistance Program	<p>A free, confidential service that provides access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional counselling Coaching Online resources Peer volunteers <p>Also available for issues related to addictions, mental or physical health, work-life balance, career, family and more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide legal advice. 	<p>Website: myassistplan.com</p> <p>Toll-free line: 1.855.403.8922</p>
Distress and Crisis Ontario	<p>Distress Centres across Ontario provide listening support and referral services 24 hours a day, seven days a week through highly trained and committed volunteers.</p>		<p>For a list of local centres, please visit: dcontario.org/centres.html</p>
Complaint Services	<p>If you to choose to file a written complaint about a licensee, the Law Society will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and assess the complaint Provide you with a letter to let you know the complaint has been received Inform you if the Law Society cannot help with a complaint or deal with it as a professional conduct matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide legal advice Address complaints that do not relate to the professional conduct of a licensee (either a paralegal, lawyer or articling student). 	<p>Website: lso.ca/with.aspx?id=644</p> <p>Toll-free line: 1-800-268-7568</p> <p>General Line: 416-947-3310</p> <p>TTY Line: 416-644-4886</p>
Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre	<p>Provides free legal advice and assistance to individuals who have experienced discrimination under the <i>Ontario Human Rights Code</i> including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing an application at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), attending mediation at the HRTO, representing an individual at a hearing, and enforcing an order of the HRTO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide personal counselling Investigate complaints Address complaints that are not related to grounds covered by the <i>Ontario Human Right Code</i>. 	<p>Website: hrlsc.on.ca/en/welcome</p> <p>Toll-free line: 1-866-625-5179</p> <p>General Line: 416-597-4900</p>
Law Society Referral Service (LSRS)	<p>If you are seeking legal advice, the LSRS can help you find a lawyer or paralegal in a chosen area of law.</p> <p>Lawyers or paralegals participating in the service will offer you up to a half-hour free consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access to free legal services Provide more than one referral for the same legal issue. 	<p>Website: lsrs.lsuc.on.ca/lsrs</p> <p>E-mail: lsrs@lso.ca</p>

