

# NOT IN OUR SPACE!



**RESPECTFUL  
WORKSPACES**

**FOR LIVE  
PERFORMANCE  
PROFESSIONALS**

The **Not In Our Space!** campaign emerged from the feedback that Equity received from our membership regarding harassment in live performance spaces.

# OVERVIEW

Equity is proud to be supporting a global cultural shift that is taking place in live performance. By working in partnership with engagers, our goal is to improve working conditions for our members.

The concept of space is appropriate for several reasons. Physical space is fundamental for the rehearsal process, as well as for performances. When involved in productions, we all need to be aware of the way our behaviour affects our colleagues. As an ensemble operating in a shared space, we recognize that the actions of individuals impact the larger group, and that the best way to maintain a healthy space is through a commitment to shared oversight.

In this brochure, we define what the problem is, explain how we will affect change and, through The **Equity Support Spectrum**, offer tailored solutions.

Equity acknowledges the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres as a founding partner in this initiative.



# HARASSMENT IS...

Harassment is defined as offensive or intimidating behaviour that is unwelcome. It can occur in the form of bullying for any reason categorized as personal harassment or specifically as sexual harassment through any form of sexualized treatment. Harassment can also occur based on protected grounds under human rights legislation.

Legislation and collective agreements define harassment slightly differently, but according to overarching legal standards:

- The behaviour can be direct or indirect, obvious or subtle, active or passive.
- It can take the form of written, verbal, physical, electronic or any other form of expression.
- Harassment can be physical, psychological or a combination of the two.
- The impact on the subject of harassment, not the intent of the harasser, defines harassment. "I didn't mean to offend" or "It was meant as a joke" are not legitimate excuses.
- Harassment can be one incident or repeated incidents (it is often several incidents that occur over a period of time). Remember, a single incident can have a severe impact on the subject.

# THE LAW SAYS...



Discrimination is a form of harassment that excludes individuals or treats them unfairly because they are members of specific groups.

The Canadian Human Rights Act, passed in 1977, protects people in Canada from discrimination. Provincial and territorial human rights laws share many similarities with the Canadian Human Rights Act and apply many of the same principles. Human rights violations that relate to what is known as a protected ground may warrant the intervention of a provincial Human Rights Commission. It is important to be aware of the specific grounds within your province's legislation. The 11 grounds of discrimination protected under the Act are: **race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, and a conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspension has been ordered.**

Discrimination need not be overt in order to be unacceptable. Systemic discriminatory practices are often embedded in an institution or sector, and may be invisible to the people who do not experience it.

**To read more about the different forms of harassment, we encourage you to check out the Equity Respectful Workspace Policy at: [www.caea.com](http://www.caea.com)**

# HARASSMENT IS NOT...

The behaviours of individuals that are not considered harassment are those that arise from a relationship of mutual consent. Respectful workspace banter and interactions, such as a hug between friends, mutual flirtation and a compliment on physical appearance between peer colleagues where there is no power imbalance are not considered harassment. There would likely be a power imbalance between a director, producer, patron or engager and an actor or another production member.

In addition, the day-to-day issues related to performance (i.e., providing direction to an individual in order to have the person improve their performance) absenteeism, discipline and even dismissal – as long as they respect collective agreements, policies and legislation, are reasonable and not abusive or discriminatory – should not be interpreted as harassment. However, a workspace disagreement, when poorly handled or left unresolved, can lead to harassment.

# WHAT DO WE WANT TO CHANGE?

Artists working in live performance have a right to workspaces free from personal harassment, sexual harassment and violence. In a recent Equity survey to which more than 1,000 Equity members responded, it was reported that approximately half of the respondents had either been the subject of or witness to an occurrence of personal harassment or sexual harassment while working on an Equity contract.

Harassment is not a joke. It is an expression of perceived power by the harasser over another person, usually for reasons over which the subject has little or no control. It can manifest itself in overt violent behaviour, but more frequently, it reveals itself in subtle actions, which may or may not be intended but, nonetheless, have a negative impact.

Equity is committed to the pursuit of respectful workspaces for artists and supports those who have experienced or witnessed toxic situations. We will not tolerate nor condone behaviour that is meant to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual, or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Artists must speak out against harassment and stand together in addressing problems when they arise.

# HOW WILL CHANGE HAPPEN?

The **Not In Our Space!** campaign has some key objectives which include:

- Stopping harassment before it starts;
- Defining what harassment is/is not and differentiating between different forms of harassment;
- Emphasizing collective responsibility by encouraging subjects as well as witnesses to come forward when they experience or observe harassment;
- Empowering action through multiple reporting options and convenient access to engager and Equity support networks;
- Educating key support personnel.

## **HOW TO REACH EQUITY**

### **CANADIAN ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION**

#### **National Office**

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[info@caea.com](mailto:info@caea.com)

[www.caea.com](http://www.caea.com)

# HAVE QUESTIONS?

Equity has a variety of resources available that will better inform you about what harassment is, how you can proactively work with Equity staff to resolve workspace conflict and, if necessary, provide a process for initiating a formal complaint through the Association. The **Equity Support Spectrum** found on the reverse of this brochure provides multiple options for resolving harassment issues.

If you would like more in-depth knowledge about Equity's **Respectful Workspace Policy**, or if you are a stage manager or deputy on a production looking for tips on how to support cast members with harassment concerns, you are encouraged to visit the **Not In Our Space!** portal on the Equity homepage – [www.caea.com](http://www.caea.com).

Respectful Workspace Advisors (RWA) are trained Equity staff members who will listen to questions you might have about uncomfortable workspace situations and inform your decision-making. RWAs can be reached during National Office hours at **1-800-387-1856**. In emergency situations, Equity staff may also be reached after office hours at the same number by following the instructions.

