



**AFOA CANADA**

*Building a Community of Professionals*

## **PART 3**

# RESTORING PEACE IN THE WORKPLACE

*After a Harassment  
Claim*

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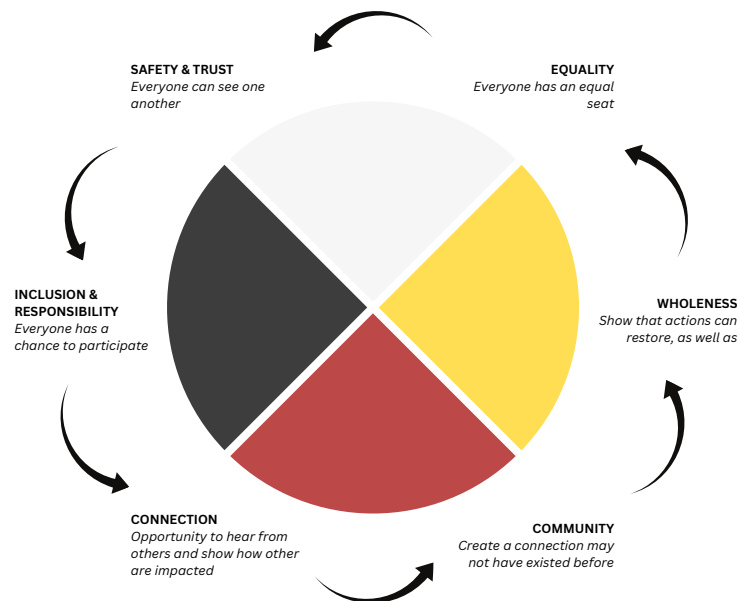
## THE AFTERMATH

No matter the organization, workplace culture, or outcome of the investigation, any harassment claim made in the workplace can result in hurt feelings, gossip, toxic environments, and damage to relationships. It is only through recognition and repair that we can heal workplace relationships and rebuild connections.

## CIRCLES TO RECONNECTION

Connected people can work together to repair harm, restore dignity, and feel whole again. Connection empowers the person who did harm to see that they can have a positive effect on others.

The use of circles is a restorative way of solving problems. Circles are a tool used to hold people accountable as well as facilitate decision-making. They are used to build and maintain relationships, and are meant to be collaborative, engaging, and to encourage input and opinions. The intent is to deepen people's understandings of one another. Symbolically, the circle has no beginning and no end (ever-evolving relationships) and no points (no positions of power within it).



After a harassment claim, it can be incredibly beneficial to facilitate circles with those involved to begin to repair any relational damage that may have been caused as a result of the claim, whether it was legislatively substantiated or not. A sharing circle is an opportunity to express feelings and identify what supports are needed. A facilitator would gather and combine ideas to the end goal of keeping people safe, healthy, and happy. Likewise, Healing Circles are an opportunity to guide emotional release by encouraging participants to let go of their negative feelings. A facilitator would identify what experiences are triggering negative emotions and what experiences can lead to positive emotions.

## REPAIR AND RESTORATION

When a person experiences conflict and change, they often go through a series of emotions similar to the seven stages on the Anishinaabek Grief Health and Loss Tool.

A harassment claim, whether substantiated or not, can impact not only the complainant or respondent in this way, but other people within the network of workplace relationships as well, to varying degrees.

Learning to notice and correct your behaviour is the biggest contribution you can make to supporting your workplace on a personal level, referred to as emotional intelligence. Using a combination of recognition and regulation practices, we can work on our personal and social skills to enhance self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation.

Regulation means you can correct or modify your behaviour after you recognize your emotional state. When you experience an emotional reaction, consider why you are feeling this way before you react.

Recognition means being aware of your emotional state and distinguishing when you may feel emotionally triggered by something. Furthermore, it is recognizing that your emotional responses may have negative impacts on others.

## ADDRESSING CONFLICT OPENLY

To begin to heal workplace relationships after a harassment claim, it is important to offer opportunities for parties to come together and share in open, honest, and vulnerable conversations to acknowledge what has happened, and how to rebuild their relationship(s) to forge trust, reconnection, and helping each other to feel whole again. You may need to use the services of a third party to mediate these discussions, or you may have an Elder or trusted community leader to help facilitate the restoration of relationships in knowledge sharing. Remember, these are delicate conversations and require a high level of respect, awareness, and sensitivity.



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[saymag.com/anishinaabek-grief-and-loss-healing-tool](http://saymag.com/anishinaabek-grief-and-loss-healing-tool)