

Context

Theatre artists face unique risks that are specific to their industry. Because the work can (and should) be challenging, experimental, exploratory, and bold, the line between camaraderie and transgression can sometimes become subjective. Though artistic freedom of expression is essential, the creative space must be a safe space.

These conditions are compounded by work precarity. Misconduct often goes unreported for fear of reprisal or not being believed, but no one should have to tolerate abuse or harassment, be silenced, or be alone.

Theatre practitioners are entitled to safe and respectful workplaces, at all stages of the process: from auditions to closing night parties, including office work, crewing, and rehearsals. The METAs' Anti-Harassment Policy seeks to ensure that our awards process does not tolerate abusive or harassing behaviour of any kind.

* The METAs Committee would like to acknowledge that this document was created using text from the [Not in Our Space](#) Respectful Workplace Campaign, as developed by the Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA) and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT). Equity's [Respectful Workplace Policy](#) is often quoted in the following pages. Other excerpts were inspired by the [Harassment & Bullying Policy](#) and [Code of Behaviour](#) of the Royal Court Theatre (UK). However, please note that the views expressed in this document represent solely those of the METAs Committee.

METAC (METAs Committee)

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Application

This Policy applies to all companies that have successfully registered a production for METAs consideration and to the individuals involved in these productions, as credited by the producing companies.

It is the responsibility of all producers, board members, managers, and staff of METAs registered companies to ensure that this Policy is clearly communicated to, and upheld by, anyone involved in their METAs registered productions.

The METAs Anti-Harassment Policy also applies to the individuals who make up the Montreal English Theatre Awards organization. This includes (but not limited to) current and former:

- members of the METAs Board of Directors;
- members of the METAs Committee;
- members of the METAs Juries;
- METAs registered companies;
- METAs Nominees, Recipients, and Honorees;
- METAs volunteers;
- etc.

Definitions

Conduct or comments become harassment when they are unwelcome to others or make others feel uncomfortable or threatened, even if they are intended as a joke. No matter the intention, it's the impact that counts.

Harassment includes any behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, humiliating, or hostile, which interferes with an individual's work, sexualizes the workplace, or causes stress, anxiety, fear, or sickness on the part of the harassed person.

Harassment may include (but is not limited to):

- physically intimidating behaviour and/or threats;
- use of profanity (swearing), vulgarity;
- ridiculing, taunting, belittling, or humiliating another person;
- derogatory name-calling;
- inappropriate or insulting remarks, gestures, jokes, innuendo or taunting;
- unwanted questions or comments about a person's private life;
- posting or display of materials, articles, or graffiti (including online / social media) which may cause humiliation, offence, or embarrassment.

Bullying is a distinct form of personal harassment and may include (but is not limited to):

- loud, abusive behaviour;
- unjustified criticism;
- repeated delegation of demeaning tasks;
- shunning behaviours (including withholding information, ganging up, deliberate isolation from colleagues, or exclusion from joint activities).

Definitions (continued)

Sexual harassment refers to any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender expression, affecting the dignity of individuals at work, creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexualized working environment.

Sexual misconduct may include (but is not limited to):

- insinuating and sexualized remarks;
- unwanted touching or inappropriate physical contact;
- grabbing, patting, hugging, or pinching;
- leering, whistling or other suggestive or insulting sounds;
- suggestive gestures or jokes;
- derogatory remarks about a person's body, manner, or sexual activities;
- showing, sending, or displaying of pornography;
- demand for sexual attention;
- promise of advantage for sexual concessions;
- threat of disadvantage for rejection of advances;
- insult after rejection of an advance and / or repeated propositions;
- physical force or threat of force, for sexual action.

This list is not exhaustive and we recognize that unwanted sexual attention can take many forms.

Guiding Principles

By registering for the METAs, you agree with the following statements:

- Each individual has a right to a working environment which encourages respectful, considerate, dignified, and non-sexualized working relationships.
- Everyone is responsible for their own behaviour in this regard and any threatening, aggressive, bullying behaviour or unwanted sexual attention, language, or behaviour should result in disciplinary action.
- Harassment based on age, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, or harassment of a sexual nature, is unlawful and may render persons liable for legal action or even criminal proceedings.
- Companies should empower their personnel with a clear policy of their own, which raises awareness through education and dialogue, providing support for those who have experienced or witnessed toxic behaviours in the workplace and offering tools to prevent bullying and harassment.
- Companies should have an open, clear reporting structure and offer different steps that need to be taken to resolve an incident.
- Everyone should be encouraged to report instances of abuse or harassment – witnessed or experienced – and encourage their peers to do the same.

Code of Behaviour

Below are some codes of behaviour addressing areas of risk. This is only a beginning; we invite companies to contribute to this list of inappropriate conduct, and come up with their own specific policies to prevent work-related abuse and harassment.

- It is never appropriate for someone in a junior role to be asked by someone in a position of seniority to work outside hours in their private home.
- It is never appropriate to verbally sexually objectify anyone's body in a rehearsal room or theatre.
- It is never appropriate for an actor to be made to feel vulnerable through nudity, undress, or costuming.
- It is never appropriate to send overly personal or suggestive communications to a colleague.
- It is never appropriate to initiate unwanted intimate physical contact.
- It is never appropriate to push people to share their personal experiences to deepen the work. If it is offered, it has to remain within the trust of the working room.

Duty to Investigate

The METAs Committee will ensure that an impartial investigation is conducted into incidents and complaints of harassment. An investigation may even be conducted when there is no complaint, if knowledge or rumours of harassment are affecting the METAs workplace.

Investigation Report

The outcome of the investigation will be detailed in a confidential report, which the METAs Committee will keep for future reference. An outline of the report will be communicated to the complainant and to the accused. However, copies of the investigation report will not be provided unless the METAs is compelled to by law (e.g. a court order, or a valid access to information request).

Disciplinary Measures

When a METAs' investigation concludes that misconduct was established, the following disciplinary measures may be applied.

In the case of an individual employed by, volunteering for, or liaising with the METAs:

- Immediate removal of the accused individual from the organization, and immediate termination of their contract (when applicable);

In the case of a METAs registered company, failure to provide a harassment-free environment for the individuals involved in a METAs registered production could result in the following disciplinary measures:

- Individuals accused of abuse or harassment could be removed from the credits of all METAs registered productions, preventing them from receiving METAs Nominations.
- METAs registered companies run by individuals accused of abuse or harassment could have their METAs registration cancelled, making their production(s) ineligible for METAs consideration.
- In some instances, a company or individual who is a previous METAs Nominee, Recipient, or Honoree could be stripped of their award and removed from the official list of METAs Nominees, Recipients, and Honorees, if they have been accused of abuse or harassment.

Each reported instance will be investigated and assessed individually. All, some, or none of these measures may be applied.

Community Resources

For more information on abuse and harassment in our creative spaces and to find out what you can do about it, please visit the following websites or contact these organisations.

[Equity's Respectful Workplace Policy](#)

[Equity's Not in Our Space Anti-Harassment and Respectful Workplace Campaign](#)

[Equity's Not in Our Space - Respectful Workplace Statement](#)

[PACT - Not in Our Space](#)

[The Equity Support Spectrum](#)

[Intimacy Rehearsal and Performance Practice](#)

[Theatre Arts Collective \(TAC\) for Consent and Respect \(Calgary\): Sexuality in Auditions - Best Practices Guidelines](#)

[Montreal Sexual Assault Centre](#)

514 934-4504 / 1 888 933-9007

Equity Respectful Workspace Advisor (RWA)

1 800 387-1856