

TVAC Takes a Stand Against Bullying

While recognizing the right to freedom of opinion and expression of every individual, and the value provided by sharing diverse opinions, TVAC wants to inform you of its proactive approach against bullying. The increasing popularity of social media has had the effect of giving a new platform for social undermining. Large or small, every organization can be at risk of such behaviours.

Understanding Bullying

Bullying is the opposite of social support. It refers to intentional offenses aimed at destroying another's favourable reputation, their ability to accomplish their tasks, or their ability to build and maintain positive relationships. Everyone has a view of bullying but everybody's view will differ slightly.

There are different behaviours associated to many forms of bullying. The ones most encountered in an organization setting are:

- **Disrespecting and Devaluing the individual or the organization** – often through disrespectful and devaluing language or verbal abuse;
- **Threat to professional status** – including belittling opinions, public professional humiliation, accusations regarding lack of effort, etc.;
- **Threat to personal standing of an individual or the organization** – including undermining (personal) integrity, destructive innuendo and sarcasm, making inappropriate jokes about target, persistent teasing, name calling, insults, and intimidation.

And can be done through different tactics, among others:

- Falsely accusing for “errors” not actually made;

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- Disregarding satisfactory or exemplary quality of completed work despite evidence (discrediting);
 - Harshly and constantly criticizing, having a different standard for the target;
 - Starting, or failing to stop, destructive rumours or gossip about the person or organization;
 - Encouraging people to turn against the person or organization.

The forms of bullying that can be encountered are many. Here are a few:

- **Legal bullying** – the bringing of a vexatious legal action to control and punish a person or an organization. It is one of the nastiest form of bullying;
- **Client/Member bullying** – an employee is bullied by those they serve;
- **Cyber bullying** – communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, or humiliate the recipient. It is defined in legal glossaries as:
 - *Actions that use information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm a person or an organization.*
 - *The use of internet service and mobile technologies such as web pages and discussion groups (as well as instant messaging or SMS text messages) with the intention of harming a person or an organization.*

Why does it happen and why is it important to address the issue of bullying?

Bullying in an organization may happen due to insecurities felt by the offender. The offender may disparage the ideas of others in an attempt to make up for his/her own lack of creativity, involvement, positive input or it may stem from a desire to feel powerful. Bullying in an organization creates a negative atmosphere among the members and the employees and hurts

people's ability to do their jobs well. It places their health, well-being, safety and career at risk and it interferes with job performance and creates a toxic state-of-mind environment.

TVAC'S ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

TVAC has a legal responsibility to its employees and must undertake to provide a work environment that is free of harassment. Therefore, TVAC will not tolerate verbal abuses, intimidation or discrediting of its employees, its members, its supporters, or the Association itself. There will be no tolerance for harassment or actions that may compromise the future of the Association by creating ill will between the Association, its employees, its members and its supporters.

Non-respect of this policy may result in the application of the Articles 3.4 and 3.6 of TVAC's By-Laws. The Board has the authority to suspend or expel any Member from TVAC on a number of grounds as specified in Article 3.6 of TVAC's By-Laws.

TVAC'S "ANTI-BULLYING" POLICY'S PROCEDURE **Proposed to the Board of Directors**

It is the responsibility of each Board member to have a proactive attitude on the matter. As soon as a member of the Board is made aware of a bullying behaviour, he/she must inform the Board as well as the Head Office and the Board will decide on which procedure to apply in order to solve the issue.

Very often, undermining behaviours are accomplished via seemingly casual conversations (in person, e-mails or post on social medias) in which one or more persons disparage another not present (a member, an employee, a supporter, or the Association). **Bullying is a difficult thing to control, but it must be addressed. It is important to establish and let the members know of TVAC's "anti-bullying" policy.**

In order to be successful, experts suggest adopting these procedures:

Post policies publicly. Make sure the members are aware of all aspects of the organization’s “anti-bullying” policy. That way, members cannot claim they were unaware that certain behaviours were not allowed.

Be approachable. Invite members to contact the Head Office or their board representatives if they have concerns. Let members know that our door is open. Keep that open-door policy no matter what members may want to discuss with us. Members who feel an organization is listening will feel empowered instead of powerless and may have less incentive to lash out.

Contact privately and discreetly. If the Board decides to contact privately and discreetly a member who has shown undermining behaviours towards other members, employees, supporters, or the Association itself, the Board should appoint a representative (member of the Board) to initiate contact and afterwards, report to the Board.

Some members will listen and discuss the situation with a Board representative. These members may be open to changing their behaviour. Other members, when confronted by a Board representative about their undermining behaviour, will be unreceptive.

Consider removal. In the case of an unreceptive member, a letter signed by the Board should be sent to the member to firmly discourage his/her behaviour and remind him/her of TVAC’s “anti-bullying” policy. If a member continues his/her undermining behaviour, the Board may need to consider having to remove this member from the register of members of the Association (based on Articles 3.4 and 3.6 of TVAC’s By-Laws).

3.4 Termination of Membership

A Membership in the Corporation is terminated when:

- (a) the Member ceases to meet the conditions set out in Section 3.1 above;

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- (b) the Member dies, or is liquidated or dissolved, as the case may be;
 - (c) the Member resigns by delivering a written resignation to the President in which case such resignation shall be effective on the date specified in the resignation;
 - (d) the Member is expelled or their Membership is otherwise terminated in accordance with the Articles or By-laws; or
 - (e) the Corporation is liquidated or dissolved under the Act.

3.5 Effect of Termination of Membership

Subject to the Articles, upon any termination of membership, the rights of the Member, including any rights in the property of the Corporation, automatically cease to exist.

3.6 Discipline of Members

- (a) The Board shall have authority to suspend or expel any Member from the Corporation on any one or more of the following grounds:
 - (i) violating any provision of the Articles, By-laws, or written policies of the Corporation;
 - (ii) carrying out any conduct which may be detrimental to the Corporation as determined by the Board in its sole discretion;
 - (iii) for any other reason that the Board in its sole and absolute discretion considers to be reasonable, having regard to the purposes of the Corporation.
- (b) In the event that the Board determines that a Member should be suspended or expelled from Membership in the Corporation, the President, or such other Officer as may be designated by the Board, shall provide ten (10) days' written

notice of suspension or expulsion to the Member and shall provide reasons for the proposed suspension or expulsion. The Member may make written submissions to the President, or such other Officer as may be designated by the Board, in response to the notice received within such ten (10) day period. In the event that no written submissions are received by the President, the President, or such other Officer as may be designated by the Board, may proceed to notify the Member that the Member is suspended or expelled from Membership in the Corporation. If written submissions are received in accordance with this section, the Board will consider such submissions in arriving at a final decision and shall notify the Member concerning such final decision within a further ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the submissions. The Board's decision shall be final and binding on the Member, without any further right of appeal.

Policy as amended adopted unanimously by the Board of Directors on May 6, 2017.