

TOOL 4.10

Identify Key Staff for GBVH Focal Points and Contact Team

- » **GOAL:** Offers guidance on selecting staff to serve as focal points
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Senior Management and Human Resources

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) focal points are designated company representatives who can act as the first point of contact for workplace GBVH issues. Ask focal points to work as a team (contact team) so that they can support each other in this role and to prevent overreliance on individuals.

Choose staff that are respected in the workplace. Include staff who have a role in employee and community wellbeing (e.g., community outreach, employee assistance programs, internal communications, HR, legal, medical, OHS, gender focal points, security, and unions).

The GBVH Focal Points/Contact Team can:

- Raise general awareness about workplace GBVH
- Respond to disclosures of violence and harassment in a survivor-centered way
- Support and coordinate employee access to available workplace and community support from the first point of contact to when they no longer require assistance
- Encourage and accept notification from employees about perpetrators in the workplace and appropriately escalate these allegations so that they can be investigated
- Identify, through participation in monitoring and evaluation activities, any barriers to accessing GBVH policies that employees may face, and address the barriers identified.

Diversity matters. Remember to include focal points of all genders so employees can be comfortable speaking about issues that they might not want to disclose to people of the same or other genders. Try to include employees that reflect the ethnic and religious diversity of the workforce. It may also be important to consider other elements of diversity and inclusion (e.g., diverse age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.).

Does seniority matter when choosing focal points? Levels of seniority are not important if the staff you choose are supported to fulfil their role. It is however important to include one senior management sponsor to help ensure management engagement and oversight of respectful workplaces initiatives. This sponsor should be a person with oversight of focal points and who can support them to undertake their duties in line with company GBVH commitments.

How many focal points should be on a contact team? It is important to have an adequate number of employees on the contact team so that all employees have access to a team member when required. The number of focal points needed will depend on the size of the company and its geographic spread⁷⁸. There should ideally be a focal point that can be accessed face to face by any employee at any time. The company should consider having focal points at each location and focal point on all shifts.

How do we choose our focal points? Management can nominate focal points (as long as staff can choose not to participate), call for expressions of interest, or hold elections.

Participation must be voluntary. Do not force staff to lead GBVH initiatives, as many people are affected by GBVH and may not want to be on the contact team. Do not ask people for reasons if they do not want to be on the contact team.

Key considerations:

1. It is important that the contact team is resourced to do its job well. Ensure that its members have paid time to undertake their focal point role, that their work program reflects their responsibilities, and that their responsibilities are also discussed and acknowledged in performance reviews.
2. Provide training and support so focal points feel confident in performing their duties. **TOOL 4.11** offers guidance on training GBVH focal points. Training should be led by experts (possibly external), and it should cover definitions and dynamics of workplace violence and harassment and build the focal points' skills to undertake their responsibilities (see above). Training must be based in a survivor-centered approach, as training that is not survivor-centered is likely to cause harm. Consider forming relationships with service providers such as counselors so that focal points have immediate access to support if needed. See **TOOL 4.5** for further guidance on selecting service providers.

⁷⁸ In small businesses, the functions of the contact team may be performed by a single focal point.