

ODS Code of Conduct

[ODS Code of Conduct](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What we strive for](#)

[Workplace policies](#)

[Respectful Workplace Policy](#)

[ODS Policy](#)

[Retaliation against complainants](#)

[How to address Code of Conduct concerns](#)

[How to report harassment](#)

[Credits](#)

Introduction

The Ontario Digital Service (ODS) is committed to building a safe, welcoming, inclusive, consent-based and harassment-free culture for everyone.

This Code of Conduct is how we are putting these principles into action. We want our team and our workplace culture to reflect and celebrate the diversity of the communities we serve.

What we strive for

We strive to create a welcoming and inclusive culture that empowers people to provide outstanding public service. That kind of atmosphere requires an open exchange of ideas balanced by thoughtful guidelines. We know our team will include and work with our colleagues in ways that we haven't even thought of.

We embrace these guiding principles:

1. Practice empathy and humility.
2. Assume competence in your colleagues, clients and the public.
3. Assume that everyone we work with is doing their best work for the public.
4. Listen carefully and actively.
5. Assume positive intent, ask questions, and seek to understand context

6. Be mindful of the impact your words, actions and approaches have on other people.
7. Listen as much as you speak.
8. Actively practice inclusion in your work.

Who this applies to

The ODS Code of Conduct applies to ODS staff wherever they are working, and those working within ODS spaces, including:

- Physical offices
- Events and meetings
- All of our online forums and virtual collaboration tools, including:
 - Chat services (e.g. Slack, Yammer)
 - Mailing lists and email
 - Code repositories (e.g. Github, Gitlab)
 - Collaborative documents (e.g. Jira conversation threads, Google docs)
 - Video and audio conferences (e.g. Zoom, appear.in)

Workplace policies

We expect everyone on the ODS team and those in ODS spaces to follow the ODS Code of Conduct and other OPS policies including:

- [Respectful Workplace Policy](#)
- [Anti-Racism Policy](#)
- Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act Part III.0.1](#)

For a complete list of OPS policies, visit [InsideOPS](#).

Our policies forbid:

- Discrimination, defined as any practice or behaviour, whether intentional or not, which has a negative impact on an individual or group.
- Sexual and non-sexual workplace harassment and misconduct, as is consistent with the [Occupational Health and Safety Act Part III.0.1](#)
- Creating or contributing to a negative, hostile or unpleasant workplace due to harassment or discriminatory comments or conduct

- Reprisal against anyone for exercising a right under the OPS Respectful Workplace Policy

Types of discrimination

Discrimination can be based on any bias. The Canadian Human Rights Act states

“that all individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on:

- race
- national or ethnic origin
- colour
- religion
- age
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender identity or expression
- marital status
- family status
- genetic characteristics
- disability
- conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.”

In addition to the above mentioned legally protected classes we include the following as unacceptable discrimination based on:

- mental illness
- socioeconomic status or background
- neuro(a)typicality
- physical appearance
- body size
- clothing
- political affiliation

Examples of discriminatory behaviours

Discrimination undermines the culture we want to foster because it diminishes safety (physical and psychological) in a collaborative workplace. The following is just a few examples to help you recognize behaviours that contravene our policies.

Unwanted physical contact and implied physical contact.

Example:

- Physical contact and simulated physical contact (eg, text descriptions like **backrub**) without consent or after a request to stop.

Sustained disruption in meetings, talks, chatrooms and discussions

- Repeatedly interrupting or talking over someone else.
- Sustained off-topic discussion
- Not providing space for others to contribute

Patronizing language or behaviour

- Intentionally or repeatedly referring to people in a way that rejects the validity of their gender identity; for instance, by using 'dead' or rejected names, incorrect pronouns or forms of address (misgendering)
- Referring to an individual in a way that demeans or challenges the validity of their racial identity
- Pedantic corrections that don't contribute to the conversation (for example, when someone is using "democracy" to mean "participatory government," saying "well actually, we're not a democracy; we're a constitutional monarchy.")
- Assuming that particular people or groups need concepts defined or explained to them. (It's great to be sensitive to the fact that clients and coworkers may not be familiar with technical or government terms you use every day, but stereotyping people can be patronizing.)
- Assuming that particular groups of people are technically unskilled ("So easy your grandparents could do it.")
- The use of racially charged or ableist language to describe an individual or thing such as "thug", "ghetto", or "lame"
- Feigning surprise at someone's lack of knowledge or awareness about a topic
- Mocking someone's real or perceived accent or first language
- Clothing that has appropriated styling or derogatory language.

Code of Conduct concerns

If you experience or see behaviour that is contrary to the ODS Code of Conduct, you can take steps to address your concerns.

We grow and learn as a community through the process of questioning and reflection. Our process is intended to be restorative and reconciliatory.

“Restorative justice is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behaviour. It is best accomplished through cooperative processes that include all stakeholders. This can lead to transformation of people, relationships and communities.” [Centre for Justice and Reconciliation](#)

Tenants of Restorative Justice

- The inclusion of all parties
- Encountering the other side
- Making amends for the harm
- Reintegration of the parties into their work together

You can find out more about restorative justice practices at the [Centre for Justice and Reconciliation](#)

Where to get help

Reach out to supervisors, management representatives or members of the People Board for help. Here is a document that may support you through your process.

We will listen to your concerns and follow the OPS guidelines for supervisors and People Board members to help you solve Code of Conduct concerns. We encourage you to report issues promptly. We will respect your privacy and confidentiality.

Credits

The ODS is greatly appreciative of the GSA Technology Transformation Service of the United States' Government who gave us advice and drafts on this Code of Conduct.