



Northern California Region
of Narcotics Anonymous
1820 Walters Court, Suite A-1
Fairfield, CA 94533-2737

REGIONAL POLICY ON HARASSMENT and DISCRIMINATION

Approved by NCRSO Board Directors on 10/01/16

Approved by NCRSC 09/10/2016.

Approved by NCCNA 08/20/2016

The Northern California Region of Narcotics Anonymous, and all of its committees and work groups are committed to providing an environment free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, can contribute fully, and have equal opportunities.

Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, every person has the right to be free from harassment and discrimination. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated, condoned, or ignored. If a claim of harassment or discrimination is brought forth, the claim will be treated with respect, investigated, and managed quickly and respectfully, including appropriate action to remedy any [proven] violation of this policy. The Northern California Region as a whole is committed to a comprehensive strategy to address harassment and discrimination, including:

- Provide training, education and information to make sure that members and employees know their rights and responsibilities;
- Provide an effective and fair complaints procedure;
- Promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Educate the members of the Northern California Regional Service Committees (NCRSC) of the types and forms of harassment. Examples can be found at the end of this policy in Appendix A.
2. Make sure that any members or special workers within the Northern California Regional Service Committees and Northern California Regional Service Office are aware that harassment and discrimination are unacceptable practices and are incompatible with the "Atmosphere of Recovery", which is striving to maintain fellowship in all meetings.
3. Establish a commitment to maintain an "Atmosphere of Recovery" in all areas of the regional organization by acknowledging that meetings should be free of all forms of discrimination and harassment.
4. Define what is seen as possible forms of harassment and discrimination, including examples for everyone to understand.
5. Establish a safe and confidential method for reporting any violation or possible violation of this policy.
6. Define the process and guidelines for handling these reports in a timely manner. This process will include how to file a complaint, and the steps that it will take to investigate, document, report, and establish some form of resolution.
7. This policy will provide ways to report outside the Northern California Region, if a member feels that the actions decided internally were inadequate.

COMPLAINT PROCESS:

Filing a complaint:

The Northern California Region has established that there are multiple ways to file a complaint regarding any form of harassment or inappropriate behaviors on our committees. The following is a list of the multiple ways that a complaint can be filed.

- Verbally report to the chair of the committee where the incident is taking or took place, or to any member of the Board of Directors if uncomfortable reporting this to the chair of the committee.
- Turn in a written complaint to the chair of the committee where the incident is taking or took place.
- Complete a complaint form that is available from a link on [Northern California Regional website](#).
 - This form will be sent to a designated member of the Board of Directors, selected by the Board of Directors, to confidentially handle these complaints.

Response to complaints:

All complaints will be taken seriously and will receive an immediate response, if possible.

The Commitment of Leadership of all the Northern California Regional Committees is that:

- A response will be received immediately to acknowledge the complaint and to notify the member that an investigation will take place, if necessary;
- All investigations will be handled as quietly, respectfully, and with the highest level of confidentiality only involving the parties that need to know;
- Any investigations will be concluded within 60 days or less;
- All written complaints will be documented by the Board of Directors, regardless of who received the complaint.

Taking action:

If a complaint is verbally given to the chair or vice chair of a committee, the chair and vice chair of that committee will lead a quick investigation, if deemed appropriate. If action can be taken immediately to curtail or change the behavior, this should happen. If no further problems occur, the complaint will be closed, and a short documented note will be provided to the Board of Directors, for tracking procedures only. The details will remain confidential.

If the complaint is in writing or cannot be handled quickly and successfully, the next steps in the investigation are defined as follows:

The investigation:

- All complaints are to be confidential and will not be discussed at any committee level, unless, and until, a decision on how to handle the complaint is determined and that decision involves reporting to the larger committee. The privacy and confidentiality of the members must be kept in trust throughout the process.
- The fact that a complaint was received will be reported to Regional Leadership, but the contents of the complaint will not be divulged, unless necessary.
- An investigation will be confidentially handled by the designated officer of the Board of Directors who is assigned to receive and investigate all complaints. The designated officer will have the option to decide whether to involve leadership on any committees, including the Board of Directors.
- Every stage of the investigation will be documented by the designated officer.

- The parties involved will be confidentially interviewed.
- The complainant will be asked what they believe will be the correct resolution, and if deemed appropriate by the designated officer this resolution will be implemented.

After investigation completion:

- Remedial action can involve the following:
 - requirement to review the policy as it relates to the harassment;
 - presentation of the Atmosphere of Recovery Workshop at the committee level;
 - request to the service committee involved to have the named individual in the complaint removed from the position on the committee.
- Final resolution will always be reported to the appropriate committees, if deemed necessary by the designated officer.
- Documentation regarding the investigation will be kept electronically by the Board of Directors for at least five years. These documents will be kept completely confidential, unless required to disclose by law.

Additional action:

If the complainant feels that the action was unsatisfactory, the following actions are available.

- Request a review by the full Board of Directors;
- File a complaint with the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Again, the Northern California Region of Narcotics Anonymous, and all of its committees and work groups are committed to providing an environment free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, can contribute fully, and have equal opportunities.

APPENDIX A:

Examples of harassment include:

- Epithets, remarks, jokes, or innuendos related to a person's race, gender identity, gender expression, sex, disability, sexual orientation, creed, age, or any other ground protected by Title VII [or the Fair Employment and Housing Act].
- Posting or circulating offensive pictures, graffiti, or materials, whether in print form, via email, or other electronic means.
- Singling out a person for humiliating or demeaning "teasing" or jokes because they are a member of a *Title VII*-protected group. (see next section of this document).
- Comments ridiculing a person because of characteristics that are related to a ground of discrimination. For example, this could include comments about a person's dress, speech, or other practices that may be related to their sex, race, gender identity, or creed.

If a person does not explicitly object to harassing behavior, or appears to be going along with it, this does not mean that the behavior is okay. The behavior could still be considered harassment under Title VII.

Sexual and gender-based harassment is a form of harassment that can include:

- Gender-related comments about a person's physical characteristics or mannerisms
- Paternalism based on gender, which a person feels undermines his or her self-respect or position of responsibility
- Unwelcome physical contact
- Suggestive or offensive remarks or innuendoes about members of a specific gender
- Propositions of physical intimacy
- Gender-related verbal abuse, threats, or taunting
- Leering or inappropriate staring
- Bragging about sexual prowess and/or questions or discussions about sexual activities
- Offensive jokes or comments of a sexual nature about an individual.
- Rough and vulgar humor or language related to gender
- Display of sexually offensive pictures, graffiti, or other materials, including through electronic means
- Demands for dates and/or sexual favors

Sexual solicitation: This policy prohibits sexual solicitations or advances by anyone who is in a position to grant or deny a benefit to the recipient of the solicitation or advance. This includes leadership on all the Northern California Committees, as well as any member or employee where one individual is in a position to grant or deny a benefit to the other. Reprisals for rejecting such advances or solicitations are also not allowed.

Poisoned environment: A poisoned environment is created by comments or conduct (including comments or conduct that are condoned or allowed to continue when brought to the attention of leadership) that create a discriminatory environment. The comments or conduct need not be directed at a specific person, and may be from any person, regardless of position or status. A single comment or action, if sufficiently serious, may create a poisoned environment.

Title VII-protected group: This policy prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following grounds, and any combination of these grounds. This list is based on grounds that were protected by law as of the date of approval of this policy and will be updated as needed.

- Age
- Creed (religion)
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Family status (such as being in a parent-child relationship)
- Marital status (including married, single, widowed, divorced, separated, or living in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage, whether in a same-sex or opposite-sex relationship)
- Disability (including mental, physical, developmental, or learning disabilities)
- Race
- Ancestry
- Place of origin
- Ethnic origin
- Citizenship
- Color
- Record of offences (criminal conviction for a provincial offence or for an offence for which a pardon has been received)
- Association or relationship with a person identified by one of the above grounds
- Perception that one of the above grounds applies