



# ToolKit: Tips for Interviews

## 1. PHYSICAL SET-UP

- Private Location
- Copies of relevant documents.
- Water, tissues

## 2. SCHEDULING

- Be flexible in terms of scheduling interviews, particularly to respond to confidentiality concerns, but balance this consideration against necessity of a completing the interview in a timely manner.

## 3. BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Review relevant policies/procedures and the incident.
- Set up formal interview times with parties involved, advising them of their right to be accompanied by a support person during the interview.
- Arrange for someone impartial (e.g. another member of management team) to be a scribe.
- Advise parties to prepare a witness list, which you will receive during their interview.

## 4. INTERVIEWS

- Interview each party separately
- If interviews of parties are back-to-back, allow time so that the parties are not obliged to come into contact while exiting/waiting for interview.
- Promise (and demand) confidentiality from the parties, but explain that he/she cannot remain anonymous.
- Outline purpose of interview.
- Establish and elicit complete details and nature of incident.
- Receive list of witnesses.
- Share any discrepancies with parties (after witness interviews) and provide a further opportunity to each to respond.

## 5. WITNESS INTERVIEWS

- Employ a consistent process with all witnesses.
- Prepare questions and issues to canvass in advance.
- Be prepared to put, verbatim, specific statements/observations the parties attribute to the witness being interviewed and carefully elicit response/ confirmation/denial.
- Emphasize the witnesses' duty of confidentiality.
- Explain the possibility that a witness could, if necessary, be required to give the evidence under oath and in a court or arbitral setting.
- Ask witnesses to report observations as opposed to opinions.
- Use fact based statements vs. global statements (late on October 3rd, vs. Always late)
- Outline complaint generally to provide context but avoid revealing specific details.
- Share details relevant to this witness only.
- Ask for corroborating evidence where applicable (memos, notes, e-mail, etc.)
- Do not disclose identity of other witnesses.

Adopted from: Coleman, Sarah. A., Otten, Allyson, L. "An Educator's Guide to Understanding Workplace Harassment."