**Workplace Hostility Fact Sheet**

**Definition of Workplace Hostility:** A form of violence. It is also known as co-worker abuse or workplace bullying. Workplace Hostility is aggressive behavior demonstrated by individuals or group members towards another individual or group. *Workplace hostility in the workplace is destructive and unacceptable behavior.* It includes all acts of unkindness, discourtesy, sabotage, divisiveness, infighting, lack of cohesiveness, scapegoating and criticism. For example:

- Belittling gestures e.g. deliberate eye-rolling, folding arms, staring into space when communication is attempted; body language aimed to discomfort the other
- Verbal abuse including name calling, threatening, intimidating, dismissing, belittling, undermining, humorous ‘put downs’
- Gossiping (destructive, negative, nasty talk), talking behind the back, backbiting
- Sarcastic comments
- Fault finding/nitpicking (except when requiring professional/clinical feedback)
- Ignoring or minimizing another’s concerns
- Slurs and jokes based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation ‘Freezing out’ excluding from work and social activities and conversation. Comments that devalue people's area of practice, women, others different from the ‘norm’. Disinterest, discouragement and withholding support
- Behaviors that seek to control/dominance (power ‘over’ rather than power ‘with’)
- Elitist attitudes about work area, education, experience; a “better than” attitude
- Physical behavior such as intimidation using posture, hitting or assault.

Workplace hostility can result in:

- Poor self esteem
- Hypertension, nervous conditions, sleep disorders
- Eating disorders
- Apathy, disconnectedness, depression, low morale, suicide (successful or not)
- Impaired personal relationships
- Removal of self from workplace - psychologically, physically (sick leave, stress leave, resignation); reduced productivity
**Personal Action Strategies** (to avoid workplace hostility and create a safe, happy workplace)

You can (for yourself and your peers):

1. Name the problem: use the term 'workplace hostility' to refer to the situation.
2. Raise issue at staff meetings: break the silence about this issue
3. Ask managers and leaders for help dealing with this issue in your workplace
4. Raise yourself awareness about your own values, beliefs and attitudes. (*We all are part of the problem at times; note it and address it*)
5. Engage in self-caring behaviors: counseling, peer support, good nutrition, adequate sleep, time out, meditation, exercise. Do the things that help you to be healthy and happy in all aspects of your humanness.
6. Speak up when you witness it and name 'workplace hostility' for what it is.