

# Building respect

I'VE

WITNESSED

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

A quick guide for those who think they  
have seen inappropriate behaviour.

# I have **witnessed** inappropriate behaviour or bullying

## **What to do if you think someone else is experiencing inappropriate behaviour or bullying.**

Everyone in our University has the right to work in a safe, respectful culture, free of inappropriate behaviour and bullying.

It can be upsetting to witness inappropriate behaviour. You may be concerned about what you observed and unsure what to do next.

We are committed to supporting you to resolve concerns around inappropriate behaviour in a way that helps everyone involved to be heard and move forward.

Inappropriate behaviour affects different people in different ways – witnesses as well as those on the receiving end.

### **Speak up.**

We want you to feel safe and supported to speak up about inappropriate behaviour. Review these steps to find the best way to resolve things.

In many cases it only takes one person to give feedback for inappropriate behaviour to change. Often the person acting inappropriately doesn't realise they were doing it, or the impact it was having.

Our focus is on resolving issues through reflection, feedback and discussion, only using a formal process when appropriate.

### **The role of your manager is:**

- To actively build a positive team culture
- To create an environment where people feel safe to talk to each other about issues
- If people raise concerns to respond with discretion and in an impartial, fair and professional way
- To think about the person before the process
- To provide clarity so everyone involved knows what is happening and what to expect

**If you have witnessed inappropriate behaviour, please speak up so that we can resolve it constructively.**

We have a series of guides to help you which you can find on the University website. **Start with the 'Our approach, our options' guide** then work through the steps in our approach to help you resolve things.

### **1. Creating a positive culture**

Your team is encouraged to have a discussion about your team culture and what our values and behaviours mean to you. Talk to your manager about this.

### **2. Reflect**

**In the moment stay calm**, try not to react or take sides. Let people know that you witnessed the behaviour. Check people are OK and if they require support.

**Identify the issue.** Focus on the specific behaviour not the person. Then use the flowchart to work out what is going on and work through the options.

**Appropriate behaviour.** Occasionally things happen at work that we don't like but if they are done with respect and to help meet work goals, it may be this is appropriate behaviour.

**Talk to a trusted, impartial third party**, or someone from the contact list at the end of this guide.

### **3. Direct Feedback**

**Speak up there and then** if you feel comfortable and if it's appropriate. Use may BUILD to feedback about the specific behaviour (refer to the e-learning programme). Do not use inflammatory language. Describe the behaviour and its impact – then listen and talk about what they could do differently next time. Afterwards write down what you witnessed in the behaviour diary.

**Be kind.** Stepping into their shoes helps build empathy. They may not have done it intentionally.

### **4. Informal resolution or 5. Formal process**

**If the behaviour is repeated** despite giving feedback, either the person experiencing it, or you (at their request) could ask your manager or the Manager of Facilitation and Mediation to explore informal resolution. A **formal process**, may be necessary, in which case, use the 'Instances of inappropriate behaviour' form.

## Your notes to help you consider the options

Reflect on what you observed:

Detail any discussion(s) with the person experiencing inappropriate behavior:

Detail any feedback given to the person who behaved inappropriately:

What were the perspectives of those involved? Has this changed your view of the situation?

Possible next steps and the preferred outcome for the person who experienced the inappropriate behaviour:

Additional support for those involved:

## Further support and guidance

If you feel you need more guidance on what to do next, you can visit the University website where you can download the following tools and resources:

### For you

- Information about our approaches, policies and procedures
- Guidance on what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Who to speak to for support
- Step-by-step guides walking you through all of our options

### For your team

- Guides and templates to help you discuss and improve team culture
- Roles and responsibilities
- Guide for managers

This is one in a series of guides to support anyone who is a target of inappropriate behaviour, has witnessed or had an allegation of such behaviour made against them, and for managers dealing with inappropriate behaviour in their teams.



### Contact List

For more assistance or if you have any questions, you can get in touch with the people listed below who can advise you on informal and formal procedures, and support you throughout the process:

- [HR team](#)  
human.resources@otago.ac.nz  
Tel 03 479 8269
- [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#)
- [Ethical Behaviour Network](#)
- [Manager of Facilitation and Mediation](#)  
mediation@otago.ac.nz  
Tel 03 479 5679
- [Occupational Health](#)
- Or contact your Union rep