

# School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

## Implementation of the Learner Mistreatment Framework

### Preamble

A safe, supportive, and healthy learning environment in our school is essential to our mission and a fundamental reflection of our values. As such, any mistreatment of members of the school community is unacceptable. This document details our implementation of the FMHS Learner Mistreatment Framework that addresses mistreatment of learners in the clinical learning environment and is relevant to any alleged perpetrators who are part of the McGill community. Although the Framework is constrained to this context the principles and many of the procedures provide a guide to other contexts, for example, mistreatment within the academic environment. The Framework can be found on the website of the Office for Respectful Environments: [About | Office for Respectful Environments - McGill University](#)

### Definitions

**Mistreatment:** Behaviors towards learners or other colleagues, patients, or teachers/educators whether intentional or unintentional, which can negatively affect the learning environment; can include, for example, belittlement, intimidation, humiliation, hostility, physical or psychological harassment or discrimination.

**Learner in the clinical environment:** primarily M.Sc.A. students engaged in SCSD assigned clinical practice (practicum or internship) at an on-site or off-site clinic under the supervision of an educator from the McGill community; M.Sc. combined students, M.Sc. research students and doctoral students who may be involved in research-teaching clinics are also included.

**Members of the McGill community:** academic faculty, clinical academic faculty, administrative staff, clinical educators who are employed by McGill, clinical educators who have contracts to provide supervisory services to McGill students including those with nil salary, part-time lecturers, part-time lab instructors, teaching assistants, doctoral students and others who may be involved with the supervision of students in our teaching clinics.

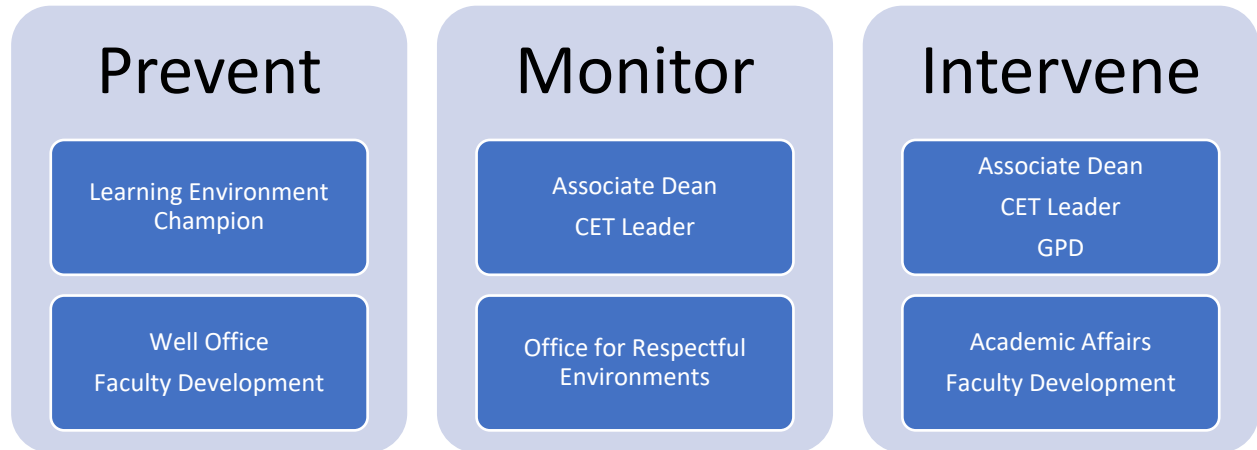
### Activities

**Prevention:** Policies and programs that prevent mistreatment and thus enhance the conditions within which healthy development and optimal learning take place. Education on definition of mistreatment, expectations and processes may include development of skills such as mindfulness, emotion recognition and management, adaptive coping, conflict resolution, self-awareness and help-seeking behavior.

**Monitoring:** Receiving and recording reports of alleged mistreatment. Collecting, summarizing, and analyzing quantitative data on incidents of mistreatment as they occur over time. Sharing aggregate data regarding mistreatment concerns with key leaders, faculty, and learners.

**Intervening:** Concrete actions taken to improve the situation and minimize further mistreatment behaviors; these actions may be with individuals (e.g., remediation such as coaching, removal from learning environment, disciplinary actions) and/or groups (e.g., faculty development with the department or team, removal of learners).

## Roles and Responsibilities with SCSD



Note that in the academic year 2021/2022 the Associate Dean is Susan Rvachew, the Clinical Education Team Leader is Kelly Root, the Graduate Program Director is Linda Polka, and the Learning Environment Champion is Laura Gonnerman.

### Prevention

Annualized activities that aim to prevent mistreatment include faculty-wide and school-wide procedures that inform members of the community of their obligation to conform to the following codes. These include letters of understanding for clinical educators and part-time lecturers and annual re-affirmations by faculty of the following:

- The instructor has read and agrees to abide by the code of conduct within McGill's Faculty of Medicine: [https://www.mcgill.ca/medicine/files/medicine/code\\_of\\_conduct\\_june2019\\_v01\\_en.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/medicine/files/medicine/code_of_conduct_june2019_v01_en.pdf)
- The instructor has read and agrees to abide by McGill's Guidelines on Intimate Relationships Between Teaching Staff and Students: <https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/guidelinesonrelationships-final-e.pdf>.

For learners, annualized affirmation of their obligation to abide by the [code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures.pdf \(mcgill.ca\)](#) as well as mandatory Sexual Violence Education training program through the [Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education - McGill University](#).

At orientation each year learners are alerted to their rights and responsibilities and to the reporting tools available to them in the FMHS [Report Mistreatment | Office for Respectful Environments - McGill University](#).

The Learning Environment committee will coordinate the provision of education programs as needed for faculty and learners. The education programs may include seminars, workshops, information pamphlets, webinars or other forms of information sharing. They may be delivered by learners, faculty, or professionals in didactic or active learning modalities.

Faculty will be encouraged to attend relevant sessions provided by Faculty Development when they occur. Learners may turn to the Well Office for individual counselling or group support as needed.

## Monitoring

**Identification of mistreatment concerns:** Students/learners in the clinical environment who experience one or more incidents of mistreatment are encouraged to report those events. The student may be uncertain about whether the event meets the definition of mistreatment or unsure about how to make a report or reluctant to put themselves in a difficult situation. The student may discuss the situation with the Well Office or with their advisor before making a report and be assured that their privacy will be respected. More information about mistreatment is available on the ORE website: [Definitions of Mistreatment | Office for Respectful Environments - McGill University](#). Once having decided to report mistreatment concerns, there are three avenues within the SCSD for making a report, as follows:

1. Report directly to the Associate Dean (School Director) in person or by e-mail. The Associate Dean will contact you within 72 hours to confirm and complete the information provided to support follow-up and data collection.
2. Report directly to the Clinical Education Team Leader in person or by e-mail. The Clinical Education Team Leader will contact you within 72 hours to confirm and complete the information provided to support follow-up and data collection. The CET Leader will also provide a copy of the report to the Associate Dean.\*
3. Report to the Office for Respectful Environments. ORE will contact you within 72 hours to confirm and complete the information provided to support follow-up and data collection. ORE will also provide information about the report to the Associate Dean.\*

\*The CET Team Leader and the ORE will obtain your permission before transferring reports to the Associate Dean. Be aware that effective follow-up and intervention requires the involvement of the Associate Dean.

**Named versus anonymous reports:** Any person making a report about mistreatment concerns may provide their name and contact information OR they may do so anonymously. These reports will be recorded and tracked but follow-up will vary as indicated in the section on intervention.

**Third party reports:** Reports concerning mistreatment may be submitted by third-party “by-standers”, that is persons who are witnesses to an incident of mistreatment or who are aware that a learner has suffered mistreatment, for example by direct report from the victim. Third parties might be a peer of the learner who is the victim of mistreatment, a faculty advisor, or a colleague of the alleged perpetrator.

**Sexual violence:** Allegations of sexual violence and related forms of violence should be alerted to OSVRSE (<https://www.mcgill.ca/osvrse/>) as well as the ORE.

**Informal reports:** Learners may alert faculty to mistreatment concerns in their reflections, placement evaluations, or term-end teaching evaluations. These documents are meant to be confidential and are sometimes anonymous. They do not constitute a formal report of

mistreatment. They may alert faculty to potential problems but formal monitoring and tracking of incidents as well as effective follow-up requires that the mistreatment concern be reported formally. Formal reporting involves alerting the Associate Dean, the CET Leader or the ORE using the mechanisms described above, even if the report is made anonymously.

**Advisor responsibilities:** Learners may discuss mistreatment concerns with other faculty members such as their advisors. The responsibility of the advisor is to help the student decide on the appropriate course of action and facilitate their access to the necessary services and supports according to prescribed procedures and the student's needs. If the student is in crisis or requires emotional support refer the student to the Well Office or follow the advice provided by the Dean of Students: [Worrisome Student Behaviour | Office of the Dean of Students - McGill University](#) and also [helping students in difficulty 1.pdf \(mcgill.ca\)](#). If the student wants to report the mistreatment, direct the student to the ORE or make a report on the student's behalf with the student's consent. Do not undertake independent interventions with the alleged perpetrator under any circumstances. Although it may be necessary to protect a student from harm immediately in some circumstances, actions involving the alleged perpetrator must involve the Associate Dean minimally and the CET Leader typically.

### Intervention

**Initial contact:** Named complainants will be contacted by the Associate Dean or the CET Leader within 72 hours of the report of mistreatment to acknowledge receipt and obtain information that supports an action plan. Anonymous complaints will be recorded in a data base that permits the identification of recurring incidents or broad-based patterns of problematic behavior.

**Action plans:** An action plan to respond to incidents of alleged mistreatment will be developed, in accordance with the nature of the complainant (anonymous or named), the employer of the alleged perpetrator (McGill University or service provider) and the nature of the complaint (requiring immediate intervention or longer term strategy).

**Faculty member:** An intervention with a faculty member (academic or CAS) will occur when (1) a named complainant submits a report about a specific faculty member; (2) an anonymous complainant submits a report about a specific faculty member that describes a critical or major incident of mistreatment; or (3) a recurring patterns of complaints regarding a specific faculty member accumulates. The Associate Dean will meet with the faculty member to discuss strategies to prevent further incidents. A follow-up letter to the faculty member will summarize the discussion points, with a copy to Academic Affairs. Note that it is not assumed that the faculty member has mistreated a learner without further investigation. The intervention may involve education of students and faculty about the definition of mistreatment or strategies to avoid the appearance of mistreatment. On the other hand, in the event of a critical or major incident, an escalation by the Associate Dean to the Dean may be required.

**Clinical educator:** If a clinical educator who is not a faculty member is the named subject of a report of mistreatment, the CET Leader will notify the relevant authority at the clinical partner site (e.g., Director of Education) to ensure that action is taken by the health care institution, school or private practice. If recurring complaints regarding a specific clinical educator accumulates, a letter will be sent by the CET Leader and the Associate Dean informing that

person that they will no longer be permitted to supervise McGill SLP students. Additional actions may include discontinuing adjunct positions or contracts, and in extreme situations, notification of the OOAQ.

**Peers and other learners:** If another student is the named subject of a report of mistreatment, the student's progression committee (which includes the Associate Dean, a member of the CET, and the student's advisor) will meet with the student. A follow-up letter to the student will summarize the discussion points, with a copy placed in the student's file. Further follow-up may involve the Graduate Program Director and the Associate Dean (GPS).

**Immediate protection of the student:** In some cases, it may be necessary to protect the student immediately by, for example, withdrawing the student from the placement site. In such a situation, the CET will make the necessary arrangements on behalf of the student. Immediate protective actions can be taken before any reports are filed but reports must be submitted subsequently with appropriate follow-up actions by the Associate Dean and the CET Leader.

**Recurring reports of mistreatment:** Anonymous complaints will be tracked so that recurring complaints, either related to a particular individual or the school as a whole, can be targeted by more global interventions such as mandatory or voluntary education sessions for faculty, clinical educators, or students. The database of reports will be analyzed annually by the Associate Dean, the CET Leader, and the Learning Environment Champion with a view to identifying the need for such educational interventions.

### Post-Intervention Follow-up

**Feedback to complainants:** Where permitted, learners who have reported mistreatment concerns will be advised of the steps taken to address those concerns. However, due to restrictions imposed by privacy legislation, learners may not be advised of all outcomes related to their reported concerns.

**Feed back to the school community:** Annually, in September, a report will be made to faculty and attached to the faculty meeting minutes in the open section so that it is accessible by all members of the school community. The report will aggregate anonymous information about mistreatment reports for the previous academic year, the five preceding academic years, with an analysis of trends. Specifically, the report will include the number of reports made, the type of complainant (named or anonymous), the alleged perpetrator (faculty, CE, student, or other), the general type of alleged mistreatment, and the general type of interventions that were applied. These reports will aggregate data that comes through ORE, the CET Leader or direct to the Associate Dean after accounting for duplicate reports.