

The power dance

Taking your rightful place as a woman in a cooperative

Dealing with unequal power relations and bullying in housing co-ops

April 2020



This workshop was conceived as part of the project entitled “*Coopératives d’habitation : Présence des femmes, pouvoir des femmes*” [Women’s presence, women’s power] with the aim of fostering women’s participation in their living environment, in this case, a housing co-op. Jeanne Hubert, trainer, designed the workshop and guide, assisted by Lyse Cloutier.

The guide is easy to use and is meant for use by housing co-op staff and residents. You can adapt it to your particular needs. In it, you will find a facilitation outline and the documents and tools you’ll need to facilitate “*The Power Dance*,” *Taking Your Rightful Place as a Woman in a Housing Co-op*.

The Centre d’Éducation et d’Action des Femmes de Montréal (CÉAF) and their women and housing committee conducted the workshop as part of their project, “*Quartier libéré des violences faites aux femmes*.” Our sincerest thanks to the committee women who contributed to the content and spirit of the workshop, and the women co-op residents who took part in the pilot workshop.



Contained in this guide:

- Workshop goals and agenda
- Facilitation outline
- Documents to be photocopied and handed out to participants, plus the “*Power Dance*” cover page:

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A | **Goals and agenda**

General goals:

- Opportunity for discussion and thinking about power relations and bullying in housing co-ops
- Encourage women's empowerment and full participation in housing co-ops

Specific goals:

- Better comprehension of when and how women experience bullying and negative power relations in co-ops
- Recognize the impacts of these situations on women's lives and motivation to become involved in co-op management
- Collectively share strategies, tips, means and tools for dealing with these situations.

Agenda

- 1. Introduction, presentation and agreement**
- 2. Power relations and bullying**
 - a. Individual exercise
 - b. Sharing and pooling information
- 3. Types of power and bullying**
 - a. Sharing and discussion
- 4. Reclaiming power and taking my rightful place**
 - a. Simulation exercises
 - b. Pooling information and discussion
- 5. Evaluation and appreciations**



Facilitation outline

**Proposed facilitation outline for 3-hour workshop
with 6–8 participants***

Time required	Steps	Tasks (Plan to welcome participants 15–20 min. before start, ideally with a light snack)	Tools, materials
20 min.	1. Introduction and agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Brief recap of the Women's Presence, Women's Power project and its findings. The findings show that the harassment women experience in co-ops is a barrier to their participation. They are not "alone" in having this experience.• Present the goal of the meeting.• Do a round of introductions.• Ask women to suggest rules that would help generate a supportive, safe and respectful climate. Write them on the board.• Hand out the group process agreement and read it out loud, linking it to the participants' words.• Explain that they can use this agreement and adapt it for use in their committees, work groups or co-op meetings. Present it while stressing the importance of such rules to ensuring a respectful and safe atmosphere.• Distribute the participants workbooks and present the workshop goals and agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Présence des femmes, pouvoir des femmes</i> project report• Large sheets on the wall or stand (flip chart)• Document for participants• Sample agreement (see Document C)
15 min.	2. Individual exercises on power relations, bullying and the impacts on women (and cooperatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the exercise. Think of one or two examples for participants to consider. If needed, use one of the examples from the simulation exercise in Document F (5 min.)• Hand out question sheets to participants and ask them to respond individually in writing (specify that this information is for their use and will not be collected) (5 min.)• Next, each woman selects an image that symbolizes for her the different types of negative power relations they have experienced in housing co-ops. (5 min.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop sheet D: questionnaire• Series of photos, or photo-language (or deck of cards)
35 min.	3. Return to large group to report back	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask each woman to show the others her image and explain how she links the questions, her visual representation and her experience as a woman in her co-op. Consider the women's different experiences.• Then: Based on participants' examples: "Do you see anything similar to what you experienced?"	<p>Possibly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gum for putting up photo-language images• Flip chart for key words from participants' examples

Time required	Steps	Tasks	Tools, materials
15 min.	4. Present experiences of different types of power related to bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to what participants have expressed and with the aid of Document E: Consider different types of power, exercised both positively and negatively (e.g., autocratic versus democratic power). • In interaction with the participants promote a discussion: Are there barriers specific to women (impostor syndrome, stereotypes, etc.)? Why? Document F, which provides concrete examples, can aid this discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document E on the 6 categories of power • Document F: situations of unequal power • Documents G1, G2, G3 Definitions and characteristics/ • Document H Impacts
10 min.		Break	
45 min.	5. How to reclaim power and take your rightful place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break the group up into teams of at least 2–3 participants. Potential for 5 teams. • Give a different scenario to each team. If there 5 teams, just hand them out randomly. If you don't have 5 teams, prioritize the scenarios that you think are most relevant to your group. • In each small group, participants prepare responses to negative situations based on the scenarios they have received. They can use the answers they wrote to question 2 in the first exercise (15 min.) • Participants present their scenarios to the large group and get the group's feedback (15 min.) • Discussion in large group about what they have just seen and experienced (10 min.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document I: Five (5) simulation scenarios to distribute to subgroups for the simulation exercise
15 min.	6. Other perceptions and solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand out documents and make a brief presentation on: power relations, bullying, the role of active and positive witnesses, supportive resources (link with what participants identified in preceding exercise). • Brief mention of references, bibliography, media resources and <i>Women's Presence</i>, <i>Women's Power</i> project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents selected from the guide (e.g., among documents H to L), depending on context • <i>Présence et pouvoir des femmes</i> » project documents
5-10 min	7. Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round on "I'm going away with..." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My evaluation

**Facilitators should expect to spend 4-4.5 hours on site, including time to welcome participants before the start and being available to speak with a few participants when the workshop is over. Some women may need to talk about their situation.*



Materials and documents for facilitators:

1. Large sheets for writing and hanging on the wall, pens, felt markers, pencils for participants, photo-language photographs or images.
2. Facilitator's guide includes:
 - A. Workshop goals and agenda
 - B. Facilitation outline
 - C. The rules of play (alliance or agreement) and instructions for fostering an atmosphere in which women will feel secure and motivated (for use in interaction with participants)
 - D. Exercise 1: Questionnaire related to the photo-language exercise
 - E. CPRF document: Categories of power in an organization
 - F. Examples of situations that involve unequal power relations among members
 - G. 1-2-3: Definitions, characteristics and manifestations
 - H. Possible impacts of bullying and harassment in housing co-ops
 - I. Exercise 2: Housing co-op simulation scenarios (1 scenario for each group of roughly 3 women)
 - J. Ways to deal with bullying (direct communication, support of active witnesses, complaint, etc.)
 - K. When bullying is a crime
 - L. References, bibliography and media resources
 - M. Evaluation form
3. Workbook or folder for participants (documents to photocopy, mentioned at the beginning of this guide)



Rules of the game, alliance or agreement

to foster a respectful, safe and stimulating atmosphere

This document may be helpful in many types of meetings (committees, work group, Board, etc.) and for everyday neighbour relations). It can be adapted.

For facilitators:

- ✓ It's a participatory workshop, but participation is not compulsory. It's absolutely fine if someone doesn't want to talk and would rather observe.
- ✓ There are no right or wrong answers. Only responses that are right for you.
- ✓ The facilitator's role is to make sure that everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to speak and that participants are respected.
- ✓ Prioritize those who have not yet spoken before allowing participants who have spoken earlier to speak again (first turn, second turn, etc.)

Other instructions for everyone in the workshop:

- ✓ Every participant is entitled to speak and not be interrupted.
- ✓ Everyone is entitled to express their own opinion, have their own ways of seeing things, their own ideas and to express a personal point of view even if it's not the same as everyone else's.
- ✓ Everyone has a responsibility to treat others with respect and not attempt to invalidate other women's point of view.
- ✓ Everyone is entitled to be treated respectfully (respect for her as a person, her strengths, limits, and feelings).
- ✓ Respect shown verbally and non-verbally to those present and absent.
- ✓ Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory language is not acceptable.
- ✓ Whatever is said during the workshop will not go outside the workshop. Everyone is entitled to have their personal information kept confidential.
- ✓ In addition, some issues require confidentiality, for example, members' financial information regarding subsidies or rent payment. Every policy of the cooperative should include a point concerning the obligation of committees and heads of committees to ensure confidentiality.
- ✓ Everyone is entitled to a clean, comfortable and safe setting.
- ✓ Humour and fun are welcome (not sarcasm).

**OPENNES and KINDNESS
INDIVIDUAL and COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT
TO CREATE A HEALTHY,
PLEASANT and STIMULATING SPACE**



Exercise 1

Photo-language workshop

**“My experience of negative power relations
in my housing co-op.”**

First, answer individually. Then, select an image that represents your situation

1. Do I have an example of a specific situation in which actions, gestures or words have triggered in me an uneasiness, a painful feeling, a reluctance to take my place, to say my opinion or to propose something in the way I wanted?

2. What did I need in that situation? What could have encouraged me to participate?

3. After returning to the large group

Do we see any common points in the experiences each woman has recounted?



Categories of power in organizations

The six main categories of informal and formal power exercised in an organization



Power to decide:

Have the authority to make the ultimate decision, move beyond resistance and into action

Examples of actions taken: Establishing directions and an action plan, authorizing communications, activities, job creation, hiring or layoffs, convening meetings, setting meeting agendas, committing the organization by giving their word, drafting and tabling projects, signing official documents, vetoing decisions, etc.



Power to influence decisions:

Possess and practise persuasive skills in a group.

Examples of actions taken: Have the ability to express and argue, be popular, appreciated, attractive, flattering or intimidating, be recognized for sound judgment or advice, have a good network and connections to key people in the organization, be present at the organization's strategic meetings as well as those where the organization is represented, etc.



Power of expertise:

Possess and use specialized knowledge that endows the person with authority in decision-making.

Examples of actions taken: Holding and emphasizing diplomas or training, substantial reading on the subject, mastering a scholarly vocabulary, having a formal title, having seniority, having past experience that allows the person to take a position as an expert in the field, etc.



Power to inform:

Possess the most complete information and determine how it is or is not disseminated.

Examples of actions taken: Prepare meeting agendas, write meeting reports, prepare minutes, various communications to participants and members, to the community or to funders, have access to contact information for people/organizations related to ours, have access to the archives and history of the group, etc.



Power to reward/punish:

Have the authority to validate, value certain gestures, attitudes or words and sanction others.

Examples of actions taken: Congratulating others, giving someone a certificate or award, evaluating people or activities, thanking someone with a privilege/gift in kind or in service, denigrating someone, depriving someone of something, taking away a privilege, imposing conditions, excluding someone from a group or activity, etc.



Power to spend:

Engage the organization in any monetary or financial transaction.

Examples of actions taken: Purchasing goods, services, budgeting current and future assets, contracting investments, loans, financial obligations, cutting or prioritizing expenditures, signing cheques, collecting payments, changing the economic terms of the organization's contracts including staff salaries, etc.

Facilitator's note: All these forms of power can be used correctly or in an abusive manner.

This is one of a series of tools created by the Carrefour de participation, ressourcement et formation (CPRF).

F | Examples of situations that involve unequal power relations among members

This document may be used as a tool for stimulating discussion

A single mother on social assistance is suspected of not declaring income (to make ends meet), or is watched by neighbours who try to see if she has an undeclared spouse “he often spends the night at her place”, it is said (difference in economic class, vulnerability to the economic system).

A homosexual, bisexual or trans person who is tolerated but viewed as “weird” by some members who try to avoid having him or her on their committee (difference in sexual orientation or gender).

A person who is critical of the flaws in the democratic processes in place at their co-op, who raises them in a courteous manner, and is perceived to be disruptive. She learns that she is the only one who is not informed when a new committee is struck (fear of members questioning themselves, refusal to review their practices).


A member who tries to present her or his ideas, expressing herself or himself in her or his own way, to a professional person who considers that their position and language give them more legitimacy or respectability (difference in culture, education, social or economic background).

A person who has been unemployed for a while who hears at the General Meeting (GM), “I am going to give up my job too and have fun working on the outdoor committee” (difference in economic status).

A person who is shy, does not know the Robert’s Rules (meeting procedures), has little group experience and finds it difficult to take his or her place in the flow of discussion in front of people who are used to taking an active role in GMs. He or she is never asked to give an opinion (difference in experience and knowledge, versus autocratic takeover by some).

A member is popular and has power because he or she makes people laugh, speaks in a theatrical way, swears and uses sarcasm to promote his or her ideas and disqualify those of others (intimidation and undue polarization of attention).

An older person is told that if they begin “to lose their capacities” they should make way for a young family, it would be an example of the cooperative spirit. “There are so many others who are waiting for housing.” (Age-based discrimination).



These behaviours, even if unintentionally initiated, create unequal power relations, if not abuse of power, harassment or intimidation. They should not be tolerated anywhere, including in housing cooperatives.

Bullying is an assault (not a conflict)



Rooted in POWER:

Acquired by size, physical or psychological strength, status, or peer support.

It is distinguished by its FREQUENCY:

Attacks are frequent and repeated.

Characterized by the INTENTION TO HARM or EXCLUDE THE OTHER PERSON'S REALITY:

The attacker seeks to injure the other psychologically or physically, or takes pleasure in exercising power.

Victims FEEL UPSET, often POWERLESS:

Victims have few ways of successfully defending themselves on their own.

Education Act:

The Education Act (section 13, paragraph 1.1) defines bullying in this way: "Any repeated direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injures, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes."

The following definitions (G2 et G3) present key elements, all of which must be present for it to be concluded that bullying is taking place.

Note : All forms of bullying are violent, but not all forms of violence are examples of bullying
Jeanne Hubert, Centre de ressources éducatif et pédagogique (CREP), CSDM

Definitions of discrimination, harassment and bullying

Université de Sherbrooke, Bureau du respect des personnes,
Faculté de médecine et des sciences de la santé

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is conduct characterized by behaviour, gestures or words that contribute to the exclusion, inferiority or inequitable treatment of a person because of characteristics that are unique to that person (e.g., the fact that an individual is a member of a particular group or group of persons): age, sex, ethnicity, culture or belief, sexual orientation).

What is psychological harassment?

(inspired by section 81.18 of the *Act Respecting Labour Standards*)

Psychological harassment is distress-inducing conduct in the form of repeated behaviours, verbal comments, or gestures:

- That are hostile or unwanted.
- That affect the student or employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity.
- That result in a harmful work or school environment.
- A single serious incidence of such behaviour may constitute psychological harassment if it has a lasting and harmful effect on the person.
- The definition of psychological harassment found in the *Act respecting labour standards* includes sexual harassment and harassment based on one of the grounds listed in section 10 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*: race, colour, sex, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, a handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap.

What is bullying?

The act of instilling fear in a person in order to dominate them or undermine their self-esteem. The following behaviours may be considered acts of bullying:

- Threats: threatening phone calls, threats of violence against the person, their loved ones or property.
- Physical threats or assaults: showing a gun, pushing, shoving, assault, threatened beatings and stalking.
- Damage to or theft of the victim's property.
- Challenging or coercing the victim to perform an unwanted, immoral, dangerous or illegal act.
- Extortion: demanding money or property from the victim to in exchange for his or her safety.
- Inciting hatred of the victim.
- Voluntary actions aimed at tarnishing the victim's reputation.
- Manoeuvre aimed at blaming the victim for a crime.

Characteristics and manifestations of bullying

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de la famille

Unequal power relations

Usually a deliberate act that has the effect of harming or causing harm

Repetitive in nature*

Direct or indirect bullying

Physical

- Tripping, deliberately pushing, shoving, coercing, hitting, etc.

Verbal

- Insulting, mocking, ridiculing, threatening, making sexist, homophobic, transphobic or racist remarks, making discriminatory remarks based on age or other personal characteristics, etc.

Social

- Spreading lies or rumours, denigrating, humiliating, looking down on or threatening, isolating, excluding, etc.

Material

- Destroying,
- Vandalizing,
- Appropriating the property of others (including, for example, images in cyberspace), etc.

Verbal, social, or material bullying may be perpetrated by means of information and communication technologies (social networks, text messages, emails, blogs, Web sites, etc.)

Direct or indirect bullying has harmful effects for the person targeted, which could also affect other people involved and have a negative impact on their environment.



*Depending on the context, certain objectively serious single acts may also be associated with acts of intimidation without being repetitive in nature. For example, assault causing bodily harm, assault with a weapon or death threats.

H | Possible impacts of bullying and harassment in housing co-ops

Depending on status:



Impact on the victim

- Surprise, confusion, incomprehension
- Loss of self-esteem
- Sadness or depressive symptoms, psychological distress
- Sense of powerlessness and vulnerability
- Avoidance behaviours (taking odd routes, giving reasons for leaving before or after other meeting participants, etc.).
- Mistrust, feelings of betrayal
- Isolation, withdrawal, self-exclusion
- Sharp attitude or mood swings
- Aggressive behaviours or thoughts
- Rejection by peers (who don't understand victim's reactions)
- Difficulty concentrating on their personal affairs or work
- Possible decrease in performance for the fulfilment of responsibilities, absenteeism (GM, committee meetings, etc.)
- Loss of interest in the cooperative, or in activities they usually appreciate
- Feelings of insecurity, fear
- Thoughts and actions against oneself, self-accusation, self-sabotage, etc.
- Problems with sleep and appetite, stress-related physical symptoms (headaches, etc.)



Impact on the bully or harasser (if they have not stopped their behaviour)

- Reinforcement of their status as a negative leader
- Risk of perpetuating this behaviour and using it against others
- Long-term links between bullying, social problems and crime
- Regret, guilt, shame, low self-esteem that often leads to an escalation of inappropriate behaviour (self-justification) and self-destructive compensations (alcohol etc.)
- Participation problems (no one wants to join them on a committee)
- Risk of being legally sued, expelled, or ending up with a violent response from someone



Impact on the person who witnesses the incident

- Often troubled, stressed, sad, anguished, indignant
- Fear of being associated with the victim and of becoming a victim themselves
- Fear of being seen as a snitch
- Feelings of guilt and powerlessness if they did not intervene or ineffectively intervened
- Fear of being made to take part in bullying and remorse if they did so
- Mean World Syndrome
- Withdrawal from the co-op's activities, avoidance

Exercise 2

Co-op simulation exercises

1. As a member of a committee, together with another member of the same committee, you must transfer the file, (for which you have been responsible for the last 5 years), to a new member who will now be assuming the related tasks. While you are trying to give him a history of the activities and actions that have been carried out and the follow-ups still to be done, the new member keeps interrupting you to give his opinion on each item discussed. When you try to resume speaking he says: **"Hey! I haven't finished! You're cutting me off!"** Surprised, you let this behaviour pass, but you start to feel really uncomfortable and even irritated.

In this situation: *what would you do? If you were a witness, what would you do?*

2. At the beginning of the general meeting, you ask that the members present agree on a process, alliance or agreement that support a respectful and motivating climate for all. A member immediately replies **"We're not school children, or in a CHSLD, we don't need that!"** Someone else says: **"You have to trust the meeting chair (and president of the board of directors) who always presides over our meetings and does it very well!"**

What do you do? As a witness, what would you do?

4. You voted against the motion of another member during the GM after expressing an opinion that was different from theirs. The meeting did not adopt the proposal. Ever since, when you see this individual, they give you a threatening or insulting look, refuse to answer your polite greeting, or, when you go out to get some fresh air on the common balcony, suddenly get up and leave. You notice an ad that you posted on the bulletin board downstairs has been torn to pieces and thrown on the floor. You are increasingly alarmed, and try to avoid the individual. You leave by the door that is furthest from your unit or make a detour.

What would you do? As a witness?

5. You are on a committee and when you try to speak, your ideas and opinions are systematically invalidated. Out of 6 members, 4 are from the same family or are close friends. Often these members will gather ahead to discuss certain topics and then go to the meeting and impose their ideas. Even when a decision comes to a vote, you and the other member are always in the minority.

What would you do? As a witness, what would you do?

7. A member repeatedly and insistently expresses unwanted interest in you. He pretends he wants to discuss a co-op matter with you, comes to your unit at all hours, steps too close when he talks to you, refuses to leave, insists on telling his life story, keeps you standing at the door when you're trying to end the conversation. He regularly compliments you on your appearance.

What would you do? As a witness?

3. A member of the Finance Committee sends you an email asking if you're planning to request a rent subsidy again this year. He/she mentions having seen children other than yours leave your apartment several times and wonders if you might have undeclared income, for example by running a family daycare centre. He/she also asks you if your boyfriend is living with you because he/she sees his car parked out front often, day and night.

What would you do? As a witness?

6. You are in the yard with a new member and as you inform her of the name of the head of the Outdoor Committee, another member standing nearby comes over and describes that member in a caricatured way: **"She's an environmental cop, a radical Greenpeace. Gotta watch out with her, especially if you so much as pull out a dandelion. I hope you're not like that!"**

What would you do? As a witness?

J | Ways to deal with bullying: direct communication, support of active witnesses, complaint, etc.

What to do when you are a victim of bullying and harassment



Plan A

What to do when you are a victim of bullying and harassment

1. Speak directly to the person who is bothering you

If your safety is not threatened, it is much more effective to communicate directly with the person than to send them a letter, text or email, or to complain to everyone except the person concerned. **If possible**, act at the time of the undesirable behaviour. Ask a trustworthy witness to provide empathetic support if possible.

2. Choose the right time

If you couldn't intervene as soon as it happened, or you were upset: take time to refocus and plan the right time to communicate and allow yourself enough time to communicate effectively. Choose or wait until you are in a quiet, safe place where **no one will support the bully. Take someone with you who will maintain control if you are worried or feel vulnerable.** Ask him/her only to be a witness and to intervene firmly and strongly (but calmly) only if you receive threats or insults that destabilize you and to which you are unable to respond.

3. Prepare yourself ahead of time

Think ahead about what you want to say. Describe the problem clearly and objectively and explain how it has affected you. **Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be treated like this, that you have rights and your integrity must be respected.** And be ready to leave the location of the discussion or announce a consequence if the person states that they will not change their actions or behaves the same way while you are speaking.

4. Avoid insults, provocation and projection

If you upset and attack the other person, you will only increase their willingness not to listen to you and to continue bothering you. Don't attribute intent, label, give orders or threaten retaliation that you won't do or that would make you, in turn, a bully. Responding to bullying with bullying is not the best solution. You only end up escalating the problem. Don't try to interpret the other person's behaviour. For instance, don't say "You think you're the boss here?" or "You're nothing but a stupid sexist pig trying to get at me."

5. Tell the other person how you are feeling and name your needs

Tell the bully how their actions have made you feel. For example, *"When I arrive and you say: 'Oh look, the little lady as stepped in!' while laughing and making faces, I feel really angry. I need to be treated with respect and I want you to stop behaving like this."* Affirm yourself in a positive way, looking the bully right in the eyes and saying, for example, "I don't like it when you spread false rumours about me. Please stop doing that." Name the behaviour: *"It's bullying!"* OR *"That's harassment."*

6. Inform the person that if they refuse to change their behaviour, out of respect for yourself you will have to take action to stop the unacceptable behaviour.

7. Practise active listening

Sometimes, situations like this start with a dispute that gets out of control. If appropriate, ask the person if you said or did something that bothered or harmed him. Give the person a chance to explain himself, calmly and with respect. Remain relaxed, centred and try to decipher what the person is saying. Tell them you want to solve the problem, and **if appropriate**, acknowledge your share of the responsibility for the situation (not for their behaviour). Propose a fair remedy if appropriate. If the person is excessively emotional or aggressive, suggest getting a neutral person to sit in on your discussion (mediator, support worker).

Above all, remember that the bullying and harassing conduct must stop—nothing justifies this kind of behaviour!

8. Work hard to come up with a solution

If you do not succeed in making the person stop the behaviour that is bothering you, tell them that you have other remedies and that you intend to use them. Depending on the situation, find out what recourse is available to you and use it.

While you wait for the situation to change, don't isolate yourself, take careful notes of everything that happens, and, if needed, ask someone you trust to accompany you and act as a witness.



Ways to deal with bullying: direct communication, support of active witnesses, complaint, etc.

What to do when you are a victim of bullying and harassment

Plan B

Use the appropriate recourse

Note:

Dealing with the problem internally is preferable when security is not threatened, circumstances permit, and individuals involved act willingly and effectively to stop the bullying. Legal recourse is costly in time, energy, stress and money. And results are not guaranteed. **(Find out more at Éducaloi.qc.ca).**

1. Cooperative's Code of Conduct or Code of Ethics, Member Contract, Internal Governance By-Law

Check whether the co-op's code of ethics or conduct, the membership contract and the by-laws provide for a procedure to be followed in cases of violence, bullying and harassment.

- If so**, follow these procedures and contact the person in charge or the Board.
- If not, look for** and ask that these rules be formulated and applied on an urgent basis.

You can call FECHIMM's phone line at 514 843-6929 or 1 833 333-6929 (toll free) or contact the mediation service at: <https://fechimm.coop/fr/mediation>

2. Police

When the problem cannot be solved internally because the bullying behaviour constitutes a criminal act (harassment, threats, theft, assault, rape), any citizen may call for police intervention. The victim must then file a complaint with the police, by telephone or by going to the neighbourhood police station (open every day between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.).

To speak to the socio-community officer at your neighbourhood station, simply dial 514 280-04__ (plus the two digits of your neighbourhood station)
For example, for Station 21, the number to call is 514-280-0421.

In case of emergency, don't hesitate to call 911.

You can also contact:

- **Your local women's centre.** For contact details call the provincial association (L'R des centres de femmes du Québec) at 514 876-9965 or check the website at <https://rcentres.qc.ca>
- **Provincial helpline for victims of sexual assault:**
1 888 933-9007
- **SOS Violence conjugale** (provincial domestic violence helpline): 1 800 363-9010

What to do when you are a “witness”

1. Take a moment to reflect

Do I feel confident and safe enough to intervene positively and effectively?



2. Distance yourself if you do not want to intervene.

Passive witnesses often encourage the bully.



3. Go for help.

If you don't feel capable of intervening alone, ask someone else to intervene with you or for you.



4. Tell the bully that you don't like their behaviour.

If they hear comments like this, they are more likely to realize that their conduct is unacceptable. The person who is being targeted by this behaviour will feel less alone and more supported.

5. Create a diversion.

For example, pretend you are just arriving and don't know what's going on. Address the person who is being bullied, and begin to talk about any topic, even if you barely know them, just to run interference.

Examples: “Hi there! What committee are you in?” “Hi, I don't know you, are you a new member of the co-op?” “Hey! You're just the person I wanted to speak to!”

6. Offer help to the person who is being bullied

(during or after). For example, “I saw what happened, how are you doing? Can we talk about it? Can I help you in any way? You know that no one has the right to act that way with you, and there are things you can do to make them stop.”

7. Report the situation

to people in charge of the cooperative (or other people in authority positions)



It's important to know the difference between reporting and snitching.

Reporting

Refusing to accept a distressing situation for a victim of unacceptable behaviours and forcing the bully to stop this conduct

Reporting

also gives the bully a chance to get help in adopting more appropriate behaviour.

Being a “snitch”:
Revealing information with the intent of harming someone, for the fun of it, or as a way of taking revenge.

K | When bullying is a crime

In some cases, bullying may be considered a crime. This may be the case, for example, if words, gestures or behaviour are:

- Threats
- Physical or verbal violence
- Malicious rumors
- Theft or breakage of personal property
- Identity fraud
- Criminal harassment
- Juvenile pornography
- Distribution of intimate images
- Incitement to hatred (intimidation based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, etc.).

Anyone can report these offences to the police (9-1-1).

For areas not served by the 911 service, the Sureté du Québec can be reached at 310-4141 or from a cell phone at *4141.

Based on the information provided, the police will determine whether an investigation is necessary and whether the file should be referred to lawyers to assess the appropriateness of laying charges.

Important!

This article is a general explanation of the law in force in Québec and is not a legal opinion or legal advice. To learn about the rules regarding your particular situation, **consult** a lawyer or notary.

OR Éducaloi.qc.ca

OR JURIPOP <https://juripop.org>





References, bibliography and media resources

Declaration of Principles on Eliminating and Preventing Violence Against Women in Housing Co-ops, Women's Committee, FECHIMM (Adopted at FECHIMM's 2018 AGM)

Documents produced for the project entitled *Les coopératives d'habitation : présence des femmes, pouvoir des femmes* by the Comité logement Lachine-Lasalle, FECHIMM, GRT 2000 and Table régionale des centres de femmes de Montréal-Laval.

- *Bonnes pratiques pour des coopératives d'habitation plus inclusives*
- *Inclusive and Egalitarian Policies and By-Laws for My Cooperative*
- *Member Selection By-Law*
- *Work/Family/Participation Balance Guide*
- *Member Contract*
- *Building By-Law*
- *Internal Governance By-Law*

Declaration of Principles on Preventing Violence Against Women in Housing Co-ops, produced in partnership with the the FECHIMM's Women's Committee: <https://fechimm.coop/fr/declaration-violences-femmes>

Housing Cooperatives Needs Assessment Report: *Présence des femmes, pouvoir des femmes*, summary of needs assessment report presenting issues women face; Facilitator's guide, including activities held at the forums in Montréal and Laval.

FECHIMM, mediation service for member co-ops and telephone helpline: <https://fechimm.coop/en/mediation> and <https://fechimm.coop/fr/conseils>

Juripop: <https://juripop.org>

Video: Le harcèlement psychologique au travail: (many aspects similar to experiences of women in housing co-ops) <https://youtu.be/ujB7pESDdPo>

Éducaloi: Criminal Bullying

https://youtu.be/aF5jk_u_2Jk?list=PLqcJpiwHizBpcNITCvDk_Q5dIMVMNLN4p

Example of how to intervene in an incident of bullying: What about you? How would you react if you were on this bus? <https://youtu.be/4fVLUaUS4pg>

RQOH_Prevenir_agir_contre_violences_et_harcèlement_OSBL-H_web (1).pdf

RQOH_Guide_prevenir_violences_et_harcèlement_ envers_femmes_OSBL-H_web (2).pdf

Votre antiféministe, nos répliques, de l'humour à l'affrontement physique, L'R des centres de femmes du Québec, Mélissa Blais, Marie Soleil Chrétien

M | Evaluation form

My appreciation of this workshop:

• Discussions?

• Content?

• Facilitation?

I'm leaving...

Financing 111

Thank you

Credits

Concept, content, research and writing:

Jeanne Hubert

Assistance with design, content and writing:

Lyse Cloutier

Graphic design:

Sylvie Émond, Designer Pompier

Reading and comments:

Sophie Clerc, Lyse Cloutier and Katherine Ruault

Corrections:

Sophie Clerc and Lyse Cloutier

English language translation:

Nicole Kennedy

Liaison committee between the *Présence des femmes, pouvoir des femmes* project and CÉAF's women and housing committee:

Amélie Cabana-Lacombe, Sophie Clerc, Lyse Cloutier, Guylène Fanchin, Erika Lorena Hernandez Avila, Jeanne Hubert, Marie-Pier Kouassi, Julie Leblanc and Pascale Thérien

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Carrefour de
Participation
Ressourcement
Formation



Since February 2017, the FECHIMM, Comité logement Lachine-LaSalle (CLLL),
Groupe de ressources techniques (GRT) Réseau 2000+
and the Table régionale des centres de femmes Montréal/Laval
have led the project, « Les coopératives d'habitation :
présence des femmes, pouvoir des femmes. »

Funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE),
the goal of this three- year project is to enhance women's
participation and empowerment in housing
cooperatives.



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