

THE READING HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES POLICY NO. 323

SUBJECT: Educational Environment

Responsibility of: TRHSHS Program Directors
Revised: July, 2012 Reviewed: 2012

Purpose

To promote a culture of safety and respect in the educational environment.

Policy

All members of the Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences (faculty, staff, students and guests) will strive to maintain an educational environment free from all forms of violence, including lateral violence, bullying, threatening behaviors, or any form of verbal, written, physical, or sexual abuse.

Appropriate behavior is required at all times in all settings associated with the School of Health Sciences including but not limited to: classrooms, clinical settings, shuttle busses, and while on hospital or school property or during any school-related activity regardless of location.

Lateral violence is a term used to describe physical, verbal or emotional abuse occurring between peers such as in a student to student interaction. (Similar terms include horizontal violence, and horizontal hostility). Lateral violence can be manifested in verbal or nonverbal behaviors. The ten common forms of lateral violence described in healthcare literature are: “non-verbal innuendo,” “verbal affront,” “undermining activities,” “withholding information,” “sabotage,” “infighting,” scapegoating,” “backstabbing,” “failure to respect privacy,” and “broken confidences” (Griffin, 2004, Center for American Nurse Lateral Violence and Bullying in the Workplace)

Additional examples of lateral violence include but are not limited to:

1. Name calling
2. Aggressive physical behaviors such as slamming doors, throwing objects, use of an aggressive tone of voice, use of gestures such as clenched fists, physical contact with another person such as shoving, pushing, slapping, hitting, etc.
3. Threatening behavior (verbal, written, or physical threats of aggression)
4. Intimidation
5. Bullying
6. Or any other form of disruptive, violent, or abusive behavior resulting in the recipient’s perception of threat or disrespect.

Reporting Procedure: Incidents of lateral violence or any form of threatening, inappropriate, or abusive behavior are to be reported immediately to the Program Director. If the situation is one of immediate concern for safety, the individual needs to make all attempts to remove himself/herself from the threatening situation and report the situation to The Reading Hospital

and Medical Center Security Department or the local law enforcement agency. The individual making the report shall be assured of a confidential process with information released on a “need-to-know” basis for the safety and security of the entire school. No act of retaliation or discrimination shall result as a result of reporting an occurrence.

Disciplinary Actions: Abusive and violent behaviors are not acceptable in the healthcare or educational setting. The School of Health Sciences will investigate all reported incidents of violence/abuse.

The School of Health Sciences will endeavor to utilize progressive discipline where appropriate, which will be based solely on such factors as judgment as to the seriousness of the misconduct and the extent to which the school believes the individual is willing and or able to correct or avoid the improper behavior in the future. Individuals who engage in any form of lateral violence are subject to disciplinary action that is not limited to, but may include: counseling, verbal warning, suspension, or any discipline up to and including dismissal from the school.

Employees of the School of Health Sciences are subject to all current employment practices.