

Student Physician Intimidation & Harassment

BREAK the CYCLE



DALHOUSIE
University

**Faculty of
Medicine**



BREAK THE CYCLE

Like any form of abuse, housestaff harassment will continue in a generational pattern. If student physicians are taught in a way that focusses on learning through intimidation, they will be more likely to teach their future students in the same destructive manner. All faculty and housestaff must help break this cycle.

For more information contact:

Undergraduate Medical Education Office
(902) 494-1546

and/or

Office of Admissions & Student Affairs
(902) 494-1874

Dalhousie Medical School



Are you part of the problem?

BREAK THE CYCLE

“It’s just part of the job.”

“I don’t like it,
but this is the way it’s always been.”

“It’s a necessary part of training.”

Is it ?

- workload abuse
- ridiculing
- threatening gestures
- exclusion from learning experiences
- disallowing sick leave
- belittling comments

It’s not “*just part of the job,*” and it’s not “*a necessary part of training.*”

It’s harassment !

Surveys have confirmed that housestaff harassment does occur and, worse yet, is somehow viewed as acceptable behavior by some faculty and housestaff.

It is not !

Student Physician Well Being

Trust, respect, fairness and a spirit of collegiality between faculty and housestaff at Dalhousie is essential for creating the best possible environment for learning. And in a teaching hospital, creating this environment will attract the best to Dalhousie as well as produce top quality physicians.

Research has shown that harassment and intimidation actually achieves the opposite environment – one that hinders learning. Incidents of harassment or intimidation undermine professional confidence, and in some cases compromise health care delivery. And, simply put, it’s unprofessional.

Harassment and intimidation includes, but is not limited to:

- unfair work demands;
- discrimination based on race, culture, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.
- verbal abuse: shouting, swearing, belittling, ridiculing, disparaging remarks of sexist, homophobic, religious or ethnic grounds;

- physical abuse: throwing objects, pushing, slapping or making threatening gestures;
- sexual abuse: unwelcome comments, gestures, touching or actions of a sexual nature;
- workload abuse: contractual infraction, excessive service volume, lack of supervision, or not making reasonable illness, disability or leave allowances;
- reprisal for having lodged, or being a witness in, a harassment or intimidation complaint; and
- education compromise: grading unfairly, or unreasonable exclusion from a learning experience.

Student Physicians -

what you should do:

The only way to break the cycle is to come forward. Dalhousie needs a process that is open and responsive to these issues, for everyone involved.

As a first step, student physicians can discuss the situation with:

- the individual involved;
- a clinical supervisor;
- the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs;
- a Program Director;
- a Department or Division Head; or
- the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Medical Education.

If a resolution does not occur, student physicians are encouraged to make a written complaint to the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Medical Education.

The process is complainant driven, meaning the complainant will be consulted along each step of the way. Complaints will be dealt with in a fair and just manner for all parties involved.

Faculty -

what you should know:

The Dalhousie Undergraduate Medical Education Office strongly encourages faculty to be familiar with and adhere to the guidelines on harassment and education.

A copy of these guidelines can be obtained from departmental administrators or by calling the **Undergraduate Medical Education Office** at (902) 494-1546.