



Employment and  
Social Development Canada

Emploi et  
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Canada

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# **ANNUAL REPORT 2017–2018 OFFICE OF INFORMAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**





## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am very pleased to present the 9th Annual Report for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)'s Office of Informal Conflict Management (OICM).

With our 10 years of experience, I am happy to report that the OICM has become a strong partner in creating and sustaining a healthy and respectful workplace. In his 25th Annual Report to the Prime Minister, the Clerk of the Privy Council highlighted the OICM network's outstanding work across the public service in providing support to foster a workplace that advances mental health.<sup>1</sup> In addition to involvement in mental health, the OICM develops and maintains close ties with other internal partners to meet the needs of its employees.

The number of employees knocking at our doors to find tools to resolve conflicts in the workplace continues to increase annually. By ensuring that inevitable conflicts in the workplace serve as a learning opportunity, the OICM participates in building a strong, high-performing workforce year after year. To do so, we rely on employees throughout the country, from Vancouver to Summerside via Edmonton, Toronto, Edmundston, Fredericton, Lévis and Gatineau. Our team is experienced, highly qualified and ready to serve ESDC employees.

In this report, you will find more information about ESDC OICM's preventive services and activities as well as our team's achievements for the 2017- 2018 fiscal year.

Enjoy!

Stéphanie Tinkler  
A/Director of Office of Workplace Values, Recognition and Resolution  
Workplace Management  
Human Resources Services Branch

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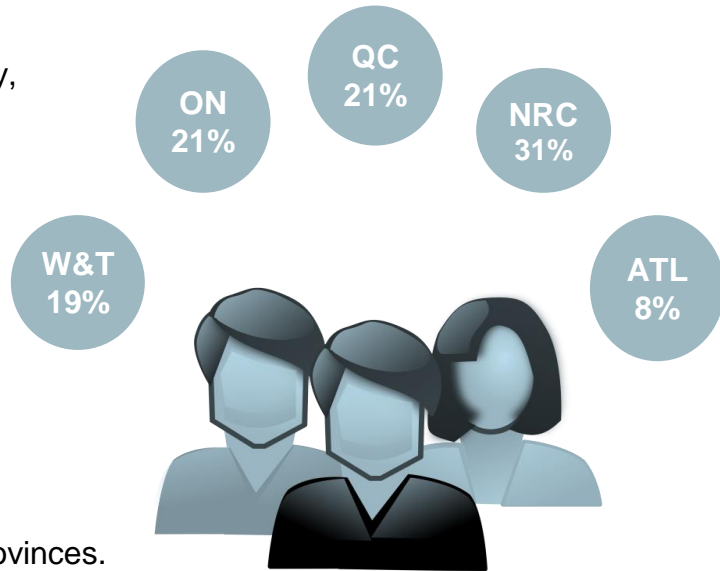
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pco-bcp/images/ann-rpt/25/rpt-25-eng.pdf>, p. 31

## INFORMAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICES OFFERED TO ESDC EMPLOYEES

609 new files were opened, a 16% increase from the previous year.

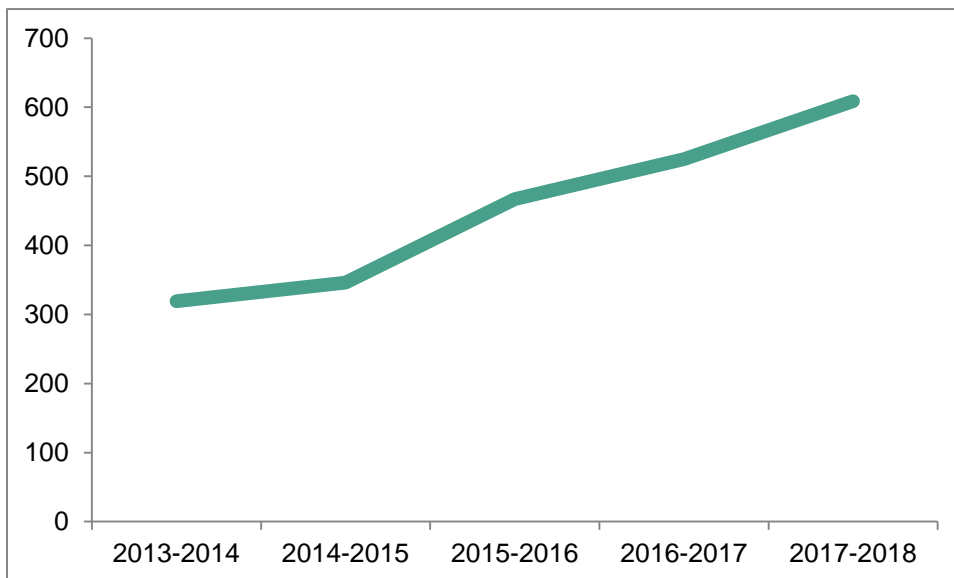
The OICM served a total of 4,600 employees throughout the country, a 32% year-over-year increase. Of that number, 849 opted for conflict resolution services.

Among those who saw a practitioner, 31% were from National Headquarters (Gatineau/Ottawa), 21% from Ontario, 19% from the Western and Territories Region, 21% from Quebec, and 8% were from the Atlantic provinces.



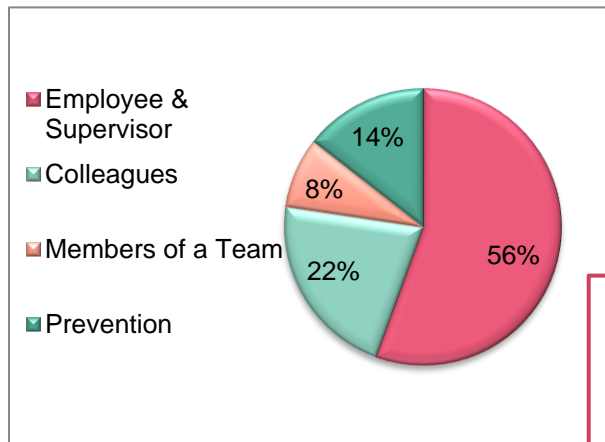
**849**

*Number of Files Opened: Year-Over-Year Comparison*

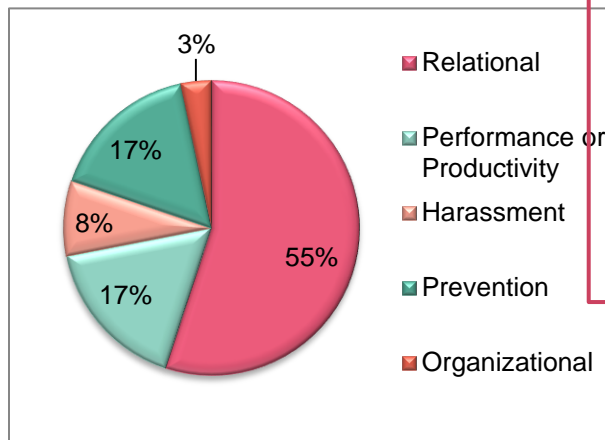


## OBSERVATIONS – Conflict Resolution Files

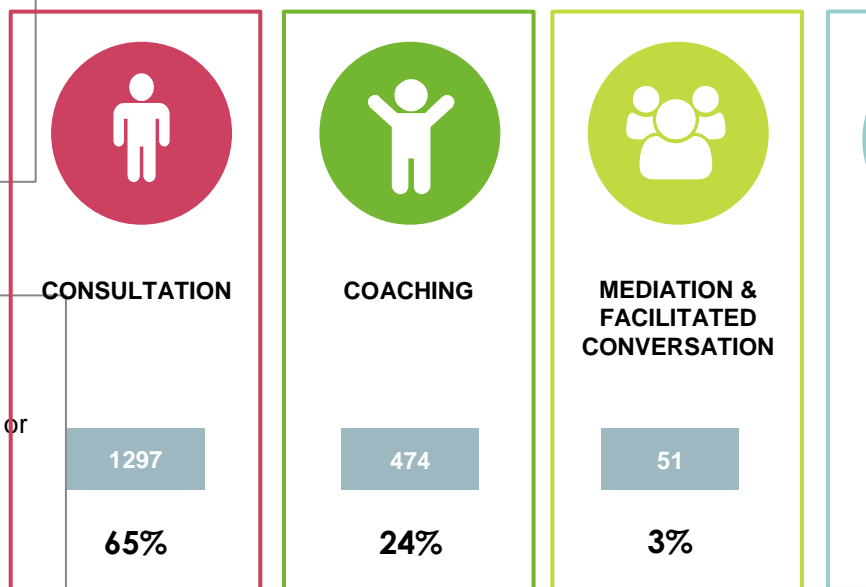
*Relationships Between the Parties*



*Nature of the Conflict*



### RESOLUTION SERVICES PROVIDED



**CONSULTATION:** The first contact between the client and practitioner, it is the most popular service. For statistical purposes, consultations with employees, managers, collaborators, pre-mediation sessions and pre-facilitated conversations are included in this category.



**COACHING:** Includes individual coaching, team coaching, and the coaching program for supervisors.



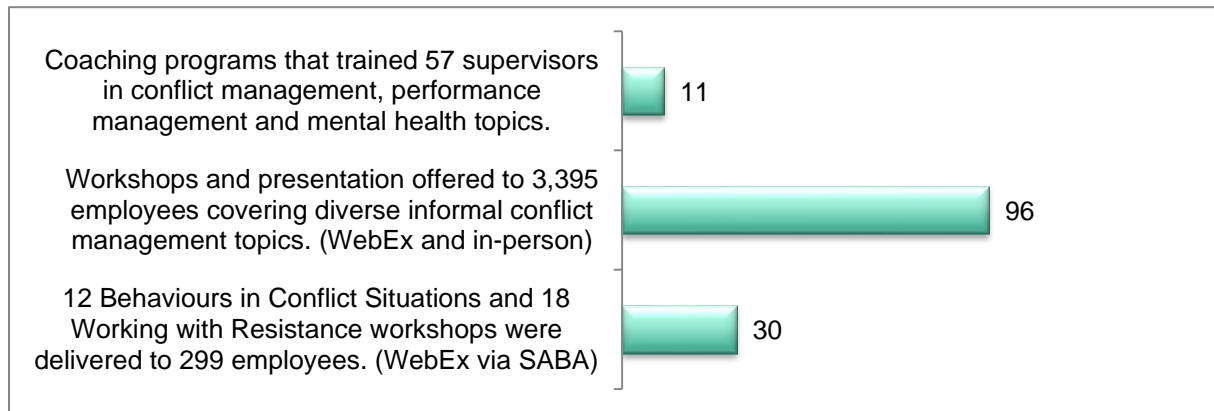
**MEDIATION / FACILITATED CONVERSATION:** Mediation/facilitated conversation account for 3% of all services provided at the OICM. These services provide participants a healthy, safe environment to discuss the challenges they face. Every mediation/facilitated conversation takes an average of 22.5 hours of work, not including travel time.



**GROUP PROCESSES:** Taking an average of 40 hours for a team of about 12 employees, it is common for a practitioner to identify individual issues and/or issues between two specific employees within a team. The practitioner then resolves this through mediation or facilitated conversation prior to addressing the challenges facing the whole team.



**PREVENTION ACTIVITIES:** The OICM recognizes the importance of prevention and has made it a priority to increase its offering of prevention activities. Just over 3,750 employees participated in activities that promote the prevention of conflict or enable them to manage conflict in the workplace.



## ACHIEVEMENTS

### Initiative to Resolve Grievances through Mediation

Since 2010, various ESDC partners—unions, Labour Relations, management and the OICM have maintained long-lasting and productive cooperation to promote prompt conflict resolution in order to support the search for solutions that are acceptable to everyone, while mitigating the effects of long-term conflict on the individuals directly involved.



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Between 2016 and 2017, members of a working group, which included two union representatives, two management members, one Labour Relations advisor and one OICM manager assessed 12 grievances, five of which went to mediation. Four of the five grievances were withdrawn, resulting in an 80% success rate.

Following the success of the 2016-2017 pilot project in the Quebec Region, endorsement was obtained by the Canada Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU) and management to launch a similar project in the National Capital Region (NCR). The OICM received agreement and support in January 2018, as well as endorsement from Employment and Social Development Canada's Workplace Management Committee (ESDC-WMC) on May 16, 2018. The next pilot project's launch is planned for the fall of 2018.

**QUARTERLY TREND REPORT :** In the fall of 2017, the OICM established a quarterly report to identify trends that have the potential to lead to conflict in various areas of the organization. This report continues to be disseminated widely within ESDC and provides the OICM with the opportunity to study the information and develop strategies in response, which will ultimately contribute to a healthier workplace.

#### **COLLABORATION WITH INTERNAL PARTNERS:**

- Delivered several joint *Respectful Workplace* presentations with the Office of Values and Ethics.
- Assisted *Performance Management* by attending their awareness sessions and provided an overview of OICM services as well as guidance in how to approach various situations that could lead to conflict, as well as provide various information on how to prevent conflict from escalating.

#### **FEEDBACK FROM USERS OF OICM SERVICES**

92% of respondents are satisfied with their overall OICM experience.

Feedback on the impact of the OICM is mostly gathered through qualitative methods, as attested by the following testimonials:



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“This was my first experience handling conflict between two employees. The practitioner was very reassuring from the outset and gave me a lot of tips and advice on the behaviour to adopt to facilitate the meeting between both employees. She followed up on the file on schedule. I had confidence in her and she was able to guide me through this challenging landscape.”

“I am now equipped with tools that I will use throughout my career and in my private life.”

“I was very impressed with the quality of services I received and with my comfort level during a tense interaction with a colleague during the mediation session. I was in a safe environment and had the opportunity to express my vision and opinion without feeling judged or feeling the need to justify myself.”

“I feel more at ease handling conflict situations. I believe that with practice, I will be even more comfortable when dealing with this type of situation.”