2015 2016

Office of Conflict Resolution
2015–2016 Annual Report

Solution

Canada

Letter to the Deputy Minister

Ms. Marta Morgan
Deputy Minister
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Dear Ms. Morgan:

I am pleased to submit the 2015–2016 Annual Report of the Office of Conflict Resolution (OCR) for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The report presents an overview of our accomplishments and activities for the period of April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016. Along with a general analysis of the sources of conflict that have been identified by IRCC statistics, it provides a detailed description of the services that OCR offers, including mediation, group processes, coaching and training.

The OCR has continued to provide a timely and neutral approach to helping those in conflict find creative solutions that are sustainable, mutually beneficial for all parties and conducive to overall workplace well-being.

Cordially,

Stéphane Cardinal
Director and Informal Conflict Management System Senior Officer
Office of Conflict Resolution

Message from the Director of the Office of Conflict Resolution

This year represents the tenth anniversary of the Informal Conflict Management System (ICMS), per the amendment to the *Public Service Labour Relations Act* of April 2005. At the time, the objective was to empower each department to create an ICMS system corresponding to its needs and culture. Recognizing the importance of dealing with workplace conflicts and issues informally, IRCC created the Office of Conflict Resolution (OCR) in 2005 with a mandate to manage and resolve work-related issues appropriately and to promote a harmonious and respectful workplace. We have seen a tremendous evolution in our work over that period of time, and we are continuing our efforts to raise awareness of informal conflict resolution processes and to ensure that our services are accessible to all employees.

Over the years, the OCR has become an integral strategic partner in ongoing, government-wide priorities: performance and people management, workplace well-being, harassment prevention, conflict resolution, effective communication and Blueprint 2020 initiatives. The most recent addition to our training roster is the development of the Civility in the Workplace workshop, which supports the Workplace Well-Being Initiative by offering teams a forum for discussing what kind of workplace they would like to have.

The literature on civility indicates that workplace incivility has a much larger impact than once thought. It has been shown that incivility hurts performance through reduced time at work, lowered creativity, diminished team spirit and employee engagement, and it can even negatively affect physical and mental health. The OCR has developed a two-pronged approach to provide participants with the tools they need to identify and effectively address uncivil behaviour and to build a more civil workplace.

I encourage all IRCC staff to discover the benefits of our services and what they can do for you, your team and the overall health of IRCC.

Executive Summary

In 2015–2016, the OCR provided 144 interventions to a total of 211 clients. The National Capital Region (NCR) was the principal user of OCR services, with a rate of 62.2%, an increase from previous years but reflective of our demographics. Again this year, the most frequently used service by OCR clients was conflict coaching, which comprised 42.4% of all services provided. This is consistent with the previous year, which suggests IRCC employees have greater interest and confidence in learning to manage conflicts on their own.

The primary nature of conflicts in cases handled by the OCR continues to be Interpersonal/Work Issues, accounting for 51.2% of cases. Of these cases, 31.3% involved conflicts between employees and managers, whereas 19.84% involved ineffective communication. With regard to the amount of training provided by the OCR, this year is considered a second consecutive record. With 73 sessions provided to IRCC offices across Canada and overseas to almost 1444 participants, it has been a successful year in helping IRCC employees become more conflict competent.

In addition to casework and building competency through training, the OCR is committed to helping the organization improve a number of areas identified in the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES), particularly in relation to the perception of harassment and uncivil behaviours in the workplace. This year we launched a new workshop called Building Civility in the Workplace, which aims to strengthen managers' and employees' awareness of their roles in improving their workplace.

Background

Since its creation in 2005, the OCR has offered a confidential, impartial and flexible way to deal with conflicts in a timely manner. Its major objectives are to promote effective dialogue at all levels and to deal with workplace difficulties as soon as they arise, at the lowest possible level and as close as possible to the source of the conflict.

The OCR supports staff at all levels in preventing, managing and resolving workplace conflicts. Its key roles are to

- provide confidential, flexible, fast, informal and effective ways of handling conflict when and where it occurs;
- provide learning activities that develop the skills and abilities of employees to manage their own conflicts;
- promote discussion of issues and concerns; and
- provide specialized conflict resolution services, such as intake interviews and option development, conflict coaching, facilitation, mediation, group interventions and the development of specialized tools.

Fostering Best Practices

In addition to providing ICMS training and services, the OCR prides itself on staying current with new tools and up-to-date expertise for conflict resolution advisors. Moreover, the OCR is an active partner within the Federal ICMS Network in order to ensure its services reflect the best practices of the field and to provide input on streamlining all ICMS services within the federal government.

How the Office Operates

When a client contacts the OCR, we proceed with some or all of the following:

- active listening to the situation in person or by phone;

- based on the circumstances of the situation and the context, the OCR offers informal process assistance through mediation, facilitation, personal conflict coaching or group intervention;

- if another party needs to be involved, the OCR or the client gets in touch with the other individual to inquire about their interest in participating in the desired informal process.

Clients normally contact the OCR by phone through the free toll number 1-877-690-7971, by email through the generic email (Conflict-Resolution-Office/resolution-conflit@cic.gc.ca) or directly, as walk-ins, at 365 Laurier, 3rd floor, Ottawa, Ontario.
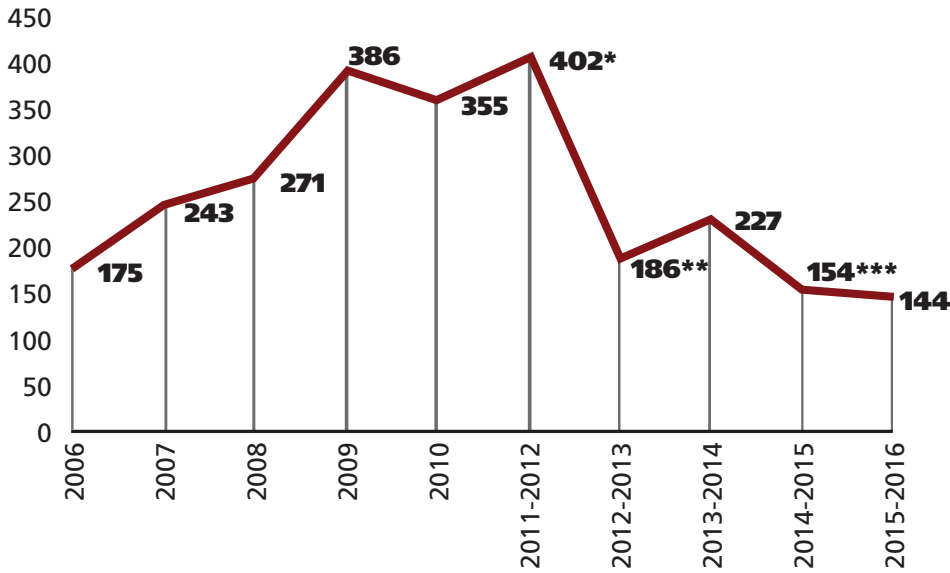
Interventions

ICMS Interventions

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the implementation of the ICMS within the federal public service and IRCC. In its tenth year of operation, the OCR provided 144 interventions, involving a total of 211 clients. Of these, three interventions were provided to four clients from other departments. Of our 211 clients, 35.1% were returning clients, whereas 64.9% were first-time users. The majority of clients who used our services were indeterminate employees (80.6%), and 46.0% were supervisors or managers. The gender distribution for our clients was 73.6% female, which is fairly consistent with IRCC's gender distribution (66.6% female).

Figure 1

Comparison of the OCR's number of interventions from 2006 to 2015–2016

Chart data points:
- 2006: 175
- 2007: 243
- 2008: 271
- 2009: 386
- 2010: 355
- 2011-2012: 402*
- 2012-2013: 186**
- 2013-2014: 227
- 2014-2015: 154***
- 2015-2016: 144

* Period covered = 15 months. Since 2011, the OCR report has covered a fiscal year rather than calendar year.

** Reduction explained by DRAP exercise and a new methodology to account for the number of interventions.

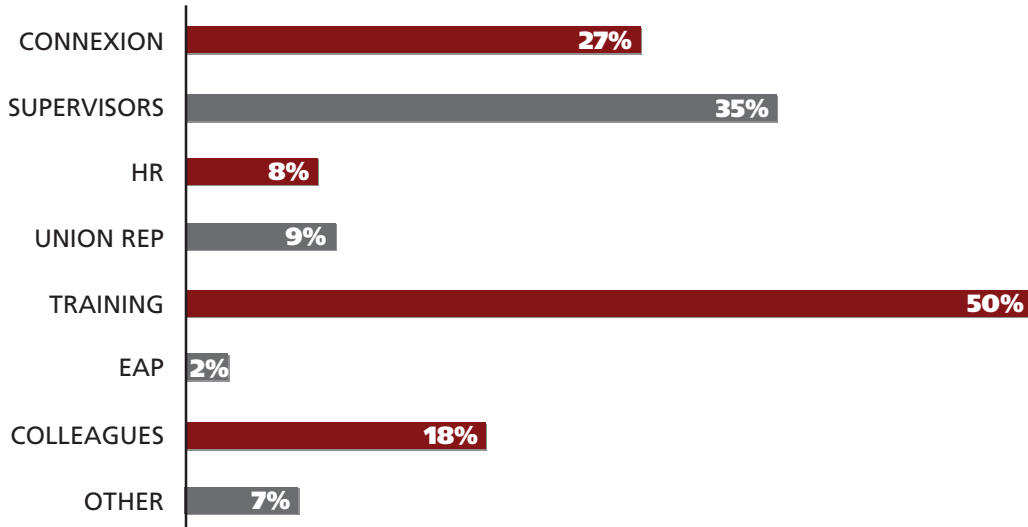*** This data has been modified from last year's report—changing 288 to 154; this change was caused by a misinterpretation of the new data system.

Sources of referral

When clients were asked how they heard about OCR services, the responses were as follows:

Figure 2

Sources of referral

- CONNEXION: 27%
- SUPERVISORS: 35%
- HR: 8%
- UNION REP: 9%
- TRAINING: 50%
- EAP: 2%
- COLLEAGUES: 18%
- OTHER: 7%

Services by Region

Although our office is located in Ottawa, we offer ICMS services to IRCC staff throughout Canada and internationally to the missions. The breakdown of clients by region was as follows:

Figure 3

ICMS Services by Region

Case Processing Region
10.2%

International Region
10.7%

Eastern Region
6.7%

Western Region
6.1%

Ontario Region
4.1%

National Headquarters
62.2%

Services by Sector

IRCC has five sectors. The rates of ICMS use by sector are as follows: Operations, 51.4%; Corporate Services, 20.3%; Strategic and Program Policy, 20.3%; Internal (Executive) Services, 6.1%; and Finance, 2.1%. These rates are consistent with the sizes of their respective work forces and rates from previous years.

Types of Services

Unresolved conflicts can have an impact on the individuals involved as well as on other people in the workplace. Indeed, conflict can be quite contagious in any work environment, increasing absenteeism and stress leave as well as decreasing overall productivity.

All employees are encouraged to try to resolve conflicts on their own as soon as they sense unease. They can also voluntarily access a number of specialized OCR services.

Intake consultations and options development

Intake consultations and options development accounted for 34% of interventions offered by the OCR this fiscal year. This service provides clients with the opportunity to better understand a situation and identify the options available for resolving a conflict. Sometimes, the stress and emotions felt while trying to cope with a conflict or difficult work situation can leave individuals unable to effectively deal with the issues. The conflict resolution practitioner can help employees see issues from different perspectives and identify possible solutions.

Figure 4

Types of services provided 2015–2016
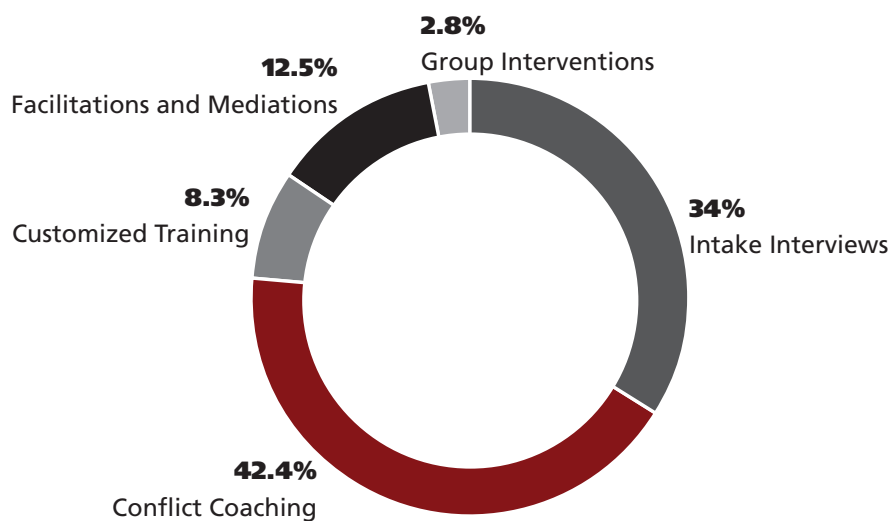
Conflict coaching

Conflict coaching represented 42.4% of the workload of OCR practitioners this fiscal year, which is similar to last year's rate of 49%. This specialized type of coaching can help employees and managers develop new skills and strategies to resolve conflicts with others. These skills are particularly effective in interpersonal conflict situations in which clients are preparing to have difficult conversations without a facilitator.

Facilitation and mediation

As individuals become more comfortable with conflict resolution skills and practices, many workplace issues and situations can be resolved directly by the people involved without outside intervention. This is consistent with our vision of empowering all IRCC employees to address their concerns as quickly as possible and at the lowest possible level. However, when more complicated situations need to be addressed, a facilitated discussion or mediation with the assistance of an OCR practitioner is often helpful in creating a safe and constructive process for parties to find a mutually beneficial resolution and improve the working relationship.

Facilitations and mediations accounted for 12.5% of our interventions, which is similar to the rate of 13.2% from the previous year.

Group interventions

Group interventions represented only 2.8% of interventions for the 2015–2016 fiscal year; however, they involved 67 clients and over 338 hours of preparation and intervention. This is an increase from the 276 hours invested in the previous year on group interventions. Group processes are consistently the most demanding interventions in terms of time and resources. Typically, a group process addresses difficult situations that impact the work environment for one or more teams. In order to assess the issues and dynamics, each member of the team (including employees and management) is invited to share their perspective on the issues impacting the group, often through individual interviews or questionnaires, depending on the size of the group. A lot of time is also spent setting the stage for a constructive dialogue, which often involves preparing management, creating buy-in from all involved and ensuring commitment to follow through on the action plan.

Other

Specialized tools and customized training accounted for 8.3% of our work for the 2015–2016 fiscal year, which is a significant increase from the previous rate of 1.7%. Customized training is provided to respond to the diverse training needs of clients and involves designing or adapting training, such as shortening an existing training to meet operational needs, developing a virtual version to meet regional needs and creating a new workshop to meet a team's particular needs, such as developing skills in change management.

Specialized tools are created as a timely response to address needs identified by clients. This includes items such as a handout on tips and best practices for communicating via email as well as larger products, such as the delivery of several videoconference sessions on dealing with resistance to help managers and supervisors prepare for mid-year and end-of-year performance evaluations.

No matter the reason for contacting the OCR, the fact that individuals have sought out our services is a positive sign; it means they are proactively looking for ways to resolve difficult situations in a collaborative manner.

Variations in the kinds of services provided each year are related to the needs of clients and the nature of the issues identified. Interpersonal conflicts, for example, may require conflict coaching, whereas general issues related to management practices or poor communication may require brainstorming and option development to consider possible avenues of resolution. Facilitation, mediation and group interventions are often the result of failing to address conflicts early on, causing them to fester and escalate. As conflicts escalate, they become more complicated to resolve and may require the assistance of a neutral third party to facilitate discussions.

Sources of Conflict

Conflict is inevitable in all aspects of our lives, and work is no exception. Individuals have different views, beliefs and experiences that influence their perceptions and their reactions to situations. They also have different priorities and different needs. It is the way in which these differences are dealt with that will determine the outcome of a conflict; how a person responds to conflict affects whether there will be a positive or negative outcome.

Figure 5

Sources of conflict
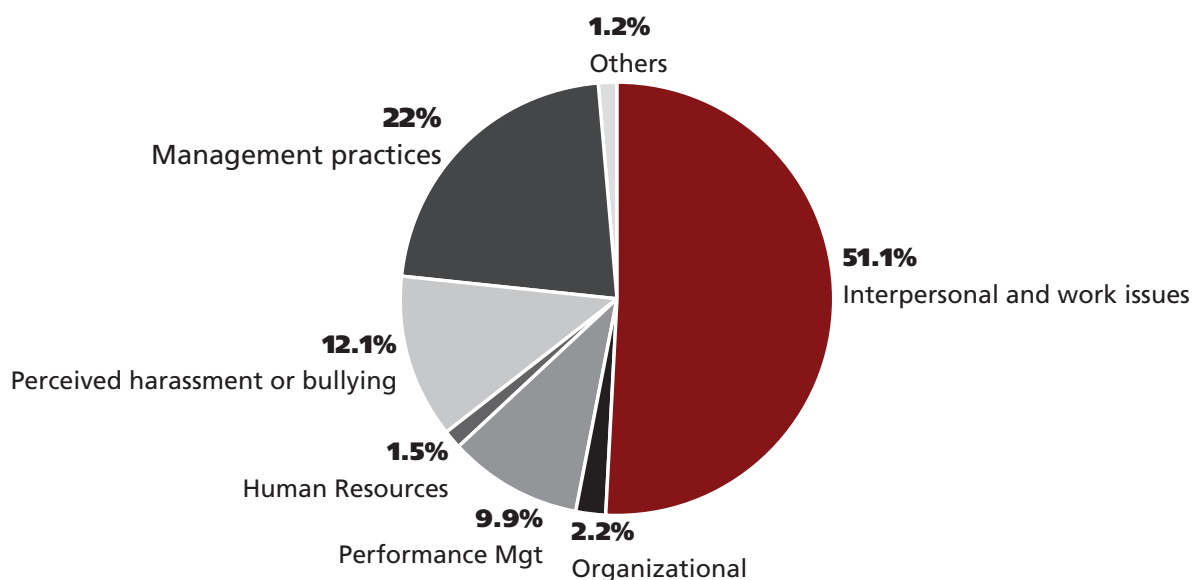
In 2015–2016, the most common source of conflict was in the category "Interpersonal and work issues" (51.1%), which refers to breakdown or ineffective communication, personal issues, personality, work style, values and workplace relationships. Also, within this category, 31.3% of the cases involved interpersonal conflicts between a manager and a subordinate, 14.6% involved conflicts between two employees and 11.1% involved conflicts between two members of management.

The OCR is involved in a large number of conflicts between diverging hierarchical levels because some employees in this kind of relationship feel safer discussing difficult subjects with an impartial third party present. When a conflict or misunderstanding occurs between a supervisor and a subordinate, subordinates sometime fear escalating the conflict by addressing the issues directly with the supervisor. The fine line between open communication and perceived insubordination motivates some employees to use ICMS services in these situations to ensure the communication is well received in a safe environment.

The next most significant source of conflict was "Management practices," which include abuse of authority, management decisions, work-life balance, roles and responsibilities and duty to accommodate, which together accounted for 22%. Conflict coaching is often the option used in these situations. This method helps clients to understand the different styles, clarify the probable intention from the other party and adapt their communication strategy (see *Conflict Coaching Outcomes* below).

The third most frequently identified source of conflict was "Perceived harassment or bullying" at 12.1%. This shows a consistent decrease from the previous two years (15.7% and 18.9%) and is lower than the 2014 PSES results for harassment at IRCC (15%). It is important to note that the issue of perceived harassment is often resolved once both parties identify the miscommunication or misunderstanding that has occurred and agree to modify behaviours or interactions.

Finally, the issues related to "Performance management," which accounted for 9.9% of issues reported, is similar to previous years (8.9% in 2014–15 and 8.0% in 2013–2014). Interestingly, we have noticed a recurring pattern of management describing a situation as performance management issues and employees reporting the same situation as perceived harassment or management-style issues. Different perceptions of the same situation are common in many conflicts and can be addressed with open communication regarding intentions and impact.

Outcomes

Conflict Coaching
Conflict coaching was again the most frequent service provided this year, accounting for almost half of the services provided by the OCR (42.4%). Within coaching cases, 18.6% of clients reported that the situation improved, whereas 8.8% reported no improvement through coaching. A smaller percentage of clients (4.9%) chose to change jobs compared to 7.8% of coaching clients who did so last year. 2.9% of clients received coaching without following up to provide an update on their situation.

Facilitated Discussion and Mediation
This fiscal year, we prepared for 18 facilitations and mediations. Of these cases, 18.4% did not proceed with the facilitation, and 12.5% changed jobs or departments prior to the mediation. We completed 12 facilitations and mediations, with 83.3% reaching an agreement (10/12). Of the two cases involving grievances, 100% of them resulted in the withdrawal of the grievance.

Interestingly, we had an 8.3% rate of refusal for facilitations and mediations, which included some members of management refusing to use ICMS services to resolve conflicts or misunderstandings with their subordinates. The previous years, the refusal rate was 6% and 7.1%. Because ICMS services are voluntary, we cannot compel anyone to use our services.

However, IRCC employees and management do not necessarily understand the impact of their refusal to try to resolve difficult situations. Often, the willing party feels helpless in resolving issues when faced with the refusal of the other party. This suggests that continued promotion of ICMS services within all ranks of IRCC is important to encourage staff to view an invitation from a colleague to use OCR services to address workplace conflict as a positive opportunity to improve the workplace.

Intake Consultations and Options Development

The intake consultation is generally the first contact with the client, and for some, it is the full extent of the assistance they require. This fiscal year, 41.5% of those who used the intake consultation service received information or documents as requested. 6.2% reported an improvement in their situation, whereas 1.5% reported no improvement. Another 10.8% of clients decided to change jobs rather than address their conflict, and 13.8% did not proceed with any other services beyond the intake consultation. The remaining 67.7% of clients chose to continue working with the OCR and used other services, such as conflict coaching, facilitation and mediation, group intervention or training.

Group Interventions

All completed group interventions reported at least a partial resolution, meaning that not all issues may have been resolved to every participant's satisfaction; however, a number of issues were resolved for the group. Partial resolution is common for group interventions because it is often not feasible to address and resolve every single issue raised by every member of the group.

Service Standards

The established service standard for the OCR is to respond within 24 to 48 hours from the initial contact. In 99.3% of cases from this year, clients were able to receive OCR services with no appreciable delay.

The OCR tries to schedule interventions as quickly as possible. The goal is to deal with conflict at the earliest stage possible, at the lowest level possible and as close as possible to the source of the conflict. The average duration of a case this fiscal year was 58.3 calendar days, which is significantly shorter than last year's average of 93.5 calendar days. There is a broad spectrum for how long each case takes from initial contact to closing. For this fiscal year, that period ranged from one day for some cases to 334 days for the longest case. When a delay in service occurs, it is usually because of the unavailability of participants and the complexity of the situation. For example, in mediations and group interventions, the need to accommodate the schedules of all the individuals involved (the individuals involved in the conflict, the people accompanying them and the mediators) can create scheduling delays. This is especially true when services are provided outside the NCR, where travel preparations are necessary.

The OCR continually strives to work in partnership with bargaining agent representatives and Labour Relations to encourage the use of informal conflict resolution at the grievance filing stage. Some referrals are made proactively by both Labour Relations (8%) and bargaining agent representatives (9%) in an effort to resolve the situations informally before resorting to formal means.
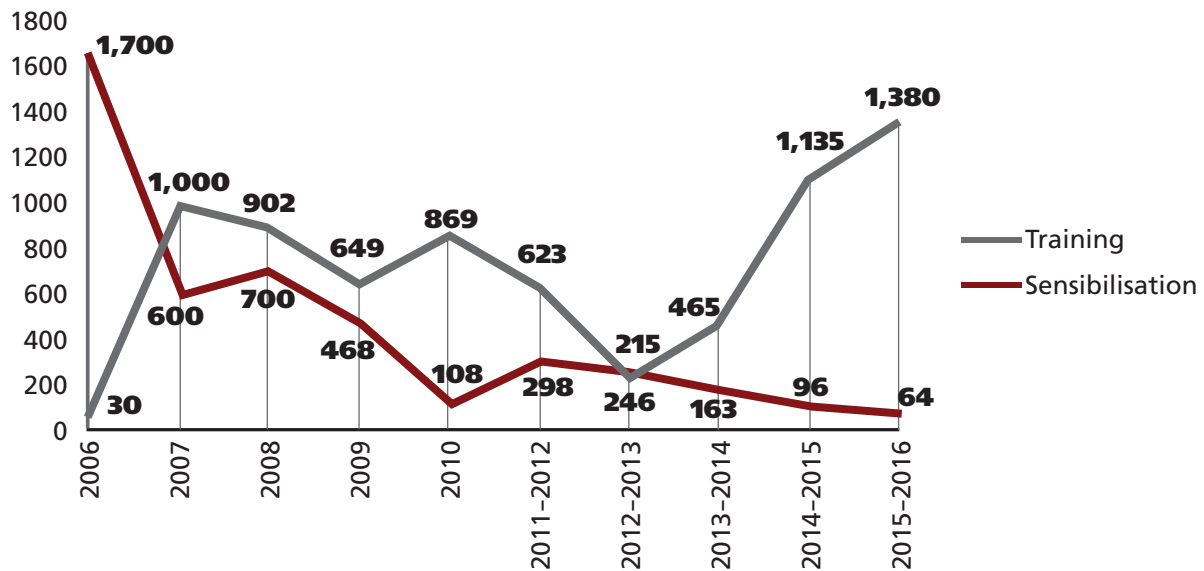
Prevention

Training and Awareness Sessions
In 2015–2016, the OCR delivered 73 training and awareness sessions to 1444 IRCC employees and managers, which constitutes a second consecutive record for the highest number of participants trained since the program's inception.

Figure 6

Number of participants in training or awareness sessions since 2006

There are a number of factors that have likely contributed to this continuous increase in training:

- the implementation of Phase II for the "Giving and Receiving Feedback" training, which, in the last fiscal year, was made available to IRCC staff at all levels in support of the Performance Management initiative;
- the increasing popularity of the workshop "Social Styles," which helps participants reflect on their styles of interaction and those of their teammates in order to enhance communication;
- management's desire to improve workplace environments and to support effective communication in order to prevent and better manage conflicts;
- our partners in the Learning and Development Division and the International Region continuing to promote the delivery of our training in the regions as well as overseas;
- the high level of satisfaction from participants that is reflected in training evaluations and communicated through word of mouth referrals, which results in many repeat requests for training from former clients and requests from new clients;
- our communication strategy, which has increased the visibility of our services;
- the accessibility and quick delivery of our services; and
- the ongoing growth of IRCC's population.

Training Distribution

Training workshops are normally scheduled based on clients' requests. The Learning and Development Division (Human Resources [HR]) continues to be an important partner for coordinating OCR training across the country. Of the 73 workshops delivered this year, almost 43% were dedicated to helping managers and employees with the performance management process, such as "Giving and Receiving Feedback" and "Crucial Conversations"; 27% of the training activities were dedicated to helping employees in conflict management; and 30% were team building workshops.

Figure 7

Workshops delivered through the fiscal year
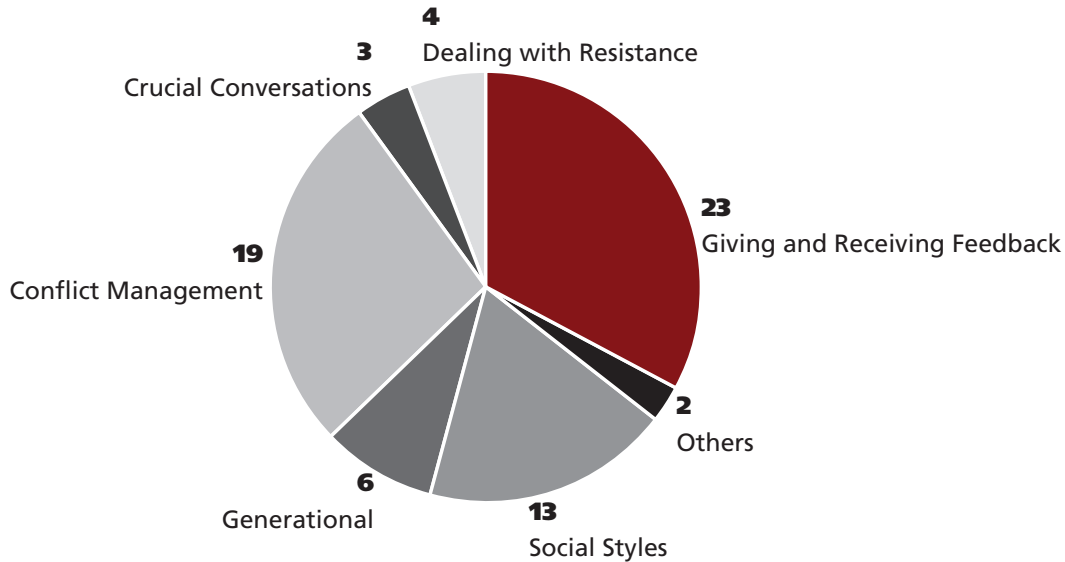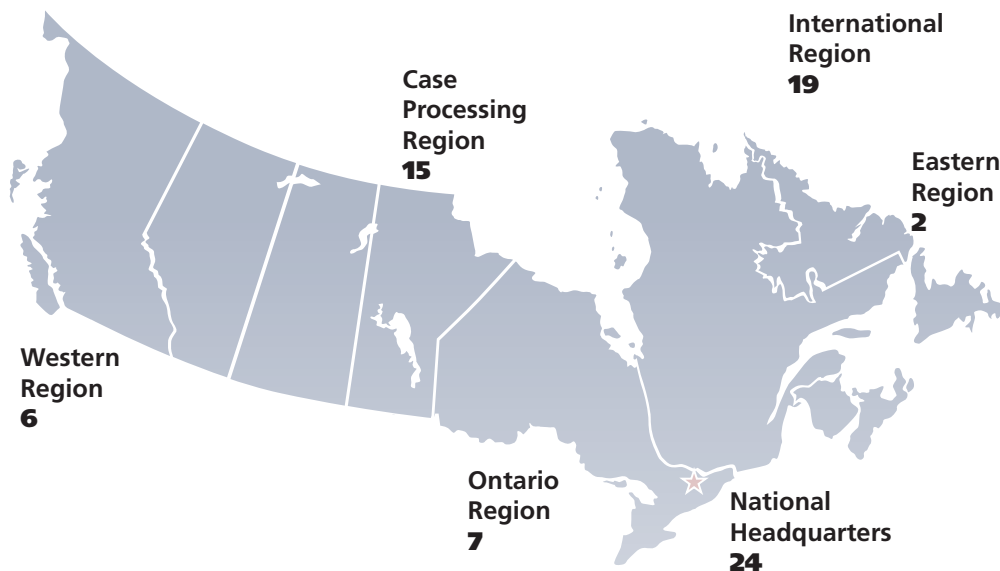

Participant Distribution

Of the 1444 workshop participants, 38% attended sessions that developed skills relating to performance management, 28% attended sessions that build informal conflict management competencies and 34% attended workshops that provide insights into different interpersonal styles and perceptions.

Training by Region

The OCR has been very active in the regions and overseas in the last year. We succeeded in offering training in every region and will strive to continue doing so in the coming years. Most of the training workshops were coordinated through the regional training coordinators, while others were coordinated directly with the client.

Figure 8

Training sessions by region

International Region **19**

Case Processing Region **15**

Eastern Region **2**

Western Region **6**

Ontario Region **7**

National Headquarters **24**

Training Details

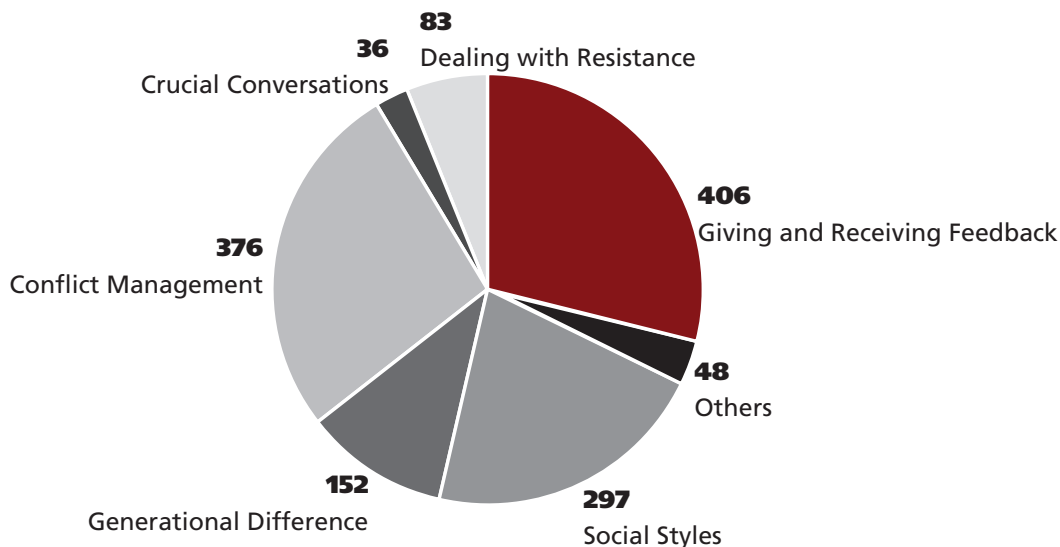All training and awareness sessions are available in French and English.

▶ One and a half-day workshop: "Conflict Resolution – ICMS@Work"
Sixty-four managers or supervisors attended one of the four workshops offered this year. This mandatory learning activity for middle managers is designed to enhance understanding of the various roles that exist in our integrated approach to conflict resolution while enhancing skills for dealing with conflict. This workshop is also offered to HR professionals and bargaining agents.

▶ One-day workshop: "Essentials for Constructive Conflict Management"
There were six one-day workshops offered to employees this fiscal year, which enabled us to train 92 employees to identify their own conflict styles and improve their communication skills. We also took this opportunity to inform them of the informal conflict resolution options available at the OCR.

▶ Half-day workshop: "Conflict Resolution"
In order to accommodate operational requirements, the OCR developed a half-day workshop on informal conflict management, which covers the basics of the ICMS, OCR services and tools to improve communication. This fiscal year, we offered nine workshops and trained 220 casual, term and student employees as well as locally engaged staff abroad. These half-day workshops increase awareness of the ICMS and provide tools for resolving and preventing conflicts.

▶ Two-day workshop: "Crucial Conversations"
This workshop provides an opportunity for participants to enhance their communication and conflict resolution skills through a deeper and more intensive approach to having difficult conversations with individuals and in teams. Three training sessions were provided to 36 participants across Canada.

▶ Half-day workshop: "Giving and Receiving Feedback"
This workshop was launched in the previous fiscal year and is predominantly targeted targeted to help managers and supervisors improve their skills in giving and receiving effective feedback. For the 2015–2016 fiscal year, the workshop was offered across Canada and in the missions to employees as well as management and continues to be one of our more popular workshops. Twenty-three sessions were delivered to 406 participants.

▶ Half-day workshop: "Generational Differences"
This workshop uses a highly interactive approach to raise awareness of generational differences in the workplace and introduces employees to strategies for improving intergenerational communication and dealing with potential conflicts. Six sessions were delivered to 152 participants this fiscal year.

▶ Half-day workshop: "Social Styles"
In this team-building workshop, participants use a questionnaire to identify their own Social Style or preferred style of interaction with others. We use exercises and activities in small and large groups to explore the characteristics of each style, when each might be useful and how to adapt to others' style preferences when appropriate. Thirteen sessions were delivered to 297 participants this fiscal year.

▶ Specialized awareness sessions:
In addition to training sessions, 64 employees attended one of three OCR awareness sessions or information kiosks this fiscal year. The sessions and kiosks are an opportunity for employees to learn about available OCR services. In previous years, we have provided a greater number of stand-alone awareness sessions. However, the focus in the last two fiscal years have been to invest more time and resources into delivering training, which provides participants with the dual benefit of developing skills and knowledge at the same time as learning about the OCR.

▶ International Conflict Resolution Day / 10th Anniversary of ICMS:
October 17, 2015, was International Conflict Resolution Day, and 2015 was the tenth anniversary of the ICMS in the federal public service. In order to celebrate these two events, the OCR launched a new initiative on civility in the workplace (see below) in October 2015 and used this opportunity to promote our services through a message in IRCC Connexion on October 17.

► Civility in the Workplace:
In response to the APEX report, *Civility Matters*, and the 2014 PSES results, the OCR developed a new initiative to encourage a learning conversation at IRCC on civility in the workplace. The initiative began with a *Dear Coach* article on Today@IRCC, which raised the topic of civility at work and solicited positive examples of civil behaviour that staff have experienced and appreciated. This was followed by a national videoconference discussion on "What does civility mean to you?" in October 2015 and culminated in the development of a workshop on civility, which was piloted twice in March 2016.

Figure 9

Number of participants who received training by workshop topic

Reporting on the OCR's training and awareness activities began in 2006. Since then, over 7226 IRCC employees have attended an OCR training session, and more than 4443 have participated in an awareness session. These activities are integral to the OCR's mandate of helping employees enhance their conflict resolution skills.

Communication

In terms of communication and promotion of the ICMS, we continued our efforts to add tools and information to the OCR website, making them more easily accessible to all IRCC staff. This year, the number of visits on our intranet site decreased from last year, going from 100 visits in 2013–2014 to 3342 visits in 2014–2015 and 1855 visits in 2015–2016.

We continued to publish our online newsletter, *Dear Coach*, which provides suggestions, case studies, tips and tools to help all IRCC employees in dealing with difficult situations.

The OCR continued to engage key stakeholders through the IRCC Informal Conflict Resolution Network (ICRN). This provides the OCR with opportunities to meet with bargaining agents, HR representatives and members of management to discuss trends in conflict resolution as well as to identify recurring difficulties that stakeholders have noticed in IRCC workplaces.

Client Satisfaction

To continually provide services that are timely and effective, the OCR solicited feedback from our clients on an ongoing basis by providing evaluation forms following the delivery of a service and immediately after a training session. Furthermore, to assess the impact of clients' newly learned ICMS skills, an electronic survey was sent to evaluate the long-term impact of our training and services. This year, the electronic survey was sent to approximately 917 clients, and 161 responded, which is a 17.5% response rate. In the last fiscal year, challenges in switching the survey program from Fluid Survey to Voxco delayed the sending of surveys.

Overall, the results from client evaluations continue to demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with the various services and training offered by the OCR.

1. **Conflict resolution workshops for employees**

    - 95% of respondents would recommend the workshops to their colleagues.
    - 95% of respondents found the workshops relevant and useful.

    "The instructors were very calm and were able to keep everyone on point and to offer solutions on communication in the workplace that have been very effective."

2. **"Conflict Resolution – ICMS @ Work"**

    - 100% of respondents would recommend the workshop to their colleagues.
    - 100% of respondents found the workshop relevant and useful

    "It was a really great training program that was interactive and informative."

3. "Social Styles"

  • 95% of respondents would recommend the workshop to their colleagues.
  • 94% of respondents found the workshop relevant and useful.

"Training exercises with my coworkers and supervisors helped me understand their expectations and preferred methods for collaboration."

4. "Giving and Receiving Feedback"
   This fiscal year, the workshop was offered to all employees.

  • 95% of respondents would recommend this workshop to others.

5. ICMS services
   Services offered by the OCR are part of the ICMS and are confidential, neutral and impartial. An informal approach is encouraged at IRCC because it is less costly and allows people to manage their conflicts as they occur, at the lowest possible level and as close as possible to the source of conflict. Based on the survey results,

  • 84% of respondents indicated that the advisor created an inclusive environment where clients felt comfortable sharing their stories;
  • 81% felt understood;
  • 85% were able to present all issues adequately;
  • 89% rated their interactions with an OCR advisor as good to very good;
  • 80% agree or strongly agree that the information will remain confidential; and
  • 75% were able to apply the concepts or skills learned from the OCR.

"I felt heard and understood and like I had time to explain everything, and the advisor was very caring and not dismissive in any way. The advisor always answered my emails promptly and even followed up with me a few weeks after our meeting."

Conclusion

During this reporting year, there were several instances where managers had to deal with highly sensitive situations involving staff with mental or other health-related conditions. In some of these sensitive situations, all parties involved wrestled with supporting the employee directly affected by the mental or other health-related condition and ensuring a conducive and safe working environment.

In one of these situations, the manager was clearly unable to engage the employee in some basic required activities to continue their duties, due to a medical condition. Needless to say that when these situations arise, the parties involved are under considerable stress and are concerned about the well-being of this individual.

IRCC continues to be a leader among the large family of federal departments in terms of investing in workplace well-being. The OCR remains strongly committed to pursuing its leadership role in supporting this goal by developing learning activities and tools to assist employees and managers in preventing and effectively managing conflict that may arise in the workplace.

Over the coming year, the OCR commits to

- supporting IRCC managers, team leaders and employees in meeting better results in the future PSES survey scheduled for 2017 by promoting the "Building Civility in the Workplace Program";
- continuing its prevention activities in support of IRCC priorities regarding effective performance management and workplace well-being;
- remaining efficient and readily available to all IRCC staff regarding the resolution of workplace conflict.

The OCR's goal is to reach as many people as possible at all levels, and the initiatives and interventions listed in this report help to achieve this goal. Approximately 1700 employees, managers and team leaders were in some type of contact with the OCR this year.

Quotes

"You can't solve problems until you understand the other side." —Jeffrey Manber

"Are you really listening, or are you just waiting for your turn to talk?"
— R. Montgomery

"Relationships of trust depend on our willingness to look not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others." — Peter Farquharson