

Annual Report 2024–2025

Office of the Ombud
A safe place to call



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada





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Message from the Ombud

Parks Canada team members bring passion and commitment to their work. Whether working in the field, in offices, or alongside communities and partners, team members across the Agency share a strong sense of purpose rooted in connection to place, history, and meaning.

In the past year, that commitment has been tested by a complex workplace landscape, which includes a persistent climate of fiscal constraint and operational uncertainty, shifting political climate, artificial intelligence, as well as natural disasters—to name but a few—which continue to create concerns around job security and safety for oneself and others. Some team members who reached out to the Office of the Ombud reported they are experiencing cumulative stress and fatigue—physical, emotional, and psychological—compounded by change and uncertainty.

Through it all, we see that people come to work every day wanting to bring their best, to contribute, and to do meaningful work. Always, and especially in times like these, maintaining a **people-centered approach** is not just important—it is essential. This means acting with compassion, assuming positive intent, and treating one another with respect and understanding. By centering on people—our colleagues, our teams, our communities—we can continue to meet the mission of Parks Canada with integrity and resilience.

The role of the Ombud continues to be one of trust-building, listening, and surfacing the realities and concerns of team members in a safe and confidential



space. This year, we had the privilege of connecting with more team members than the past years and hearing your stories: we led 234 events and managed 524 cases, which represents a year over year increase. The stories shared with us during calls, coaching conversations and visits remind us that behind every policy and every project is a person—one who deserves to be treated with **dignity, respect, empathy, and fairness**.

We see you. We hear you. We see you navigating struggles at work, and we also hear stories of resilience. We are inspired by your dedication and perseverance. Work situations can be challenging—and yet through those challenges we hear of

Role of the Ombud:

- » Monitors trends and issues;
- » Helps navigate challenges;
- » Clarifies appropriate channels;
- » Identifies options;
- » Builds engagement.

so many stories where team members emerge stronger. As your ombud and informal conflict management practitioners, we hope to be there by your side as you work through these challenges, offering support, guidance, and empathy.

I am grateful to the Employee Networks for their important work and their contribution to this year's Annual Report. It is my honour to amplify some of their voices and help team members connect with the variety of available supports.

Thank you for the strength and vulnerability you show every time you speak up and for every action you take towards making Parks Canada a

people-centered and inclusive organization. Please continue to reach out to us by email (omb@pc.gc.ca) or by phone (1-866-787-6780).



Marie-Josée Frenette

Ombud



OFFICE OF
THE OMBUD
A safe place to call



INTERNATIONAL
OMBUDS
ASSOCIATION

Organizational Ombuds Council
(OOC)



Conseil des Ombuds organisationnels
(COO)

*A safe
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to call*

Informal Conflict Management Practitioners' message to the PCA team

Star athletes have coaches. They understand that striving for excellence on their own simply does not work. While day to day most of us can rely on our teams and colleagues for support, there are both roles and circumstances that can make this more challenging. An outside and impartial perspective can offer valuable support.

"I wish I had reached out sooner" is something we hear often. While we certainly embrace the notion of "better later than never", we encourage contacting us early. There is value in an outside perspective. There is also value in a supportive environment in which to explore, learn and create. Star leaders also have coaches.

We are frequently sought after conflict has escalated. Sometimes we wonder what prevents people from reaching out sooner.

Is it the need for more information about the services we provide? We are working towards becoming more widely known and welcome any suggestions you have on how we might improve our outreach.

Is it a fear of not having all the answers? To this we respond, "who does?!?". The volume of information and the pace of change are staggering. The issues we face are thorny and complex. We are simply more effective when we work together in supportive, collaborative relationships.

Role of Informal Conflict Management Practitioners:

- » Uphold impartiality and confidentiality;
- » Assist to facilitate discussions;
- » Facilitate mediations;
- » Build capacity to manage workplace conflicts;
- » Promote a healthy and respectful workplace.



Is it the challenge of admitting a misstep?

There's no blaming or shaming here. Mistakes and learning are inseparable. Plus, there's the factor of us all being human.

While we do not have magic wands or simple solutions, we can support you in clarifying what you want, in developing options, and in analyzing

a challenge from multiple perspectives. We often receive feedback that a call with us prevented a misstep, prevented a conflict from escalating, or allowed a team to come together in a more positive and productive way.

We look forward to working with you over the coming year.



Our main graphic element symbolizes unity with a diamond design that resembles four individuals with their hands reaching out and linking together. The shapes evoke strength and highlight that our team members are at the heart of what we do and the importance of people-centered approaches. The overlap of the individuals represents inclusion and belonging. The four individuals also symbolize the Office of Ombud's four guiding principles (independence, impartiality, informality, confidentiality), as well as the four commitments of PCA (to protect, to present, to celebrate, to serve). The colour palette was carefully chosen to represent the mandate of PCA while creating a sense of comfort, which aligns with the office's vision of creating safe spaces for PCA team members.

Ombud 2024-2025 at a glance

(April 1st 2024 to March 31st 2025)

What we accomplished this year

524

cases¹

292

events²

1084

members assisted
by the OMB through
individual and
group services

2204

participants reached
through learning
events and
workshops

524 cases,
this includes but is
not limited to:

50

group
coaching

59

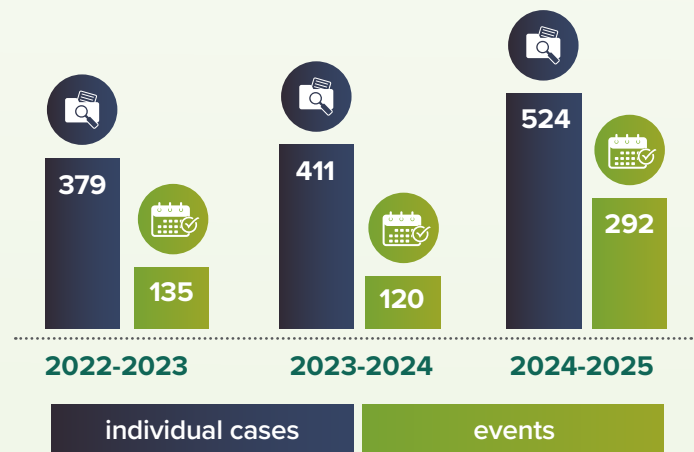
mediations
and facilitated
discussions

327

individual
coaching



**Our support is growing to
meet increasing needs.**

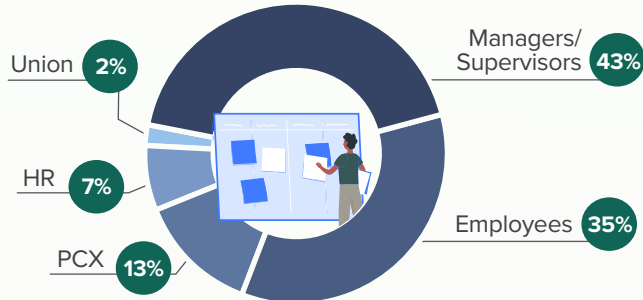


1. A case is opened when an OMB member is consulted by someone to discuss information and/or options and for assistance in understanding, managing, or addressing issues, questions, or concerns. It can involve a simple coaching call or a complex coaching relation, a mediation or group process. Simple information requests do not constitute a case file.
2. An event is opened when an OMB member carries out activities aimed at capacity building, providing orientation, increasing visibility through promotion and outreach, or increasing understanding and awareness through the presentation of systemic trends and issues.



Participants in Office of the Ombud services

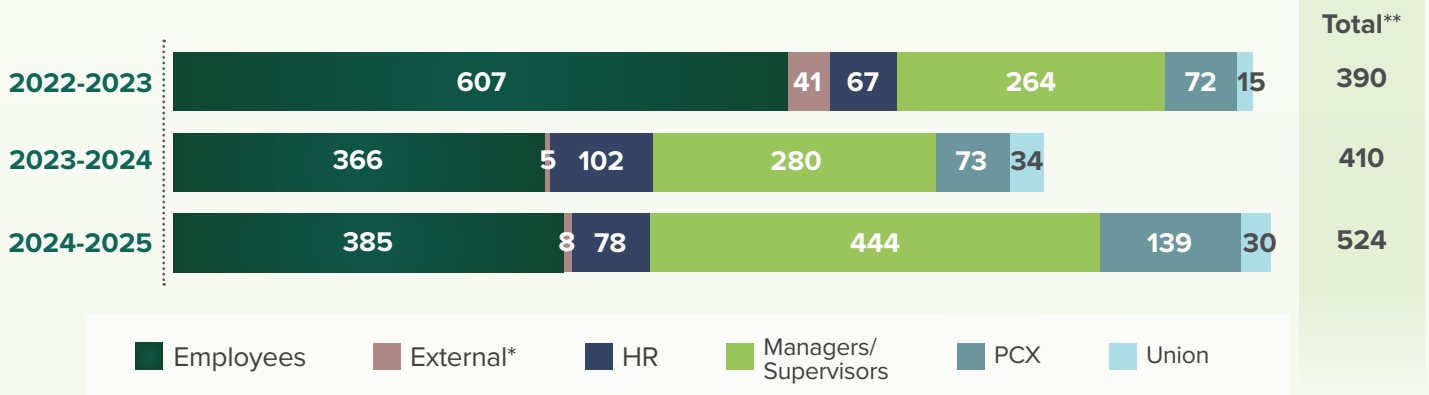
(Participants are either involved in the case as clients/ participants, support, or being directly implicated in consultations as part of the service they are accessing)



When in doubt, reach out!



Cases by Fiscal Year and Participant Type



* External including OGDs/Agencies, members of the public, former employees, volunteers and volunteer/partners organizations, contractors, etc.

** Total represents the total number of cases. There can be multiple participants for each case.

How the clients became aware of the Office of the Ombud

- 39% previous experience
- 35% referred/recommended
- 13% training
- 3% ParksNet
- 6% promotional activity
- 4% unknown



We had a total of 292 events



107 training events	101 action coaching sessions ³ (from 18 groups, led by 6 facilitators)
64 OMB 101 workshops	20 psychometric workshops

3. Action Coaching is a collaborative, peer-based approach where managers and supervisors learn and apply coaching techniques to support one another, share experiences, solve problems, and develop concrete actions—strengthening leadership skills, building resilience, and fostering a supportive professional network.

About our services

Ombud principles

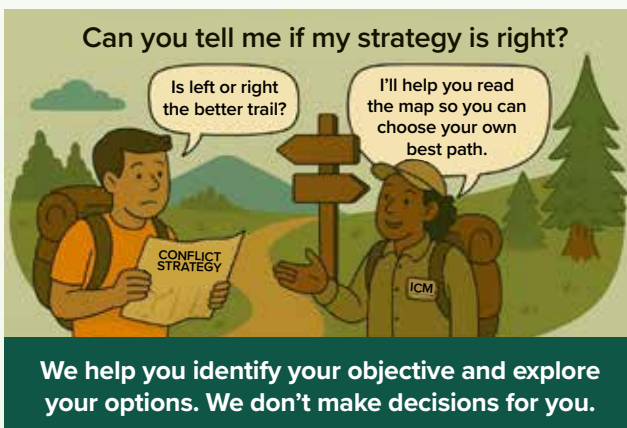
Independence

Impartiality

Informality

Confidentiality





Themes 2024–2025

For the fiscal 2024-2025 Annual Report, we are identifying three key themes related to the concerns brought forth to our Office. Within each, we are presenting a few key “friction points” that we have heard various team members mention in their interactions with us.

Friction points in conflict are the key moments, issues, or dynamics that generate tension, resistance, or escalation between people or groups. They are like the emotional or practical “sticking points” that prevent resolution or deepen division. Understanding these can help you either navigate conflict more effectively or defuse it before it gets worse.

As an Ombud office, we listen closely to these moments not just as signs of strain, but as opportunities for insight. Friction, after all, arises where people care – about fairness, clarity, support, and respect. It is in these spaces of tension that we can uncover patterns worth examining, and opportunities worth pursuing.

We also notice what works well, what helps people have important conversations, build understanding and resolve conflict. Much of this is reflected in the best practices shared under each theme.

1. Silence as self-preservation

Context

Some team members, especially those in term and contract positions have shared with our Office that they avoid addressing workplace conflict or concerns that are organizationally relevant,

including inappropriate behaviours of supervisors, out of fear of not being renewed or being labeled “difficult.” These team members often face a profound inner conflict. On one side lies their commitment to fairness, integrity, and the belief that harmful behaviour should be addressed to prevent it from happening again. On the other side lies a fear – that speaking up could trigger reprisals, damage their reputation, or limit their future opportunities for promotions or employment. While most leaders would not exercise their power in this manner, it is important to know that their staff might carry this fear.

This tension creates a paralyzing state where individuals feel both morally compelled to act and deeply cautious about protecting their livelihoods. Over time, this can take a psychological toll, leading to stress, diminished trust, and disengagement.

From an Ombud perspective, the issue shows both individual and systemic dimensions. In some situation, employees report that staying silent can feel like the safer option. Even when we cannot quantify how widespread this perception is, the fact that it exists at all creates a risk: valuable feedback may be lost, some organizational risks may not be surfaced, and certain problems may go unaddressed. Over time, this can influence the workplace climate and trust in our systems.

The Public Service Employment Survey (2024) indicates that 15% somewhat disagree and 14% strongly disagree with the statement “I feel I can initiate a formal recourse process without fear or reprisal” (32%) (this is slightly higher than 2022 and

slightly higher than the Public Service as a whole). The Office of the Ombud does not keep stats on the number of individuals raising fear of speaking up but will do so going forward as we adopt a new case management system.

Friction Points

- » Conflict festers or worsens due to avoidance.
- » Power imbalances are amplified.
- » Important feedback is not shared and legitimate concerns are not addressed.
- » Emotional strain, disengagement, or quiet quitting among staff.

Theme Summary

This theme highlights how job insecurity and precarious work can silence legitimate concerns, enabling toxic dynamics to continue, and preventing authentic communication. It creates missed opportunities.



Best practices

- » Find multiple ways to request feedback from others, including anonymous feedback.
- » Conduct stay and/or exit interviews, “skip levels”, 360 exercises.
- » For field units, conduct end of season review for all staff and include the space for anonymous feedback.
- » Include information about internal supports during onboarding and place contact information in high-visibility areas
- » Provide clear protections for those who raise concerns, backed by action – not just policy.
- » Reinforce that speaking up is an act of contribution, not defiance.
- » Provide feedback and raise concerns in a timely manner and at the lowest level possible – use alternative mechanisms and engage supports as needed.



2. Decisions without voices

Context

Team members often feel frustrated when people in positions of authority make a decision—especially one that contradicts their input—without explaining the reasoning. Over the last year, we have heard from team members who have shared with us, *“I don’t mind if my leaders don’t agree with me. But out of respect, I want to understand why.”*

This is not just about curiosity. It is about trust, respect, and feeling valued. When people invest time, thought, and expertise into recommendations, they want to know their input was seriously considered. A lack of explanation can feel dismissive, leaving the impression that their voice does not matter.

Leaders are not intentional in omitting information – this is sometimes due to time pressure, an assumption of understanding, decisions based on

sensitive or confidential factors they cannot fully share, or other factors, but it can nonetheless make team members feel hurt or resentful.

79 individuals over the last year raised concerns with the Office of the Ombud about Decision-Making/Input.

Decisions in accommodation requests

While this applies generally to the decisions in the workplace, we have heard from many team members specifically about concerns that key decisions on their accommodations or return to work are made without their input. This top-down approach leaves people feeling excluded, dismissed, unheard, or frustrated.

Disability management has heard this need and is adopting a centralized approach to accommodations within the Agency. One of the results of this initiative across the Agency will be a simple single point of contact (via Jira) for employees and managers to request accommodations directly from the center, on the one hand enabling team members to be included in the accommodation, regardless of who



is initiating the request, on the other hand allowing the employee to initiate the process directly with the centre of expertise.

Twice as many individuals reached out to the Office of the Ombud regarding concerns about accommodations/return to work (45) as they did the previous year.

Friction Points

- » Team members may feel their input and expertise is not valued, which erodes the foundational trust needed for effective collaboration.
- » Even when the decision is sound, lack of explanation can make it feel arbitrary or disrespectful, breeding quiet resentment.
- » People are less likely to support or implement a decision if they don't understand the rationale.
- » *In the accommodation or return to work process*, people don't feel heard and trust can decline when people are left out of conversations and decisions that affect them directly and in significant ways.

Theme Summary

This theme highlights the importance of involving team members in decisions that shape their experience, either specifically as it relates to accommodations or generally, as it pertains to work decisions. Meaningful consultation not only leads to better outcomes – it also signals respect, builds trust and strengthens organizational culture.

Best practices

- » Provide inputs in a constructive manner and ask questions to better understand decision making processes and rationale.
- » Acknowledge the input by clearly saying how the recommendation was considered, even if it wasn't adopted.



- » Explain the “why” when you can, sharing the reasoning to the extent possible, and highlighting (where this is appropriate) if some elements are confidential and cannot be shared.
- » Show that disagreement is not dismissal, that contributions and diversity of thought are still valued and sought.

Specific to accommodations

- » Advise team members empathetically, and as quickly as possible about the steps being taken to review their accommodation requests while appreciating that the accommodation process can be emotionally challenging for team members.
- » Provide clarity on accommodations well in advance of returns to work, including for team members in seasonal positions.
- » Engage in continuous dialogue about accommodations. Use the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport to support conversations between employees and managers about optimal workplace conditions and any necessary adjustments, including adaptive equipment or measures ([About the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport – Canada.ca](#)) and join one of the PCA trainings on Disability Management ([Disability Management Program – Parks Canada Intranet](#)).

3. When process is not enough

Context

Like many federal organizations, Parks Canada must operate within the requirements of the Canada Labour Code, Part II, C-65, which governs violence and harassment in the workplace. Its process is designed with important intentions: to ensure workplaces are assessment, to identify risk factors for harassment and violence and to implement preventive measures to address risks and therefore reduce future harm. Because its outcomes cannot lead to disciplinary measures, many complainants/principal parties (language used in C-65) choose to have their allegations addressed and investigated through the process of administrative investigations.

However, both processes do not obligate the organization to engage in workplace restoration. When restoration does not occur, the relational and cultural dimensions of harm often remain unaddressed.

Restoration is resource-intensive, both in time and cost, yet it is critical to repairing trust, collaboration, and harmony within teams. Without it, the impact of formal investigations lingers. We continue to meet with team members who describe their workplaces as carrying open wounds – unresolved, painful reminders of past conflicts. These unhealed fractures manifest in mistrust, strained relationships, and persistent friction long after a notice of occurrence is closed or concerns have been addressed through an administrative investigation.

The consequence is twofold: individuals carry the weight of traumatic experiences, often feeling that the process exacerbated rather than alleviated harm; and organizations inherit cultures marked by tension, where collaboration is harder to rebuild.

Formal processes, while necessary, are not sufficient on their own. Without deliberate efforts to restore and heal, workplaces risk carrying unresolved scars into the future that silently shape the way people work together today.

Adding to this challenge is the **speed of operations** across the Agency. The seasonal pace, constant demands, and focus on delivery leave little room for teams to pause, reflect, and work through conflict in real time. Urgency often takes precedence over dialogue, and unresolved tensions get carried forward into the next season or project.

158 cases addressed by the Office of the Ombud mentioned workplace climate.

Friction Points

- » Formal investigations have an end point but the sometimes limited scope of formal processes leave unresolved tensions that continue to strain relationships.
- » The formality of processes means that some team members don't feel cared for through the process, which can lead to feelings of distrust.
- » Team members may hesitate to raise concerns, fearing that processes cause more harm than resolution.
- » The fast pace of work, and the requirements around confidentiality of some processes, leave little opportunity to pause and address conflict in a timely and meaningful manner.

Theme Summary

This theme highlights how formal processes, while essential for compliance and accountability, often fall short of addressing the relational and cultural damage left behind. Combined with the rapid pace of operations, these processes can leave

little space for reflection, dialogue, or healing. Restoration is not just a compassionate response – it is a strategic necessity to improve, to rebuild collaboration, prevent recurrence, and sustain a healthy workplace culture.

Best Practices

- » Pair formal processes with facilitated restoration efforts as standard practice.
- » Communicate openly about the strain investigations create, acknowledge the impact and validate the experiences of those affected, while maintaining the confidentiality of the processes.

- » Separate accountability from care:
While administrative or disciplinary steps may be necessary, parallel spaces for healing should be created.
- » Build time into operational cycles for reflection and repair, treating it as an integral part of delivering results.

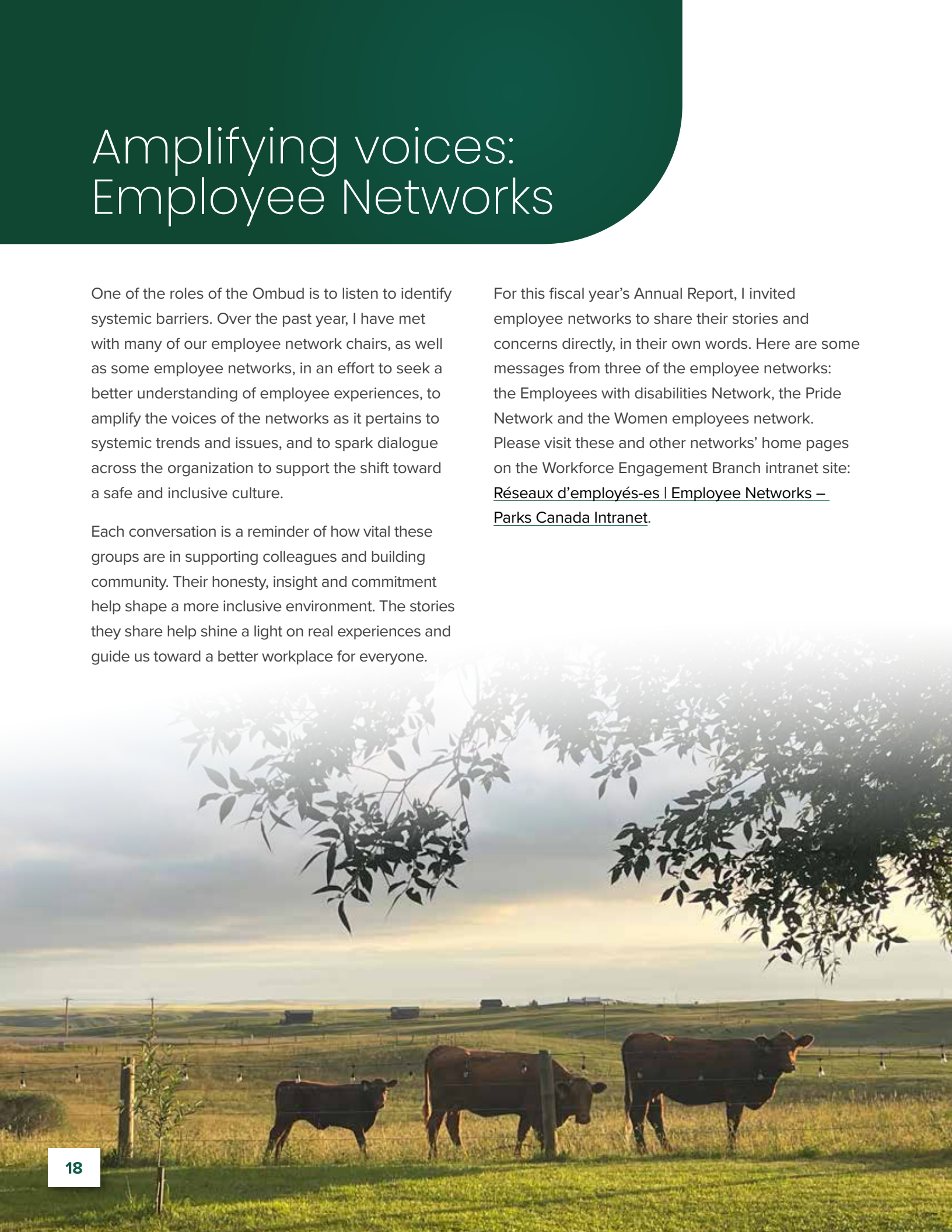


Amplifying voices: Employee Networks

One of the roles of the Ombud is to listen to identify systemic barriers. Over the past year, I have met with many of our employee network chairs, as well as some employee networks, in an effort to seek a better understanding of employee experiences, to amplify the voices of the networks as it pertains to systemic trends and issues, and to spark dialogue across the organization to support the shift toward a safe and inclusive culture.

Each conversation is a reminder of how vital these groups are in supporting colleagues and building community. Their honesty, insight and commitment help shape a more inclusive environment. The stories they share help shine a light on real experiences and guide us toward a better workplace for everyone.

For this fiscal year's Annual Report, I invited employee networks to share their stories and concerns directly, in their own words. Here are some messages from three of the employee networks: the Employees with disabilities Network, the Pride Network and the Women employees network. Please visit these and other networks' home pages on the Workforce Engagement Branch intranet site: [Réseaux d'employés-es | Employee Networks – Parks Canada Intranet.](#)



A message from the Employees with Disabilities Network

In 2022, 27 percent of Canadians aged 15 years or older (approximately 8 million people) reported having at least one disability.¹ A reality that most Canadians will experience in their lifetime due to injury, illness, or age which could be permanent or temporary. 3.7 percent of Parks Canada employees currently identify as having a disability (approximately 304 individuals).

Despite this, many employees continue to face systemic barriers that hinder their full participation and opportunities for career advancement. A key concern raised by the network is the difficulty in accessing workplace accommodations. As stated in the Canadian Human Rights Act R.S.C.,1985, c. H-6, there is a legal duty to accommodate unless the accommodation needs 'would impose undue hardship to the employer, considering health, safety and cost'.²

Members of the Employees with Disabilities Network have reported ongoing challenges in obtaining workplace accommodations. Despite the legal duty to accommodate under the Canadian Human Rights Act, employees often encounter resistance. Managers sometimes cite budgetary constraints or question the necessity or legitimacy of accommodation requests and expect employees to provide proof of their medical conditions, which can leave employees feeling undervalued or burdensome. These concerns have been raised with the network's co-chairs and the Office of the Ombud, which has seen a noticeable increase in related inquiries.

Network members have also flagged that there is a persistent lack of awareness across the agency regarding accessibility and how to access related information. Employees often find themselves in the position of having to educate colleagues and managers on accessibility requirements for staff and visitors, highlighting the need for improved communication and training.

Network members have requested that a dedicated individual be appointed to oversee, advocate for and streamline the accommodation process. This person can step in and close the knowledge gaps for employees, managers and supervisors. We would also recommend that managers and supervisors be held accountable for meeting accommodation needs in a timely manner and be required to take additional accessibility training and workshops.

A key realization from the network is the disconnect between policy and practice. While inclusive policies are in place, many employees feel they must continually advocate for themselves and others. The network emphasizes the need for a cultural shift, one that transforms written commitments into meaningful, everyday actions that foster a truly inclusive workplace.

1. [Statistics Canada, The Canadian Survey on Disability \(CSD\), 2022.](#)

2. [Canadian Human Rights Act, 1985.](#)

A message from the Pride Network

Concern #1—Visibility and recognition of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities

The Parks Canada Pride Network has expressed concerns about the visibility and recognition of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, particularly considering the agency's vast geography and decentralized structure. Reaching and supporting queer and trans staff and visitors is difficult when visibility is limited, especially in remote or socially conservative areas. While being visible can foster safety and solidarity, it also carries risks—making it essential to create environments where inclusion is clearly communicated and supported. The Pride Network also highlights the importance of recognizing 2SLGBTQIA+ histories through heritage designations, such as Montreal's AIDS memorial and Winnipeg's historic lesbian bar, to affirm queer and trans presence and contributions across Canada.

Concern #2—Hiring and working in socially conservative places

In socially conservative regions, the Pride Network is particularly concerned about how local attitudes may influence workplace culture and hiring practices. They advocate for embedding inclusive values into recruitment by suggesting values-based interview questions that help identify candidates who are collaborative and respectful of diversity. Additionally, the network emphasizes the need for early engagement, such as inclusive messaging during staff orientation and annual training to reinforce respectful workplace expectations. There is recognition that time and resources are needed to properly train and orient teams, especially in environments where there is resistance and backlash to queer and trans rights. By setting clear expectations and promoting a culture of respect, Parks Canada can ensure that all employees feel safe, valued, and supported.

Achievement

Held on October 29, 2024, the virtual event, Trans-Scripts, explored the careers of three trans* and non-binary people in Parks Canada, each following a unique path in different parts of the country. Organized by Parks Pride, the event was a panel discussion in English and accessible across the country with simultaneous French, ASL and LSQ interpreters. Over two hundred participants learned about their journeys, successes, and challenges in crafting a career script as a trans Parkie. This event proactively reinforced human rights to prevent anti-queer and anti-trans rhetoric from causing harm in the workplace.

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/b5ff0c4a-b8be-41d8-bf7f-2436c43c99a6@6f45dd51-039e-4566-bcc5-5b700537cb87>

A message from the Women employees' network

The Network for Women employees represents women across the Agency, with varying experiences and at many stages of life.

Sadly, many of women's experiences have historically been deemed not appropriate for discussion in the workplace, or not "work-related". In reality, women's experiences have inherent effect on all facets of their lives, both personally and professionally.

From menstruation to peri- and menopause, from family planning, pregnancy and breastfeeding, to caregiving, these experiences change the way women perceive themselves and their world, and how they are able to "show up" each day. And yet, there is a culture of shame, embarrassment and "suffering in silence" that many women in the workforce today have experienced since their pre-pubescence. As a network, we seek to end this stigma through bringing these experiences into the forefront, educating all staff about how these changes can affect their colleagues, and eliminating barriers to women accessing the resources they need to feel supported. Our goal is to make helpful, relevant information more accessible, and to encourage a culture of sharing that empowers women to support one another in all aspects of life. In 2024, the Network championed an all-staff learning event discussing perimenopause and menopause, which reached over 600 attendees, and countless additional viewers post-event.

From connecting monthly with our network members, we have gathered that there is a lingering cultural expectation that women put everyone ahead of themselves. As a Network, we hope to create a space where women can put themselves first, reflect on their identity and their experiences, celebrate their wins, share their advice and voice their concerns. We try to understand the barriers women face in the workplace and respond to their needs. Whether it is understanding the complexities of the maternal leave process or finding a mentor who understands the challenges they face and can help them thrive in their work, we bring the network members together monthly with experts and one another. Through our formal Mentorship Initiative, launched in 2024, the first cohort linked together 12 pairs of mentors and mentees. Since 2023, we have doubled our overall membership to 400 employees through word of mouth and promotion on Flash Info. With an average attendance of 75 employees at our monthly sessions, this turnout is a testament to the value women at Parks Canada place on these conversations and the community-building process.

OMB Priorities

Last year, our focus was to expand and standardize our list of workshops available across the Agency.

We also developed a “placemat” of resources which has been placed on our intranet site which helps shed the light on microaggressions and provides resources to help address microaggressions in the workplace: Understanding and Addressing Microaggressions.

This year our focus will be to develop a large library of coaching tools available online which team members will be able to review at their own pace or discuss with a practitioner from our Office. This will include best practices for navigating generational diversity in the workplace and the following tool on the difference between Calling in vs. calling out vs. calling up.

We welcome your feedback, and we hope that some of these tools will be of assistance to you!

Workshops offered by the OMB:

- » Introduction to the Office of the Ombud
- » Effective Conflict Management
- » Navigating Difficult Conversation
- » Managing Change and Transitions
- » People-Centered Leadership in Times of Change
- » Resiliency During Change
- » Engagement and Empowerment Begin with Us
- » Fostering a Human-Centered Workplace
- » Working with Different Styles
- » Understanding and addressing microaggressions



Calling in vs. calling out vs. calling up

In fostering spaces of inclusion and belonging, it is important to recognize, name, and address when individuals or groups with marginalized identities are experiencing harm, such as bias or discrimination.

The concepts of “calling out” or “calling in” have become popular ways of thinking about how to bring attention to this type of harm. We have added “calling up” as it resonates with many PCA team members. Knowing the difference between these concepts can help us reflect, then act, in the ways we feel will best promote constructive change.

What is calling in, calling out and calling up?



Calling in

Calling in is an invitation to a one-on-one or small group conversation to bring attention to an individual or group's harmful words or behavior, including bias, prejudice, microaggressions, and discrimination.



Calling out

Calling out is bringing public attention to an individual, group, or organization's harmful words or behavior.



Calling up

Calling up is encouraging someone to rise to a higher standard of behavior or leadership, to be and do better by appealing to shared values and aspirations. It focuses on inspiring accountability and growth.

Why would I call someone in, out or up?

- » To stop the perpetuation and negative effects of harmful words or behavior.
- » To create a compassionate space for listening, understanding, offering new information, and correcting assumptions.
- » To lean into having tough conversations with people in your sphere of influence – the individuals or groups you know personally, and that will be open to conversation with you.

Note: These are not mutually exclusive strategies. Depending on the situation, calling out could precede calling in, or calling up might follow as a way to sustain growth and accountability.

What should I consider when calling in, out or up?



Calling in

Influence – You have influence with this person through a personal (e.g. close relationship) or professional (e.g. work colleague) connection.

Safety – A one-on-one or small group conversation will not compromise your wellbeing.

Openness – This person has demonstrated an openness and commitment to learning how to better foster spaces of inclusion and belonging.



Calling out

Urgency – There is an urgent need to hit “pause” to prevent further harm to others or yourself, and make it clear to others present that you are not in agreement with what is being said or done.

Influence and Safety – There is a specific power or relationship dynamic that would render calling in harmful, unsafe, or ineffective for you.

Openness – Previous attempts to call in have been unsuccessful.



Calling up

Values – you can connect the person’s behaviour to shared principles, commitments, or organizational values.

Respect – you want to empower someone to model inclusive or courageous behavior.

Growth – to inspire long-term change by holding someone to their highest standards, especially when someone is in a position or influence.

How do you call in, out or up?



Calling in

- » “I’m curious. What was your intention when you said that?”
- » “How might the impact of your words or actions differ from your intent?”
- » “How might someone else see that differently?”
- » “Why do you think that is the case? Why do you believe that to be true?”



Calling out

- » “That’s not our culture here. I am concerned those words conflict with our values”.
- » “I don’t think that’s funny. Can you tell me why that’s funny to you?”
- » “It sounded like you said _____. Is that really what you meant?”
- » “I’d like to push back against that. I don’t see it that way.”
- » “I need you to know how your comment just impacted me”.
- » “It sounds like there are some assumptions that we could benefit from unpacking”



Calling up

- » “I know you are deliberate about creating a welcoming space – how do you think those words landed?”
- » “That doesn’t sound like the inclusive leader/colleague I know you aim to be”.
- » “We all slip sometimes, but I also know you want to model respect here”.
- » “You’ve shown you can lead with empathy – how might you approach this differently?”

Note: depending on your relationship and the context, some of these suggestions might land better being delivered privately or publicly.

Remember

Patience

- » Try to be patient and understanding, keeping in mind that you will also sometimes cause harm with your words or actions.

Self-care

- » If you are the target of the harm, make sure you are taking care of yourself (you may not have the comfort, capacity or ability to call in or call out right now and that's okay).

Find Allies

- » Identify allies for support and to step in, so that the burden is not on you.
- » If you are an ally, act as an upstander to call in or call out when you see the harm being done, without being asked to do so.
- » Reflect on your own identities and privilege, noting how they may make you more or less effective, safe, and able to call in or call out (e.g. if you have racial privilege, it may make it easier or safer for you to call out racial harm).

What do I do when someone calls me in, out or up?



DO

- » **Pause** – take a breath. Ground yourself to receive what they have to say.
- » **Listen** – with the intent of learning and seeing things from their point of view.
- » **Acknowledge** – take responsibility for the impact of your words or actions.
- » **Reflect** – process your thoughts and emotions. It may help to do so with a trusted partner who will not only have grace for your mistake, neither defending your actions nor condemning you.
- » **Repair the harm done** – change your behavior going forward, inviting trusted partners to hold you accountable to learning and doing better.



DON'T

- » Don't beat yourself up or go on a shame spiral; try to be kind to yourself.
- » Don't make the person calling you in or out be your emotional caretaker, especially if they are the recipient of the harm (that is centering yourself and may add to their emotional labor).
- » Remember: You're not a bad person. You are an ever changing and evolving person and this is just one step in your growth.