



Whistleblowing Canada Research Society

- Research, Education & Advocacy

Vision, Purpose, Mission

Whistleblowing Canada's vision is to be a Canadian leader in improving whistleblowing practice, culture, efficacy and legislation through education and research.

Our purpose is to advance education and understanding of the whistleblowing phenomenon, through research and disseminate results publicly.

Our mission is to improve the practice of whistleblowing, the lives of whistleblowers and Canadians at large and accountability in Canadian organizations by encouraging public policy dialogue and development through workshops, lectures, conferences and advocacy. We will also create a network of researchers nationally and internationally to develop the emergent field in Canada.

Our Direction

Our work is guided by the results of a 2017 in-depth, qualitative case study of an important drug safety whistleblowing event in 1996 at Health Canada, a federal regulatory agency. The investigation uncovered evidence of questionable behaviour at senior levels of the bureaucracy, strange decisions in both a related court case and a House of Commons standing committee, all with negative implications for public health and safety, accountability and public trust in government that are still relevant today.

The study was aimed at developing a better understanding of the whistleblowing phenomenon, including why whistleblowing often led to the abnormal result of reprisals for the truth-teller and impunity for the wrong-doer. The results were surprising. It was discovered that legislation alone will not protect whistleblowers. Equally important, if not more so, is culture. Legislation becomes merely aspirational and will not be successfully implemented if it is introduced into an unwelcoming, hostile environment or dysfunctional organizational culture. The problem of reprisals involves *both* law and organizational culture.

The following are the four main issues identified leading to reprisals to which we will direct our current and future research, education and advocacy:

- i weak, ineffective whistleblower protection legislation,
- ii dysfunctional organizational cultures,
- iii dysfunctional political cultures, and
- iv attitudes and beliefs detrimental to whistleblowers in the courts.

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