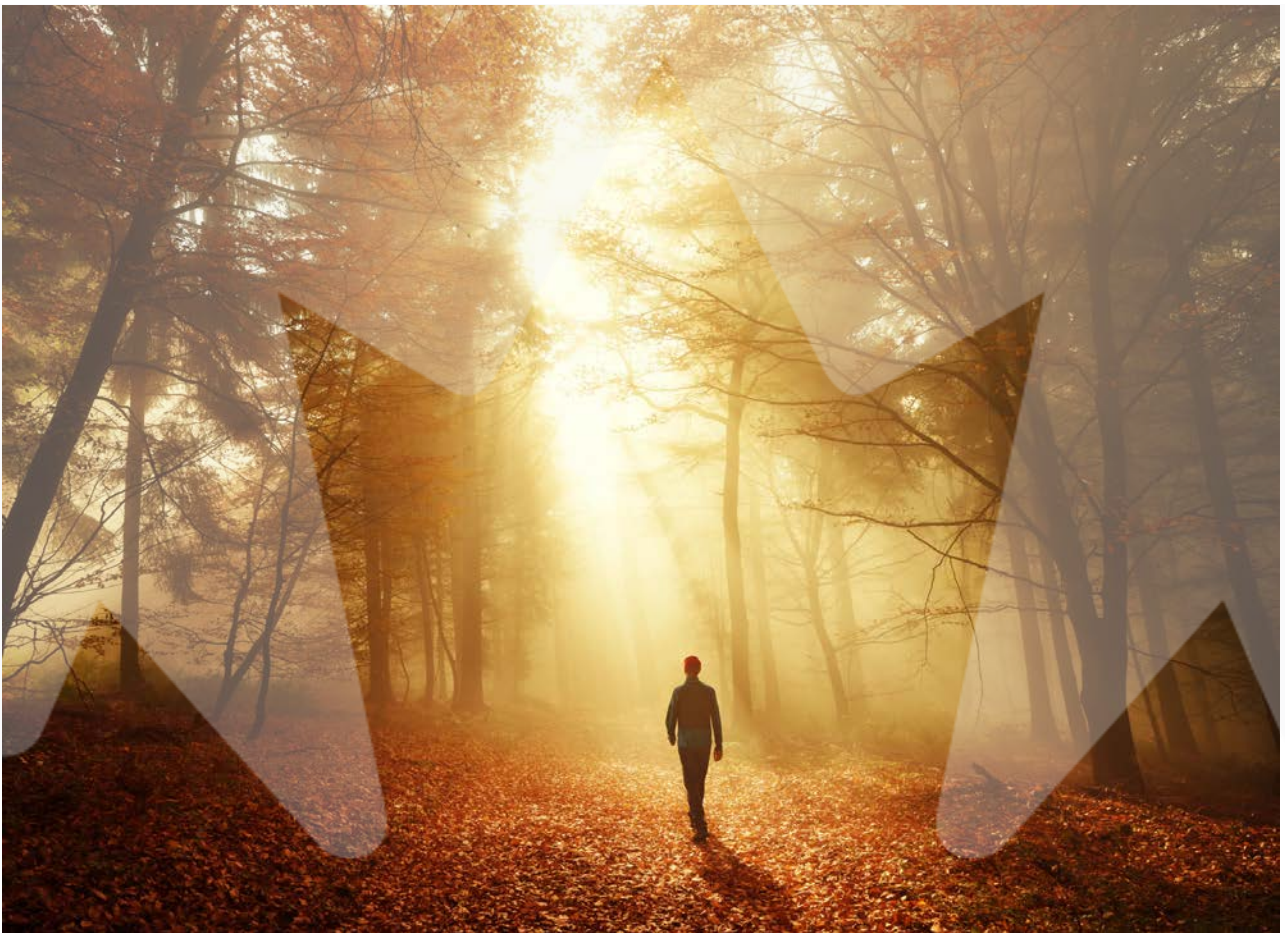




The Office of Conflict Management 2017-2018 Annual Report



Workforce Development and Wellness Services (WDWS)
Human Resources Branch (HRB)

Également offert en français sous le titre de : **Bureau de la gestion de conflits – Rapport annuel 2017-2018.**

[Visit us online](#)

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Office of Conflict Management’s Director	4
The OCM at a glance.....	5
Highlights of the OCM’S activities.....	5
Consultations	6
Services	7
Nature of conflict	9
Sources of referral	10
Parties involved	11
Conflict Prevention Training Program	12
Mandatory OCM Awareness Sessions	12
In the regions	13
Training Activities.....	13
Rumours and Gossip: The Impact on the Workplace	14
Feedback: A Shared Responsibility	14
Building Civility	14
Enhance Your Interpersonal Relationships Trough Respectful Communication (now Respectful Communication).....	14
Flash Workshops/Specific Group Training	14
Services and training in the regions	15
OCM Service Promotion and Communication	16
OCM Intranet search trends.....	17
Service Statements from clients.....	17
Conclusion	19
Upcoming in 2018-2019	19
How to Contact the OCM	19

Message from the Office of Conflict Management's Director

As the Director of the Office of Conflict Management (OCM) for the past 12 years, I am once again very proud to present our 2017-2018 Annual Report demonstrating the hard work that the OCM's dedicated and passionate team provided throughout the year.

In the Clerk's twenty-fourth annual report, he underlines the importance to "remain focused on mental health and workplace wellness." He adds that "improving workplace wellness is also about improving communication and empowering employees." With the continued awareness of mental health in the workplace and its movement within the Federal Government, the OCM has seen a constant rise of coaching and mediation/facilitated discussion services. Conflict coaching empowers employees to deal with conflict at the early stage thus helping, amongst other things, to prevent negative impacts on mental health.

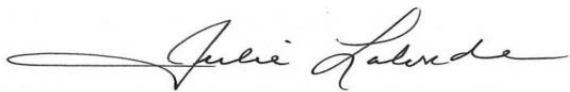
To celebrate the International Conflict Resolution Day (October 19, 2017), ECCC OCM as the lead with the support of the Federal Informal Conflict Management System (ICMS) Network, and in collaboration with the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) organized a panel for all federal public service employees to hear what the Union (PSAC) co-chair of the Informal Conflict Management System (ICMS), the co-chair of the ICMS Network, a representative of Labour Relations (LR), and the Ombudsman at Canadian Heritage had to say on the topic of "**Unresolved Conflicts: The Impact on Workplace Wellness.**" To view a recording of the event, [click on this link](#)* (please note that the recording is only available in the language that was used at the event).

The OCM learning curriculum was designed to prevent and manage conflict. It enables employees to develop constructive communication skills and gain self-confidence in expressing their needs and interest as well as having difficult conversation. We invite you to join us to our free training sessions.

Positive feedback from our clients confirmed that we delivered professional informal conflict management services aimed at meeting their needs. It also helped to outline the importance of conflict management and prevention services in the workplace. We thank you for your continued feedback.

The OCM continues to promote its services, training and tools through various fora such as the International Conflict Resolution Day activities, the Intranet, ECollab, News@ECCC, OCM kiosks, and other kiosks in collaboration with the Respect Liaison Officer (RLO), the Mental Health team and, other networks such as the Managers' Network. I invite you to visit our Intranet site for more information on our various tools, services and training sessions.

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2017-2018 Annual Report. Do not hesitate to send us your comments.



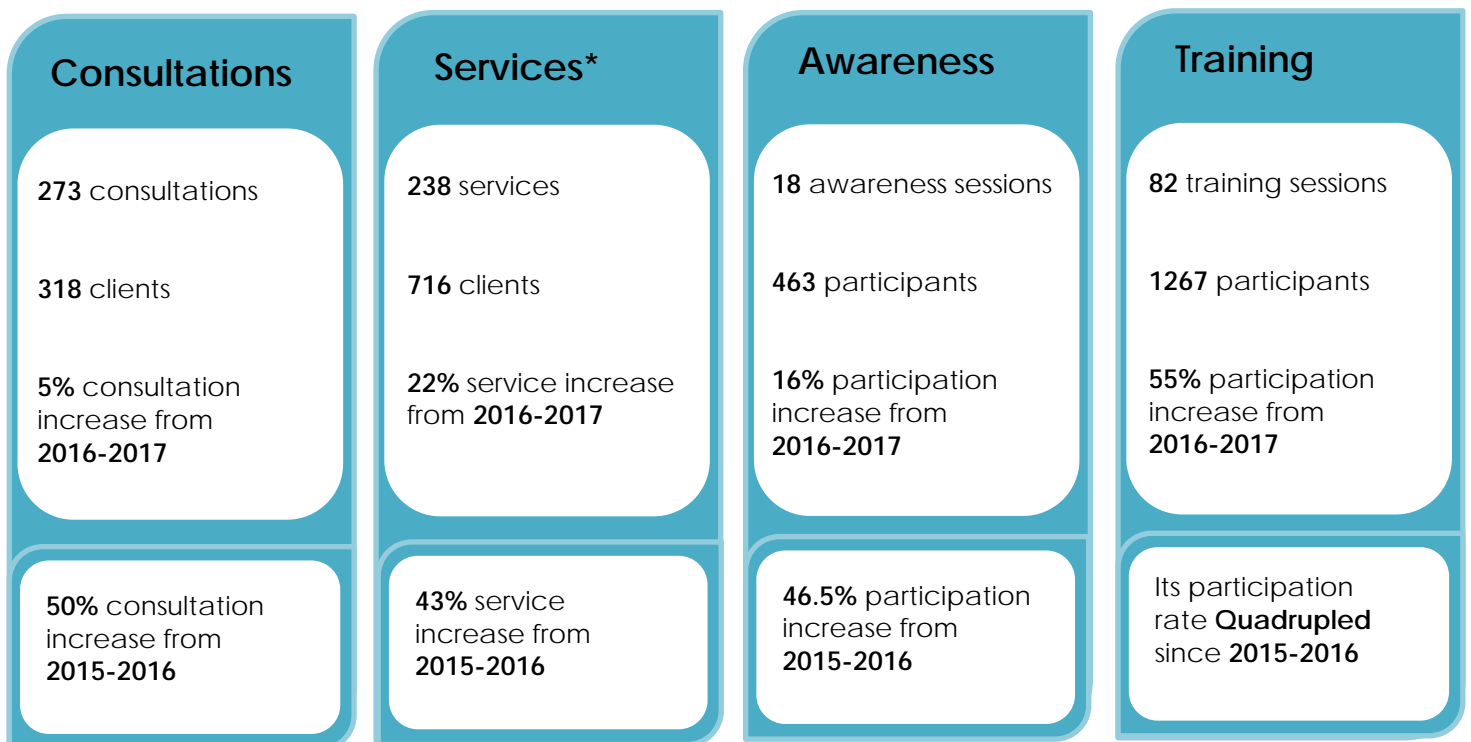
Julie Lalonde, Director
The Office of Conflict Management

*<http://csps-efpc.canwebcast.net/2017-10-19-Br>

The OCM at a glance

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OCM'S ACTIVITIES

- A total of **2764** clients received services and training from the OCM. This represents an increase of **34%** compared to the 2016-2017.
- For the last few years, **interpersonal/work issues** continue to be the most common reason why employees requested services from the OCM.
- Once again, the majority of our services were provided to **returning clients** and clients who have **self-referred**. The feedback we received indicated that employees see the positive results they experienced when using OCM services.
- Conflict among **employees and management** continue to account for more than half of our service requests.



Note: throughout the report, “employees” represents all ECCC employees (including management).

* The discrepancies between the number of clients and the number of services can be explained by the fact that one service can have multiple clients.

Consultations

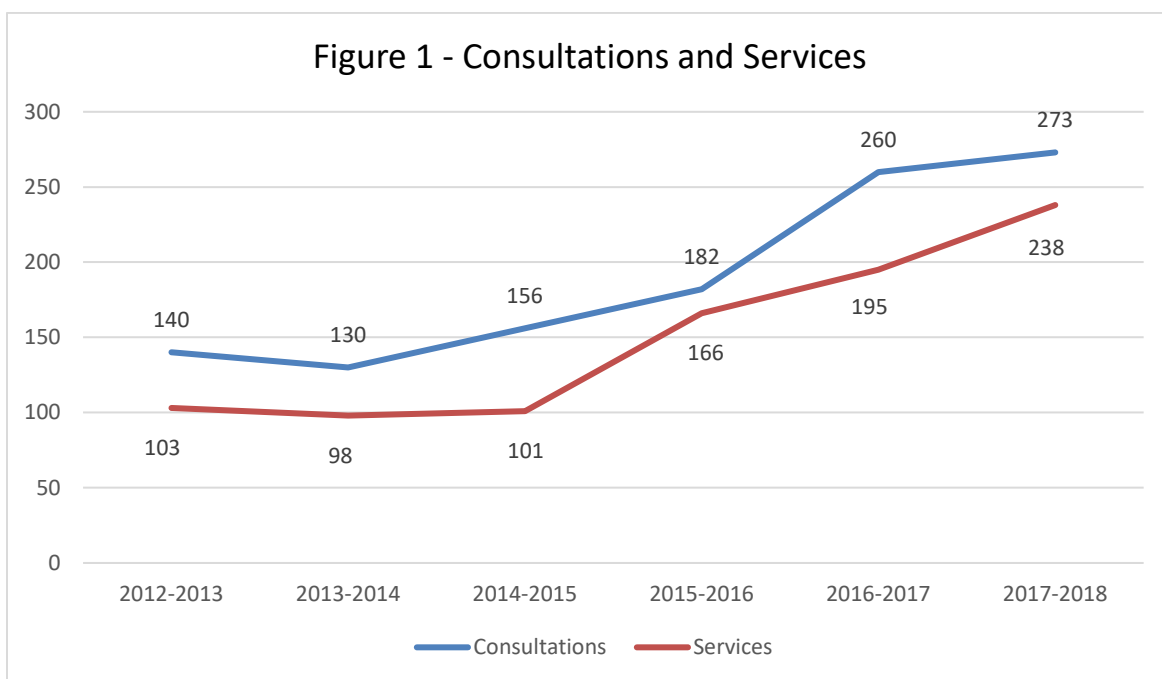
Consultations are generally the first point of contact, they allow the practitioners to welcome the employee, explain the OCM services, and analyse the employee's concerns in order to determine an appropriate course of action.

Not all consultations result in a service request. In some cases, one consultation was enough to provide the client with the information needed. The OCM also refers clients to other resources such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the Union, the Respect Liaison Officers (RLO), Labour Relations (LR), and Values and Ethics (V&E) when appropriate.

There was a small rise in consultations and a significant increase of services compared to 2016-2017. The small rise of consultation is explained by the fact that a good percentage of service requests were from employees who had self-identified which services they wished to receive. Therefore bypassing the consultation stage and increasing the amount of services rendered in 2017-2018. Returning employees are generally looking for additional help and tools on either a new or a recurring conflict that they had chosen not to manage at the time. Some employees consulted the OCM Intranet page for information and specifically requested the service desired for their particular needs (see figure 12 for the trends of OCM intranet searches per month.)

273 consultations were provided in 2017-2018 (Figure 1) where **87%** resulted in a service request.

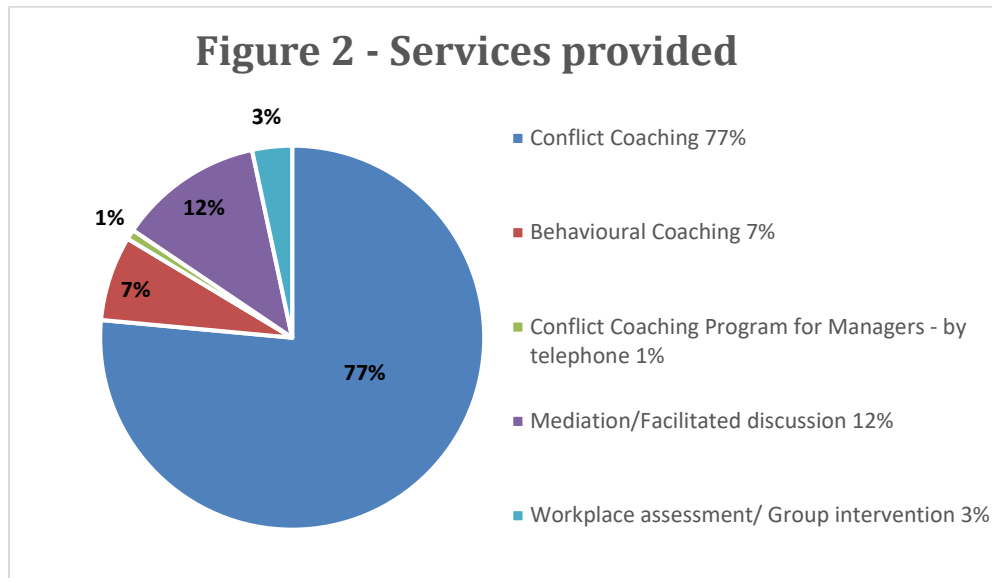
238 services were provided in 2017-2018 (Figure 1), a **22%** increase from 2016-2017.



Services

Reporting on the OCM services helps to evaluate and identify trends and issues. This provides a pulse on the challenges ECCC employees are facing and in turn, allows the OCM to develop and provide the right tools and support for our clients. It also contributes to improve our training curriculum in order to develop employees' abilities and empower them to gain better communication skills to prevent and resolve their conflict.

Figure 2 shows the percentages of the services rendered by the OCM in 2017-2018.



Some of the services percentages might seem low compared to others; however, it doesn't necessarily represent the amount of time dedicated to it. For example, the Workplace Assessment/Group Intervention and Mediation/Facilitated Discussions usually take more hours to complete than Conflict Coaching.

Conflict Coaching is usually a one-on-one coaching to deal with specific conflict situations and assist in the development of conflict management skills to have an informal conversation or in the preparation of a mediation/facilitated discussion.

77% of the OCM services
182 Conflict Coaching
260 clients

Behavioural Coaching is a structured, one-on-one preventative process aimed at gaining knowledge about oneself, and/or improving one's behavioural responses to conflict. This coaching service focuses on the client's objectives to improve a particular behaviour.

7% of the OCM services
17 Behavioural Coaching
17 clients

Conflict Coaching Program for Managers – by telephone is a program offered to employees with supervisory functions which provides the opportunity to enhance and practice conflict management skills.

- 1% of the OCM services
- 2 cohorts per year
- 16 clients (8 managers per cohort)

Mediation/Facilitated Discussion facilitates communication between two or more parties intending to reach a mutually and acceptable agreement. Used alone or to help resolve a grievance or complaint process as a resolution option. Clients can be accompanied by a Union or Labour Relations representative for support. When the request is to try and resolve a grievance or complaint, the grievance or complaint is placed in abeyance before the beginning of this process.

- 12% of the OCM services
- 29 Mediations /Facilitated discussions
- 66 clients

Workplace Assessment/Group Intervention consists in the analysis of workplace issues within a team in order to address them effectively through confidential interviews, recommendations, group discussion, training when applicable, and follow-ups.

- 3% of the OCM services
- 8 Workplace assessments/Group interventions
- 357 clients

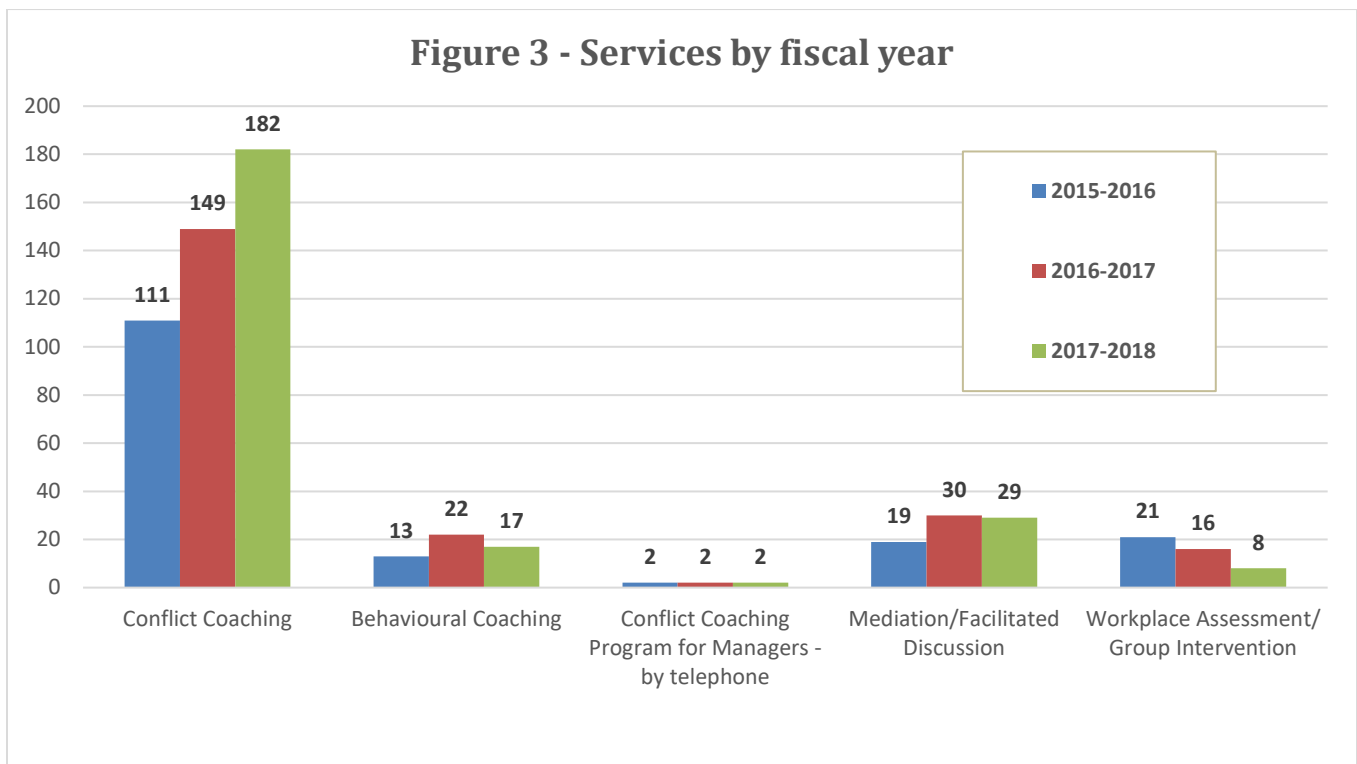


Figure 3 shows an increase for the **Conflict Coaching** services in 2017-2018. This demonstrated a higher level of empowerment for clients to deal with conflicts. It also potentially explains why the number of **Mediation/Facilitated Discussions** service requests remained consistent.

As for the **Behavioural Coaching**, the number may vary from year to year as employees must choose to commit his or her time for a number of sessions in order to act in a preventative manner. With full workloads and conflicting priorities, we have observed that employees generally opt to delay the management of a conflict until the situation is no longer avoidable.

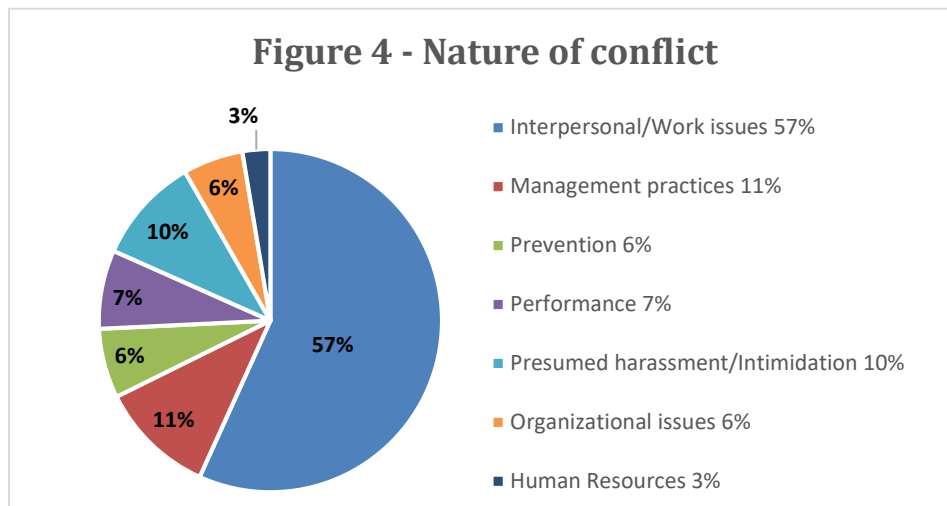
The number of **Conflict Coaching Program for Managers – by telephone** remains consistent as we run one French and one English cohort per year.

There is a decrease in the number of **Workplace Assessment/Group Intervention**. In 2017-2018, we conducted a total of eight Workplace Assessment/Group Interventions. Although this service request was reduced by half from the previous year, there was a significant increase of participants. In 2017-2018 **357** participants took part in a Workplace Assessment/Group Interventions compared to **177** from 2016-2017. Larger groups take more time than the average Workplace Assessment/Group Intervention as each individual are interviewed thus potentially adding to the number and complexity of the issues uncovered.

Nature of conflict

Reporting on the nature of conflict allows us to identify trends and account for the reasons why employees request services from the OCM.

Figure 4 represents the trends of nature of conflict for the services requests received in 2017-2018:



Interpersonal/Work Issues consistently continues to be the most common reason for service requests. This category includes communication issues and different work styles.

With 57% it represents an **increase of 1.6%** compared to 2016-2017.

Management Practices consistently continues to be the second most common reason for service requests. This category includes communication issues between employee and supervisors as well as management styles.

With 11% it represents an **increase of 32%** compared to 2016-2017.

Presumed Harassment/Intimidation ascended as the third most common reason why employees called upon the OCM for help. In the previous years, we captured this type of service requests when it was related to a formal complaint. As of 2017-2018, when the client expressed feeling harassed or intimidated it was captured under 'Presumed Harassment/Intimidation' regardless if the situation was part of a current or potential official harassment complaint. This enables the OCM to report on the number of employees that feel harassed or intimidated. Especially for this type of request, we strongly encourage employees to call upon their Union representative or their LR advisor for advice. In some cases, multiple employees can request OCM services individually for the same presumed harasser; thus potentially increasing the number under this nature of conflict not necessarily the number of presumed harassers.

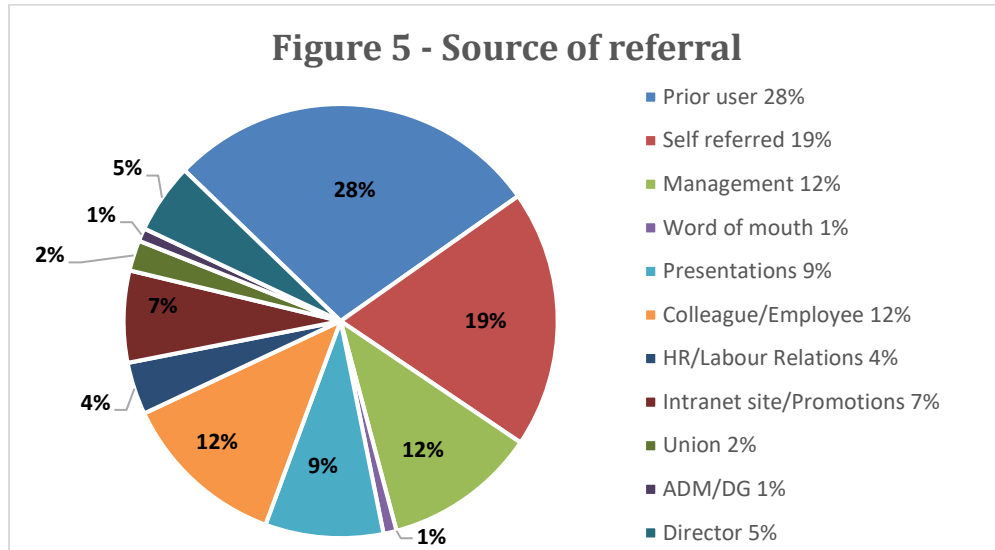
This service request **nearly tripled** compared to 2016-2017. This could possibly be explained by the increase in harassment and intimidation awareness and the new way of capturing our statistics. The #MeToo movement could also have had an impact.

Values and Ethics, there was one case in 2017-2018. This case doesn't appear in the diagram as the decimal percentage appeared as zero percent.

Sources of referral

Reporting on the source of referral allows us to identify how employees came to hear about our services. This information lets us know where and how to promote our services in order to reach a greater number of ECCC employees.

Figure 5 represents the trends of the source of referrals for the services requests received in 2017-2018:



Prior users are returning clients who are generally looking for additional help and tools on either a new or a recurring conflict. Most often, recurring conflict are from employees who attempted to resolve their conflicts by themselves and were unsuccessful.

19% increase compared to 2016-2017.

Self referred are new clients who had prior knowledge of the OCM services. Although there is a decrease from 2016-2017, self referred employees remain the second highest source of service requests.

7% decrease compared to 2016-2017.

Management referred clients to our services to help them mitigate conflict either between employees, intra-team, and inter-team.*

52% increase compared to 2016-2017. This could be explained by the increased number of managers who have completed the Mandatory OCM Awareness Session as well as the positive feedback from one manager to another about the success of previous services. Thus, more managers are promoting OCM services.

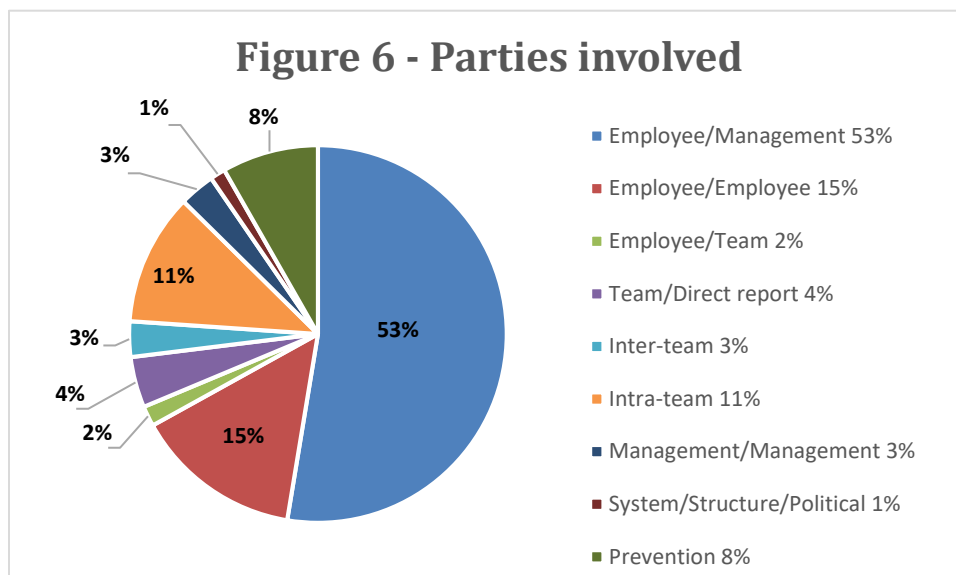
Colleague/Employee was also in third place along with management as source referrals.

This source referral **nearly tripled** compared to 2016-2017. This could possibly be explained by the fact that employees are satisfied with the results of the services received and encourages other employees to call upon the OCM for their issues.

Parties involved

Reporting on the parties involved allows us to identify the issues and challenges within the various working relationships. This information enables us to develop tools and training to guide employees and managers towards effective conflict management solutions.

Figure 6 represents the trends of the types of parties involved for the services requests received in 2017-2018:



* Note: Intra-team is described as within a team
Inter-team is described as between two different teams

Employees and management continues to be the working relationship with the most issues and challenges. We see a rise in service request especially around the time of the mid-year performance reviews and the year-end assessment.

13% increase from 2016-2017.

Conflict **between employees** continues to rank second. Changing priorities, stress, short deadlines, feeling overwhelmed and overworked affect individuals differently; therefore, creating many challenges even within good working relationships.

14% increase from 2016-2017.

Intra-team conflict continues to rank third. With a diverse workforce, challenges arises from different ideas, values, backgrounds, experiences, and ways to execute the work. Communicating these differences can cause tensions within a team.

53% increase from 2016-2017. This could be explained by an increased awareness that even though a conflict can be between two individuals, it has an impact on other members of a team. This could be attributed to OCM and departmental efforts towards creating a respectful workspace.

Conflict Prevention Training Program

Why is conflict management training so important?

Conflict management training enables employees to gain valuable knowledge and competencies in communication and helps to develop abilities in managing, resolving and preventing conflict. It empowers employees to build on their strengths, helps them define their contribution to a situation and develop strategies in order to have a healthier workplace.

A total of **1730** employees participated in an OCM training. This represent an **increase of 42%** compared to the 2016-2017 total employee participation rate.

MANDATORY OCM AWARENESS SESSIONS

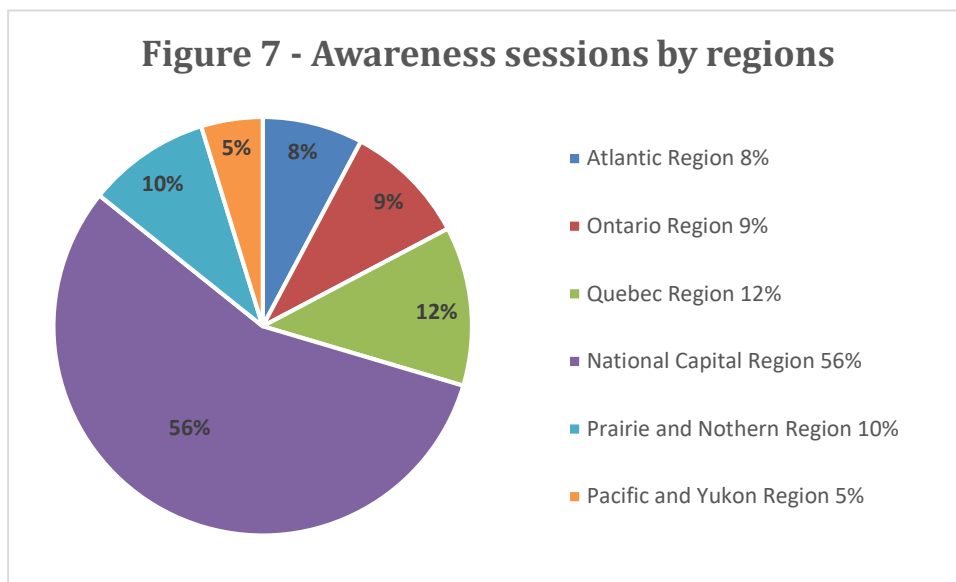
This Awareness Session is given as a mandatory training to all ECCC employees as it provides a better understanding of the OCM services and offers an overview of conflict prevention notions. It was made mandatory in order to meet the *Informal Conflict Management Systems* (ICMS) mandate that includes awareness and access to informal conflict management for the federal public service with the goal to enable a culture of open communication and respect. The ICMS mandate comes from the *Public Service Labour Relations Act* (PSLRA), s. 207.

18 awareness sessions were provided in 2017-2018.

463 participants completed their training. A **15.75%** participation increase from 2016-2017 and a **46.5%** participation increase from 2015-2016. This increase could be attributed to the senior management requirements for ECCC employees to complete all the TBS and ECCC mandatory trainings. Many have added the Mandatory OCM Awareness session to their learning plan. Also, in collaboration with the onboarding team, the Mandatory OCM Awareness Session information was distributed to arriving ECCC employees.

In the regions

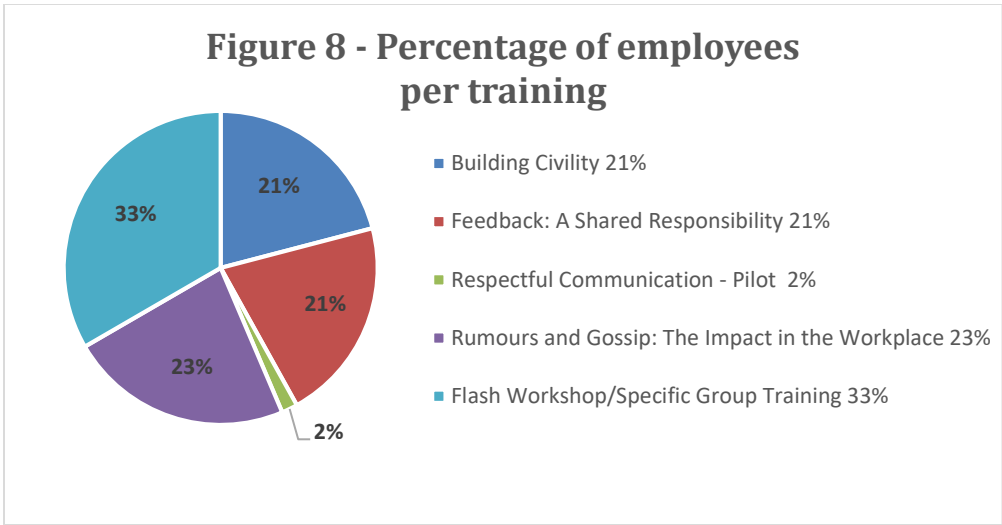
In order to reach all ECCC employees, the OCM continues to provide the mandatory training session nationwide via WebEx, videoconference and in person when a practitioner travels to the regions.



TRAINING ACTIVITIES

The OCM regularly revises its curriculum to provide learning opportunities in accordance with the relevant experiences and challenges employees face in the workplace. This enables us to provide employees with the right communication tools and support in a constant changing working environment. It also promotes constructive and respectful discussions of issues and challenges in the early stages; therefore, preventing communication breakdowns and mental health issues. The OCM training provide concepts and tools that are useful for all types of conflicts.

In 2017-2018, **82** training sessions were provided to **1271** employees.



Rumours and Gossip: The Impact on the Workplace was designed to raise awareness and provide tips and tools on the prevention and management of rumours and gossip. The OCM often presents this training at branch and group retreats.

The OCM delivered **23** sessions to **293** employees.

Feedback: A Shared Responsibility was developed within the context of the implementation of the performance management directive, the OCM offered this workshop in order for employees and managers to achieve the impact desired through constructive and respectful conversations while giving and receiving feedback.

The OCM delivered **17** sessions to **267** employees.

Building Civility was designed to raise awareness as to what would be perceived as uncivil behaviour. It provides participants with the tools to identify and effectively address discourteous or disrespectful behaviours, and how to positively contribute to a civil workplace.

The OCM delivered **20** sessions to **266** employees.

Enhance Your Interpersonal Relationships Through Respectful Communication. Provided as a pilot training session aimed at providing tools to improve interactions between employees through respectful means in order to prevent and resolve conflicts (Inspired by Marshall Resenberg's approach on Non-Violent Communication (NVC).

The OCM delivered **2** sessions to **21** employees.

Flash Workshops/Specific Group Training. The flash workshops were a one hour overview of certain tools or a specific topic offered by the OCM. Specific group training were provided at team retreats or were requested by management according to their group specific needs.

The OCM delivered **20** sessions to **424** employees.

Services and training in the regions

The OCM office has three full time practitioners and is located in the National Capital Region (NCR). However, our services and training are offered nation wide. Our practitioners travel to the regions when necessary to provide in-person services. While in the regions, they take the opportunity to provide training, promote our services, and meet with Union and Labour Relation representatives.

Figure 9 represents the percentage of the ECCC employee population in the regions. This is a snap shot of the February 6, 2018 data.

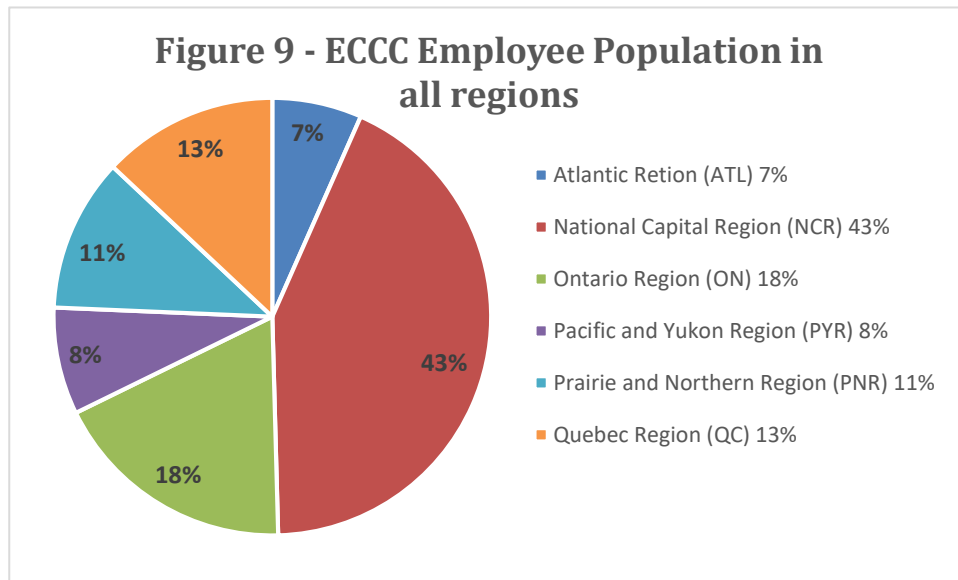
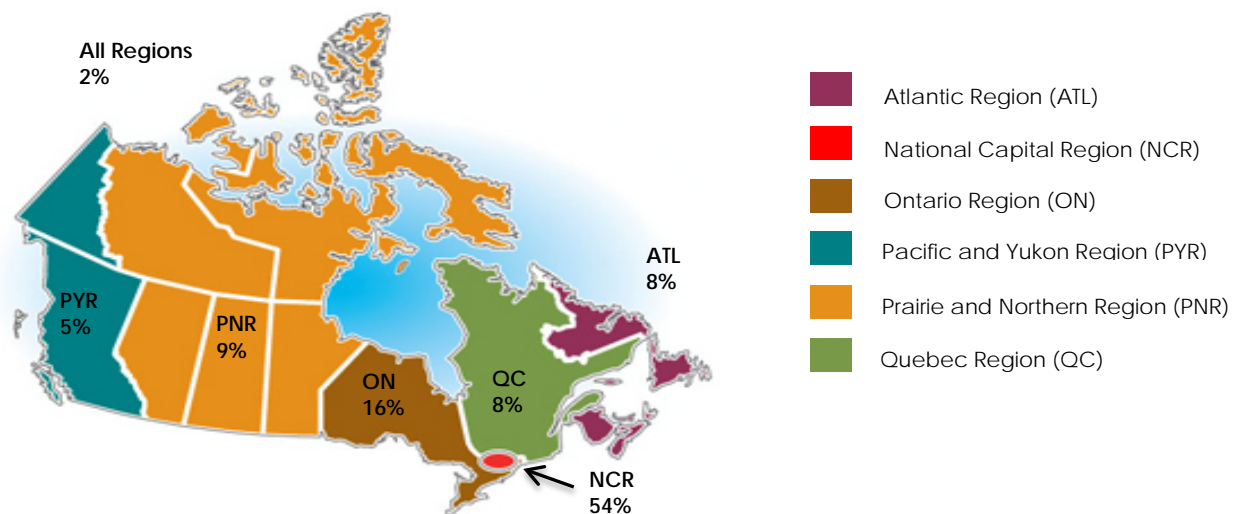
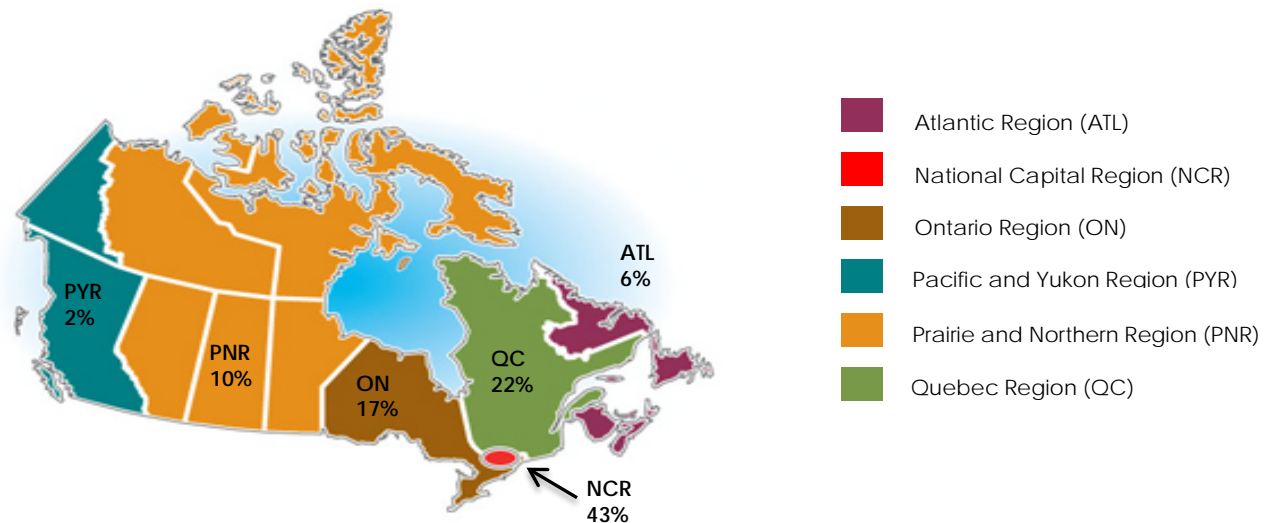


Figure 10 - Percentage of OCM SERVICES per region



The two percent (2%) services in 'all regions' represents the Conflict Coaching Program for Managers – by telephone and requests received for virtual teams.

Figure 11 – Percentage of OCM TRAINING per region



OCM Service Promotion and Communication

One of the OCM's mandate is to promote our services to all ECCC employees. The OCM continues to promote our informal conflict resolution services through:

- Training sessions
- Presentation at team retreats
- Various News@ECCC articles
- Communiqués such as the Managers' Network and EXpress
- Bulletins "From Conflict to Opportunity"
- International Conflict Resolution Day activities
- Intranet/ ECollab
- Training Catalogue
- Kiosks

The OCM hosted various activities surrounding the International Conflict Resolution Day on October 19, 2017. A panel was organized for all the Federal Public employees to hear what the Union (PSAC) co-chair of the Informal Conflict Management System (ICMS), the co-chair of the ICMS Network, a representative of Labour Relations, and the Ombudsman at Canadian Heritage had to say on the topic of "**Unresolved Conflicts: The Impact on Workplace Wellness.**" To view a recording of the event, [click on this link](http://csps-efpc.canwebcast.net/2017-10-19-Br)* (please note that the recording is only available in the language that was used at the event). With the assistance of human resources representatives, multiple kiosks in Toronto (with a practitioner), Dartmouth, Montreal, Dorval, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, Vancouver and the NCR were also organized.

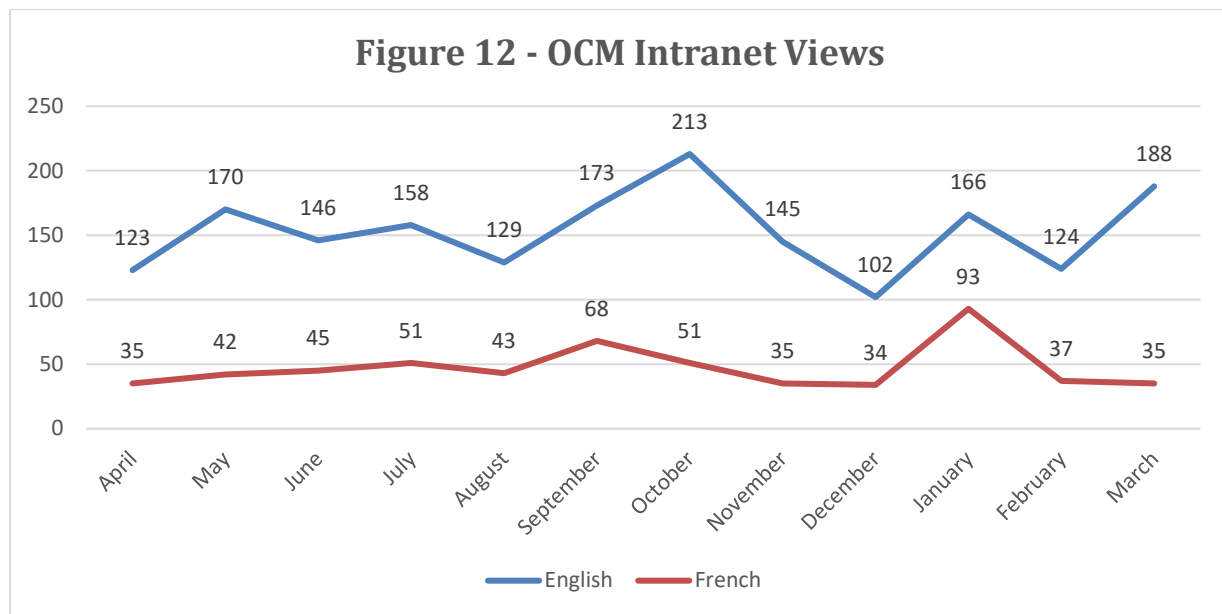
The OCM also participated in departmental initiatives such as Respect Day, Persons with Disability Network and Mental Health month.

*<http://csps-efpc.canwebcast.net/2017-10-19-Br>

OCM INTRANET SEARCH TRENDS

ECCC employees have access to OCM information such as training and services descriptions as well as tools and resources such as the bulletins, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), previous annual reports, and many additional reference documents.

Figure 12 shows the amount of views per month by language to show peak periods when ECCC employees consulted the OCM Intranet page.



Service Statements from clients

The coaching I received was great help in the prevention of another conflict, particularly by raising awareness of the importance of assertiveness, the importance of clearly communicating one's concerns to others as well as the importance of identifying triggers, motivational factors, the impact of values, beliefs and personal interest in our working relationships.
(Independent translation)

I believe I have the tools to communicate better and diffuse conflict in the future. I am reassured with the thought that I can contact the OCM if I need more coaching.

Since the session I had with you, we have not had to deal with a "lack of civility" case. The problem seems to have disappeared. So, congratulations, it was a success!
(Independent translation)

I really valued the coaching provided by the OCM; their services aren't just for people in a tough situation. They teach skills and reflection that are generally beneficial for life.

The services received were excellent and personalized. I was treated with respect during this time of great hardship. I would want these services to be further promoted to managers and employees. (Independent translation)

My meeting with (practitioner) allowed me to express my concerns and ask my questions to a neutral and professional person. This allowed me to structure my thinking and make my decisions in the face of difficult choice I had to make regarding my work. (Practitioner) gave me tools and ideas to help me organize my thoughts and reduce my stress when making decisions. My meeting also allowed me to find the right words to express my decision. (Independent translation)

Taking the steps to contact the OCM was frightening. If I had known what a positive impact it would have on my workplace and private relationships, I would never have hesitated to call. I felt safe to share my concerns and gained insight into how others perceived me and how my communication style could be perceived by others.

I have found that if I used OCM coaching services any time I have had to have a difficult conversation it has always gone better than a time when I did not use their services. We often become scientists because we are better at dealing with information and things rather than people. Then we start our careers and find out we have to learn to deal with people. The OCM is so good they can even teach scientists to relate to people.

Excellent attentiveness. (Practitioner) provided me with the necessary theory for my reflections. She gave me several references to tools/examples. It was done very concretely and I saw how I could apply the theory and move forward with the situation. She took the time to help me "manage" the problem. I did not feel judged and that's very important to me. (Independent translation)

This was a really outstanding and beneficial learning experience that I am confident will have a lasting and positive effect on me as an individual and also on our team. Many thanks.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to spend two days and helping the team develop tools for better communication. Your help is greatly appreciated. (Independent translation)

I feel that this course has opened my eyes and lines of communication with my team. The material was well put together. (Practitioner) was an excellent facilitator. This course would not only benefit those in conflict but all employees and employers. Thank you.

Conclusion

In 2017-2018, the OCM has succeeded in offering services and training to an increasing number of employees. We are committed to reach as many employees as possible by stressing the importance of being proactive in your conflict management. Our services were developed to manage, resolve, prevent, and mitigate conflict in order to create a healthier, more respectful and productive working environment for all ECCC employees.

Since the OCM's inception in 2005, service requests have steadily increased every year. We strive to improve our services based on the changing workforce in order to better serve our clients and provide the best tools and support. We encourage our clients to send us their comments and ideas to improve our services.

Should you have any suggestions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Upcoming in 2018-2019

A new learning format is being developed as "building block" for managers and their respective teams to select various training bundles and ensemble them into a tailor-made training sessions. This will enable managers to "shop" for the tools that best fits individual team dynamics.

We will continue to deliver our bulletin, "From Conflict to Opportunity" to help ECCC employees learn about different topics, tools and information related to conflict.

The OCM will continue to offer a variety of services and learning activities to support ECCC employees in preventing and resolving conflict in order to create a healthy and respectful workplace.

How to Contact the OCM

All ECCC employees can access OCM services by emailing our office at ec.gestiondesconflitsbgc-conflictmanagementocm.ec@canada.ca or calling our toll-free number **1-844-489-0572**.

What can you expect when reaching out to us?

The services provided are voluntary, informal, impartial and confidential based.

The OCM service standard for responding to clients is within two business days from the initial contact. A trained and qualified practitioner will schedule time with the client within the service standard. During your conversation, the practitioner will listen and assess your situation in order to propose a conflict prevention or resolution strategy designed to meet your needs and interests.

For more information on our services and training, visit our [intranet](#)* site.

* <http://intranet.ec.gc.ca/hr-rh/default.asp?lang=En&n=0EFB1741-1>

**Together, let's continue to improve the workplace
one conversation at a time!**