

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

BACKGROUND

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT ARE FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WHICH VIOLATE IMPORTANT HUMAN RIGHTS.

INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OCCUR EVERY DAY IN EVERY SPACE

- It is based on sex but it is not about sexual desire or unrequited attraction.
- It is a violation of human rights and other federal and provincial legislation; yet, it is **widespread**.
- It is **harmful** to those being harassed; yet, **bystanders often interpret sexual harassment as “normal” behavior**.
- The costs of harassment are high, yet coworkers, schoolmates, and so-called “friends” often engage in harassment.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEX INVOLVING UNWANTED COMMENTS OR BEHAVIOR THAT INTIMIDATE, OFFEND, OR HUMILIATE ANOTHER PERSON. EXAMPLES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- **ASKING FOR SEX IN EXCHANGE FOR A BENEFIT (E.G. A PROMOTION OR A PASSING GRADE)**
- **UNWANTED TOUCHING**
- **CALLING PEOPLE SEX-SPECIFIC DEROGATORY NAMES**

GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT IS A FORM OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, INVOLVING BEHAVIORS THAT REINFORCES HETERONORMATIVE GENDER ROLES LIKE:

- **MAKING GENDER-RELATED COMMENTS ABOUT A PERSON’S APPEARANCE OR MANNERISMS**

SEXUAL HARASSMENT



SPACES & IMPACTS

WORKPLACE

- Undermines a person's sense of dignity & competence at work.
- Compromises earning potential (absenteeism, distraction, loss of promotion).
- Creates a toxic environment.

EDUCATION

Undermines skills and a person's ability to learn.

Disrupts education.

Compromises a person's ability to reach their full potential.

Can result in absenteeism, poor grades and discontinuation of one's studies.

STREET

- This form of sexual harassment occurs in public places.
- Sexually Objectifies.
- Makes public spaces feel less comfortable and safe.
- Reinforces vulnerability to assault and attack in public spaces



STATISTICS

- Globally, **70 to 99%** of women experience street harassment at some point during their lives.
- **25-85** percent of women surveyed report having experienced sexual harassment at work

70% OF WORKERS WHO EXPERIENCE SEXUAL HARASSMENT SAY THEY HAVE NEVER REPORTED IT

Maya Raghu et al. #MeTooWhatNext: Strengthening Workplace Sexual Harassment Protections and Accountability, (Washington, DC: 2017),



REPORTING BARRIERS

- Perpetrator known to victim "But we work together"
- Myth & Misconceptions "it's just innocent flirtation"
- Experiences Minimized/Ignore : "It's not a big deal-they do it to everyone"
- Everyone will find out"
- Fear of loss of employment or setbacks to one's career development



INTERSECTIONALITY

NO OCCUPATION IS IMMUNE FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT, BUT THE INCIDENCE OF HARASSMENT APPEARS TO BE HIGHER IN WORKPLACES WITH STARK POWER IMBALANCES BETWEEN WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

WOMEN, PARTICULARLY WOMEN OF COLOR AND IMMIGRANT WOMEN, ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN LOW-WAGE JOBS, WHICH OFTEN LACK LEGAL PROTECTIONS & CRITICAL SUPPORTS LIKE HIGHER WAGES, FAIR AND PREDICTABLE SCHEDULES, ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE, AND PAID TIME OFF, LEAVING WORKERS VULNERABLE TO EXPLOITATION