



**ACHIEVE**  
CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP

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PowerPoint Slides for  
On-Demand Webinar

# Workplace Sexual Harassment

Why It Happens and How to Prevent It

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WE BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO LIKE WHERE THEY WORK.

# DEFINING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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- Unwelcome or offensive conduct of a sexual nature, or that is related to a person's gender.
  - This includes, but is not limited to, requests for sexual favours; suggestive remarks and gestures; unwelcome touching or contact; offensive jokes, objects, or pictures; undue attention; and intimidation.

# GENDER HARASSMENT IS:

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- Telling sexist jokes
- Asking only male employees to help with moving heavy furniture in the office
- Asking only female employees to plan office parties
- Requiring female employees to wear skirts
- Requiring male employees to have short hair

# CATEGORIES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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## Quid Pro Quo:

*Something for something*

- When a job benefit is conditional upon the harassment.

## Hostile Environment:

- When the conduct is persistent and pervasive enough to create a hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment.

# IS MY WORKPLACE HOSTILE?

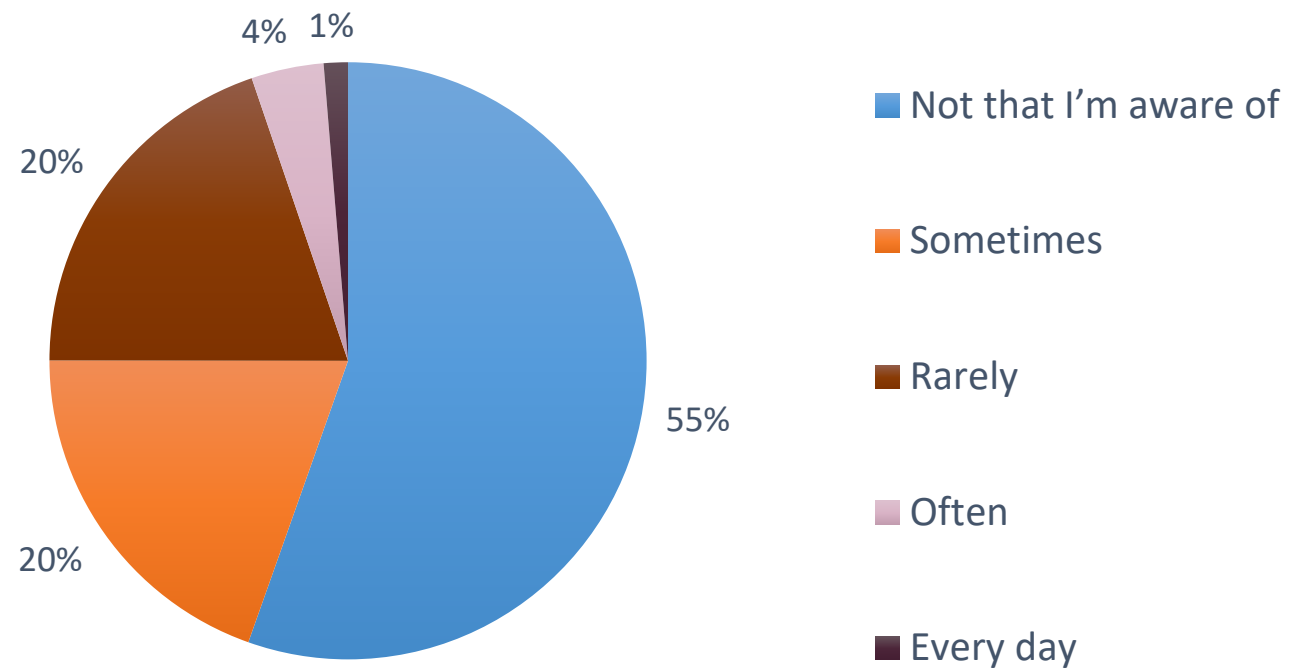
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- Hostile acts are:
  - Discriminatory against a protected class (age, sex, religion, disability, etc.)
  - Severe enough to disrupt your work or productivity
  - Continuous, regular, or frequent over a period of time
- Your employer was advised, but failed to take appropriate action

# RESULTS FROM ACHIEVE'S SURVEY

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Does sexual harassment occur in your workplace?



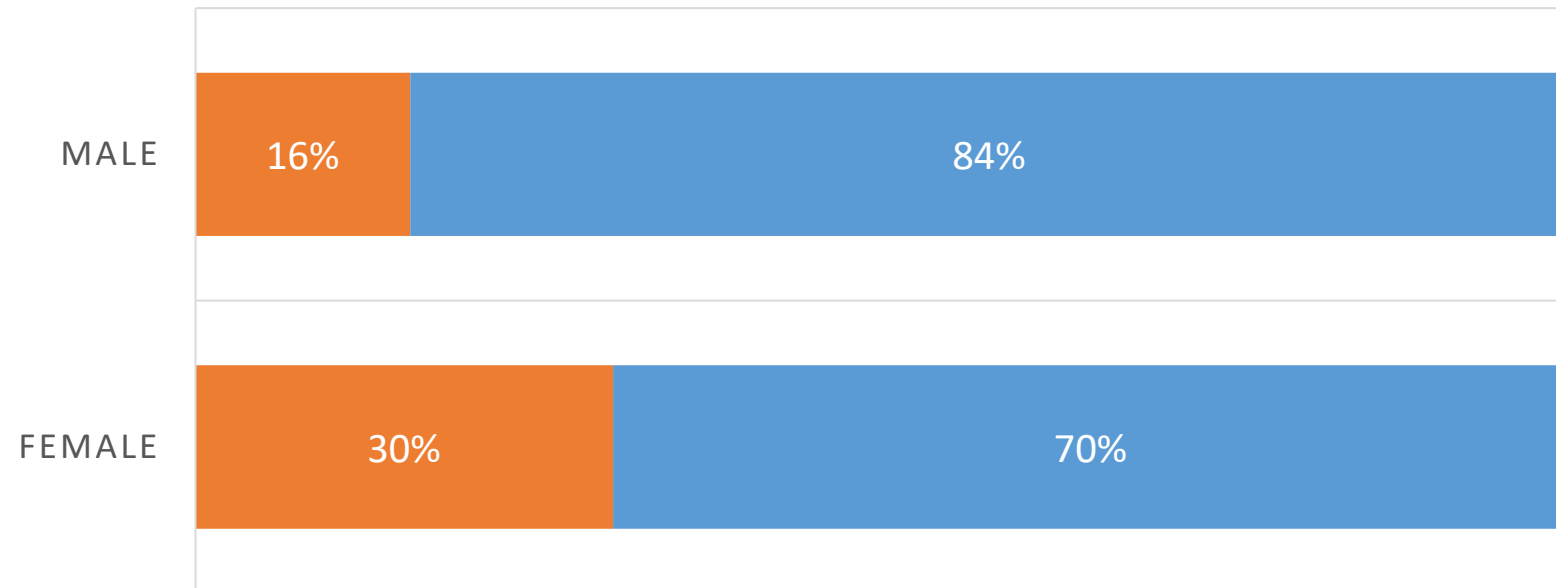
# HOW THE GENDERS DIFFER

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**Have you ever been sexually harassed at work?  
(by gender)**

(other respondent genders are not included due to low sample sizes)

■ Yes ■ No



# WHO ARE THE COMMON TARGETS?

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- Women
- People new to the workforce (young people, immigrants)
- People who are financially dependent (single parent)
- Racial minorities
- LGBT2SQ+
- People with low seniority/low on the pay scale
- People with disabilities



# HUMAN COSTS

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- Mental health concerns
- Headaches
- Sleep problems
- Damage to reputation
- Loss of job opportunities
- Loss of income

**“At first I tolerated it because I thought it was ‘normal’ behaviour. Eventually I became depressed, suicidal, and was unable to force myself to get out of bed and go to work.”**

Survey Respondent

# ORGANIZATIONAL COSTS

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- Lower employee productivity
- Higher employee turnover
- Legal costs
- Low employee morale
- Hiring outside consultants
- Damage to business reputation

# ROOT CAUSES

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1. Power Imbalances
2. Unhealthy Organizations

# POWER IMBALANCES

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## **1. Patriarchy**

Rooted in ideologies of sexism and misogyny in which men have a disproportionate amount of power and women are highly sexualized.

## **2. Hierarchy**

Structures in which there are large imbalances of power. Examples include large organizations, governments, etc.

## **3. Money**

In our capitalistic society, money = power. Those with little money are often in more vulnerable and powerless positions.

# SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY ORGANIZATIONS

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- Lack of communication
- Low morale
- High rates of conflict
- Ineffective leadership

## 8 RISK FACTORS TO WATCH FOR

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1. Organizational culture
2. Large power imbalances
3. Employees who are new to the workforce
4. Lack of diversity
5. Customer service
6. Ratios of men to women
7. Employees who work alone
8. Combining alcohol with work

**“I left my career [serving] as a result of sexual harassment. People would sometimes justify harassment with the tip they would leave at the end.”**

Survey Respondent



**“The discussions may be difficult, but the positives are many. We cannot change what we are unaware of, and once we are aware, we cannot help but change.”**

Sheryl Sandberg

# PREVENTION

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## INSIGHTS & STRATEGIES

1. Engaged leadership
2. Focus on organizational health
3. Provide training
4. Write and communicate policies  
and reporting procedures

# ENGAGED LEADERSHIP

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- Prioritize organizational culture
- Address risk factors
- Promote and provide training
- Develop policies and procedures
- Hold *everyone* accountable

# ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

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1. Build meaningful relationships
2. Focus your leadership team on people
3. Communicate your purpose and values
4. Provide meaningful and challenging work
5. Create peak performing teams

# PROVIDE TRAINING

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- Educate
- Remind and refresh
- Inform new employees

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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- 76% of organizations have a policy. Less than half provide any training on it.
- Key Components of Training:
  - Current and up-to-date
  - Outlines reporting process
  - States how harassment will be dealt with
  - Informs of all options

# BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

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- Bystanders are either part of the problem, or part of the solution.
- Bystander Intervention is valuable because:
  - Shifts responsibility to everyone who is aware of the situation
  - Empowers everyone with tools to intervene

# COMMON RESPONSES TO HARASSMENT

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- Avoid the harasser
- Deny or downplay the incident
- Endure the behaviour
- Accept a settlement payment and sign an NDA



## LEAST COMMON RESPONSE

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Reporting the incident.

# WHY DON'T PEOPLE REPORT?

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- They feel powerless
- Revictimization
- Shame
- Blame themselves
- Don't think they'll be believed
- Don't think anything will happen
- Fear of retaliation – both socially and professionally

**“Policies rarely have the teeth of enforcement. They are just words that still put the onus, and sometimes blame on the victim. To come forward and have nothing done is sometimes worse than the actual event.”**

Survey Respondent

# POLICY CHECKLIST

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- Definition of sexual harassment
- An explanation of what constitutes as prohibited conduct
- Statement ensuring that there will be no retaliation against anyone who reports
- Statement ensuring that confidentiality will be maintained unless disclosure is necessary
- Statement ensuring that disciplinary measures will be enacted promptly and proportionately
- Inform employees that they can file a complaint under the Canadian Human Rights Act

# REPORTING CHECKLIST

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- At least two people responsible for taking complaints
- A variety of methods for submitting a complaint: phone hotlines, written, in-person, web-based, etc.
- Statement ensuring that the report will be taken seriously
- Statement ensuring that the complaint process will be prompt, thorough, and impartial

# INVESTIGATIONS

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**Step One:** Start with a Restorative Approach

**Step Two:** Move into informal or formal mediation

**Step Three:** Proceed with investigation if needed

# WHAT ABOUT ROMANCE?

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# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SEXUALLY HARASSED

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1. Document everything.
2. Confront your harasser (if it's safe to do so).
3. Report the incident to your workplace.
4. Take legal action.
5. File a Human Rights Complaint.
6. Don't blame yourself!



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A WITNESS

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1. Be aware. Notice the situation.
2. Identify that there is a problem.
3. Take responsibility for the situation.
4. Take action:
  - Talk to perpetrator or target
  - Cause a distraction
  - Report to security or manager/supervisor
  - Document with notes, photos, or video

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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What are **three things** you would like to implement for **yourself or your organization** based on what you've learned in this workshop?

# POLICY ANALYSIS

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- Our sexual harassment policy aims to protect men and women in our company from unwanted sexual advances and give them guidelines to report incidents. We will also explain how we handle claims, punish sexual harassment, and help victims recover.

# POLICY ANALYSIS

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- We will terminate repeat offenders after the second claim against them if our investigation concludes they are indeed guilty.

# POLICY ANALYSIS

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- Best practice is to have employees bring the concerns to their immediate supervisor either in person or in writing, unless the supervisor is the alleged harasser, in which case the employee would need to take their complaint up a level.

## ADDITIONAL EVENTS & RESOURCES

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- Other Public Workshops
- On-Location Training
- Live and On-Demand Webinars
- Blog Articles
- Free Monthly Webinar

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