



## ***Drawing The Line On Workplace Sexual Harassment***

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Welcome!

### Facilitators:

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### Workplace Sexual Harassment: Webinar's Agenda

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- 1. Seeing beyond the individual incident or harasser**
  - The "big picture"
  - How sexual harassment regulates and segregates public space: for example, by gender, race or age
- 2. Taking Leadership to end Workplace Harassment**
- 3. Drawing The Line on Sexual Harassment**
  - Strategies for challenging sexual harassment through bystander intervention
  - Strategies to support survivor-victims



### Workplace Sexual Harassment

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### **For Bystanders and those who may hear disclosures about sexual harassment:**

- *What are the challenges?*
- *What makes this difficult?*
- *What information would support you?*



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## The “Big Picture”

Seeing beyond the individual incident or harasser



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## Workplace Sexual Harassment: Realities

**Almost half** of all women will say they have experienced sexual harassment at work or in other public spaces.

Hollaback: *You Have the Power to End Street Harassment*. Research. Online: <http://www.ihollaback.org/research/>

**Rarely reported**; often linked to “**workplace culture**” that tolerates or encourages sexually harassing behaviors

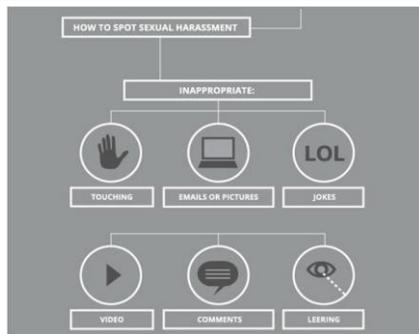
Recent **high-profile cases** point to the ‘**slippery-slope**’ of minimizing harassing behaviors:

- CBC
- Parliament Hill



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## Workplace Sexual Harassment: Realities



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## Workplace Sexual Harassment: Context

“The media typically reports *stereotypical or ‘classic’ forms of sexual harassment*” in the workplace” only.

From: *Framing sexual harassment through media representations*. *Women's Studies International Forum* 37 (2013) 95–103: 102.

• “**a high profile male** is alleged or found to have harassed a subordinate female”

- **Scandalous** allegations
- “**overtly sexual conduct** also predominate”



## Workplace Sexual Harassment: Context

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**Common misconception** that sexual harassment is a situation of:

- sexual misconduct/ "odd" or bold sexual behavior
- unrequited attraction
- sexual desire.

On the contrary:

- patterns of sexual harassment often also reflect **cultural/workplace norms**
- whose "turf" or space



## Workplace Sexual Harassment: Context

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Studies have shown that sexual harassment operates to *protect one person/groups' privileges* (i.e. to a certain space, role or position, let's say), while keeping others from 'outsider' groups away.

- Sex/gender

- Age

- Race



## Workplace Sexual Harassment: Examples

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An Afro-Canadian woman sexually harassed by both white male and female coworkers carried the unspoken expectation that **she should 'know her place' in the workplace.**

A young man who worked on an off-shore oil rig in an all-male environment: "was **not masculine enough**", and faced sexualized harassment and an attempted sexual assault.

Study of **31 women in combat arms of the Canadian Forces:**

- messages of nonacceptance
- inconsistent and subjective performance standards.



## Historical Example: Sexual Harassment

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Women activists in Washington attend the New Left's Counter-Inaugural to Richard Nixon's first Inauguration (1969)



Antiwar leader Dave Dellinger, serving as master of ceremonies



### Historical Example: Sexual Harassment

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Marilyn Webb, a local feminist was slated to speak

"F\*\*\* her down a dark alley!"

Men in the audience began to shout: "Take her off the stage and f\*\*\*\* her!"

"Firestone tried to speak next, but was drowned out by a **howl** of sexual epithets."



### At Work: Who is Sexual Harassment Impacting?

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Young women from **marginalized racial, sexual and socioeconomic groups** are more vulnerable to being targeted for sexual harassment.

Considerably higher for **women in military organizations**, and which have a longstanding tradition of more male staffs as well as stereotypically masculine tasks.

Oftentimes, targeted persons do not disclose sexual harassment because they are **embarrassed, do not want anyone to know, or fear repercussions.**



### Taking Leadership at Work

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- Fostering positive workplace culture
- The usefulness *and* limitations of sexual harassment policies



### Fostering a Positive Workplace Environment

1. Recognize that jokes, emails or banter about women, LGBTQ folks, racialized groups are **just as damaging to your space** as are physical and sexualized behaviors.

2. **Foster active inclusion** of women, LGBTQ folks, diverse workers/volunteers at work

Active, diverse inclusion **can be just as helpful** to your space as a good sexual harassment policy.



### Fostering a Positive Workplace Environment: Workplace Policies

- Is your policy visible to people at your work?
- Do folks know where to find it? If your policy is impossible to find, it's likely that no-one is using it.
- Is your policy easy-to-understand? (i.e. how to report, to whom; what the possible outcomes may be)
- A good policy will **not only help those who report—but in addition, help those who are considering reporting**



### Fostering a Positive Workplace Environment: Workplace Policies

- Is your policy effective?
- If it stressful to use, or it fails to hold offenders accountable, people will not use it.
- **Commit to reviewing your policy** every 2-5 years
- Your review process ought to include **review or comments from diverse people at your work**. For example: folks from different departments, a team of female employees, or a team of LGBTQ-identified employees



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### Drawing the Line in Workplace Sexual Harassment:

- Bystander Intervention
- Supporting survivors better

You hear  
your boss tell  
a coworker  
how great her  
legs look in  
a skirt.

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Do you    go  
back to  
your desk?

## Bystanders & the bystander effect

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The bystander effect occurs when the presence of others hinders an individual from intervening in an emergency situation

“Someone else will do something”

OR

“They did nothing, so why should I bother?”

## Bystanders in the workplace

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It's a lot harder to intervene when you know not only the person being targeted but the perpetrator as well.

- 1- “I don’t want it to come back on me.”
- 2- “Maybe I misheard.”
- 3- “I know him. He’s kidding!”
- 4- “He has more seniority than me.”
- 5- “I have no idea what to do...”

## How to draw the line at work

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- Call them out and tell them it’s unacceptable.
- Get back up. (Human Resources, Union rep, other colleagues, etc.)
- Check in with your colleague and ask her if she’s okay.

## Supporting survivors/victims

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- Believe and validate
- Listen attentively
- Respect confidentiality
- Offer resources and support, not “advice”
- Supporting others means supporting ourselves, too.



## What Else Can You Do?: Great Resources on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence

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### Responding to Sexual Violence Disclosures

- Online learning modules
- Easy to complete
- Video scenarios of disclosures and supportive responses
- <http://www.learningtoendabuse.ca/responding-disclosures-sexual-violence>

### Draw the Line campaign

- Learn more
- Order free materials!
- [info@draw-the-line.ca](mailto:info@draw-the-line.ca)
- Website: [www.draw-the-line.ca](http://www.draw-the-line.ca)



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[www.sexualassaultsupport.ca](http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca)  
[www.draw-the-line.ca](http://www.draw-the-line.ca)

