

Tips for Creating a Harassment Prevention Training for your Workplace / School



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**Topics on this article might be sensitive for some audiences, yet it is important to generate conversation around the problem so it can be solved and not covered.*

Facts:

- *1 in 3 women have been sexually harassed at work*
- *Employee perceptions of sexual harassment influences workplace policy effectiveness*
- *39% of the victims did nothing because thought it would cause a negative impact for their career or suffer from retaliation.*

**Data from: <https://www.lifeworks.com/blog/4-facts-need-know-sexual-harassment-workplace/>*

School culture should not be ignorant from sexual harassment trainings and education. The more information, the more empower we make our collaborators.

Schools should be safe environments for everyone. The best way to keep a healthy, safe environment is to evaluate and audit the internal culture. Going in depth and asking questions to staff is an effective way to study what needs to be done.

So, what does your internal training, communications, and policies should have?

First, the goal is to promote policies that protect diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Also, to have safe environments and a culture that protects and speaks up when things are not right.

Sexual harassment has multiple negative effects:

- Decreases performance
- Damages morale

- Hurts trust in the leadership and culture
 - It can evolve to become a scandal and damage the organization publicly
- So yes, it is bad. We do not want it. We need to not only control it, but make sure is NOT present.

To achieve a harassment free culture, **respect is fundamental.**

Respect empowers. Respect nurtures emotional health. Respect enforces the organization from top to bottom and makes it appealing in the public eye.

Training

It needs to be:

1. Engaging (Interesting enough to grab your employee's attention)
2. Effective (Enough information, with examples, to ensure effective delivery)
3. Measurable (To make sure ALL your employee's and staff are following it, and did it)
4. Needs to be inclusive and empathetic. Empowering enough to make staff and stakeholders feel comfortable to report and speak up against the harassment or risk behaviors.

**It is important to be sensitive and understand the audience you are aiming. You can shape training according to your audience, be empathetic. Some individuals can be susceptible about the topic. However, it is important to note we need to speak and normalize these topics. Generating conversation is a way to empower, and make victims feel safe to share their thoughts, report, and comment.*

Sexual harassment can be shown by different actions, little things that added can be the entrance to bigger problems. Make sure to address the risk behaviors on time and take them with the best professionalism.

First

Ask questions or survey your employee's on how they feel with the current policies (if any). Ask them if they have experienced any sexual harassment incident. Evaluate how much they know about harassment and sexual harassment.

Note: Make sure to tailor your surveys depending on your groups and audiences. Some groups might feel more susceptible to the topics. However, as mentioned, it is important

to make the topic available to everyone. Sexual harassment shouldn't be treated as a tabu nor a topic to touch with tweezers.

It is extremely helpful to ask the legal, compliance, and HR teams to understand the culture, the policies, and legalities in place, as well as the ethical standards.

They can also help with the tone, message, and context. However, you should not ignore the whole staff, use them just as support.

Note: You might be able to record a video or write a note from leadership to express their position on the matter.

Second

Your goal here is design a process to create, share, and analyze the delivery of the training.

Design it to be accessible and easy to follow. Do not overwork it.

Polite is great but remember that polite is not synonym of boring.

When creating your training (Video, conference, etc.), be inclusive. Remember that we all have the right for a harassment free workplace. Try to use diverse individuals, from multiple genders to promote inclusivity.

Third – Suggested modules

You can expand your training, but they all should follow a logical order and important legalities (according to your state laws and other laws).

This is the modules/topics we recommend:

- Introduction: The “why is it important?”, what does the law states, why I promote DEI, better environment, culture, here you share the goals of the training)
- Respect: Here you will share why a respect culture is important, give examples of what not to do and what to do, positive things coming from respectful interactions, correction methods and report mechanisms
- Three examples of lack of respect: Rudeness, Bullying and Abusive conduct, Illegal Behavior. In this section you will describe each of those, and explain their consequences, how to report it, and why they are wrong

- **What is Sexual Harassment:** Description of what is Sexual Harassment, how to identify it, explain when it needs to be reported and how. Make them feel empower to act and speak up.
- **Gender and Sexuality:** Here you will give examples of how Sexual harassment can happen to everyone, and how to identify it at any situation. Differences between gender identity and sexual orientation.
- **What is expected from the employer:** This section is for the employees to understand what is expected from the organization, what resources are on place and which mechanisms exist to report and control harassment.
- **Reporting:** This is probably the most important section in the training. You need to explain the policies and procedures on how to report risk behavior and violations on a safe, anonymous way. Empower your staff so they don't feel they can't talk because of prejudice.

Extra notes:

We recommend employers to have diverse methods of communications that make it easier for employees to feel empower and act against unacceptable behavior. Things like sharing the organization's anti-sexual harassment policy, sharing an anti-sexual harassment fact sheet during on boarding of new staff, posters with help numbers and describing how to report sexual harassment, and an updated sexual harassment training at least every year can really make the difference.

Do not forget, everything starts with respect and empathy. Also, do not forget that everyone in the organization needs to follow these policies and trainings.