

CSW Topic 1: **Measures to Fight Sexual Harassment against Women**

Sexual harassment has been a big problem for women throughout history. For some people sexual harassment starts by being insulted with so-called swear words which are obviously directed against one's own sexuality. For others sexual harassment is just a physical thing and starts by getting touched unintentionally.

Sexual harassment is a form of violence, in this case violence against women (VAW)

Policy and Law

The Council of Europe and especially the European Union have taken significant steps with treaties, directives and resolutions to ensure that all of their member states will take action to prevent sexual harassment in their state and to help and support victims of sexual harassment. A big problem of sexual harassment is recognized in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe and members of former Soviet Union countries. One can assume that this is due to social progress or caused by a traditional mindset, e.g. 'The woman is subordinate to the man'. But these areas are or will be required to comply with the Council of Europe and European Union laws and policies soon. Sadly, international conventions **have not** specifically addressed sexual harassment but there are many fundamental human rights and other international laws that have been applied to prevent sexual harassment, e.g. the right not to be subject to sex discrimination.

For the 2008 United Nations expert group report entitled "Good practices in legislation on violence against women", including information on especially defining sexual harassment, click [here](#).

further helpful websites and Reports:

http://www.stopvaw.org/new_report_online_violence_has_alarming_psychological_impacts_on_women_and_girls_4.html

http://www.stopvaw.org/united_states_research_group_advocates_for_new_perspectives_on_sexual_violence_in_the_media.html

http://www.stopvaw.org/japan_one_in_three_women_report_sexual_harassment_at_work.html

Society

An important question for solving the problem is: how can we, as a society, effect change to ensure a future free of sexual harassment? The first step to begin with is in the childhood. One of the keys to dealing with the problem is that there are healthy interactions with parents and peers, at home and in school so that children can learn that there is nothing positive about hurting other people caused by sexual interests. Children need to learn social emotional skills (SEL). Empowerment should also be a main focus for every girl. All of this is to create a culture of mutual respect.

We should also think about the reason why sexual harassment happens that often. Some people act like that because they still have the older view, the view that men are worth more than women, that women have no say in the house and are expected to be docile, no matter if in private life or community life. Others follow this line of thinking because they cling to their religion which holds this view. All these people believe women must satisfy the men's needs, whether they want it or not.

Another aspect is that there are men who see the natural difference in physiology between a man and a woman as a chance to feel superior. For some people, sexual violence is a self-assertion, for others it serves as sexual satisfaction, e.g. through rape.

Consequences

In addition, as here, the consequences must not be forgotten because most people who have experienced sexual harassment are traumatized or suffering from anxiety.

Furthermore, there is the problem of unwanted pregnancy, and the necessity to identify the victimizer and hold him responsible.

Sexual harassment at the workplace

Sexual harassment against women is a big problem many women must face at their workplace.

The tricky aspect of this is that it does not only affect their health but also their career. Often the victims do not dare to do anything because they are afraid of their job.

Sexual harassment can be called sexual harassment in the workplace in three situations. Firstly, at the workplace; secondly, during company events or in cases when people carry out work-related functions, or thirdly, when the harassment happens between two people working in the same workplace.

An important question, however, is how much the victims can rely on what has been set. It is most important that those affected have enough courage and confidence to expose the crime rather than being ashamed of it, or to have existential anxiety or fear for their career.



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Some statistics about sexual harassment at the workplace

The Australian Human Rights Commission reported that 1 in 5 women experience sexual harassment in the workplace at some time.)

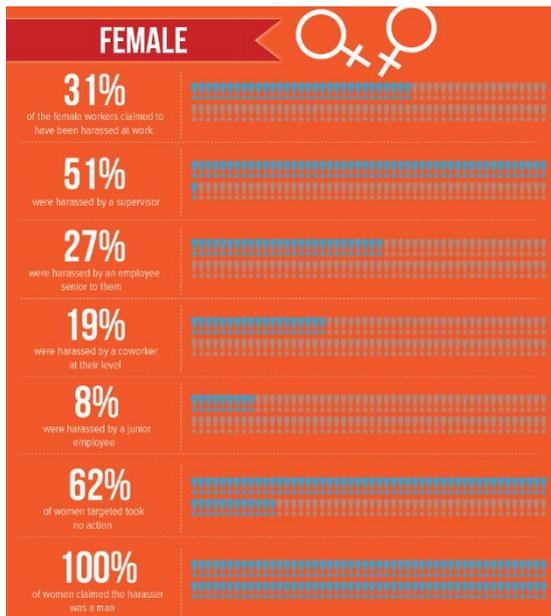
There are some reports about how many women actually experience sexual harassment in the workplace, for example a report conducted by the TUC and Everyday Sexism which found that 52% of women had experienced a form of sexual harassment in their workplace, almost a quarter had been touched without invitation, and already a fifth had experienced a sexual advance.

You can find the measures against sexual harassment under the law of the "Equal Opportunity Act" but some of them may also be offences under the criminal law.

But up to what point does the act apply as harassment?

Here are some examples of sexual harassment at work:

- Staring in a sexually suggestive or offensive manner, or whistling
- Making offensive comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity



What can you count as sexual harassment?

There are three categories in which you can be sexually harassed. On the one hand there are verbal statements. Characteristics for these are, for example, sexist or humiliating remarks, ambiguous speech behaviour or the direct request for sexual intercourse. The second point relates to gestures and facial expressions. Clear examples of this are the whistling and staring but also showing pornographic content. The third point in which sexual harassment is noticeable is action. Here, the examples start with unwanted touches such as grappling and ending with sexual coercion or even rape.



<https://brandongaille.com/23-statistics-on-sexual-harassment-the-workplace/>