

Literature Review:

# SAFE STEM WORKPLACES

2022



The Woman Abuse Council of Toronto (WomanACT) and the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology (SCWIST) are partnered to provide tailored support and training to help workplaces prevent gender and sexual harassment, develop comprehensive policy, establish trauma-informed reporting mechanisms and develop avenues for resolution and referral pathways to support.

## About WomanACT

With 29 years of experience, WomanACT is an expert at delivering training, education, and organizational strategy, coaching, and policy development to community organizations and companies to increase their capacity to prevent, recognize, and respond to violence.

## About SCWIST

Since 1981 SCWIST has been a leader in programs, partnerships, scholarships and networks across Canada for women and girls in STEM. Through innovative research, partnerships, and capacity building, SCWIST has worked to advance women and girls' participation and representation in STEM.

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Canada

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# INTRODUCTION

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The rise of the #MeToo movement has shifted dramatically society's awareness of gender and sexual harassment, but global rates of gender and sexual harassment remain high. These rates are reflected in all aspects of society, including the workplace. Global reports show that at least 40% of women have experienced sexual harassment in their workplace (Mayer, et al., 2020). In Canada, across studies, women's lifetime experience of sexual harassment has been found to be anywhere from 2.4 to 3.6 times that of men's (Angus Reid Institute, 2018; Angus Reid Institute, 2014).

While there are many contributing factors, time and time again male-dominated workplaces are found to have higher rates of workplace gender and sexual harassment than spaces that are more gender-diverse or that have greater gender-parity. This is particularly important for the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, as well as the trades, where women are a low percentage of the workforce. These rates are particularly troubling when we consider that workplaces in Canada have legislated responsibilities to ensure employee health and safety.

Workplaces are a large part of the greater social and cultural eco-systems and issues of gender and sexual harassment are symptoms of deeply entrenched gender inequalities. While the #MeToo movement has demonstrated that sexual harassment is not an individual, but an institutional problem, workplaces struggle to address effectively the root causes that enable the persistence of harmful behaviours. The high rates of harassment and violence tell us that organizational cultures continue to normalize and accept harmful behaviours such as "banter", inappropriate jokes about someone's gender identity or expression, ignoring or mistreating someone because of sexual orientation – all without repercussions (Mayer, et al., 2020). As a result, workplaces need to rethink how gender and sexual harassment is addressed by shifting away from minimizing legal liability to creating organizational cultures and norms that prevent gender and sexual harassment from occurring in the first place (Mayer, et al., 2020). Furthermore, workplaces need clear and consistent policies and practices that are trauma-informed and protect complainants from retaliation and re-victimization. This literature review aims to synthesize evidence regarding practical approaches to creating a workplace culture that does not tolerate gender and sexual harassment through the pillars of prevention, response, and accountability.

# METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this review was to conduct a literature search on the subject of preventing and responding to gender and sexual harassment in the workplace in order to understand:

1. Organizational characteristics in male-dominated sectors that make women and gender-diverse individuals vulnerable to gender and sexual harassment
2. Evidence-based and practical strategies to prevent and respond to gender and sexual harassment
3. The benefits and challenges of implementing evidence-based approaches of prevention and response
4. Considerations for effective implementation of evidence-based approaches for prevention and response

Empirical evidence was gathered from journal databases, government pages, and google searches. Sources were filtered by relevance (in accordance with the list above), applicability to the STEM field, geographical location, and date of publication (sources published within ten years were used to reflect the current political and cultural context). Based on these criteria, a total of 40 sources were used, including scholarly journal articles and reports, government publications, surveys, policy briefs, and books.

Although this report provides a broad range of evidence on practical approaches to the prevention and responds to gender and sexual harassment in the workplace, it is subject to limitations. **First and foremost, there is limited research that identifies the impact of workplace interventions that address gender and sexual harassment for gender diverse individuals and women’s intersectional identities, and the language used here is what was used in the research cited.** There is also limited data available on evidence-based approaches being directly applied to STEM workplaces. Therefore, the case studies used in this report are based on industries that share similar organizational characteristics to STEM fields. Additionally, some of the approaches are relatively new and have limited evidence available on their effectiveness concerning workplaces. Practices such as bystander intervention training and Callisto (a reporting platform) have been used successfully and evaluated in academic settings as a means to prevent violence and to report sexual assault but have been only recently used in workplaces. Although contextually relevant and highly recommended as practical approaches, more time and research is needed to generate comprehensive data on such approaches being applied in the workplace.

# BACKGROUND

In recent decades, gains have been made to the participation of women in STEM fields and the trades, and yet these sectors remain male-dominated. While more women in Canada are graduating with post-secondary degrees as compared to their male counterparts, they are less likely to graduate with a degree in a STEM field (Ferguson, 2016). The 2016 Canadian Census showed that across college graduates men made up 30% of STEM graduates and women made up 6% (Frank, 2019). Similarly, women make up a small percentage in apprenticeship training programs. In 2019, women accounted for a total of 13.5% of apprenticeship registrations and 12% of certificates granted in the same year (Statistics Canada, 2020). This representation is carried into the workforce. Labour force statistics from 2020 show that women make up very low proportions in many industries, such as construction (13%), manufacturing (27%), and transportation (22%) (Statistics Canada, 2021). Moreover, findings from a longitudinal study following STEM graduates between 2006 and 2016 (Frank, 2019) shows that a current lack of representation affects persistence and retention:

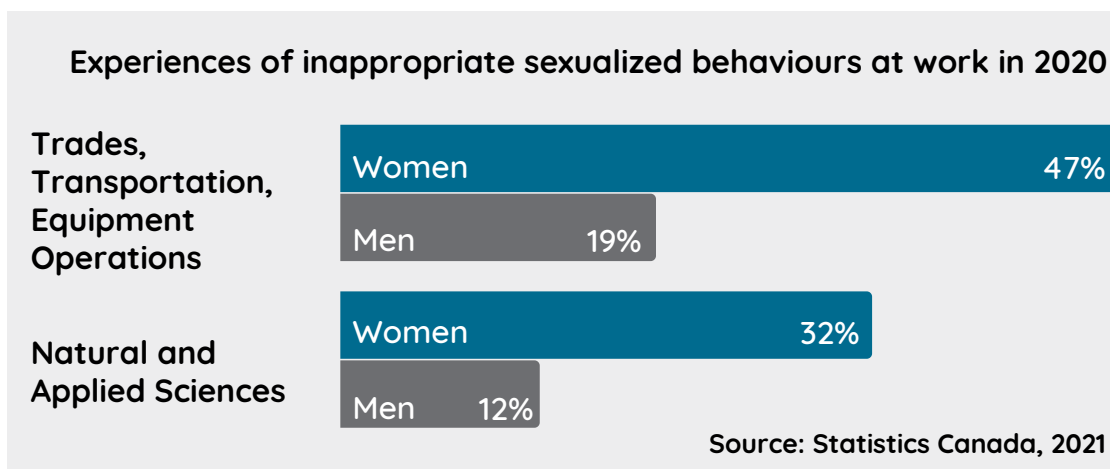
- Nearly half of the men who graduated with STEM degrees worked in a STEM occupation, but only 3 in 10 women did.
- Across men and women, those who identified as visible minorities were less likely than their counterparts to work in a STEM occupation.
- Women were less likely to persist in STEM occupations over the decade.

Even with representative gains, STEM and trade sectors remain male-dominated.





While the gender gap is narrowing, these gains come with a risk; as an increasing number of women enter these fields, they face biases, barriers, harassment, and violence that decrease their safety and impede their long-term participation (National Academies, 2018). In Canada, in 2020 alone, 47% of women working in trades, transportation, equipment operation and related occupations reported experiencing inappropriate sexualized behaviour at work, compared to 19% of men (Statistics Canada, 2021). Similarly, in the natural and applied sciences 32% of women compared to 12% of men experienced inappropriate sexualized behaviours at work (Statistics Canada, 2021). **Other Canadian studies have found higher rates of gender and sexual harassment among Indigenous women, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, women with disabilities, and young women (Jaffray, 2020; Perreault, 2020; Hango & Moyser, 2018; Angus Reid Institute, 2018).** Across male-dominated fields, it is widely understood that gender and sexual harassment are a common experience among women and gender-diverse individuals.



Individual incidents of harassment and violence have harmful effects on those who experience it. Women who experience gender and sexual harassment are more likely to report depression, general stress, anxiety, and self-blame, and are more likely to become less involved in their work or quit (Lindquist & McKay, 2018). Workplace cultures that use policies and practices that focus on resolving incidents after the fact and that aim to minimize legal liability have not only proven to be ineffective (National Academies, 2018), but can compound negative effects by enabling the retaliation and re-victimization of individuals on the receiving end of the situation (Mayer, et al., 2020). This leads to a dangerous cycle of underreporting and ineffective or harmful responses.

Organizations that do not focus on proactive approaches are held back from creating a diverse, productive, and people-focused workplace (Mayer, et al., 2020), and from preventing ancillary outcomes related to low employee productivity and high rates of stress and/or employee turnover. If workplaces are intent on achieving a safe work climate, it is critical that more holistic approaches that focus on prevention, response, and accountability are implemented. And workplaces have legislated responsibilities to do this.

Across Canada, provinces and territories govern workplace safety through workplace health and safety legislation. For example, in Ontario, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code set the legal expectations of employee protections. Similarly, in British Columbia, the Workers' Compensation Act and the British Columbia Human Rights Code govern worker safety. Ontario's employment legislation was updated in 2016 to amend the definition of workplace harassment to explicitly include workplace sexual harassment, defined as "(a) a course of vexatious and unwelcome comment or conduct against a worker because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, and (b) an unwelcome sexual solicitation or advance by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker" (Ontario Government, 2019). In both Ontario and British Columbia, duties for employers regarding workplace harassment include:

- Developing, implementing, and reviewing a policy on workplace harassment, which includes how claims can be made, investigated, and addressed.
- Educating employees on the workplace harassment policy.
- Ensuring claims of workplace harassment are appropriately and sufficiently investigated, reported on, and addressed.

However, if sexual harassment behaviours can be classified as sexual assault, they are addressed under the Criminal Code of Canada.

An environment that does not support harassing and violent behaviour and that has strong, clear, and transparent consequences can reduce significantly the likelihood that sexual harassment will be perpetrated (National Academies, 2018). **This literature review looks to summarize evidence surrounding the key pillars of accountability, prevention, and response, which help create a culture where gender and sexual harassment and violence are not tolerated.**

# ADDRESSING GENDER AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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## ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Ensuring that efforts to prevent and respond to gender and sexual harassment are effective requires an understanding of organizational climate and risk factors. Climate assessments are an important way to promote transparency and accountability and demonstrate that the organization takes gender and sexual harassment seriously. Organizations can use tools to assess employees' understanding of gender and sexual harassment, appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, how to report complaints, and their level of trust in organizational measures. Organizations should also use tools to track over time the changes to formal and informal complaints.

### Climate Assessments

Climate assessments can give organizations an accurate view of the level and type of harassment and violence experienced by their employees, the organizational culture, risks, and opportunities, and allow them to tailor their interventions to specific problems (National Academies, 2018). Organizations often rely on formal complaints to determine the extent of harassment; however, research indicates that most victims do not formally report harassing behaviour (Elsesser, 2018). As a result, organizational leaders may struggle to gauge their organizational culture and climate when sexual harassment is significantly underreported (Yang & Katz, 2020).

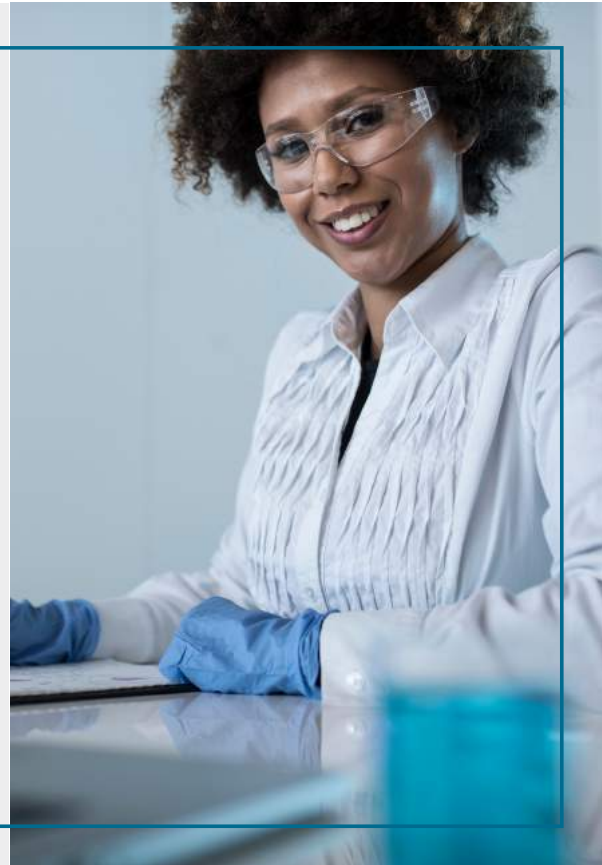
Organizations can use the results of climate surveys to determine the effectiveness of their initiatives to reduce the rates of harassment and violence (Elsesser, 2018). It is important for organizations to note that when this work is first initiated, there is often an increase in reporting before subsiding and decreasing over time. Because of under-reporting trends, an increase in reports can mean that the knowledge and skill-building helps to shift the culture and build trust and accountability among employees. This can signal that the reporting reflects a more accurate account of incidents. Over time, if ongoing interventions are effective, organizations should see the reporting rates decline. Using individual assessments of each intervention will also help organizations to determine which interventions are more or less effective.



## **Communication**

An organization's communication of the climate assessment results, analyses of interventions, and corresponding data (eg reports, investigations, outcomes) is equally important. Sharing this information, in an anonymous format, demonstrates leadership accountability to the organization's commitment to monitoring and addressing the problem of gender and sexual harassment (Mayer, et al., 2020). This expression of commitment and transparency is a crucial factor to the creation of an environment that does not tolerate harassment or violence (Elsesser, 2018), and can further improve the efficacy of other interventions.

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## PREVENTION

It is paramount that organizations understand gender and sexual harassment and violence as a significant culture issue. To create a culture that works to prevent issues of harassment and violence, it is important that organizations invest in policies, procedures, internal communication, civility promotion, and holistic training and resources.

### **Policies and Procedures**

Organizations should have a clear, comprehensive, jargon-free anti-gender and anti-sexual harassment policy. Evidence shows that a good policy has these elements: a clear policy statement with definitions, a reporting guide, specific employee responsibilities, complaint and investigation procedures, description of possible sanctions for perpetrators, no tolerance for re-victimization and retaliation, and a timeline of policy evaluations and reviews (Mayer, et al., 2020; National Academies, 2018).

When drafting policies and procedures, organizations should consider the physical and virtual environments in which employees work (Western University, n.d.). For [M1] example, construction companies might have different versions of a policy when considering employees on work sites as opposed to those in the office, and all organizations will require practices that address various ways that employees use social media and virtual work platforms (eg email, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, etc). Gender and sexual harassment policies should clarify that mistreatment on virtual platforms and social media carries equal weight with any other workplace interaction, and procedures for investigating harassment should describe clearly how to access an employee's social media or virtual work content when warranted (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016).

Beyond having policies and resources written in clear and simple language, policies should be translated into all necessary languages, easily accessible, and regularly promoted. Policies should be provided and trained on at the time of on-boarding and throughout an employees' tenure.

## **Employee Training**

There are a number of proven and effective training interventions, including: policy and procedure training, Workplace Civility Training, and bystander intervention training. Evidence shows that when delivering training, focus on positive organizational values and culture creates psychological safety and can enable employees to engage meaningfully in the material and to prevent environments where men feel attacked (Mayer, et al., 2020). Psychological safety can be established by facilitating it in small groups and setting up confidentiality provisions (Eatough, et al., 2019). Moreover, to understand the effectiveness of training it is important to routinely evaluate training through the use of pre- and post-training surveys (Eatough, et al., 2019).

**Policy and Procedure Training:** All employees should be educated on the policies and procedures and common fallacies surrounding sexual harassment in the workplace (National Academies, 2018; National Academies, et al., 2019). The policy and procedure training should be complemented with resources that enable access to necessary materials without organizational guidance and followed up with regular reviews, including any new or updated materials and practice examples to deepen employees' knowledge, skills, and accountability throughout their tenure.

**Workplace Civility Training (WCT):** The WCT program, is a specifically recognized program that gives helpful guidance around how training can develop a positive workplace culture and positive employee behaviours. As a unique program, it focuses on moving beyond legal liability and legal adherence, and instead promotes acceptable workplace conduct and the types of behaviours that contribute to a respectful, inclusive workplace (eg communication and conflict resolution skills) (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016). In workplace civility promotion programs, there are two critical components: establishing expectations of civility and respect in the workplace and providing management and employees with the tools they need to meet such expectations (Nagy & Curl-Nagy, 2019). Since most employment training should create opportunities to practice and apply the learned skills in the work environment, WCT helps to determine the civil behaviours for achieving a respectful work environment (Nagy & Curl-Nagy, 2019).

**Bystander Intervention Training:** There is an influential role for bystanders in curtailing gender and sexual harassment and violence. The bystander intervention approach moves the focus away from the willingness of the victims to come forward and instead highlights the role of observers to create a sense of collective responsibility when witnessing problematic and harmful behaviours. Bystander intervention training has been used successfully as a violence prevention strategy in academic settings and is quickly gaining traction in Canadian workplaces to prevent sexual harassment (Ligaya, 2019). The training has been shown to change social norms and empower observers to intervene in risky situations by developing skills among participants to interrupt and intervene when inappropriate behaviour occurs (Lee, et al., 2019).

Beyond the individual level, implementing bystander intervention training can help organizations communicate a message of low organizational tolerance for sexual harassment (Lee, et al., 2019). Ultimately, this can influence the potential actions of perpetrators by expanding their scope of consideration to bystanders. Potential perpetrators may learn that others will be more aware of sexual harassment and trained to act against it, thus increasing the perceived risk associated with committing sexual harassment (Lee, et al., 2019).



## RESPONSE SYSTEMS

Organizations should build systems of response that empower employees by providing widely accessible support services alongside evidence-based practices: formal and informal reporting options, multiple reporting channels, investigation standards, consistent enforcements. Surrounding all of these measures is the need for trauma-informed principles to ensure employee wellness and recovery as they move through an unsafe and potentially traumatic experience.

### **Reporting**

The goal of a reporting and response system is to resolve situations of alleged harassment and violence as quickly as possible and in a fair and thorough manner. A significant body of research establishes the many concerns that employees have with formal reporting systems (Lindquist & McKay, 2018), and has found that evidence-based reporting systems should include the following practices (Mayer, et al., 2020; Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016):

1) Both formal (verbal or written complaint with required investigation) and informal (no formal recording or grievance process) reporting options.

2) Multiple reporting channels with properly trained respondents, which can include third party online systems, multi-lingual complaint hotlines, anonymous channels with clear descriptions of what actions are feasible and not, and more than one internal person and location to report to.

3) Investigation standards that are trauma-informed, thorough, fair and ensure investigations include a timely response, comprehensive documentation, and balance confidential and transparent communication.

4) Recognition that incidents of harassment might involve more than one form of harassment (eg gender, sexual and racial), and that investigations should not exclude one over the other.

5) Consistent enforcement of policies and procedures which include ongoing monitoring to prevent retaliation or re-victimization and repercussions for perpetrators when necessary.

6) Halting the use of non-disclosure agreements.

## **Responding to Complaints**

A complaint should be taken seriously and acted upon promptly when received. A complaint should be handled confidentially with all steps and decisions documented. Any decisions and actions taken should be communicated to all implicated parties (Mayer, et al., 2020; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013). If an investigation is launched in response to a complaint, the investigator should be independent and objective, skilled in trauma-informed practice and in conducting gender and sexual harassment investigations, knowledgeable about human rights issues and the requirements of the provincial/territorial human rights code as well as the organization's anti-harassment policy (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013; Mayer, et al., 2020). **Trauma-informed principles include: understanding the general effects of trauma, showing empathy over judgment, fostering safety, acting transparently, responsiveness to cultural, historical, and gender inclusion, and providing choice and collaboration where possible (Choitz & Wagner, 2020).**

## **Trauma-Informed Support Services**

An employee-centric organizational response enables people who have experienced gender and sexual harassment to access support services without requiring them to make a formal report. An organization can integrate services to help employees navigate the various systems they might need support by providing a single point of contact to access interdisciplinary support services (National Academies, 2018). An example of this could be a user-friendly website that displays the resources available for victims, allowing for easier access to support services when needed (Dawson's Place child advocacy center, 2021). This benefits both the individuals within the organization and the organization itself; compassion allows those who experience trauma to access support, while organizations who give compassion are judged more positively by their employees (Lindquist & McKay, 2018).



# INNOVATIVE EXAMPLES

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Innovative approaches to preventing and responding to gender and sexual harassment have been implemented in several workplaces and have yielded positive results. The examples provided below are from industries that are male-dominated. However, due to little research on workplaces in Canada, all cited examples are from the United States.

## LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF POWER AND WATER (LADPW)

In response to a significant number of workplace harassment allegations, LADPW established a proactive training strategy. LADPW coordinated an eight-hour, instructor-led, mandatory training for all its employees. The training covered topics such as: individual differences related to diversity, ways to identify and resolve workplace interpersonal conflict, roles and expectations of employees and leaders, and provided an overview of laws, employment policies, and procedures. That training was followed by mandatory training for all executives, superiors, and lead personnel, providing tools and techniques to address inappropriate behaviour. LADPW also established a “boot camp team” to quickly address inappropriate conduct and provide one-on-one coaching and group training.

LADPW provides ongoing department-wide training to its employees, including training on topics such as “A Manager’s Guide for a Respectful Workplace,” “The POWER of Diversity - Workplace Diversity Training for All Employees,” as well as targeted training for smaller groups on harassment and discrimination awareness (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016).

During the first three years after LADPW initiated its training program, the number of internal complaints rose—because employees had a greater understanding of their rights and where to go to file a complaint. Since that time, however, complaints have decreased by 70%, and the severity of the types of harassment complaints have also decreased (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016).

## GREEN DOT FOR THE TRADES

Green Dot for the Trades is a bystander intervention program intended to reduce harassment on construction job sites. This program provides tools to workers on how to intervene to address job site harassment and proactive strategies to prevent harassment. Strategies to intervene, otherwise called reactive behaviours, are used to help stop harassment as it happens or address it after the fact (Kelly & Wilkinson, 2020). The program also trains workers to engage in proactive behaviours demonstrating support for stopping harassment (Kelly & Wilkinson, 2020).

Green Dot for the Trades was implemented on one pilot job site in Portland, Oregon. The pilot included: train the trainer (three days), a manager training (60 minutes), worker trainings (60 minutes), toolbox talks (five to ten minutes), information at new worker orientations, and posters and stickers on the job sites (Kelly & Wilkinson, 2020). The pilot project was evaluated through four stages of surveys administered on the job site between September 2017 to December 2019 which assessed the prevalence of harassment and bystander intervention on the job. The stage one survey was administered on September 2017, and follow-up surveys were conducted in September 2018, August 2019, and December 2019 (Kelly & Wilkinson, 2020).

During the pilot study, reported levels of harassing behaviour slightly decreased and reported bystander interventions increased. In relation to job site harassment, the reported number of instances of harassing behaviour increased from stage one to stage two, likely due to increased understanding of reporting mechanisms, but steadily decreased across stages two, three, and four. At stage four, 77% of workers reported not seeing any harassing behaviour in the last month (up from a low of 48% at stage one, and down from a high of 81% in stage three) (Kelly & Wilkinson, 2020). These findings indicate that job site harassment decreased and workers' ability to recognize harassing behaviour increased; while harassment decreased on the job site, it remained prevalent throughout the pilot project. Workers who received Green Dot training were more likely to report bystander interventions: 76% of Green Dot trained workers versus 52% of other workers reported intervening when they were in a situation to intervene (Kelly & Wilkinson, 2020)

## CALLISTO

There are a number of online platforms created to support organizations in their reporting systems. Callisto is one such platform that started with university campuses and is now being tested in workplaces. With Callisto, each organization gets their own Callisto website that contains specific information about their reporting options and resources and offers survivors several ways to report assault and harassment: 1) users can create a time-stamped, secure record of their assault, preserving evidence while deciding what to do next; 2) users can report directly to authorities at their organization to start an investigation; or 3) users can save the record to report automatically if another survivor names the same assailant through their matching system (Ladd, 2019). Callisto has served 13 campuses with a total of 149,000 students, and has been proven effective in dismantling barriers to reporting sexual assault (McHugh, 2019). For example, sexual assault survivors who visited the Callisto Campus website were five times more likely to report their experience than survivors who did not (Ladd, 2019). Furthermore, survivors using Callisto tended to report three times faster than the American national average (4 months versus 11 months) (Ladd, 2019).

Given the successes on college campuses, Callisto Expansion is currently being piloted in several tech startups and venture capital firms (McHugh, 2019). Perhaps the most unique feature about Callisto Expansion is its information escrow matching system. If more than one survivor names the same perpetrator, Callisto connects them to the same Legal Options Counsellor who reaches out to the victims separately. This advocate is a third-party attorney who helps the survivors understand their various options for taking action, including the option to speak to the other victim(s) targeted by the same perpetrator (Ladd, 2019). If all survivors consent, the legal advocate will connect victims to decide what they want to do next. Although Callisto Expansion is still in the pilot phase, its initial testing has proven successful across university campuses and has new features being tested in order to understand and respond to the variable needs of workplaces.

# BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND PROMISING PRACTICES

## BENEFITS

Approaches that aim to change organizational culture and respond effectively to instances of gender and sexual harassment offer many benefits at both the individual and organizational levels. Common benefits include:

- Lowers the risk harm to the organization's reputation and the risk of legal liability and (Kelly, 2018).
- Decreases employee turnover and absenteeism (Kelly, 2018).
- Promotes organizations' equity and diversity goals and commitment to ending sexual harassment (Holland, 2020).
- Creates a culture of inclusion and respect in the workplace (Holland, 2020).
- Improves professional well-being, including job satisfaction, career trajectories, organizational participation, organizational commitment, reduces job stress, and increases productivity (Lindquist & McKay, 2018).
- Creates a safe environment for reporting incidents and increases the likelihood of incidents being reported (Holland, 2020).
- Improves psychological and physical safety for women (Lindquist & McKay, 2018).

## CHALLENGES

Despite the benefits of implementing prevention and response measures to gender and sexual harassment, there are implementation challenges. Some of the key challenges reported are:

- Bystander intervention can lead to retaliation for the bystander (Pineiro & Kitada, 2020).
- There are financial costs associated with implementing additional training and reporting services (Reese & Lindenberg, 1999).
- Policy implementation and accountability depend on leadership's enforcement of the rules (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020).
- Punishments that leave the harassers in place increase the risk of victim retaliation (National Academies, et al., 2019).

## PROMISING PRACTICES

Although research still continues, many innovative approaches have been successful and created a culture where harassment is not tolerated. Existing research initiatives highlight four promising practices:

### **PROVIDE TRAINING THAT CREATES AN INCLUSIVE, RESPECTFUL, AND HARASSMENT-FREE ENVIRONMENT.**

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Training efforts should encourage behavioural change to prevent and intervene when harassment occurs. Based on the evidence-base of Workplace Civility Training and bystander intervention trainings, the following are important aspects of training plans: a grounding in values, culture, and ethics; a focus on what employees should do in addition to what they should not do; a commitment to bystander interventions; opportunities to practice expected behaviours (Mayer, et al., 2020; National Academies, 2018). Training should be done at time of onboarding and throughout an employee's tenure (Mayer, et al., 2020).

### **BE CONSISTENT AND EXERCISE ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY.**

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Organizations should make sure that all communications, policies, and procedures are widely accessible and understood. A jargon-free policy that includes all required information is an essential first step in a transparent reporting process. Easily accessible policies and reporting systems demystify the reporting process and make it less intimidating for employees (Yang & Katz, 2020). Moreover, implementing policies consistently and having leadership share organizational commitments, responses, and outcomes, can positively influence culture change (Mayer, et al., 2020).

### **ASSESS ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND RISK FACTORS AND EVALUATE CHANGES.**

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Organizations should be aware of current risk factors and opportunities in order to implement effective and tailored policies and procedures. Repeating assessments over time can provide metrics to measure progress and ensure that change continues after new approaches are adopted.

### **USE TRAUMA-INFORMED PRINCIPLES**

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Organizations should ensure that trauma-informed support services are widely accessible whether a formal report is made or not, that reporting systems embody trauma-informed standards, and that key stakeholders involved in dealing with complaints understand principles of trauma-informed practice.

# CONCLUSION

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Gender and sexual harassment should be addressed first and foremost as a culture and climate issue. Each of the areas discussed in this report - culture assessments, training, comprehensive reporting systems, and support services - all contribute to shifting organizational culture to one that can prevent gender and sexual harassment from happening in the first place. It is crucial that employers understand the current organizational risk factors and tailor their policies, procedures and practices accordingly. To succeed in making cultural change, leaders need to communicate their commitment to ending harassment and violence and encourage employees to also assume responsibility for promoting a civil and respectful workplace.



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