Welcome!

Facilitators:

- Nicole Pietsch, Coordinator, Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres
- Julie S. Lalonde, Project Manager, Draw-the-line.ca campaign

Workplace Sexual Harassment: Webinar's Agenda

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

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

- What are the challenges?
- What makes this difficult?
- What information would support you?
The “Big Picture”

Seeing beyond the individual incident or harasser

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.hollaback.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

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


- “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

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 reflects cultural/workplace norms
- whose “turf” or space

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

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

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

Marilyn Webb, a local feminist was slated to speak. Men in the audience began to shout: "Take her off the stage and f*** her!"

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

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

At Work: Who is Sexual Harassment Impacting?

- 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

- 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

- 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

Drawing the Line in Workplace Sexual Harassment:

- Bystander Intervention
- Supporting survivors better
Bystanders & the bystander effect

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

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

• 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

• 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

Responding to Sexual Violence Disclosures
- Online learning modules
- Easy to complete
- Video scenarios of disclosures and supportive responses

Draw the Line campaign
- Learn more
- Order free materials!
- info@draw-the-line.ca
- Website: www.draw-the-line.ca

References
- Vopni, V. "Young Women’s Experiences with Reporting Sexual Assault to Police" in Canadian Woman Studies 25 (1-2) (Winter/Spring 2006), 110
- Hollaback. You Have the Power to End Street Harassment. Online: http://www.hollaback.org
- "I’m Not Thinking of it as Sexual Harassment”: Understanding Harassment Across Race And Citizenship. By S. Welsh, Jacqueline Cor, Barbara McQuarrie and Audrey Huntley.
- Wolfe and Chiodo, CAMH, 2008, p. 3.
- Bell, M. in Mary Dore (Director)’s (2014) She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry. See: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3319508/
- Draw the Line. Online: www.draw-the-line.ca

www.sexualassaultsupport.ca
www.draw-the-line.ca