

## Talking Points: Sexual Harassment

### Sexual Harassment and Rape Culture

- Sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence.
- In addition to physical forms of assault, sexual harassment can include inappropriate statements, lewd gestures, leering behavior, and sexually explicit jokes, emails or texts.
- Sexual harassment can happen in ANY environment, anywhere and in a multitude of ways.
- The existence of policies in place to protect people from sexual harassment does not mean sexual harassment does not happen and that retaliation cannot happen. Policies need to be transparent, accessible and disseminated with meaningful training and education.
- Sexual harassment is one aspect of sexual violence in a larger framework of rape culture.
- Rape Culture describes a setting where rape is pervasive and normalized due to societal attitudes about gender and sexuality. This setting is reinforced by norms that allow exploitation and the imbalance of power to persist so that the powerful can continue to prey on those in need.
- Bystanders have key roles in the persistence of sexual violence, which includes sexual harassment.
- Bystanders aid and abet these norms when they look the other way or play into the schemes and systems that perpetuate rape culture.
- Bystanders can use their power and influence to stop and prevent sexual violence including sexual harassment by standing up, speaking out, and changing attitudes around gender and sexuality.
- This isn't the sole responsibility of one individual or one case of sexual harassment/violence. We need to focus on the culture that allows sexual violence to happen and persist and commit to change that leads to ending sexual violence.

### **Pivots from “ How can a person avoid being sexually assaulted or harassed?” or “What can people who have to work in this industry do to avoid sexual harassment?”**

- The question isn't how survivors can prevent sexual violence, but how can we change the imbalance of power and prevent sexual violence as allies and change makers in any community, industry, and society.
- We need to treat victims and survivors with respect and create spaces so they feel safe coming forward.
- We need to make perpetrators, offenders, and harm doers accountable for their actions.
- Bystanders are crucial to stopping these behaviors.

## Workplace Sexual Harassment

- Workplaces have a legal responsibility to respond and prevent sexual harassment, which includes protections against retaliatory behavior for reporting sexual harassment.
- Workplaces must foster supportive environments that allow for survivors to report and bystanders to stand up and interrupt sexual harassment.
- The prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace underscores the impact of rape culture and historical oppression. Isolation, threats, and disbelief continue to silence reporting of sexual violence in the workplace.