

RESPECT *at work*

BACKGROUND

National survey focuses on workplace sexual harassment and violence

Following the success of the 2014 national survey on the impacts of domestic violence on the workplace, the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC) at Western University is again partnering with the Canadian Labour Congress to survey workers, this time about the range of harassment and violence they are experiencing and/or witnessing. Dr. Sandy Welsh from the University of Toronto, one of Canada's foremost harassment researchers, is joining the effort.

Despite the #MeToo movement, sexual harassment is still a pernicious problem that exists in workplaces of all kinds, all across the country. 52% of the Canadian women surveyed by the Angus Reid Institute in 2018 reported having experienced workplace sexual harassment during their lifetime and 89% of women reported having taken steps to avoid unwanted sexual advances at work, (Kurl & Holliday, 2018).

Prior research tells us It is difficult to disentangle sexual harassment from workers' experiences of other forms of harassment based on their social location and employment status. In a study of the personal experiences of women who have experienced sexual harassment at work, women reported that their race, ethnic identity, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, language, and other perceived difference was as much at the root of their harassment as their gender (MacQuarrie et al., 2004).

Although harassment occurs across all occupations and industries, particular groups of workers are at increased risk due to their social location and employment status. Women, migrants, immigrants, and workers from racialized groups are overrepresented in precarious forms of employment (Noack & Vosko, 2011). This study aims to explain the multiple intersections of forms of harassment/violence and workers' social locations, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, and employment status.

Despite the interruptions to many workplaces due to Covid 19 and the large number of

people working from home, harassment & violence hasn't gone away during the pandemic. The increased use of technology has created new avenues for harassment and it's important that we understand that evolution.

The ways in which harassment policies and procedures are designed, organized, and used (or not) can positively or negatively affect reporting or help seeking (see Berlingieri 2015). Approximately 10% of non-fatal incidents of workplace violence are formally reported (McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004). Reasons why workers do not report harassment include fears about retaliation, losing one's job, potential disbelief, fear that the situation will escalate, lack of information about resources, the tolerance of harassment within workplaces, lack of policies and a central reporting system, and inaction by organizations (Berlingieri, 2015; Holmes, Rudge, Perron, & St-Pierre, 2012; MacQuarrie et al., 2004). This national survey will allow us an unprecedented view into how those barriers are playing out in specific sectors and for specific groups of people.

The survey is an opportunity for us to learn about the context of these behaviours, to gain a deeper understanding of barriers to reporting and a clearer picture of what happens when workers do report.

They survey will also provide important baseline data on what is happening in federally regulated workplaces as legislation recognizing that violence and harassment is a serious occupational health and safety problem comes into effect January 1st. Federally regulated employers will have new responsibilities to prevent and address harassment and violence. We know that to eliminate harassment and violence, workplaces need clear and accessible reporting and help-seeking procedures, as well as effective responses to reports. Repeating the survey in the future will allow us to measure the impact and the effectiveness of the legislation in achieving these outcomes.

Findings will be used to develop more effective training and resources for workers, unions and employers and the research team hopes the data will inform policy makers in government and corporate leadership on where changes are needed to achieve safer workplaces.

The survey is for everyone, regardless of their gender, occupation, position or experience of workplace harassment and violence.

For more information and a link to the survey click [here](#).