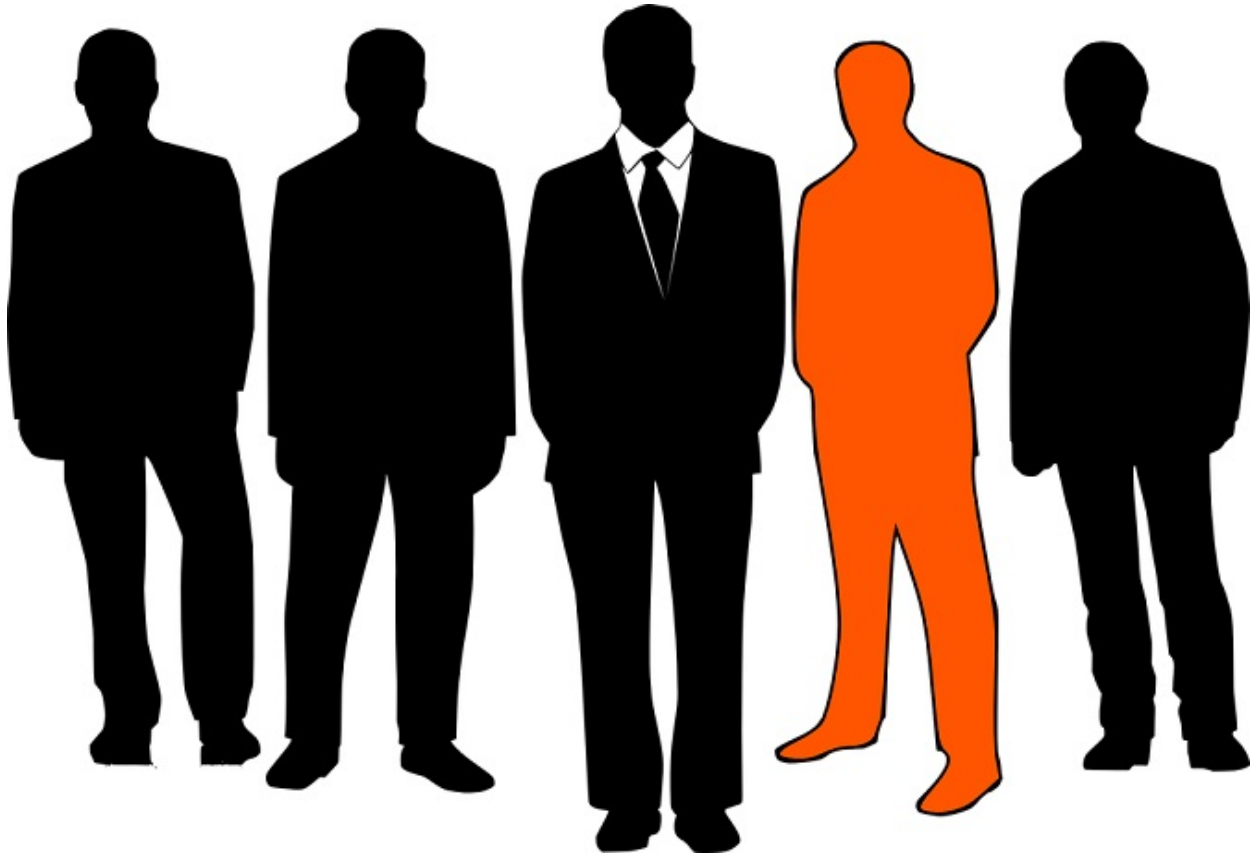


The Top 10 Things Men Can Do Right Now to Address Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

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1. Listen to and believe victims. Experiencing sexual harassment or assault is a highly personal and excruciating violation, especially when compounded by a perpetrator's threats and our society's instinct to disbelieve, blame, and judge victims. Coming forward as a victim takes a great amount of courage and risk-taking. Instead of blaming and doubting victims, believe them.

2. Engage in some self-reflection. Are you willing to acknowledge what you don't know? Consider whether you are aware that sexual harassment or sexual assault occurs at your workplace or how you may have participated in or condoned a workplace culture that facilitates such behavior. Have you evaluated the possibility that others may feel uncomfortable telling you what is happening, and why they are uncomfortable with sharing? What steps have you taken to foster a safe and supportive work environment? Taking time to self-reflect on your actions in the past that have affected your co-workers negatively is the first step in apologizing, learning from, and course-correcting your behavior for the future.

3. Put aside assumptions. Sexual harassment and sexual assault can be perpetrated by—or victimize—anyone:

- Although men perpetrate most incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault against women, everyone can be affected by gender-based violence.
- Gender-based violence is rooted in the desire to exert power and control over another.
- The fact that you don't find certain types of conduct harassing or abusive has no bearing on how this conduct impacts others.
- Sexual harassment and sexual assault affects everyone in society regardless of education and income level, race, sexual orientation, or any other demographic.

4. **Ask questions.** One of the ways men can be supportive is to make an effort to unpack sexual harassment. Ask the people in your life, "Has this happened to you? How can I help?" and respect boundaries if they don't want to talk about it. Starting a dialogue and practicing active and compassionate listening can help others feel more comfortable about sharing their experiences and allow you to understand what you can do to support.

5. **Reserve judgment.** You may have convinced yourself that you would immediately stand up to a harasser or an abuser; however, unless you've experienced a situation where your reputation, livelihood, ability to care for your family, and even your life has been on the line, reserve judgment and embrace empathy.

6. **Become a thoughtful ally.** Don't think you have to be a hero and solve everything. It may be your inclination to jump into action, confront a perpetrator, and solve the problem in the way you know best. But keep in mind that the notion that men have the duty to "protect" women is part and parcel of the cultural paternalism and misogyny at the core of gender-based violence. Practice consent and take cues or ask what would be the best way you can support or help someone. This isn't to discourage you from taking action. If there are opportunities for you to disrupt inappropriate or dangerous behavior, and you can do so safely, do it. But if you are taking some course of planned action, make sure you consult and respect the survivor's wishes at every opportunity.

7. **Scrutinize your workplace culture.** Does your workplace routinely sideline, isolate, intimidate, or speak over women or other marginalized people? Were only men or a legal team involved in the development of your workplace policies? Is your company sexual harassment policy glossed over at employee orientation, never to be heard of again? If you answered yes to any of these, the ground is fertile for sexual harassment and sexual assault to flourish. Take time to evaluate and reflect on the written and unwritten policies that enable sexual harassment in your workplace and think about how you and your fellow colleagues can approach human resources to advocate for a more thoughtful and prevention-focused approach.

8. **Advocate for equity and promote respect.** Because gender-based violence is rooted in unequal power dynamics, you have to do a deeper dive to determine whether or not your workplace is equitable if you want to tackle sexual harassment and assault in the workplace. Does your work have a diverse leadership? Are men getting paid more than women for the same work? Are people of all sexual orientation and gender identities welcome in your workplace? Oppression of any kind, whether it is racism, sexism,

homophobia, or other forms, creates an unsafe work environment. You can model the type of workplace dynamics and behavior that promote equity and respect—change can start with you.

9. Ask your workplace to change. Ask your workplace to create or review policies that address gender-based violence and its impact on the workplace. The best workplace responses share service provider resources, are informed by survivor experiences and recommendations, and regularly engage employees in awareness-raising, training, and educational activities. In addition, upon learning that an employee may be experiencing harassment or assault, workplaces should respond with compassion, prioritize safety planning, assure confidentiality to the fullest extent of the law, and allow the survivor to have a say over the workplace's response.

10. Understand gender-based violence as a human rights violation. To describe sexual harassment and assault as “women’s issues,” or expect women only to advocate for change, places the burden of solution only on women, neglects male and other gender-identifying victims, and worst of all, lets perpetrators off the hook. Ending gender-based violence is everyone’s responsibility. Let us all embrace this moment to delve into the root causes of gender-based violence, and change the culture of workplaces from one that facilitates sexual harassment, abuse, and silence, to one that promotes support, respect, and equity.