

# Key Prevention Concept Summaries



**Lead the  
change.**   
End workplace  
sexual harassment.

**Our  
Watch**   
Preventing violence  
against women

## What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that makes someone feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be verbal, sexually explicit materials, intimidating or threatening behaviours, inappropriate physical contact, and technology based. Sexual harassment is included in the term violence against women.

**Find out more here:** <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/factsheet-what-is-sexual-harassment>

## The link between sexual harassment and gender inequality

Sexual harassment is recognised as a form of gendered violence by Australian Human Rights Commission. Gendered violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, abuse of power, and harmful attitudes and behaviours.

**Find out more here:** <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/factsheet-the-link-between-sexual-harassment-and-gender-inequality>

## The drivers of gender inequality and sexual harassment

**Driver 1:** Excusing or minimising violence against women and sexual harassment or trying to justify why the violence occurred, including:

- Dismissing women's experiences of sexual harassment.
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that intimidate or offend.

**Driver 2:** Gender inequality in workplaces resulting in men dominating decision-making, including:

- Gender pay gaps.
- Lack of women in leadership.
- Lack of respect for women, including women from marginalised groups.

**Driver 3:** Rigid gender stereotyping which limits the ways people can express themselves, including:

- Making assumptions that certain types of work are better suited for women. (or men) Assumptions about caregiving roles impacting access to parental leave.

**Driver 4:** Masculine behaviour that emphasises aggression, dominance and control, including:

- 'Locker-room' talk.
- Unwanted touching, hugging, kissing or sexual gestures.

**Find out more here:** <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/understanding-violence-and-sexual-harassment/>

## The issue of workplace sexual harassment

In the last five years, **1 in 3** people experienced workplace sexual harassment.

**Women (41%)** were more likely than men (26%) to have experience workplace sexual harassment.

The most common forms of sexual harassment were sexually suggestive comments or jokes, and intrusive questions about private life or physical appearance. For employees who experiences sexual harassment in the last five years:

**49%**

had been harassed multiple times in the same workplace

**49%**

of those people said it had been ongoing for 12 months or longer

**52%**

were harassed at their workstation or where they worked

**Find out more here:** <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/factsheet-how-common-is-workplace-sexual-harassment>

## What is primary prevention of workplace sexual harassment?

Primary prevention means addressing the drivers of sexual harassment, with the aim to stop violence before it starts. Primary prevention initiatives work with whole populations – not just people who have used or at risk of using violence.

**Find out more here:** <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/factsheet-prevent-workplace-sexual-harassment>

## Role of the workplace in prevention.

The average person in Australia spends about 50% of all waking hours at work. Therefore, workplaces are in a unique position to significantly influence their employees' attitudes, beliefs, and relationships. Workplaces also have a key role in communities and industries.

**Find out more here:** [\(insert link\)](#)

## Benefits to the workplace

Preventing workplace sexual harassment not only benefits employees, but also businesses, leaders, and the community. Workplaces have seen improved employee engagement and productivity, enhanced reputation for the workplace and leadership, increased profits, stronger leadership skills, and boosted innovation and creativity.

**Find out more here:** [\(insert link\)](#)

## What is an active bystander?

Being an active bystander means being aware of when someone's behaviour is inappropriate or threatening and choosing to challenge it. If you do not feel comfortable doing this directly, then get someone to help you such as a friend or someone in authority.

**Find out more here:** [\(insert link\)](#)

## Intersectionality

Sexual harassment against anyone is wrong; however, some groups experience it more frequently and more severely than others. Other forms of discrimination exacerbate sexual harassment, including racism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism. When these other forms of discrimination occur, it creates an environment where sexual harassment can also occur. Taking an intersectional approach to prevention is vital in preventing sexual harassment against all people.

**Find out more here:** <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/factsheet-intersectionality>

## Positive Duty

Workplaces have a positive duty to address the drivers of sexual harassment and violence. Respect@ Work Amendments place a positive duty on employers to eliminate, as far as possible workplace sexual harassment and discrimination, rather than just responding after it occurs. Employers must demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to ensure a workplace, including its culture, mitigates the risk of sexual harassment occurring.

**Find out more here:** <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/factsheet-positive-duty>



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