

# ACTIVATE

THE COLLECTIVE TO BRING ADOLESCENT  
SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH  
TO YOUTH-SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS

## **Sex-Based Harassment in the Workplace: A Training for Professionals Who Support Opportunity Youth**

Module 1

Child Trends | Chapin Hall



When you have research-backed approaches handy, you can focus on what matters—encouraging young people to make healthy choices about their sexual and reproductive health.

*Activate: The Collective to Bring Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Research to Youth-Supporting Professionals* aims to bridge the gap between research and practice in support of the Office of Population Affairs’ mission to prevent teen pregnancy and promote adolescent health.

Activate translates research into practice by creating research-based resources for use by professionals who support young people who experience the child welfare and/or justice systems, homelessness, and/or disconnection from school and work (i.e., opportunity youth).

If your work touches the lives of young people, these resources are for you.

# Module 1

## Introduction to Sex-Based Harassment in the Workplace

Authors: Jan DeCoursey, Karlee Naylor, and Asari Offiong

# Objectives

- Know the training goals and format
- Understand the prevalence and consequences of sex-based harassment in the workplace
- Understand opportunity youth's experiences (i.e., youth who are disconnected from school and work) with sex-based harassment in the workplace
- Know why it is important for youth-supporting professionals to understand and address sex-based harassment

# Training Goals

1. Build awareness of the role of opportunity youth-supporting professionals in preventing and addressing sex-based harassment in the workplace.
2. Increase understanding of sex-based harassment in the workplace.
3. Describe how employers, programs, and professionals who support opportunity youth can help prevent and respond to sex-based harassment in the workplace.

# Training Format

- **Module 1:** Introduction and Background
  - Prevalence and consequences of sex-based harassment in the workplace
  - Why opportunity youth-supporting professionals should know about sex-based harassment in the workplace
- **Module 2:** Understanding Sex-Based Harassment in the Workplace
  - Definitions and types
  - Identify contexts that influence opportunity youths' experiences of and responses to sex-based harassment in the workplace

# Training Format (*continued*)

- **Module 3: Addressing Sex-Based Harassment in the Workplace**
  - Legal protections
  - Prevention and intervention of sex-based harassment in the workplace, including the roles of:
    - Employers
    - Youth programs
    - Youth-supporting professionals

# Methods: Information Used to Support This Training

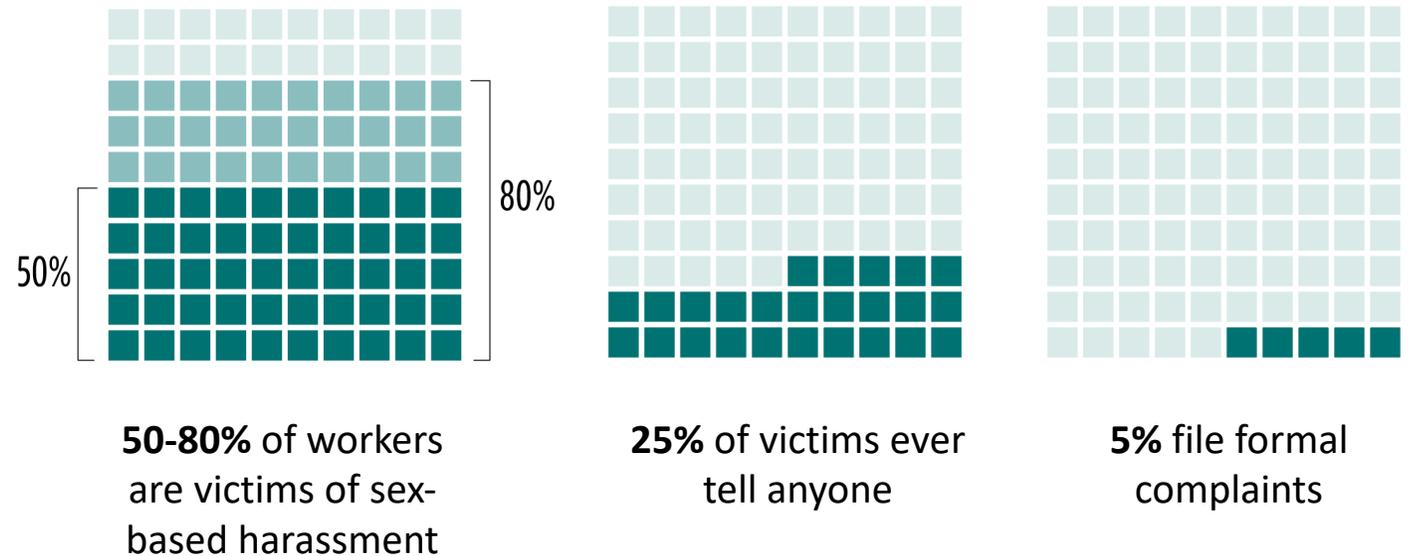
- Review of research and resources about sex-based harassment
- Review of research about opportunity youth
- Discussions about research, resource needs, and practice experience with:
  - 8 professionals who support opportunity youth
  - 6 young people who have been disconnected from school and work
  - 5 subject matter experts
- A final review by subject matter experts, youth-supporting professionals, and young people.

# Legal Definition of Sexual Harassment Discrimination

“Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.”<sup>1</sup>

# Prevalence of Sex-based Harassment in the Workplace

- Sex-based harassment in the workplace is common<sup>2-3</sup>
- Few victims talk about sex-based harassment<sup>3</sup>
- Even fewer victims report workplace sex-based harassment<sup>3</sup>



# Consequences of Sex-based Harassment in the Workplace

- Work and career
  - Job change or loss<sup>9</sup>
  - Disrupted advancement<sup>9</sup>
  - Missed work and lower productivity<sup>3</sup>
  - Lower job satisfaction<sup>10,11</sup>
- Health and well-being
  - Decreased physical and mental health<sup>10,11</sup>
  - Traumatic stress symptoms<sup>10</sup>

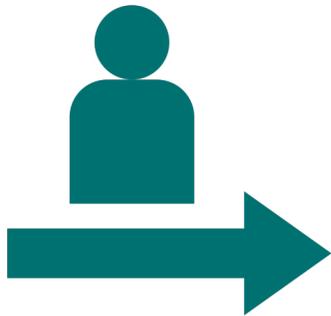
# Opportunity Youths' Experiences with Sex-Based Harassment in the Workplace

- Approximately 5 million young people are considered opportunity youth.<sup>1</sup>
- Opportunity youth experience marginalization and power dynamics that influence their experiences with workplace harassment, including sex-based harassment.
- People who are Black and/or Hispanic, Native or Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and undocumented are more likely to experience sex-based harassment in the workplace.<sup>3-6</sup>

# Opportunity Youths' Experiences with Sex-Based Harassment in the Workplace (*continued*)

- Sex-based harassment complaint rates may be lower in certain sectors or communities where opportunity youth tend to be employed due to:
  - Workplace cultures and norms
  - Language barriers
  - Lack of training on sex-based harassment in informal or seasonal work settings<sup>3,7,8</sup>

# Consequences of Sex-based Harassment for Young People



Substantially increases the likelihood of a young person leaving or losing a job<sup>9</sup>



Reduces young peoples' job satisfaction<sup>10-12</sup>



Erodes young peoples' physical and mental health<sup>10,11</sup>

# Understanding and Addressing Sex-based Harassment is Important for Youth-supporting Professionals

## Teach

Teach youth about sex-based harassment in the workplace

## Identify

Identify harassment in instances when youth do not understand it to be happening

## Support

Support youth in managing potential negative consequences of harassment

## Foster

Foster opportunity youth program cultures that encourage safety and support

## Inquire

Inquire about youth's workplace experiences and respond to circumstances that may lead to harassment

## Help

Help employers understand their responsibilities and recognize potential exposure to harassment

# Key Takeaways

- Anywhere from 50-80% of workers experience sex-based harassment, but only 25% report it and 5% file any formal complaint.
- Sex-based harassment may lead young people to quit or lose their jobs, reduce their job satisfaction, and adversely affect their physical and mental health.
- Opportunity youth-supporting professionals have a role in educating youth about, identifying, preventing, and managing the consequences of harassment, among other roles.

# Citations

1. Lewis, K., & Lewis, K. (2022). A Disrupted Year: How the Arrival of Covid-19 Affected Youth Disconnection. Social Science Research Council, 1–38.
2. Runge, R. (n.d.). Ending Gender Based Violence in the World of Work USA Report. AFL-CIO. <https://aflcio.org/sites/default/files/2017-04/Ending%20Gender%20Based%20Violence%20in%20the%20World%20of%20Work%20USA%20Report%20%28002%29.pdf>
3. Workplaces Respond to Domestic & Sexual Violence, (n.d.). The Facts on Gender-Based Workplace Violence, <https://www.workplacesrespond.org/resource-library/facts-gender-based-workplace-violence/>
4. National Institute of Justice, (November 2018). Responding to Sexual Assault Victims of Color (Webinar), <https://nij.ojp.gov/events/responding-sexual-assault-victims-color>
5. Muñoz & Kalteux. (2016). LGBT, the EEOC, and the Meaning of "Sex". The Florida Bar Journal, 90 (3), pg 43. <https://www.floridabar.org/the-florida-bar-journal/lgbt-the-eec-and-the-meaning-of-sex/>
6. Aspen Institute, (October 2019). Equity Counts: Using Data to Increase Equity and Improve Metric Outcomes for Opportunity Youth, <https://www.aspencommunitysolutions.org/report/equity-counts-using-data-to-increase-equity-and-improve-metric-outcomes-for-opportunity-youth/>
7. Jobs for the Future, (2017). Adding a Gender Lens to Nontraditional Jobs Trainings Programs, <https://www.jff.org/resources/adding-gender-lens-nontraditional-jobs-training-programs/>
8. Workplaces Respond to Domestic & Sexual Violence, (n.d.). Low Wage, High Risk Pilot Sites, <https://www.workplacesrespond.org/workplace-initiatives/low-wage-pilot-sites/>
9. McLaughlin, H., Uggen, C., & Blackstone, A. (2017). The economic and career effects of sexual harassment on working women. Gender & Society, 31(3), 333-358. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0891243217704631>
10. Willness, C. R., Steel, P., & Lee, K. (2007). A meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of workplace sexual harassment. Personnel Psychology, 60, 127-162. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2007.00067.x>
11. Chan, D. K-S., Chow, S. Y., Lam, C. B., & Cheung, S. F. (2008). Examining the job-related, psychological, and physical outcomes of workplace sexual harassment: a meta-analytic review. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 32(4), 362-376. <https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.1471-6402.2008.00451.x>
12. McDonald, P. (2012). Workplace sexual harassment 30 years on: a review of the literature. International Journal of Management Reviews, 14, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2011.00300.x>



# Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the many contributors to this resource. Experts who informed the resource include those named on this slide and the next. Thank you also to the several youth-supporting professionals, young people, and other experts who contributed but are not named there. We also thank other Activate project team members who assisted in the development of this resource including Mindy Scott, PI and Amy Dworsky, Co-PI. We are grateful for the contributions of other Child Trends, Chapin Hall, and Healthy Teen Network staff who contributed to this resource including Hannah Lantos, Child Trends and Julie Blechman, Child Trends. Finally, a special thank you to the Child Trends communications staff, especially Olga Morales, Catherine Nichols, Brent Franklin and Stephen Russ.

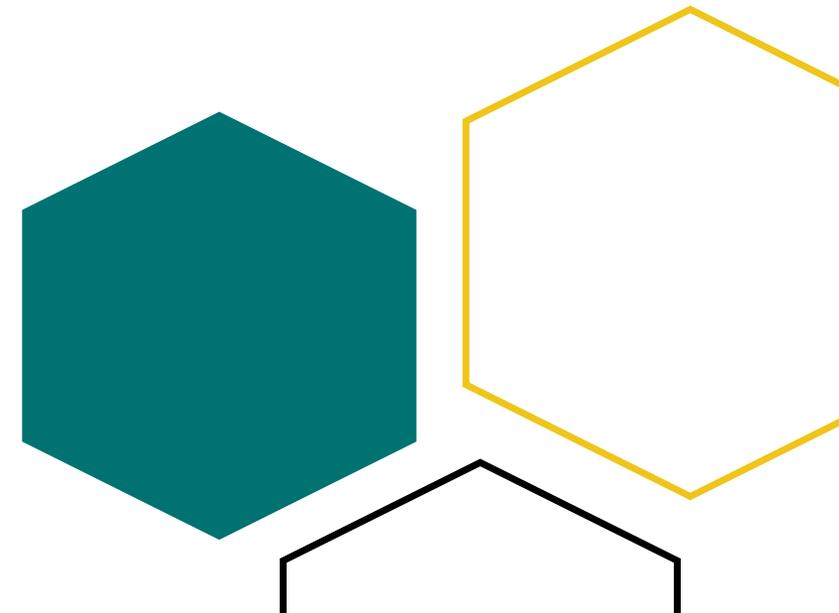
# Acknowledgements

- Alida Bouris, University of Chicago Crown School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice
- Caitlyn Medina
- Eddie Sumlin, First Place for Youth
- Karen Martinez
- Karla Vargas, Opportunity Youth United
- Lindsay White, Youth Villages
- Megan McGuire, First Place for Youth
- Nia West-Bey, CLASP
- Ruby Labra
- Sarah Gonzalez Bocinski, Futures Without Violence

# For More Information about Activate

Visit us online & get our updates:

<https://activatecollective.org/>





# Thank you

DeCoursey, J., Beckwith, S., Naylor, K., Offiong, A., Pliskin, E., Schlecht, C. [Child Trends]. (2022, September 29). *Sex-Based Harassment in the Workplace: A Training for Professionals Who Support Opportunity Youth*. Child Trends.

This project is supported by the Office of Population Affairs of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$2,184,000 with 100 percent funded by OPA/OASH/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, OPA/OASH/HHS or the U.S. government. For more information, please visit <https://opa.hhs.gov>

