

Best and promising practices to end gender-based harassment and violence at work: A multi-pronged approach

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Executive Summary

Background: The issue

Harassment and violence at work remains a pervasive and destructive problem globally, including in Canada. Research has highlighted the high prevalence rates, particularly for sexual and gender-based harassment and violence (Berlingieri et al., 2022; Burczycka, 2021; Pillinger, 2019). These issues disproportionately affect certain groups based on their social location and employment status (Berlingieri et al., 2022; Boyd, 2002; Burczycka, 2021; Deery et al., 2011; Fevre et al., 2013; Pillinger, 2019; Pillinger et al., 2022; Pollert & Charlwood, 2009; Roscigno et al., 2009; Villegas, 2019). To address this, prevention and intervention practices must move beyond individual-level variables and target broader organizational and societal factors (Berlingieri, 2015a; Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016; O'Connor et al., 2021; J.A. Perry et al., 2019). The consequences of harassment and violence are significant, impacting individuals' emotional well-being, mental health, social and job connections, job performance and productivity (e.g., Berlingieri et al., 2022; Brown & Battle, 2019; Dykstra-DeVette & Tarin, 2019; Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Friborg et al., 2017; Gale et al., 2019; Lazar et al., 2018; Ponce-Gómez et al., 2022; Vara-Horna et al., forthcoming; Willness et al., 2007). Employers also face financial costs related to lost productivity, turnover, legal fees, compensation and reputational damage (e.g., Deloitte Access Economics, 2019; D'Cruz, 2015; Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016; Rikleen, 2019; Speroni et al., 2014; Vara-Horne et al., forthcoming). The institutional costs encompass healthcare, judicial systems and reduced tax revenue (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019; Kline & Lewis, 2019; Reichert, 2017; Speroni et al., 2014).

Objective

This project is primarily concerned with the identification, design and use of organizational practices to prevent and respond to harassment and violence with a focus on gender-based harassment and violence (GBHV) at work. Specifically, this project gathered what is known about best and promising practices from a critical and intersectional perspective with a focus on the Canadian context and spanning across sectors and industries. This report highlights key considerations and requirements, particularly as they pertain to GBHV. Ultimately, the project provides guidance and practical information to employers, unions and governments on how to effectively prevent and respond to harassment and violence at work.

Results

Harassment and violence, particularly GBHV, at work is a complex issue that cannot be prevented without addressing the social structural processes that cause and maintain its various forms. This requires making harassment and violence visible and changing the ways in which its various forms have been institutionalized, and hence rendered invisible, particularly in occupations overrepresented by women. Known factors related to specific occupations, work arrangements, job designs and workplace contexts place workers at greater risk of harassment and violence, including GBHV. Some jobs, mostly those performed by women, have been sexualized, feminized and racialized in ways that increase workers' risk of experiencing GBHV. Future research and policy developments must focus on changing these root causes of GBHV.

To adequately understand and address harassment and violence at work, it is important to recognize violence as a continuum of behaviours and practices and how this conceptualization shapes prevention and timely, effective intervention. Further research is required into the multitude of ways in which forms of harassment and violence are interrelated. Increased education and awareness efforts are also required to ensure all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the continuum of violence.

Driven by legislative compliance and risk avoidance, workplaces have predominantly adopted a tick-box approach to anti-harassment and anti-violence practices, such as policies and training. Simply having these practices in place is insufficient (Berlingieri, 2015b). Currently, accepted practices lack gender-responsiveness. The shift toward gender neutrality has impeded organizations in developing and implementing effective practices. Further research is required to determine how this can be accomplished.

Attention must be given to how prevention and intervention practices are developed, implemented and used daily within workplaces (Berlingieri, 2015b). A well-planned anti-harassment and anti-violence strategy views these practices as interrelated, ongoing and mutually constitutive (Berlingieri, 2015b; Gherardi, 2012). That is, they shape and rest on one another. Changes in legislation, accountability models and education are required to encourage workplaces to work toward long-term, systemic change.

By ratifying the ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206, Canada is poised to be a leader on the global stage in preventing and responding to harassment and violence at work. It can continue to play a mediating role in fostering research and connections to create forums and opportunities for employers, workplace stakeholders and unions to share challenges and collaborate on developing evidence-based practices for eliminating harassment and violence at work. Governments on all levels can help organizations work together to share information and strategies, rather than tackling the problem of workplace harassment and violence in isolation. There are many advantages to working together, including saving costs associated with implementing and assessing practices, especially for organizations within the same industry where workplace contexts are similar (Berlingieri, 2015b). It is only through sustained collaborative efforts that harassment and violence in the world of work can be effectively prevented and addressed.

Key messages

The next phase in addressing harassment and violence necessitates collective action and accountability, exemplified by the global adoption of ILO C-190. Canada, along with other countries, has ratified the convention, committing to its provisions. To enhance the protection of all workers, established practices should be evaluated, informing the improvement of legislations, regulations, policies and practices. The evaluation framework should encompass individual workplaces as well as sectors, deepening the understanding of the impacts of harassment and violence. A lack of knowledge mobilization hinders the adoption of prevention and intervention practices, making it challenging for workplaces to access reliable evidence-based information. Governments have a crucial role in addressing this by facilitating the collaboration of experts and stakeholders to develop and communicate evidence-based best practices.

Methodology

A scoping literature review was conducted to explore workplace practices for preventing and responding to harassment and violence, with a focus on GBHV. We used various search strategies to find and review academic and grey literature. Relevant and reputable sources related to harassment and violence at work were included. We synthesized this information to outline current approaches to harassment and violence at work and provide recommendations for effective prevention and intervention.

Best and promising practices to end gender-based harassment and violence at work: A multi-pronged approach

Background

Harassment and violence remain pervasive and destructive problems in contemporary workplaces around the world, including Canada, and across all occupations and sectors (Berlingieri et al., 2022; Burczycka, 2021; Pillinger, 2019). In a 2022 Canadian national survey, 65% of respondents reported experiencing at least one behaviour of harassment and violence at work in the two years prior to completing the survey (Berlingieri et al., 2022). In the same survey, 43.9% of respondents indicated experiencing at least one behaviour of sexual harassment and violence, and 26.5% experiencing at least one behaviour of work-related online harassment (Berlingieri et al., 2022). Other studies report that approximately half of Canadian workers either witnessed or experienced inappropriate sexualized behaviour and/or gender-based discrimination at work in the previous year (Burczyka, 2021).

Researchers have highlighted the increased risk and impact for particular groups of workers related to their social location and employment status (see Berlingieri et al., 2022; Boyd, 2002; Burczycka, 2021; Dale et al., 2021; Deery et al., 2011; Fevre et al., 2013; Pollert & Charlwood, 2009; Pillinger, 2019; Pillinger et al., 2022; Roscigno et al., 2009; Villegas, 2019) and the necessity to transform gender relations (and other social dimensions) that increase workers' risk in the world of work in order to end harassment and violence (Pillinger, 2019; Pillinger et al., 2022). For example, while sexual harassment occurs across all occupations and industries, social location, citizen status and employment status place some workers at higher risk than others. 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 differences were as much at the root of their harassment as their gender (MacQuarrie et al., 2004; Welsh et al., 2006). Indeed, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is an indisputable connection between gender, work and violence (Milloy, 2021).

A comprehensive strategy with multiple interrelated practices is key to preventing harassment and violence at work and mediating negative effects. Progress is being made regarding national and subnational legislative frameworks (as in Canada), but scant attention has been given to practices adopted to prevent and address this phenomenon in workplaces (Fisher & Peek-Asa, 2005; Runyan et al., 2000; Saam, 2010; Schat & Kelloway, 2006; Vartia & Leka, 2011). Quality information about best practices is dispersed, making it difficult for all workplace stakeholders, including employer representatives (such as human resources personnel and managers), health and safety experts and union representatives, to access, evaluate and adopt evidence-based prevention and intervention practices.

Many generic practice recommendations focus on harassment and violence as a problem caused by individual workers (e.g., Berlingieri, 2015a). Instead, prevention and intervention practices must move beyond individual-level variables alone to target broader organizational and societal factors, such as power imbalances within and outside the organization, including the labour market (Berlingieri, 2015a; Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016; O'Connor et al., 2021; J.A. Perry et al., 2019). This includes the necessity to

transform gender relations (and other social dimensions) that increase workers' risk to end harassment and violence (Carlson, 2018; Grigorovich & Kontos, 2020; Pillinger, 2019; Pillinger et al., 2022; Rikleen, 2019; Schultz, 2018). Currently, many recommendations fail to incorporate an intersectional and gendered lens. Indeed, accepted prevention and intervention practices often do not consider specific risks to experiencing harassment and violence and barriers to reporting and accessing support by groups of workers marginalized for reasons like their social identity, employment status and/or immigration status. This includes considering the sexualized, feminized and racialized character of specific types of work and organizational contexts (e.g., health care, social services and hospitality sectors) and the invisibility and institutionalization of violence to develop practices that counter the root causes of violence, in all its forms (e.g., Acker, 2006; Giuffre & Williams, 1994; Lee, 2002; Milloy, 2021).

Costs and impacts of harassment and violence at work

It is important to develop and implement effective practices to prevent and intervene when harassment and violence happens at work to mitigate the significant negative consequences at the individual, interpersonal, workplace and institutional level. At the individual level, harassment and violence at work can lead to victim-survivors having lower emotional wellbeing and worse mental health, difficulty sleeping, lost earnings, job loss and an accrual of medical and legal costs (Berlingieri et al., 2022; Dionisi et al., 2012; Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016; Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Friberg et al., 2017; Gale et al., 2019; Lazar et al., 2018; Willness et al., 2007). These experiences also have interpersonal consequences, both at home and at work, for victim-survivors, such as loss of social connections, including with colleagues, and a loss of trust in leadership, especially when experiences of GBHV are not appropriately handled (Brown & Battle, 2019; Chan et al., 2008; Dykstra-DeVette & Tarin, 2019; Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Ponce-Gómez et al., 2022). An Australian national survey found that in 2018, the costs of workplace sexual harassment to individuals amounted to \$170.5 million in lost productivity, \$249.6 million in lost wellbeing, and \$103.5 million in other costs (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019).

Many individual and interpersonal level effects escalate and extend to cause negative outcomes at the workplace level (Hatch-Maillette & Scalora, 2002; Rikleen, 2019; Yamada, 2004). For instance, the mental health consequences of harassment and violence can influence a victim-survivors' job performance, including decreased productivity, increased absenteeism and presenteeism and tardiness (Chadha et al., 2022; Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007; Speroni et al., 2014; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Swanberg et al., 2005; Willness et al., 2007). Researchers have estimated that experiencing sexual harassment at work decreases productivity by over 40% (Vara-Horna et al., forthcoming), and is believed to cost approximately \$22,500 USD (in 2007 value) per person (Willness et al., 2007). An economic estimate from a 2018 Australian national survey reported that employers in that country lost \$1,840.1 million related to lost productivity (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019). There are additional costs that accrue when workers need to be absent from work for reasons related to their harassment and violence experience. In one study, researchers retroactively analyzed annual incident reports and found that in a span of one year, there were a total of 508 days of absences or restricted time from work and over \$94,000 in treatment costs and \$15,000 in indemnity charges related to injuries sustained from harassment and violence experienced at work (Speroni et al., 2014). Importantly, these statistics are based on cases that were officially reported to employers (2.1% of the participants who reported harassment and violence to the researchers within their survey made an official report to their employer) and thus a gross underestimation of the true costs to employers (Rikleen, 2019; Speroni et al., 2014). Moreover, other reports suggest that an average case of workplace bullying can cost employers between \$30,000 and \$100,000 USD in reduced performance, increased turnover, investigations, legal fees and victim-survivor compensation (D'Cruz, 2015). In 2015, the U.S Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission (EEOC) reports recovering \$164.5 million, while noting that these legal fees are only a small portion of the true costs to employers (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016). Experiencing and/or witnessing sexual harassment and violence at work increases one's intention to leave their job (Vara-Horna et al., forthcoming). This effect is especially pronounced for individuals who identify as gender-diverse (Waite, 2020). If these intentions come to fruition, there are increased costs to employers including those associated with job turnover, which can be tied to lost skills, knowledge and expertise, and additional costs related to recruitment and training (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019).

Costs associated with harassment and violence at the institutional level include healthcare, police and the judicial system, unemployment insurance and reduced taxes paid to government systems (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019; Kline & Lewis, 2019; Speroni et al., 2014). The Australian national survey suggests that governments lose \$886.9 million annually for reduced tax incomes and costs related to courts, jails and police for reasons associated with sexual harassment at work (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019). Furthermore, costs to the broader society (through government spending of tax dollars) were estimated to be \$423.5 million in Australia in 2018 (Deloitte Access Economics, 2019). In the United Kingdom, bullying and incivility at work are estimated to cost the taxpayers 2.28 billion GBP per year (Kline & Lewis, 2019). More locally, harassment and violence in Ontarian hospitals are estimated to cost taxpayers \$23.8 million per year (Reichert, 2017).

Objectives and Framework

This project uses a critical and practice-based (or process-based) approach. A critical approach is concerned with understanding and changing the way that organizational arrangements impact people (Mills & Simmons, 1995). Social and organizational change are central objectives of this approach (Mills & Simmons, 1995). Change at both levels requires an understanding of the array of ways in which workers are located within interrelated social dimensions of gender, sexual identity, race, ethnicity, class, age, ability and so on. This understanding necessitates uncovering how social and structural systems of oppression and inequity interact with one another (Mills & Simmons, 1995; Strega, 2007). Therefore, a deeper understanding of workplace harassment and violence requires an analysis of how practices, systems and institutions (re)produce inequities and harassment and violence. To bring about deep systemic change within organizations, anti-harassment and anti-violence organizational practices cannot be viewed, or designed, as distinct from those countering inequities in the workplace (Berlingieri, 2015a).

A practice-based approach allows a view of practices as networks of interrelated processes; that is, as ongoing accomplishments that 'do things' (Berlingieri, 2015b) and are capable of shaping people's experiences and the meaning of those experiences (Ahmed, 2012). For example, anti-harassment and anti-violence policies are not seen as documents that are simply produced and filed away, but as practices that are used every day within workplaces in responding to forms of harassment and violence. Policies describe and link with legislation, other policies and other anti-harassment and anti-violence practices (e.g., reporting procedures, investigations). Therefore, they have a significant impact on how everyone in the workplace conceptualizes forms of harassment and violence, how they behave, and the actions taken to address them (Berlingieri, 2015b). For this report, the term 'practices' refers to the array of actions available for workplaces to address harassment and violence. Examples include leadership, policies, training programs, risk assessments, reporting, investigative procedures, mediation and changes to the work environment. A well-planned, comprehensive strategy comprised of multiple interrelated practices is key to preventing harassment and violence and mediating its negative effects (Berlingieri, 2015b).

Organizational practices are shaped by many factors, including broader social, political and economic influences on micro, meso, and macro levels (Banday et al., 2018; D’Cruz, 2015, 2018; D’Cruz & Noronha, 2009, 2014; Ironside & Seifert, 2003). As such, practices can create and perpetuate unbalanced power relations (D’Cruz et al., 2014; Hutchinson, 2011) rendering specific groups of workers with least power at greater risk. Hence, this framework allows a move beyond a mere description of organizational practices to how they are designed and used and related outcomes of this process. The core aim is to design and use practices to bring about long-term, systemic change (rather than individual change alone); a central concern of critical theory and research (Berlingieri, 2015b). Importantly for this specific project, is how practices can be developed and used in ways that include and mitigate the risks, challenges and barriers for specific groups of workers who are at greater risk of GBHV due to their social identity and employment status.

Viewing practices as never complete, but as continuously changing, opens possibilities for continuously learning from them (Berlingieri, 2015b). For example, analyzing and learning from informal and formal reports of harassment and violence and from investigations is a continuous process. The lessons learned can feed back into all practices increasing the effectiveness of both prevention and intervention.

The interrelatedness at the core of practice-based studies brings attention also to the linkages between forms of harassment and violence along a continuum. For example, workers can experience sexual harassment and general harassment simultaneously (see Lim & Cortina, 2005). Understanding harassment and violence as a continuum of behaviours and practices is key to prevention and timely, effective intervention. A continuum shows how forms of harassment and violence are interrelated and emphasizes their escalating nature, bringing attention to the necessity for early intervention. In the context of the workplace, a continuum facilitates the examination of forms of harassment and violence ranging from covert to direct, and non-physical (e.g., incivility) to extreme forms (e.g., physical assault, sexual assault, homicide) (Berlingieri, 2015a, 2015b). The continuum also recognizes the link between psychological and physical violence. For example, it illustrates how harassment can escalate to acts of physical violence (Berlingieri, 2015a, 2015b).

This project is primarily concerned with the identification, design and use of organizational practices to prevent and respond to harassment and violence with a focus on gender-based harassment and violence (GBHV) at work. Specifically, this project gathered what is known about best and promising practices from a critical and intersectional perspective with a focus on the Canadian context and spanning across sectors and industries. The aim of this report is not to provide a full detailed description of workplace practices, but to highlight key considerations and requirements, particularly as they pertain to GBHV. Ultimately, the project provides guidance and practical information to employers, unions and governments on how to effectively prevent and respond to harassment and violence in the world of work.

Methods

In a span of five months, a scoping literature review was conducted to understand current workplace practices for handling harassment and violence, with a focus on GBHV, and to investigate prevention and intervention best and promising practices. To find relevant sources, several strategies were used. First, to probe the academic literature a combination of the following search terms was used on databases such as, Google Scholar, JSTOR and ScienceDirect: prevention, intervention, workplace harassment, workplace violence, violence at work, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment and violence, zero tolerance,

workplace bullying. Variations of these terms were combined with the terminology related to the network of interrelated practices including legislation, workplace policies, leadership, education/awareness, reporting, supports, investigations, mediation/conflict resolution, workplace assessment and monitoring and evaluation. The same search terms were used to find relevant grey literature sources, including blogs from experts, newspaper articles, government reports and resources and relevant legislation and regulations. When possible, we also used snowball sampling techniques to review the reference lists from relevant sources to ensure we were being as inclusive as possible with our sources. Finally, we consulted books and resources known to our research team of experts on GBHV. When possible, resources that focused on the Canadian context were used, but importantly international resources were not excluded from the search.

The inclusion criteria for sources included that they be written in English (or translated), be relevant to the world of work and, in the case of gray literature specifically, that it was from a reputable source. The sources that were identified with our search methods that met the inclusion criteria were first reviewed for relevancy by a member of our research team. If deemed relevant, the source was reviewed more thoroughly and documented in an annotated bibliography to highlight the purpose of the source, an overview of the methodology used, as well as key findings, conclusions and policy implications. These annotations were then reviewed by other members of the research team and thoroughly discussed for inclusion in the report.

The information from our sources was synthesized to outline the current approach to harassment and violence at work, with a specific focus on GBHV, and to make recommendations on best and promising prevention and intervention practices going forward. We used our theoretical framework to situate these recommendations based on the current state of academic and gray literatures on workplace practices.

Results

This report focuses on current workplace practices considered key for preventing and responding to harassment and violence at work, with a focus on GBHV where research was available.

Legislation

Legislation is a key part of a network of interrelated practices for the prevention and intervention of all forms of harassment and violence at work. Legislation creates an enabling framework for the adoption of prevention and intervention practices by outlining fundamental guarantees for workers and standards for employers. Canada has been at the forefront of legislative changes that have made harassment and violence a workplace health and safety issue, acknowledging that the workplace has a key role in addressing this problem. Provincial and territorial changes to Canadian legislation preceded the federal government's amendments to the Canadian Labour Code (CLC), which came into force on January 1, 2021. The amendments to the CLC, including the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations, outline the responsibilities of federally regulated employers and the rights of workers regarding harassment and violence. Also, with the inclusion of a single definition of harassment and violence, the CLC recognizes harassment and violence along a continuum and acknowledges the spectrum of different behaviors and practices that constitute this phenomenon.

The obligations of employers under the CLC, include the duty to carry out workplace assessments, develop and implement training and policies on workplace harassment and violence prevention and

conduct investigations, risk management and data sharing in federally regulated industries or workplaces (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2023a). The CLC also includes the obligation to provide support for workers who disclose or make a formal report of harassment and violence. In doing so, the legislation has strengthened the rights of workers and the responsibility for employers to prevent, intervene and provide supports for harassment and violence at work in federally regulated sectors.

Canada has also ratified the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention No. 190 (C190) to eliminate harassment and violence at work. C190 will enter into force for Canada on January 30, 2024 once it is transformed into domestic law (ILO, n.d.a). C190 and its accompanying recommendation (no. 206) signal Canada's, and other countries who have ratified C190, responsibility and commitment to be accountable for action on these issues to the global community. These positive changes at the international and federal levels signal a tri-partite commitment to further develop and strengthen legislation, regulations, policies and practices in a mutually constitutive legislative process that improves legal protections and frameworks at national and sub-national levels.

As with other prevention and intervention practices, there must be a full implementation and enforcement of legislative frameworks. Legislations should be regarded as living documents that need to be revised to reflect changing social needs and to address any identified shortcomings. They should also be able to reflect the needs and realities of workers with diverse intersecting identities and unique understandings and experiences of work and harassment and violence that may not be captured in current legal definitions (Welsh et al., 2006). All practices, including legislation, must include gender-responsive prevention, intervention and accountability standards and processes (Carlson, 2018; Dale et al., 2021; Ferris et al., 2018; Pillinger, 2019, 2020). This will help to ensure that awareness of gender disparities and diverse intersectional experiences is incorporated into the law to create legally binding obligations and enforceable rights for all workers.

Current legal frameworks are centered on a 'standard employment relationship' of those in unionized full-time employment with benefits and job security with a few exceptions (Fudge & Vosko, 2001; Matulewicz, 2015; Secretariat to the Expert Panel on Modern Federal Labour Standards, 2019). Those in non-standard employment such as precarious work and independent contractors are often not comprehensively protected by the law (Vosko, 2006; Vosko et al., 2014). Moreover, immigrant workers who rely on their jobs to stay in the country do not tend to experience the same protections or feel safe reporting instances of violence (Villegas, 2019). The lack of recognition and regulation of diverse experiences is problematic as it translates into unequal protection and benefit from the law. The goal of legislation going forward should be comprehensive and equitable protection for all employees, including workers in precarious employment with unbalanced power dynamics within the employment relationship.

Additional research is required into the challenges and barriers faced by workplaces in developing and implementing anti-harassment and anti-violence practices through an intersectional lens that disrupt gender, power and social inequities to ensure equal protection and benefit from the law (Pillinger, 2019). Continuous monitoring of the implementation and enforcement of policies, training and related practices for preventing and addressing harassment and violence at work and the establishment of measures for mitigating identified risks is necessary. Beyond legislative requirements, employers must demonstrate to workers that they are serious about harassment and violence and willing to take action to prevent it and keep workers safe. Research shows that practices to tackle harassment and violence are less successful if workers perceive their employers as tolerant of violence (see Berlingieri, 2015b; Cheung et al., 2018; Magley & Grossman, 2017; Patel et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2013).

While the law plays a role in affecting change, there needs to be an acknowledgment that broader social-structural change that promotes racial, gender and income equality and affords equal access to essential needs such as housing, education, health and child welfare is also necessary. This holistic approach calls for shared responsibility, ongoing structural changes, and the dissemination of knowledge across various tiers – international, federal, provincial, territorial and community. All practices, including legislation, should be designed to tackle the root causes of harassment and violence such as gender inequality and negative power differentials (Carlson, 2018; McLaughlin, et al., 2012).

Organizational culture

Organizational culture is a complex and problematic concept, especially for critical scholars of organizational studies. Yet, in both scholarly and non-scholarly communications, changing organizational culture is touted as critical to preventing harassment and violence. It is beyond the scope of this report to enter a full discussion of this complex notion. Instead, several key points are highlighted here for consideration on how “*organizational culture*” is used in this report.

Organizational culture generally refers to shared beliefs, values and norms which shape the behaviour of individuals. When this term is used in relation to harassment and violence, there is an implication that the cause of such behaviours is attributable exclusively to individual workers. There is then a risk that the focus remains solely on the need for individual change at the exclusion of systemic change.

Organizational culture is expressed in and created and maintained by a multitude of practices, including “the design of the organization and work, ...the artifacts and services that the organization produces, in the architecture of its premises, in the technologies that it employs, in its ceremonials of encounter and meeting, in the temporal structuring of organizational courses of action, in the quality and conditions of its working life, in the ideologies of work, in the corporate philosophy” (Strati, 1992, p.578), the organization’s history, the spoken and unspoken rules of behaviour (including those related to tolerated behaviours at work) and the history of action or inaction taken by organizations when harassment and violence occurs or is disclosed or reported by workers. These complex webs of organizational practices shape the meanings that people produce, which shapes their actions (Berlingieri, 2015b; Gherardi, 1995). Larger organizations may not have a single, universal culture. Most organizations can potentially have many cultures (Gregory, 1983; Louis, 1985; Trice & Beyer, 1993; Van Maanen & Barley, 1985). The design, implementation and use of the prevention and intervention practices included in this report significantly shape an organization's culture. Developing and sustaining an organization's culture is an accomplishment requiring constant vigilance, commitment and openness to change.

Gender and organizational culture are often treated as distinct in organizational studies (Gherardi, 1995). However, organizations and organizational cultures are strongly gendered (Gherardi, 1995). Hearn and Parkin (2001) argue for an analysis of “the ways in which organizations are constituted through gender” (p. 72-73). This gendering is accomplished and maintained through organizational processes (Gherardi, 1995). Therefore, through this lens, organizational and broader institutional practices are not viewed as neutral, and their outcomes are not to be viewed as ‘just the way things are’. For example, the feminization of specific occupations (e.g., nursing) and the increased risk for experiencing harassment and violence by these workers can be traced to specific processes.

Policies

Policies are the cornerstone of an interrelated set of workplace practices designed to prevent and intervene in harassment and violence (Berlingieri, 2015b). They define, describe and link other workplace practices, such as legislation, internal policies, reporting procedures, resolution processes and training (Berlingieri, 2015b). They are critical for outlining and communicating employee rights and employer obligations surrounding harassment and violence at work. As previously discussed, there is a legal requirement in many jurisdictions for workplaces to have policies in place for harassment and violence, including sexual harassment. Despite this, many workplaces do not have policies and training in place (Berlingieri et al., 2023; Dillon, 2012). Studies have also shown that workers have insufficient information regarding reporting procedures, training, and a lack of access to supports for employees, which significantly limits the capacity for prevention (Berlingieri et al., 2023; Burczykca, 2021). A significant research gap in the field is understanding the challenges and barriers that workplaces face in developing, implementing and using harassment and violence policies. This is particularly true for GBHV policies. This includes understanding the unique needs, contextual factors, challenges and barriers of different sectors. One of the challenges for workplaces is access to evidence-based information on effective policies.

Moving beyond sexual harassment policies to gender-responsive policies is important in acknowledging that sexual desire is not the motivating factor behind the harasser's behaviour (Schultz, 2018). Instead, GBHV is rooted in power and sexism and although the manifestations of GBVH vary in their severity, visibility, tangibility and frequency, all reflect an exercise of power that consolidates those in dominant positions (O'Connor, 2021). Prevention efforts such as policies and other interventions should focus on the structural factors implicated in GBHV. It is also important to uncover and critique the dominant epistemic assumptions of current policies and public policy texts to inform and imagine how to develop alternative policies and practices (see Grigorovich & Kontos, 2020).

If developed and used properly, policies are an important learning tool within organizations (Berlingieri, 2015b). They set expectations around behaviours in the workplace, the responses workers experiencing harassment and violence can expect and the obligations of those responsible for receiving reports. Over time, significant changes can occur within workplaces to prevent and respond to harassment and violence. To be fully effective, policies must be well-communicated, disseminated and accessible to workers in multiple ways that include, and extend, beyond initial training. Additional avenues can include workplace posters, organizational intranets, regular messaging (e.g., newsletters, emails, social media), lunch-and-learns and messaging from leadership.

The main components of an effective policy for all workplaces are outlined below. However, this is not an exhaustive list, and every organization must develop their policy with their unique contextual and risk factors in mind. Risks include broader systemic factors and workplaces should, for example, recognize the reality of inequities in society and workplaces.

- Importance and purpose of the policy
- Statement of intent and the employer's commitment to prevent and protect employees from harassment and violence, and to ending violence against women and gender-diverse individuals
- Principles on which the policy is based (e.g., a recognition that GBHV is a workplace issue that affects the safety, health, well-being and productivity of everyone in the workplace)
- Definitions of key terms used in the policy and of forms of harassment and violence, including sexual and gender-based harassment and violence, with a list of examples for each form

- Clear statement recognizing the existence of inequities in society and within the workplace and the increased risk for and impact on marginalized groups of workers
- Legislation frameworks and other policies related to the policy on harassment and violence
- Scope and coverage of the policy specifying the policy applies to all workers and parties involved with the workplace, including full and part-time, casual, contract, agency, permanent, temporary and other employees, interns, volunteers, contractors and third-parties entering or engaged with the workplace
- Acknowledgement that the workplace involves any location (physical or virtual) where work-related activities take place, where organizational resources (e.g., equipment, technology, email, social media and vehicles) are used, and while on work related travel, training, client visits and organization-sponsored events (including social gatherings)
- Description of different roles and related responsibilities (e.g., employees experiencing and witnessing harassment and violence, employees behaving abusively, supervisor and managers, human resource management, security, etc.)
- Emergency procedures to be followed when there is an immediate danger (or threat) to the health and/or safety of an employee (e.g., how to call security and/or police, how to trigger alarm devices or systems, etc.), including for employees who work in isolated areas
- Description of internal and external risk factors, including those related to the specific workplace and sector. Examples of internal risk factors include: type of work, conditions of work (including power disparities in the workplace, male-dominated workplaces, lack of diversity, interacting with the public, serving of alcohol, working in isolated areas, etc.). External factors include: family violence and client or external collaborator characteristics.
- List of training provided by the workplace by role and responsibility (e.g., training designed for all employees and additional training for leaders)
- Description of ways in which informal (disclosures) and formal reports will be resolved in a timely manner, expectations of the reporting process and specifics related to multiple reporting avenues
- Description of the investigation process, what triggers an investigation and expectations (e.g., timing of the investigation and report, who will conduct investigations, etc.). Investigators should be independent and have expertise in violence against women and gender-diverse groups.
- Expectations related to privacy and how the employer intends to protect the privacy of parties involved
- Circumstances that trigger an assessment in the workplace and resulting revisions to the policy
- Description of possible remedial actions associated with reports
- Reasonable timeframes for each process (e.g., reporting process, investigations, etc.)
- Information on monitoring policies and the frequency of updates to the policy
- Clear statement prohibiting acts of retaliation to protect workers who come forward, including the use of policies and procedures to retaliate against a worker.
- List of sanctions that comprise a progressive accountability model for employees behaving abusively
- Establishment of a workplace committee designed to prevent and address harassment and violence and specifically violence against women and gender-diverse workers. Committees should include employers, employees and worker representatives. The purpose is to monitor implementation of the policy and other practices from a gendered perspective.
- Accommodations and leave available to workers experiencing harassment and violence, including GBHV and intimate partner violence
- How the workplace will handle peace bonds and restraining orders

- Choice to have an advocate or support person present when making an informal or formal report and during other stages of the process
- Resources of support (e.g., Employment Assistance Program, sexual assault centres, shelters)

(Arnow-Richman, 2018; Berlingieri, 2015b; Berlingieri et al., 2022; CREVAWC, n.d.a.; Employment and Social Development Canada, 2023b; Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016; Government of Canada, 2020; Gupta, 2004; Heymann et al., 2023; Hoel & Einarsen, 2011; Lazar et al., 2018; OSHA, n.d.; National Research Council Canada, 2021; Pillinger, 2018; Rikleen, 2019; Woodrow & Guest, 2014).

While beyond the scope of this review to discuss non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in detail, it is important to note that they are not effective in preventing and addressing harassment and violence. NDAs are designed and used to protect the organization and the person causing harm and to silence the victim-survivor (Pillinger, 2018; Schultz, 2018). Instead, NDAs result in many negative outcomes for the workplace and for all parties involved. NDAs drive the problem deeper underground within workplaces creating a culture of fear and increasing the negative consequences.

Having a comprehensive and inclusive policy in place is an important first step in addressing GBHV at work. Research for this report shows that anti-harassment and anti-violence policies and other organizational practices need to be gender-responsive and that further research is required to understand how this can best be accomplished. As discussed, this entails, among other actions, broadening the perspective beyond sexual harassment policies to be more inclusive of other types of GBHV. This requires an understanding of GBHV as rooted in power, sexism and gender discrimination against gender identity, expression and/or sexual orientation (O'Connor, 2021; Schultz, 2018). To begin, workplaces can revisit their policies and training to ensure the inclusion of behaviours that tease, mock, ridicule and ostracize individuals for not aligning with expected gender norms and the harms this causes to both individuals and the workplace. Other considerations include ensuring that broader organizational policies and practices are free from sexist and misogynistic language and rules, such as requiring female employees to wear revealing clothing as part of their uniform requirements.

Workplace anti-harassment and anti-violence policies are often reduced to a zero-tolerance statement. Although zero-tolerance policies demonstrate an intent by workplaces to prevent abuse and to provide a safe environment for workers, research has placed their effectiveness in question (e.g., McCann, 2005). Traditionally zero-tolerance policies have meant that there is one universal response to a report of harassment and violence, which is termination of the person behaving abusively. There are many issues with this model and interpretation of zero-tolerance, including that termination without due process may not be a proportionate response to the behaviour, and that it may be successfully challenged. While it may remove the harasser from the current situation, at least temporarily, it does nothing to prevent them from continuing this behaviour in a new environment, thus continuing the cycle of violence in a different workplace or in the same workplace if they are allowed to return (Rikleen, 2019; Smith, 2019). Also, workers experiencing GBHV may hesitate to report because they want the harassment to stop, but do not necessarily want the harasser to lose their job.

While legislation in Canada is silent regarding those causing harm at work, they present significant challenges and costs for workplaces. Holding those who behave abusively responsible is important. However, an alternative interpretation of zero-tolerance, that shifts from a solely punitive focus to one that provides opportunities for those who behave abusively to learn, take responsibility and change their behaviour, is required. A progressive accountability model, if planned properly, offers an alternative. Such a model provides a range of possible actions to hold those causing harm accountable. Possible

actions in this range include: verbal warning, written warning, verbal or written apologies, behavioural contracts, coaching, mandatory counselling, education and training, probationary periods, withholding promotions, reductions in pay or bonuses, removal from leadership positions, transfer to a different position, suspension and dismissal or termination of a contract (CREVAWC, n.d.b; Johnston, 2017; Lazar et al., 2018; Rikleen, 2019; Salin, 2009). This range should include mechanisms that allow harassers to become aware of their behaviours and supports to change those behaviours. It is important to note that a progressive accountability model should consider other workplace policies and collective agreements in place. Progressive accountability measures should be clearly stated in workplace harassment and violence policies and communicated to all employees.

The concept of accountability is often applied to individual behaviour. However, individual accountability is interrelated with collective accountability. Collective accountability is “the idea that we are responsible for other people’s actions by tolerating, ignoring, or harboring them, without actively collaborating in these actions” (Winters, 2020). Policies and training provide important avenues for building this collective sense of responsibility to one another in creating a safe workplace.

The notion of policies as ongoing practices necessitates viewing them as living documents; that is, tools that are capable of “doing things” and that are open to constant monitoring and change (Berlingieri, 2015b). The learning gained from other practices (e.g., reporting procedures, investigation, etc.) should feed into the policy regularly. Simply having a policy in place, therefore, is insufficient (McCann, 2005). Policies are also most effective when used consistently. For example, when a worker makes a disclosure or report or is accused of harassment and violence, reviewing the policy together with them provides an important learning opportunity for all parties involved. As such, the policy moves beyond an exclusive role as a statement of intent to also serve as a guide for action (Berlingieri, 2015b; Rayner & Lewis, 2011). The process for monitoring policies must, therefore, also include monitoring of the compliance with policies.

The policy development process is not an isolated endeavour. Relegating the development of policies to human resources alone limits their potential to bring about significant change within organizations. The development and implementation of a policy requires a collective process in which an array of actors, including women and gender-diverse workers, from all levels and areas within the organization participate (Berlingieri, 2015b; Rayner & Lewis, 2011). Buy-in, involvement and commitment from all actors is a key factor in the success of a policy (Rayner & Lewis, 2011).

Leadership

Although policies are an important starting point that lay the foundation for prevention and intervention of harassment and violence, their implementation greatly depends on the leadership within an organization (e.g., Clarke, 2020; D’Cruz, 2015; Gadegaard et al., 2015; Woodrow & Guest, 2014). Those in leadership roles have a great deal of influence and responsibility to ensure that anti-harassment and anti-violence practices are used properly. Leaders play a central role in creating a respectful workplace and in the prevention and intervention of harassment and violence. Leaders set an example in many ways for all members of the workplace by modelling appropriate behaviour, not tolerating abusive behaviour, responding quickly and decisively to situations of harassment and violence, supporting workers when they disclose or report experiences of harassment and violence, dealing with workers who are, or who are accused of, behaving abusively, complying with legislation and their own organizational policies and following lessons learned in training. When leaders, or those in powerful positions, do not

behave in ways that promote safety and respect at work, a contagion of acceptance of abusive and violent behaviours and practices can occur (Rikleen, 2019; Sutton, 2017). This is most likely to result in an institution that fosters and normalizes inaction and silence (see Berlingieri & D’Cruz, 2021; Cheung et al., 2018; D’Cruz, 2015; Magley & Grossman, 2017; Patel et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2013).

Senior leaders must ensure that leaders at all levels understand harassment and violence as a serious workplace and health and safety issue, its impacts and costs and the commitment made by the workplace to prevent it. To bring these into practice, leaders must prioritize achieving gender equality, with their own direct involvement and the provision of suitable resources (Champions of Change Coalition, 2023). Specialized training and awareness events that include an understanding of the linkages between forms of harassment and violence and inequities at work should be made available on a regular basis to leaders. Preventing and responding to disclosures and reports of harassment and violence are a key part of a leader’s job and skill set and should be integrated in their job descriptions, performance evaluations and reward systems (Berlingieri, 2015b; Bertotti & Maxfield, 2018; Brock et al., 2018; Namie & Namie, 2011; Rikleen, 2019; Schultz, 2018). As such, accountability for taking effective action when a disclosure or report is received is key.

Much research is available on various individual leadership styles. Research demonstrates that passive leadership style can be associated with increased hostility and incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace (Lee, 2018). Similarly, tyrannical, derailed and laissez-faire leadership styles are associated with an increased risk of workplace bullying (D’Cruz, 2015). Ethical leadership that focuses on appropriate conduct and respecting the rights and dignity of others is associated with improved working conditions, including a decrease in harassment (Islam et al., 2019; Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Compassionate leadership can also help mitigate harassment (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). Equitable leadership is associated with managers’ commitment to prevent gendered harassment and violence at work (Vara-Horna, 2022).

While understanding the impacts of individual leadership styles is important in preventing harassment and violence at work, this cannot be the only factor (Berlingieri, 2015b; Berlingieri & D’Cruz, 2021). A sole focus on individual leaders alone and their personal traits negates the importance of systemic change that continues to shape the organization beyond the tenure of individual leaders (Berlingieri, 2015a, 2015b; Berlingieri & D’Cruz, 2021; D’Cruz, 2015). Targeting individual behaviour is misguided without examining the context within organizations that shape behaviour and experiences of harassment and violence (Berlingieri, 2015a, 2015b; Berlingieri & D’Cruz, 2021; Day & Catano, 2006; D’Cruz, 2015; Hodgins et al., 2014).

The practice-based approach, the framework underpinning this report, has brought attention to the emerging concept of collective approaches to leadership or leadership-as-practice. This concept brings together multiple areas of scholarship, including shared, distributed, pooled and relational models of leadership (Bryman et al., 2011; Denis et al., 2012; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012; Yammarino et al., 2012). With this approach, leadership is conceptualized as a collaborative social practice rather than an individual one residing in traits or behaviours of particular individuals (Raelin, 2016). It challenges taken-for-granted notions of hierarchical power and distributes power across the organization (Ford, 2016). To be effective, collective leadership or leadership as a practice requires specific conditions for it to flourish. Organizations need trust, shared power, transparent and effective communication, accountability and shared learning (O’Neill & Brinkerhoff, 2018). Viewing leadership in this way, spreads the responsibility

and accountability for preventing and addressing harassment and violence to across all levels within the organization (Ford, 2016). Further research is required into how both informal and formal leadership models can work in tandem.

While beyond the scope of this report, it is important to briefly address the common recommendation that more women are needed in leadership positions to prevent harassment and violence, particularly GBHV (see Arnow-Richman, 2018; Carlson, 2018; Gerdeman, 2018). Women are underrepresented in leadership positions within organizations and much work remains to be done to truly break the glass ceiling. While having women and gender-diverse individuals in leadership positions is important, holding these positions does not render them immune to harassment and violence and may make them a target (McLaughlin et al., 2012) and increase their risk of harm. For example, some research finds that women in leadership positions are targeted as a way of levelling the power dynamics with male subordinates (McLaughlin et al., 2012). McLaughlin and colleagues (2012) also argue that isolation as a woman in management is often a key mechanism linking women's supervisory status to harassment. There is limited research which examines sexual harassment through an intersectional lens in view of existing hierarchies of authority and power rather than a supervisor and employee binary (McLaughlin et al., 2012). Placing more women and gender-diverse individuals in leadership positions requires a comprehensive strategy to support them and to bring about systemic change within the organization.

Education and awareness

Training and awareness programs are an integral component of a prevention and intervention strategy that workplaces have to raise awareness about harassment and violence. However, not all employees receive training and of those that do, many report that their training has not adequately prepared them to handle harassment and violence at work (Berlingieri et al., 2022; Berlingieri et al., 2023; Speroni et al., 2014). This may be because workplaces have focused on compliance with legislation and management of costs when designing and implementing training programs, rather than *actually* reducing harassment and violence at work (e.g., Bisom-Rapp, 2001; Magley & Grossman, 2017; Rikleen, 2019). Similarly, many organizations use standard training protocols that are not adapted to their workplace and do not consider the unique risk factors that can put their employees at greater risk for experiencing harassment and violence (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016). A comprehensive training program should not only orient workers to anti-harassment and anti-violence policies in their workplace, but also be designed to reduce harassment and violence, and should include discussions on systemic social risk factors, power dynamics, unconscious biases and gender discrimination, all factors that have been normalized (Rikleen, 2019; Schultz, 2018). This requires moving beyond training strictly designed to teach workers to identify, respond to and report negative behaviours as this reinforces the narrative that individuals are solely responsible for harassment and violence at work (Hodgins et al., 2014; E.L. Perry et al., 2019).

As with workplace policies, and many other practices, training is often treated as a finite exercise that can be completed rather than a holistic and ongoing practice (e.g., Magley & Grossman, 2017; Noguchi, 2017; Rikleen, 2019). In many studies, workers have indicated the need for a broader scope and higher frequency of training (Al-Ghabeesh & Qattom, 2019; Keller et al., 2019; McLaughlin et al., 2012). Many experts also agree with this sentiment and note that recurrent training with the goal of reducing harassment and violence at work is more likely to be effective compared to the current model of one-time training that is driven by compliance with legislation (Diez-Canseco et al., 2022; Gerdeman, 2018; Magley & Grossman, 2017).

A common focus of training is bystander intervention training, which focuses on teaching people to speak up and support victim-survivors when they witness harassment and violence at work. Part of this approach includes teaching people about what is considered inappropriate workplace behaviour so that it can be recognized and labeled as such and ensuring that the responsibility of reporting is clear for all workers (Bennett et al., 2014; Byerley et al., 2022; Collins et al., 2021; Lassiter et al., 2021). Ideally, training would be designed to acknowledge the continuum of violence and that harassment and violence tends to escalate over time and it would address known barriers to helping (Berlingieri, 2015a; Latane & Darley, 1970; Lazar et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Rikleen, 2019). In the case of harassment and violence, barriers to helping might be failing to recognize inappropriate workplace behaviour, diffusion of responsibility by assuming that someone else will intervene (the bystander effect) and not knowing what to do or how to help. If these barriers are not addressed, bystander training will be ineffective, with the bystander effect reducing the probability that witnesses will engage with and report incidences of harassment and violence.

Bystander intervention training assumes that those who witness the harassment and violence will intervene if they have the knowledge and skills to identify and respond to inappropriate behaviours. Research shows that many victim-survivors report there being at least one witness to their harassment and that they often intervene in some way (Burczycka, 2021; McDonald et al., 2016). Most frequently, this happens by way of providing support and advice to the victim-survivor, instead of engaging directly with the perpetrator(s) of the harassment and violence (McDonald et al., 2016). Researchers have questioned the effectiveness of this type of intervention, while noting that there are many reasons why bystanders may choose not to involve themselves directly, including individual differences in tolerance for harassment and violence and more importantly, broader factors related to social hierarchies (e.g., Dobbin & Kalev, 2019; Kearney et al., 2004; Tinkler et al., 2007; Tinkler, 2012). For instance, the power and privilege of a bystander within the organization and social hierarchies are likely to influence their decision making on whether to directly intervene (Collins et al. 2021). When not in a position of power, bystanders might be fearful of retaliation or redirecting the harassment and violence onto themselves (Berlingieri & D’Cruz, 2021). There also needs to be an established history of action within the workplace so that bystanders (and victim-survivors) feel comfortable discussing incidents with leaders, unions, or other representatives (Berlingieri 2015b; Gerdeman, 2018).

A benefit of bystander intervention training is that it involves workers at all levels to make harassment and violence at work a shared responsibility. It takes the sole onus from the victim-survivor and makes harassment and violence a shared issue. However, a critique of this model is that it focuses almost unilaterally on individual workers and changing their behaviour rather than taking a collective action approach that targets systemic factors that allow workplace violence to thrive (Berlingieri, 2015b). For this reason, bystander intervention and traditional training models should be implemented as part of a comprehensive education program that addresses systemic workplace and social risk factors and societal causes of violence. A comprehensive and ongoing education program might include lunch-and-learns, webinars, workshops, discussion groups, posters and newsletters (Berlingieri, 2015b; Strandmark & Rahm, 2014).

Comprehensive training programs are more costly and time consuming in the short-term than the current training models, which include one-time implementation of standardized programs. However, investing in effective and comprehensive education practices is one way to establish commitment to addressing harassment and violence and develop trust between employees and leadership (Lassiter et al., 2021; Rikleen, 2019). Ultimately, ongoing education needs to be incorporated into the organizational culture. This is particularly critical because training is thought to be less effective if the organizational

culture is tolerant of or apathetic about harassment and violence (Cheung et al., 2018; Goldberg et al., 2019; Patel et al., 2017). For instance, research has demonstrated that when workers are pessimistic about their organization's likelihood and capacity to change regarding sexual harassment, they are less motivated to learn during their training sessions (Walsh et al., 2013). Because motivation to learn is highly correlated with understanding and knowledge retention, in this case training is not likely to be effective regardless of the focus, content and frequency with which it is delivered (Kontoghiorghes, 2008; Sanacore, 2008; Steinmayr & Spinath, 2009; Tang & Sampson, 2017; von Treuer et al., 2013).

The tick-box approach to training, consistent with simply complying with legislative requirements, has limited efforts to understanding whether implemented trainings are effective (Clarke, 2020; Roehling & Huang, 2015). This represents a major gap in understanding, and while legal scholars have argued that showing evidence of effectiveness should be a necessary requirement to demonstrate due diligence in educating workers, there is currently no such obligation in place (Bisom-Rapp, 2018; Clarke, 2020; Magley & Grossman, 2017). Importantly, training effectiveness can be defined in different ways depending on the goals of the organization (Roehling & Huang, 2015). Scholars refer to the gold standard as a reduction in harassment and violence, but often different definitions of effective training are used in practice. Here, we refer to effective training as one that educates, builds commitment to prevention and intervention and reduces instances of harassment and violence at work. There have been limited efforts to assess this level of effectiveness and experts on GBHV tend to believe that training as an independent practice, and as it is currently conceptualized, is an ineffective tool (Bisom-Rapp, 2001; Magley & Grossman, 2017; Zelin & Magley, 2021). Promoting the importance of evaluating accepted training practices so that they can be improved is congruent with the need to protect workers from harassment and violence at work and is an important future direction in this field.

Not all employees require the same level and content of training. Some employees will need additional specialized training. For instance, those in leadership positions and those who are tasked with receiving and resolving disclosures and reports need specialized knowledge. This includes developing effective training that covers how to respond effectively to disclosures and reports, how to enforce and update policies and other workplace practices with sensitivity (Becton et al., 2017; Lassiter et al., 2021; Malhorta & Srivastava, 2016; Oade, 2018; Pillinger, 2018) and the negative consequences for workers (including those who are at greater risk of harassment and violence due to their social location, employment status and/or immigration status). Furthermore, leadership training should also include specific information about retaliation, including what is considered retaliatory behaviour and how to prevent retaliation (Lazar et al., 2018; OSHA, n.d.; Rikleen, 2019). Confidentiality, including how to maintain it and its limits, is also important. Supervisors and managers should be made fully aware of risk factors for harassment and violence specific to their workplace and sector so that they are aware of how these affect the safety of workers on a daily basis.

As education efforts are part of a network of interrelated practices, any information garnered from other practices and procedures should be used as opportunities to improve training and other education resources. For example, reports can be used to gather information on the effectiveness of anti-harassment and anti-violence practices, including uncovering and understanding unique contextual factors that may need to be incorporated into training programs. To do so, workplaces need to establish procedures to 1) ensure ongoing analysis of which prevention and intervention efforts are useful and 2) implement this information in a developing a comprehensive training program.

Disclosures and reporting

Informal reports (disclosures) and formal reports of harassment and violence at work take many forms, including informal disclosures to coworkers, formal reports to supervisors and filing formal grievances associated with violations of legislation, collective agreements and/or guaranteed human rights. Reporting procedures should be included and detailed as part of workplace harassment and violence policies. Informal reporting requires the same attentiveness as formal reporting and clear procedures for follow-up. People may mistake informal reporting as less serious or as a flexible process that is not subject to predetermined procedures. However, informal reporting procedures should not be spontaneous or unstructured (Berlingieri, 2015b).

Informal reports represent important opportunities for workplaces to de-escalate the harassment and violence, resolve the current issue and identify actions needed to prevent harassment and violence from reoccurring (Berlingieri, 2015a). As such, organizations should have well-planned procedures in place to process informal reports, with the goal of resolving a situation (e.g., Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

If handled appropriately, both informal and formal reports are an important part of ongoing harassment and violence prevention and intervention. Specifically, clear communication regarding reporting procedures will likely decrease the frequency and intensity of workplace harassment and violence because intervention is possible at earlier stages in the continuum of violence (Berlingieri, 2015b). For this reason, proper techniques and strategies should be a fundamental component of management training (Lassiter et al., 2021; OSHA, n.d.). Furthermore, reports should be part of a broader set of practices that work to monitor and assess ongoing risk for harassment and violence. Knowledge from these practices can be used to inform organizational and systemic changes to reduce harassment and violence at work.

Although it is in the best interest of organizations to resolve harassment and violence with informal reporting procedures, it may not always be the correct course of action. For instance, workplaces should not require resolution through informal procedures when harassment and violence is more advanced on the continuum of violence and/or situations where the victim-survivor does not want to directly engage with the perpetrator. In these cases, formal reporting procedures are the more appropriate option.

As part of anti-harassment and anti-violence policies, workplaces should clearly identify who employees can approach to make a formal report. It is important that there is more than one option, including an impartial third-party representative or a union representative (Berlingieri, 2015b; Brock et al., 2018; Lazar et al., 2018; Malhotra & Srivastava, 2016; Richards & Daley, 2003). The options should extend beyond direct supervisors and managers because it is possible that workers might not be comfortable disclosing to them, especially if they are already aware of or are participating in the harassment and violence. Filing a formal report should trigger a series of events, including a thorough and prompt examination of the situation with the goals of 1) identifying actionable items to reduce the risk of further harm for the employee who made the report, and for all employees more generally, 2) holding the person causing harm accountable for their actions, ideally using a progressive accountability model, and 3) finding a resolution to the current issue. As part of this process and following their disclosure, the individual who reported harassment and violence should be provided with resources to support them through their experience. These processes will be revisited and discussed in more detail in their respective sections of this report.

There are many ways that these processes break down and become ineffective. For instance, when reports are not taken seriously and resolved, it signals that abusive behaviour is tolerated (Berlingieri et al., 2022). Furthermore, workers can also lose trust in the organization, leaders and team if no action is taken to resolve the situation in a timely manner. This is especially true if those who report are not supported through this process and are not kept apprised of the progress of an investigation (Rikleem, 2019). Instead, an organization can show genuine commitment to anti-harassment and anti-violence by having practices in place to ensure that all reports are taken seriously and are resolved as quickly as possible (Gerdeman, 2018; Malhotra & Srivastava, 2016). Over time, this decreases barriers to reporting and seeking support. This is important for workers to feel comfortable reporting their experiences of harassment and violence and to develop trust that the organization will act to rectify the behaviour (Lazar et al., 2018).

In addition to an organizational history of failing to respond appropriately to reports of harassment and violence, victim-survivors have highlighted many other barriers that stop them from reporting inappropriate behaviours at work. In several studies, victim-survivors indicate that they did not make a report at work because they did not believe the incident was serious enough to warrant one or they felt shame or embarrassment about the experience (Berlingieri et al., 2022; Burczyka, 2021; Speroni et al., 2014). This points to the lack of quality training and suggests that workers do not understand the continuum of violence and that “less serious” incidents can and should be reported to avoid escalation (Berlingieri, 2015a, 2015b; Berlingieri et al., 2022; Malhotra & Srivastava, 2016; Rikleem, 2019; Welsh et al., 2006). Current training, policies and other practices often focus on physical acts of violence and distinguish between physical and psychological forms of harassment and violence.

Workplace policies and procedures can also act as barriers to reporting harassment and violence at work. For example, workers have indicated that a lack of clarity surrounding the reporting procedures in workplace policies has been an added barrier to making a report (Berlingieri et al., 2022; McCann, 2005). Furthermore, in the case of zero-tolerance policies, workers may not report an instance of harassment and violence because they do not want the perpetrator to be fired (Smith, 2019), but simply want the abusive behaviour to stop. Clarifying reporting procedures and implementing a progressive accountability model might help reduce these barriers and ensure that those causing harm are held accountable for their actions and given the opportunity to learn and change their behaviour.

Workers may also choose not to report incidences of harassment and violence because the occurrence of the behaviour is well known and thus, they expect that a report is unlikely to initiate change (Epstein & Goodman, 2019; Lithwick, 2017; Marshall, 2005). They might also fear personal repercussions, including ostracism, retaliation, losing one’s job, or other negative impacts on career progression (Bruckert & Law, 2018; Burczyka, 2021; OSHA, n.d.; Rikleem, 2019; Villegas, 2019). Similarly, women and gender-diverse individuals who experience harassment and violence have reason to fear that they will not be believed, as historically, they have been blamed when they share experiences of violence and assault (Berlingieri et al., 2022; Bruckert & Law, 2018; Epstein & Goodman, 2019; Rikleem, 2019).

The success of prevention and intervention efforts is often measured with decreases in the number of harassment and violence reports received. However, there are various reasons, many of which have been outlined in this report, why victim-survivors might choose not to report to employers or workplace representatives (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; McDonald, 2012). Therefore, in the current landscape, this is more likely indicative that practices are not working and that workers are being silenced (Brock et al.,

2018). Instead, the expectation is that reports will increase, at least initially, when effective workplace practices are being used to their full potential, including when training is done properly and when appropriate and swift action is taken when a disclosure or report is made (Berlingieri, 2015b).

Supports for affected parties

Within the current Canadian landscape, legislation and regulations, there are minimal requirements for employers to provide support for workers who have experienced harassment and violence at work. Federally legislated employers are tasked with providing a referral list that includes local resources that are available to support victim-survivors through their experience of harassment and violence, including counselling, crisis lines and support groups. In some cases, workplaces may provide additional supports to victim-survivors, although it is not mandated by legislation. However, because they are not regulated, we must recognize that liberties can be taken in the ways these are offered and used, which might reflect inequitable practices.

Oftentimes the list of resources will include information for local shelters, sexual assault centres and other community-based organization who advocate for gender rights. These resources can seem inaccessible for victim-survivors of harassment and violence at work, especially if they believe that their experience was not serious or if they believe they need to physically go to the shelter to access support. Workplaces should communicate to workers that these resources are for anyone who is struggling with harassment and violence and that one does not have to be in need of shelter to benefit from the resources they offer. One way to support this endeavour is for workplaces to prioritize forming productive and meaningful relationships with these organizations before a crisis occurs. This will help workplaces understand the work and value of these organizations and to communicate this information to their employees when needed.

Workplaces can also fulfill their obligation to provide employees with supports by directing them to an Employment Assistant Program (EAP). EAPs often have free counselling services that can be helpful to victim-survivors, however, there are several important considerations. First, EAPs often have caps on the maximum number of counselling sessions an employee can access within their coverage. If the employee then needs further counselling sessions, they are required to start the process again with a new counsellor, which can re-traumatize victim-survivors. Furthermore, it is pertinent that EAPs have counsellors with specific training on harassment and violence, including sexual and gender-based harassment and violence and domestic violence, and that their practices are trauma and violence informed (Dale et al., 2021).

There have been recommendations to extend the breadth of support provided to employees beyond providing a list of local supports and resources. For instance, supports should include the opportunity to take a leave to process the trauma associated with experiencing harassment and violence. Some provinces have been progressive with legislation that allows employees to take paid, partially paid, or unpaid leaves (with job protection) when they experience sexual violence or intimate partner violence. However, even within more progressive systems, employees must be aware of this right, they must advocate for their leave and are often required to provide evidence to support their claim. Importantly, this goes against international recommendations for gender-responsive supports from the ILO C-190, which includes shifting the burden of proof away from victim-survivors (see ILO, n.d.b, for a detailed list of gender-responsive supports).

While allowing victim-survivors to take a leave is a step in the right direction, workplaces should also have systems in place to support employees who do so. For instance, workloads should be redistributed during absences so that workers do not return to work with an increased and overwhelming workload (Cayir et al., 2021). Ideally, leaves required to attend appointments (e.g., medical, legal) related to the harassment and violence should also be paid to avoid financial burden on the victim-survivor. Similarly, if needed supports are not accessible or covered by an EAP or employee benefits, employers should consider covering the costs (e.g., ongoing therapy). This represents a gender-responsive support when we consider that harassment and violence at work disproportionately affects women and gender-diverse individuals who tend to be paid less than their male colleagues and thus may be less able to sustain the economic burden of supporting themselves through the healing process (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2022; Fisher & Gunnison, 2001; Moyser, 2019; Pillinger, 2016; Rikleen, 2019).

Supports should also be extended to all those who are impacted by harassment and violence at work, including victim-survivors, bystanders, perpetrators and those receiving disclosures and reports. For example, this would include supports that are designed to educate and counsel those causing harm in the workplace (Oade, 2018). This practice links back to the idea of holding perpetrators responsible for their behaviour while providing them the opportunity to learn and rectify their actions. See the policy section for further discussion on progressive accountability models.

It is also important to note that at the most basic level, employers need to ensure that victim-survivors and bystanders who report incidences are protected from retaliation (OSHA, n.d.; Rikleen, 2019). This extends to protecting them from retaliation for using any supports that help them process their experiences.

Investigations

Investigations are a key component of a network of anti-harassment and violence practices. A good investigation is fair, effective, timely, thorough, confidential (to the extent possible), responsive and impartial (Hoel & Einarsen, 2011; Rubin & Thomlinson, 2018). Ideally, there should be a detailed plan in place prior to conducting investigations (Ishamel & Alemoru, 1999). While some researchers and practitioners (including lawyers) advise employers to ground their investigation process in organizational policies and procedures, the assumption is made that these policies and procedures are thorough and sound. In a network of interrelated practices, one practice can significantly shape others. For example, if a harassment and violence policy is not comprehensive and based on best-practices, it can result in a faulty investigation. It is critical that investigators have undertaken extensive training in proven investigative procedures (Becton et al., 2017; Ishmael & Alemoru, 1999), as well as harassment and violence in all its forms and their linkages along a continuum. Regarding the latter, it is critical to have an in-depth knowledge of GBHV and how inequities, gender imbalances and power differentials play out in forms of harassment and violence. Investigations should be gender-informed and acknowledge risks associated with women and gender-diverse individuals coming forward with allegations in the workplace, taking every precaution to reduce harms (e.g., Pillinger, 2018).

There are multiple outcomes to aim for with investigations, including resolution for victim-survivors, accountability for those who caused harm, the identification of risk factors and learning where gaps may exist in harassment and violence practices that need attention. Investigations, as with reports, offer employers and other workplace parties the opportunity to examine current workplace practices to improve and, where necessary, repair workplace culture, interpersonal relationships among employees, communication and management responses. A main goal is to reduce the incidence of harassment and

violence at work. When planning investigative procedures, organizations should consider the desired outcomes of investigations. When a situation of harassment and violence has resulted in a disclosure, report or grievance, there is an opportunity to learn. Questions to examine include: was the behaviour present at a “lower” level along the continuum and for how long; are there organizational factors that discouraged the victim-survivor(s) to informally or formally report their experiences; did the victim-survivor(s) fully understand reporting procedures and where to seek assistance; were the reporting procedures effective and did they work as intended; did management or other parties who became aware act effectively and promptly; were other policies and procedures in place unclear; were there contextual factors at play that may have contributed to the situation (e.g., job design, work processes and environment in a specific unit or department).

Investigations do not need to be carried out only when a formal report has been made. Organizations can carry out an investigation to learn more about a specific situation or a pattern that they are noticing in their organization. This allows the organization to learn more and, therefore, can be an effective prevention tool (e.g., Berlingieri, 2015b; Kelley & Mullen, 2006). Also, not all formal reports are investigated. The need for investigations can decrease in workplaces where a well-planned and comprehensive network of anti-harassment and violence practices exists and are carried out consistently.

During an investigation, it is important to maintain an open line of communication between the organization and all involved parties, including ensuring that those who report are aware of the process and updated on the progress of the investigation (Rikleem, 2019). Legal scholars have argued that if employees who reported the harassment and violence are not satisfied with the results of an investigation, the employer’s investigation process can be subject to a human rights complaint, a grievance, or the courts (Johnson, 2017). All parties involved in a situation – victim-survivors, harassers and witnesses – should be informed of their rights and responsibilities, as well as limitations to confidentiality. The alleged harasser should be provided with the opportunity to respond to the details of the report. This does not mean that they are to receive the original report form submitted by the victim-survivor (Rubin & Thomlinson, 2018). Doing so may be detrimental to the victim-survivor and the investigation (Rubin & Thomlinson, 2018). Instead, alleged harassers can be given a summary of the report including the main event(s) so that they are able to prepare a response (Rubin & Thomlinson, 2018).

Interim measures should be in place to protect victim-survivors, witnesses and other employees throughout the investigation as there may be a risk of escalation of harassment and violence and/or retaliation. It must be made clear that any actions taken in this regard are non-punitive (Rubin & Thomlinson, 2018). Workers reporting experiences of harassment and violence are most often transferred out, often against their will, especially in cases when a superior in a managerial role is behaving abusively (Rayner et al., 2002; Richards & Daley, 2003; Rikleem, 2019). Transferring the harasser may have advantages, including restoring employee morale in the workplace, department, or unit, especially when the harassment has been left unaddressed for a lengthy period and the manager’s authority and standing has been damaged (Richards & Daley, 2003). In situations where the harasser is a supervisor or manager of the employee who reported, the reporting relationship should be changed. The employee should not report to the supervisor/manager, nor should the supervisor/manager be responsible for the organization of the employee’s work assignments. Organizational practices related to the prerogative to manage employees can be misused to control, harass and retaliate against employees who report harassment and violence (Berlingieri, 2015b).

Mediation and arbitration

Mediation or arbitration by an impartial third party is often viewed as an informal intervention aimed at resolving the situation, avoiding escalation and a formal report. As such, mediation is typically possible only when the situation is at an early stage (Hubert, 2003; Keashly & Nowell, 2011; Vartia et al., 2003) and when the abusive behaviour is not considered serious (Hubert, 2003). Caution is required here with the latter. The subjective perception of victim-survivors is a common element in definitions and understandings of harassment and violence, therefore, any judgement on the seriousness of behaviour must involve the worker being harmed. The cumulative trauma and harm experienced by the victim, may preclude mediation as a viable practice and could do more harm (Namie & Namie, 2011). Also, experiences of harassment and violence are not the same for everyone and can be experienced differently by individuals located in diverse social and structural locations (Berlingieri, 2015b). Victim-survivors must never be forced into mediation. And mediation must not be used when there is malicious intent by the harasser.

Forms of harassment, such as bullying, can often erroneously be conflated with conflict. As a result, mediation can be reduced to a resolution of conflict enforcing the individualistic view of harassment and violence (Berlingieri, 2015b). Mediation can have several shortcomings, particularly if not developed and implemented properly. The misuse of organizational practices, such as mediation, ignores power differentials that may exist prior to and those that develop during the harassment process as it continues (Berlingieri, 2015b; Keashly & Nowell, 2011). Victim-survivors may fear retaliation and negative consequences as a result of entering into mediation, especially so if the harasser is a supervisor or manager (Berlingieri, 2015b; Hart, 2012; Keashly & Nowell, 2011). Another possible shortcoming of mediation is that it does not address or acknowledge the harm done to victim-survivors by past behaviours, thereby, potentially compounding the harm done (Keashly & Nowell, 2011). Also, mediation is a confidential process. As such, it may be difficult for workplaces to use it as a learning opportunity to inform prevention (Berlingieri, 2015b; Keashly & Nowell, 2011). If workplaces do not develop effective communication efforts surrounding mediation (and other practices), other employees do not see action being taken and, therefore, may interpret this apparent inaction as the workplace condoning the abusive behaviour (Berlingieri, 2015b; Keashly & Nowell, 2011). This may contribute to underreporting and the increase of negative consequences of harassment and violence. For many victim-survivors of sexual harassment and violence, the confidentiality offered by mediation is desired to alleviate fears of being scrutinized for speaking up or blamed for the harassment (McElwaine, 2019). Therefore, the balance between confidentiality and transparency is a challenge for workplaces.

Mediation can be a useful practice if not used in isolation (Caponecchia & Wyatt, 2011) and like with other practices, it is part of a well-planned set of interrelated practices (Berlingieri, 2015b). Although considered an informal practice, mediation requires thorough training for facilitators, extensive preparation of the parties involved and engagement and support from key stakeholders within the workplace (McMahon et al., 2022). All those who make decisions on which organizational practices will be applied to any situation must fully understand the continuum of violence, the role of power in harassment and violence, the advantages and disadvantages of mediation and under which circumstances it is most effective.

It is beyond the scope of the report to examine the many forms that mediation can take. However, it is important to briefly mention models of restorative justice. Different from typical forms of mediation, models based on restorative justice aims to “promote reflection, responsibility, behaviour change, and

repair harm” (Goldscheid, 2021, p. 706). Individuals who cause harm have the opportunity to acknowledge their negative behaviour and related impacts and seek rehabilitation. Victim-survivors can benefit from having questions answered and frustrations aired, having their experiences acknowledged and validated and obtaining a desired remedial outcome. For all parties involved, trust and relationships can be restored benefiting everyone in the workplace. Restorative justice also has the potential to determine the causes of harm (McMahon et al., 2022) and rectify those causes. Restorative justice approaches do have their critiques regarding their use in cases of GBHV (see Goldscheid, 2021, for debates about their use and research on their effectiveness).

While adopting a trauma- and violence-informed approach (TVIA) should be at the core of all anti-harassment and anti-violence practices, it is particularly critical when mediation is used in situations of GBHV (Oudshoorn et al., 2015). A trauma-informed approach is characterized by safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment voice and choice; and cultural, historical and gender issues (SAMHSA, 2014). “Violence” was added to this term to bring attention to the connection between trauma and violence (Government of Canada, 2018). TVIAs require “fundamental changes in how systems are designed, organizations function and practitioners engage with people” (Government of Canada, 2018). The four key principles of TVIA are: understanding “trauma and violence, especially structural violence, its prevalence and its impacts on peoples’ lives and behaviours”; the creation of emotionally, culturally and physically safe environments for all parties; fostering “opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection”; and “providing strengths-based and capacity-building supports” (Government of Canada, 2018). These principles attempt to restore what has been taken away from victim-survivors through experiences of GBHV. Thus, as McMahon and her colleagues (2022) state, “a trauma-informed restorative approach...allows the survivor a significant amount of choice and control, honors survivors’ self-determination, and views these individual experiences through a critical, intersectional lens that recognizes the complex personal, interpersonal, institutional, and societal factors that shape the experience of sexualized violence” (p. 1185). Centering the needs of victim-survivors of GBHV includes harms resulting from intersecting systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia (Coker, 2016).

Workplace risk assessment

Harassment and violence, including GBHV, exists in all occupations and sectors of employment. However, there are known factors that place some workers at a higher risk than others. These factors include workers’ social location, precarious employment status and immigration status. Groups of workers – particularly women, gender-diverse people and migrant workers – are disproportionately affected because of unequal power relations, low pay, precarious working conditions and times of economic crisis (Pillinger, 2016).

Other risk factors internal and external to a specific workplace or sector also increase the risk of harassment and violence. Examples of internal risk factors within workplaces or sectors include: type of work, conditions of work (including power disparities in the workplace, male-dominated workplaces or where women are working in traditionally “masculine” occupations, high frequency of young employees), lack of diversity, interacting with the public, serving of alcohol, working alone or in isolated areas, working on commission or tips and dependency on customer/client satisfaction, workplaces with some employees who are thought to be of high value or irreplaceable (see Berlingieri et al., 2022; Burczycka, 2021; Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016; Gómez-González et al., 2022; Schultz, 2018; Willness et al., 2007). The top risk factors for sexual harassment and violence also include a lack of institutional supports for victim-survivors, adherence to traditional gender roles in the workplace, lack of employment

opportunities, weak sanctions for perpetrators and weak policies related to GBHV (Groucutt et al., 2018). The poor design or lack of comprehensive anti-harassment and anti-violence organizational practices also increase the risks for workers experiencing and witnessing harassment and violence. External factors include family violence and hostile or aggressive clients, customers, patients and students. Women and gender-diverse individuals who work in, for example, sales, the service sector and healthcare, are at an increased risk of GBHV (e.g., Burczycka, 2021).

Workplace assessments should also include psychological and psychosocial risks of harassment and violence. Pillinger (2016) argues that harassment and violence most commonly manifest as psychological violence, which is invisible in the workplace despite it often taking the form of harmful psychological control. She also identifies how psychosocial risks at work are impacted by factors such as changes in the organization of work and in working conditions, globalization and new understandings of the risks faced by particular groups of workers.

Workplace assessments can be an effective prevention and intervention practice by assisting workplaces in identifying and eliminating risk factors. They can also inform effective and appropriate interventions. Workplace risk assessments should include both internal and external risk factors that place employees and others involved with the workplace at risk of harassment and violence. Assessments should also include barriers to reporting (Brock et al., 2018). Risk assessments that do not include risks faced by different groups of women and gender-diverse people increase the risk of GBHV (Pillinger, 2020). According to Pillinger (2020), “a gender-responsive approach acknowledges and makes visible the differences that exist between male and female workers, identifying their differing risks and proposing control measures so that effective solutions are provided for everyone” (p. 29). This must also include gender-diverse workers. Risk assessments must be gender-responsive during all stages of the assessment, which includes the identification of risks, the carrying out of the assessment, the development and implementation of measures to mitigate risk, the implementation and monitoring of the risk assessment and the review of the risk assessment and the measures to mitigate risk (Pillinger, 2020).

Conducting workplace risk assessments on harassment and violence, including GBHV, are a requirement of some legislative frameworks, for example, the Canada Labour Code amendments that came into force in January 2021. They are also a measure included in the ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 on harassment and violence in the world of work (Pillinger, 2020) which Canada has recently ratified. Some legislative frameworks provide conditions and timeframes for when an assessment should be updated. However, updates to workplace assessments should occur regularly and before harassment and violence becomes a problem, highlighting its importance as a prevention strategy (Rikleen, 2019). Changes to a workplace assessment can be triggered by investigation findings as well as lessons learned from other practices such as reports. Workplaces can also conduct research (through surveys and/or interviews) to learn more about risk factors from workers themselves. Assessments should also include confidential employee feedback. To encourage honesty, it would be best practice to have an external assessor (Rikleen, 2019). This external assessor should be a third-party with no vested interest in the organization’s profits or functioning, rather than internal counsel or the like (Brock et al., 2018). Throughout the workplace assessment process, there needs to be an integrated framework that considers, understands and incorporates the continuum of violence and thus acknowledges that problematic behaviours can escalate into larger issues over time (Cleary et al., 2009). Ideally risk assessments should result in a context-specific, specialized action plan for workplaces to address, monitor and prevent GBHV. In other words, the action plan should specifically target a workplace’s risk factors and not be a generic one-size-fits-all plan. Action plans are best developed collaboratively,

including supervisors, managers, co-workers (Berlingieri, 2015b; Strandmark & Rahm, 2014), health and safety representatives and unions.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of prevention and intervention practices remains one of the largest research gaps in the field (Caponecchia et al. 2020; Fisher & Peek-Asa, 2005; Runyan et al., 2000; Saam, 2010; Schat & Kelloway, 2006; Vartia & Leka, 2011). However, there are a few studies that have shown the positive effects of anti-harassment and anti-violence practices. For example, in a large study of British nurses, Deery, Walsh and Guest (2011) found that anti-harassment policies reduce the turnover intentions of racialized nurses.

As previously mentioned in this report, organizations need to shift away from a tick-mark approach to practices. An important part of this shift involves the ongoing monitoring of organizational practices and the readiness to make changes to practices when needed. This requires developing a comprehensive plan of practices and related procedures, learning from them and taking action when necessary to improve practices.

Evaluation entails examining whether and to what extent the practices have been successful in achieving desired goals and mitigating the impacts and costs of harassment and violence at work. Evaluations should be linked to explicit aims of prevention and intervention practices and problems identified in the organization (Hunt et al., 2010; Vartia & Leka, 2011), including identified risk factors in the workplace assessment and known consequences of harassment and violence. The evaluation process should include the measurement of short-, medium- and long-term outcomes (Vartia & Leka, 2011).

Monitoring and evaluation cannot be reduced only to counting the number of formal reports received. Research clearly shows that harassment and violence are grossly underreported. Approximately 10% of non-fatal incidents of workplace violence are formally reported (McCarthy & Mayhew, 2004). Over 90% of sexual assaults in Canada go unreported (see Johnson, 2006; Kong et al., 2003). Also, reporting levels may be skewed due to a variety of factors, including staff turnover (Cooper & Dranger, 2018). Having a single variable to measure success also does not assess growth in behavioral outcomes related to interventions such as training (Cooper & Dranger, 2018). Increases in reporting rates are to be expected when training is conducted, and other organizational practices are being properly implemented. This may signal that employees are feeling safer to report their experiences of harassment and violence. Hence, an increase in reporting levels can be a positive outcome of a prevention and intervention strategy.

There are various ways that organizations can monitor and evaluate their practices internally and with the assistance of researchers. Governments also have a role to play in monitoring and evaluating organizational practices (Dale et al., 2021). For example, governments can harness the rich data provided by mandatory reports that are part of legislation on harassment and violence.

Examples of possible avenues for learning more about the effectiveness of organizational practices include:

- Analyzing harassment and violence disclosures and reports for insights into patterns of harassment and discrimination in the workplace (Oade, 2018; Rikleen, 2019; Schultz, 2018). This should include,

for example, the number, nature and outcome of enquiries (Rayner et al., 2002); monitoring for cases of repeat harassers; departments or units with significant repeating reports; and tracking consistent workplace contextual and risk factors involved in cases (Berlingieri, 2015b; Rikleen, 2019).

- Extensive research has been done on the impacts of various forms of harassment and violence to individuals and workplaces (e.g., physical and mental health consequences, high turnover rates, absenteeism and presenteeism, decreased productivity, etc.) (for GBHV-specific resources, see Asencios-Gonzalez et al., 2018; Duvvury et al., 2022; Ponce-Gómez et al., 2022; Reeves & O’Learly-Kelly, 2007; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Swanberg et al., 2005; Vara-Horna et al., forthcoming). These impacts can be analyzed over time by workplaces to both monitor and evaluate anti-harassment and anti-violence practices.
- Employee surveys, interviews, focus groups and group discussion (Vartia & Leka, 2011).
- Exit interviews that include questions related to harassment and violence (Rayner et al., 2002).

A lack of awareness and knowledge of harassment and violence influence the readiness and willingness of workplaces, including senior leaders, managers and employees, to act (Vartia & Leka, 2011). This points to the link between training and awareness building within workplaces and other practices, including monitoring and evaluation. More research is required into the effectiveness of prevention and intervention practices, detailed procedures for the development and implementation of practices and a taxonomy to help organizations conduct monitoring and evaluation of practices.

Implications

This report brings to light key implications for policy, practice and research. Three key implications are outlined below.

- The next phase in preventing and responding to harassment and violence requires collective action and responsibility, a concept captured by the ILO C-190. The collective is now global. Since ratifying the convention Canada joins other ratified countries, in committing accountability to the provisions of ILO C-190.
- Accepted practices need to be evaluated and findings should be used to strengthen legislations and regulations, policies and other practices to better protect all workers. The evaluation framework needs to both focus on individual organizations and extend across workplaces and industries. The framework should also deepen the understanding of the impacts and costs of GBHV at work and where improvements can be made.
- A lack of knowledge mobilization has impeded the adoption of harassment and violence prevention and intervention practices. It is difficult for workplaces to find high-quality evidence-based information about practices to guide their work. No mechanisms exist to assess and make quality resources available broadly. Governments at all levels, working together, play an important role in rectifying this gap. For example, governments can bring together scholarly and community experts, and other stakeholders, to ensure that the development and implementation of best practices are evidence-based and reflect the lived experiences of victim-survivors.

Conclusion

Harassment and violence, particularly GBHV, at work is a complex issue that cannot be prevented without addressing the social structural processes that cause and maintain its various forms. This

requires making harassment and violence visible and changing the ways in which its various forms have been institutionalized, and hence rendered invisible, particularly in occupations overrepresented by women. Known factors related to specific occupations, work arrangements, job designs and workplace contexts place workers at greater risk of harassment and violence, including GBHV. Some jobs, mostly those performed by women, have been sexualized, feminized and racialized in ways that increase workers' risk of experiencing GBHV. For instance, female restaurant servers are often required to wear revealing clothing and are expected to tolerate inappropriate commentary from customers to subsidize their inadequate income with tips. Future research and policy developments must focus on changing these root causes of GBHV.

To adequately understand and address harassment and violence at work, it is important to recognize violence as a continuum of behaviours and practices and how this conceptualization shapes prevention and timely, effective intervention. Further research is required into the multitude of ways in which forms of harassment and violence are interrelated. Increased education and awareness efforts are also required to ensure all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the continuum of violence.

Driven by legislative compliance and risk avoidance, workplaces have predominantly adopted a tick-box approach to anti-harassment and anti-violence practices, such as policies and training. Simply having these practices in place is insufficient (Berlingieri, 2015b). Furthermore, the shift toward gender neutrality has impeded organizations in developing and implementing effective practices. Currently, accepted practices lack gender-responsiveness. Further research is required to determine how this can be accomplished.

Attention must be given to how prevention and intervention practices are developed, implemented and used daily within workplaces (Berlingieri, 2015b). A well-planned anti-harassment and anti-violence strategy views these practices as interrelated, ongoing and mutually constitutive (Berlingieri, 2015b; Gherardi, 2012). That is, they shape and rest on one another. They are rich sources of information that can provide insights about effectiveness, and information about the unique context and risk factors for individual workplaces and sectors. Changes in legislation, accountability models and education are required to encourage workplaces to work toward long-term, systemic change. Doing so requires a deep understanding of the root causes of harassment and violence and a shift away from a reactionary model to a preventative one.

By ratifying the ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206, Canada is poised to be a leader on the global stage in preventing and responding to harassment and violence at work. It can continue to play a mediating role in fostering research and connections to create forums and opportunities for employers, workplace stakeholders and unions to share challenges and collaborate on developing evidence-based practices for eliminating harassment and violence at work. Governments on all levels can help organizations work together to share information and strategies, rather than tackling the problem of workplace harassment and violence in isolation. There are many advantages to working together, including saving costs associated with implementing and assessing practices, especially for organizations within the same industry where workplace contexts are similar (Berlingieri, 2015b). It is only through sustained collaborative efforts that harassment and violence in the world of work can be effectively prevented and addressed.

Knowledge Mobilization Activities

The core goal of the knowledge mobilization plan for this project is to make evidence accessible, understandable and useful for knowledge users. Knowledge mobilization efforts will be aimed at a range of cross-sectoral stakeholders, including business leaders; employer representatives (e.g., human resources); union leaders, representatives and advocates; health and safety representatives; policymakers; academics; and practitioners working in multiple fields (including harassment and violence, occupational health and safety and organizational studies) and, very importantly, workers. This project will be supported by an extensive social media campaign and publicly available webpages that will house knowledge outputs (this report and the accompanying evidence brief) and related resources. Knowledge mobilization and translation activities will include seminars, webinars, conference presentations, electronic mailings, posters, summaries and infographics. These activities and resources will ensure the exchange of ideas and knowledge with all stakeholders.

Specific knowledge mobilization targets and activities are as follows:

Academics who study workplace harassment and violence	Project activities will include a conference presentation (on May 31, 2023) at the Canadian Sociological Association (Violence and Society Research Cluster) taking place at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences (York University, Toronto, Ontario).
Labour organizations, employer representatives, advocates who support workers and harassment and violence practitioners	This project has major policy and practice implications for these groups. Along with the main report, plain language summaries, posters, infographics, etc. of all findings will be developed and disseminated. In addition to having implications for workplaces, research on workplace harassment and violence has relevance and implications for practitioners and advocates who work with employers and workers. Webinars and presentations are a particularly good venue for reaching these audiences.
Government	CREVAWC holds multiple research and knowledge mobilization contracts with provincial and national ministries and are frequently involved in discussions and debriefs on advancing efforts to end gender-based violence. Learnings from this project will be shared with ministry representatives through a variety of activities.
General public	Broader dissemination methods will be used to reach a broad general audience. Activities will include media dissemination, blogs, social media posts (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn).
All groups	Dedicated webpages will be created to house all project materials and to engage all stakeholders. As part of other projects on harassment and violence at work, including existing projects funded by Employment and Social Development Canada, to provide practical workplace solutions to prevent and respond to harassment and violence at work, we will share findings via a bilingual Summit (presentation) and integrated into Leadership Seminars and Communities of Practice (CoP) Learning and Development Sessions (open to employers, union representative, community-based organizations and academics).

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