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Harassment Prevention in the Workplace: Your Role as a Leader

Leaders & the #MeToo Movement

“Companies and their leaders have a unique opportunity to publicly take a stance to denounce bad behavior and encourage those who have experienced discrimination, harassment and abuse to come forward in an effort to drive larger organizational change.”

Why You, As a Leader, Need to Care

Risks of Tolerating Negative Behaviors

- Tarnishing of organization's reputation/funding
- Lack of trust
- Lost productivity
- Low morale
- Absenteeism
- Premature turnover



Prevention Starts at the Top

- Workplace culture either allows harassment and negative behaviors to flourish or prevents it
- Modeled and led by leaders
- Communicate sense of urgency about raising awareness and promoting prevention
- Hold people accountable

Your Role in Harassment Prevention

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Listen

Respond

Act



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- Know and follow your organization's policies and procedures
- When an employee reports a complaint say, "Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. We take them very seriously."
- Show empathy and demonstrate your willingness to hear and objectively discuss complaints



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Act

Respond

- Respond promptly
- Immediately report any complaint or incident to the proper party
- Maintain confidentiality wherever possible but don't guarantee it
- Do not object if an employee prefers to or bypasses the standard chain of command
- **Do not** engage in retaliation



Listen

Respond

Act

Act

- Help to ensure harassment stops
- Do **not** engage in retaliation
- Create and execute a plan **promptly**. Determine:
 - The scope of the investigation
 - Who will investigate
 - What evidence will be collected
 - With whom you will talk

#MeToo: It's Not Just Happening in Hollywood

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Harassment in Healthcare

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Relevant Industry Statistics

- Of **8,300 health-care related EEOC complaints** (1999-2016); more than 3,000 were from employees at hospitals; 1,500 from workers at nursing care facilities; 380 claims in physicians offices
- 2016 JAMA report found that among physician-scientists, **30% of females and 4% of males reported having experienced sexual harassment**;
- AMA's Code of Medical Ethics calls sexual harassment in medicine "unethical" because it exploits status and power inequalities, affects employee work performance, impacts professional advancement and can jeopardize patient care
- One of the **largest jury awards for a single sexual harassment claim** was to a PA who faced abuse even after reporting the behavior; resulted in **\$168M ruling** against Catholic Healthcare West in San Francisco

Risk Factors To Be Managed

Workplace conditions that may increase harassment and other difficult behavior:

- Indifference
- Lack of diversity (gender, identity, racial, etc.)
- Not conforming to workplace norms
- Culture and language differences
- Unchecked abuses in power
- Coarsened social discourse outside the workplace

Key Strategies to Address Risk Factors

- Educate leadership on their role as culture setters
- Increase diversity at all levels
- Actively foster a culture of inclusion; be intentional about ensuring that diverse employees understand laws, workplace norms, and policies
- Pay attention to relations among and within work groups
- Actively build a culture of civility and respect that discourages the type of conduct that leads to harassment



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