

2022 Rubric on Areas of Work for Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Action Collaborative on Preventing
Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

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This rubric helps organizations identify and assess where they are doing work that is consistent with the findings and recommendations from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s 2018 report on the *Sexual Harassment of Women*. It also serves as a tool for organizations to identify opportunities to innovate and pilot new efforts and approaches to preventing sexual harassment. The rubric is organized below into four areas that reflect the major focus of the work: Prevention, Response, Remediation, and Evaluation. Although not an area of work for preventing sexual harassment, an additional fifth section of this document provides an optional way for organizations to share how they are strategically pursuing the organizational changes called for in the 2018 report.

Prevention

Embedding the Values of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect into Recruitment, Hiring, Admissions, Retention, Promotion, and Advancement.

Research shows that an organization that is male-dominated (in number, leaders, and/or culture) is one of the strongest predictors of sexual harassment.¹ Therefore, organizations should take explicit steps to achieve greater gender and racial equity,² and to improve representation at every level. Building on the 2018 National Academies report on *Sexual Harassment of Women* and the 2020 National Academies report on *Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women*, this includes:

- Strategies for hiring that take into account and gather information about harmful behavior by an applicant at prior institutions
- Develop processes to evaluate professional behavior in promotion / advancement and performance review
- Restructure equity work to provide those leading it with more institutional power (e.g., creating a chief diversity officer position, centralizing / decentralizing staff structure, etc.)³
- Practices for diversifying applicant pools and mitigating bias in recruitment efforts, such as:
 - » Working continuously to identify promising candidates from underrepresented groups and expanding the networks from which candidates are drawn

1 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/4#46>

2 https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#chapter06_pz144-6

3 <https://www.nap.edu/read/25585/chapter/8#123>

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- » Developing evaluation criteria for each job in advance of beginning the hiring process and educating hiring committees about bias
- » Writing job descriptions to appeal to a broad range of applicants (e.g. by avoiding gendered wording and writing job descriptions as broadly as possible) and using structured interviews
- » Holding those responsible for admissions and hiring decisions accountable for outcomes at every stage of the application and selection process
- » For additional recommended practices see the relevant research findings from the 2020 National Academies report on *Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women (Chapter 4, Finding 4-1, page 117)*⁴
- Practices for mitigating bias in promotion and advancement, such as:
 - » Developing processes for promotion/advancement and performance reviews to recognize and reward an individual's contributions to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion
 - » Establishing clear metrics for success and advancement and including someone who has been trained to spot bias involved at every step of the evaluation process
 - » Ensuring that performance reviews are conducted by more than one individual so decisions are based on more than one perspective
 - » For additional recommended practices see the relevant research findings from the 2020 National Academies report on *Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women (Chapter 4, Finding 4-3, page 118)*⁵
- Practices to improve retention, such as:
 - » Ensuring fair and equitable access to resources and information about those resources to all employees and students, rather than relying on informal communications
 - » Monitoring use of policies and revising them when necessary to meet the needs of all groups
 - » Creating policies and practices that address workers' needs to balance work and family roles, such as limiting department meetings and functions to specified working hours
 - » For additional recommended practices see the relevant research findings from the 2020 National Academies report on *Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women (Chapter 4, Finding 4-4, page 119)*⁶

Civility or Respect Promotion Programs.

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that anti-harassment efforts be combined with civility or respect promotion programs as a mechanism for highlighting behaviors that faculty, staff, and students should engage in, rather than focusing just on those behaviors they should avoid (such as sexual harassment, bullying, and incivility).⁷ Research cited in the report also warns that incivility can be used “as an instrument of oppression, used to ostracize women, people of color, and other undervalued minorities from organizational life” (known as selective incivility).⁸ In

4 <https://www.nap.edu/read/25585/chapter/7#117>

5 <https://www.nap.edu/read/25585/chapter/7#118>

6 <https://www.nap.edu/read/25585/chapter/7#119>

7 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#130>

8 Cortina, L. M., Kabat-Farr, D., Magley, V. J., and Nelson, K. (2017). Researching rudeness: The past, present, and future of the science of incivility. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 22*(3), 308.

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order for civility or respect programs to lead to benefits for more than those in the majority, such programs need to incorporate this research and the experiences of individuals with marginalized identities.

Leadership Education and Skill Development.

The 2018 National Academies report found that strong and effective leaders at all levels in an organization are required to make system-wide changes to climate and culture in higher education, and that they play a significant role in establishing and maintaining an organization's culture and norms.⁹ This includes programs and resources that support and facilitate leaders at every level (e.g., university, school/college, department, classroom, laboratory, etc.) in developing relevant skills. Building on the 2018 National Academies report, this includes programs and resources that:

- Provide skills on how to recognize, correct, and/or address sexual harassment, especially gender harassing behaviors (e.g., gender-insulting remarks, profane terms of address, sexually degrading images in the ambient environment) and sexual harassment that is combined with other forms of harassment or discrimination (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion), before they become severe or pervasive enough to constitute illegal behavior
- Ensure a clear understanding of policies and procedures for handling sexual harassment issues, and cases where sexual harassment combines with other forms of harassment or discrimination (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion)
- Provide skills on setting expectations for behavior
- Prepare individuals in various levels of leadership on how to handle a notification of sexual harassment
- Teach how to take explicit steps to create a culture and climate to reduce and prevent sexual harassment—and not just protect the organization against liability
- Develop conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, and/or de-escalation skills

Bystander Intervention Programs (specific to higher education or field, and/or audience).

Bystander intervention programs as a concept is an important tool in teaching people how to recognize and respond when they see problematic behavior. An underlying premise of this type of education is that it promotes a culture of support, not one of silence, by calling out negative behaviors on the spot.¹⁰ The 2018 National Academies report recommends institutions make all members of an academic community responsible for helping to create a culture where abusive behavior is seen as an aberration, not as the norm.¹¹ It also notes that training/education should be tailored¹² to a specific population or group in higher education (e.g., graduate students, staff, faculty) and/or to a specific academic environment (e.g., engineering department, small liberal arts college setting, etc.). In order for bystander intervention programs to lead to benefits for more than those in the majority, such programs need to incorporate the research on how sexual harassment can combine with other forms of harassment and discrimination (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion) and reflect the experiences of individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

9 https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/24994/chapter/8#chapter06_pz167-3

10 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#132>

11 See Recommendation 15: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#187>

12 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#153>

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Audience-specific anti-sexual harassment education.

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that anti-sexual harassment education programs clearly communicate behavioral expectations and specify consequences for failing to meet those expectations. Education programs should specifically focus on and be evaluated for their ability to change behavior. Education programs should explicitly identify gender harassment as the most common form of sexual harassment, and convey the damage of gender harassment. Finally, education should be conducted using live, qualified trainers and offer participants specific examples of inappropriate conduct. Anti-sexual harassment education should be tailored to a specific population or group in higher education (e.g., graduate students, postdocs, staff, or faculty) and tailored to a specific academic environment (e.g., department, field of work/study, external education programs like field research or internships, etc.).¹³ In order for anti-sexual harassment education to lead to benefits for more than those in the majority, such education needs to incorporate the research on how sexual harassment can combine with other forms of harassment and discrimination (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion) and reflect the experiences of individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

Ally or Ambassador Programs.

According to the 2018 National Academies report, all members of a campus community — staff, trainees, students, faculty, administrators — as well as members of research and training sites should assume responsibility for promoting civil and respectful education, training, and work environments, and stepping up and confronting those whose behaviors and actions create sexually harassing environments.¹⁴ To foster ownership of addressing this issue, ally¹⁵ or ambassador programs train and/or work to support cohorts of faculty, students, or staff embedded within existing academic ecosystems (departments, colleges, etc.) in leading change. These programs could focus work on either a relevant specific topic (sexual harassment, bias, diversity, etc.) or a specific cohort of people (for example: those who identify as men or as cisgender heterosexual). These types of programs aim to make the entire academic community responsible for reducing and preventing sexual harassment. In order for ally or ambassador programs to lead to benefits for more than those in the majority, such programs need to incorporate the research on how sexual harassment can combine with other forms of harassment and discrimination (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion) and reflect the experiences of individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

Prevention Program or Toolkits.

The 2018 National Academies report found that systemwide change to the culture and climate in higher education is required to prevent and effectively address all three forms of sexual harassment. Despite significant attention in recent years, there is no evidence to suggest that current policies, procedures, and approaches have resulted in a significant reduction in sexual harassment. It is time to consider approaches that address the systems, cultures, and climates that enable sexual harassment to perpetuate.¹⁶ In line with this, individualized Prevention Programs or toolkits may prove useful in helping organizational leaders engage with students and other campus community members to address the issue. Included here are innovative, multi-step programs or toolkits that allow specific academic cohorts or ecosystems (departments, colleges, academic leaders, etc.) to identify and develop a roadmap for collective prevention of sexual harassment. These programs might help organize an action team, facilitate review of relevant data to develop a tailored strategy, consider the ecosystem's culture to identify potential areas for improvement, etc. In order for prevention

13 https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#chapter06_pz170-2

14 See Recommendation 15: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#187>

15 <https://www.nap.edu/read/25585/chapter/6#89>

16 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9>

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programs or toolkits to lead to benefits for more than those in the majority, such programs need to incorporate the research on how sexual harassment can combine with other forms of harassment and discrimination (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion) and reflect the experiences of individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

Identifying and Reinforcing Community Values.

The 2018 National Academies report found that environments with organizational systems and structures that value and support diversity, inclusion, and respect are environments where sexual harassment behaviors are less likely to occur.¹⁷ Efforts to identify, develop, and reinforce shared community values (at various levels within an organization) will build buy-in for and underline the importance of maintaining a civil and respectful environment.

Other efforts to address or prevent sexual harassment.

The 2018 National Academies report found that judicial interpretation of Title IX and Title VII has incentivized organizations to create policies, procedures, and training on sexual harassment focused on symbolic compliance with current law and avoiding liability, and not on preventing sexual harassment.¹⁸ A major goal of the Action Collaborative is to move beyond solutions that reflect adherence to legal requirements, which are necessary but insufficient to drive the change needed to address sexual harassment.¹⁹ *If you are piloting an effort that takes this challenge to heart, that can be connected with the findings and recommendations from the 2018 National Academies report on the Sexual Harassment of Women, and is not clearly linked to another category in this section, you can make a case for why it qualifies.*

Response

Improved Policies:

Policies and procedures around preventing, addressing, and remediating the harm of sexual harassment and standards of behavior should be specific, clear, accessible, consistent, and shared with your community.²⁰ Building on the 2018 National Academies report, improved policies are ones that:

- Provide clear, specific, and accessible expectations of behavior, explicitly including gender harassment
- Include a range of clear disciplinary actions that correspond with the severity of the harassment
- Provide guidelines for determining consequences, discipline, or sanctions that correspond to the severity of the behavior and ensure consistency across an institution
- Account for and reflect that pervasive gender harassment (targeted or ambient) does the same professional and psychological damage as an isolated instance of sexual coercion²¹
- Describe options for reporting/handling an experience of harassment
- Is consistent or standardized across different populations and/or parts of an organization
- Articulate that sexual harassment is considered equally important as research misconduct in terms of its effect on the integrity of research

¹⁷ https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#chapter06_pz144-6

¹⁸ See Finding 2 from Chapter 5: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/7#118>

¹⁹ See Finding 1 from Chapter 5: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/7#118>

²⁰ <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#143>

²¹ <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/4#31>

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- Clearly state that the policy applies to educational, research, or work situations that are off campus as well and describes how the process works in those situations
- Provide timelines for the grievance process
- Describe the timelines and process for handling disciplinary actions for those with tenure
- Reflect research and knowledge of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, as a way of limiting the harm caused by the institutional response²²

Trauma-Informed Programs and Practices:

Research by Smith and Freyd shows that institutional responses that are not trauma-informed can cause significant harm to the person reporting the harassment; sometimes this harm can be worse than the original harassment they experienced.²³ Trauma-informed programs and practices can include:

- How an institution sets up and implements their response system (i.e. using knowledge of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder when designing the system; providing a variety of support services that allows the person who experienced the harm to meet their needs without having to proceed with a formal investigation),
- How individuals at an organization respond when someone discloses information or is interviewed about an experience

Providing Anonymous and Non-mandatory Reporting Resources and Tools:

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that institutions “provide alternative and less formal means of recording information about the experience and reporting the experience, and/or for notifying the institution about the experience.”²⁴ These non-formal mechanisms would also enable targets to access support services without requiring a formal report to the organization. As described in the 2018 National Academies report, such alternative and informal mechanisms include:

- Anonymous reporting mechanisms or tools
- Tools for documenting and “time-stamping” an experience without notifying an organization
- Enabling some faculty and staff to serve as target-led²⁵ responsible employees that can provide support, information, and resources and can respect the person’s wishes regarding reporting/notifying the organization about any and all sexual harassment that was disclosed (Such as the University of Oregon’s policy²⁶)
- Channels outside of the faculty or usual workplace hierarchy, such as an ombudsperson

Implementing Restorative or Transformative Justice and Alternative Means of Resolutions:

The 2018 National Academies report states that “in an effort to change behavior and improve the climate, it may also be appropriate for institutions to undertake some rehabilitation-focused measures, even though these may not be sanctions per se. Such responses might include opportunities to learn, empathize, and recognize and value differences, and they might involve focus groups with professional facilitators, participation in restorative justice circles, and empathy

²² <https://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/articles/sf2013.pdf> and <https://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/articles/sf2017.pdf> and <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-36500-001>

²³ <https://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/articles/sf2013.pdf> and <https://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/articles/sf2017.pdf> and <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-36500-001>

²⁴ See recommendation 6: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#182> and section on Target-led Institutional Response: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#138>

²⁵ See section on Target-led Institutional Response: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#138>

²⁶ <https://investigations.uoregon.edu/student-directed-employee>

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training.”²⁷ Additionally, the report notes that “target-led resolution options and mechanisms” can reduce the harm that targets experience when reporting an experience of sexual harassment.²⁸ Examples of a target-led resolution can include restorative or transformative justice and the use of an ombuds officer.²⁹

Improved Communication and Increased Transparency:

The 2018 National Academies report describes the importance of the community believing that reports of sexual harassment will be taken seriously, that those reporting experiences will not be harmed, and that perpetrators will be held accountable (because these factors signal an organizational climate that does not tolerate sexual harassment and such a climate is a predictor of lower rates of sexual harassment).³⁰ For a community to believe these things, the 2018 National Academies report cites the importance of increased transparency and clear communication.³¹ This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Effectively Communicating about Policies and Resources**, such as transparently and effectively communicating about the process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating sexual harassment, and about the resources available to those who experience sexual harassment³²
- **Courageously Communicating about Sexual Harassment that Occurs**: as the research by Freyd³³ describes, this includes cherishing and honoring those who report or blow the whistle; bearing witness, being accountable, and apologizing; and talking openly about the findings from self-studies and anonymous climate surveys
- **Increased Transparency About the Handling of Reports of Sexual Harassment**, such as providing statistical annual reports on the sexual harassment that is reported to an organization³⁴
- **Sharing Findings of Responsibility During Reference Checks**, such as policy changes to allow the sharing of findings of responsibility with other institutions that are checking references for an employee
- **Banning the Use of Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreements** that protect the perpetrator in cases of sexual harassment, and thus harm the target by not allowing them to share and discuss their experience³⁵

Addressing Gender Harassment and Other Harmful Behaviors:

The 2018 National Academies report found that gender harassment is by far the most common form of sexual harassment,³⁶ that it is as harmful as the other types of sexual harassment,³⁷ and that addressing gender harassment may prevent the other forms of sexual harassment.³⁸ Additionally it found that incivility can create environments where sexual harassment thrives and is more likely to occur.³⁹ Addressing incivility, bullying, gender harassment, other

27 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8?term=rehabilitation-focused#145>

28 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#138>

29 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#140>

30 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8>

31 https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#chapter06_pz163-3

32 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#143>

33 <https://theconversation.com/when-sexual-assault-victims-speak-out-their-institutions-often-betray-them-87050>

34 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#145>

35 See Recommendation 11: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#185>

36 See Finding 6 from chapter 2: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/4#49>

37 See Finding 2 from chapter 4: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/6#90>

38 See Recommendation 2: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#181>

39 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/4?term=incivility#27>

harmful behaviors (e.g. harassment or discrimination based on other protected characteristics such as race, disability, sexuality, and religion) early can help ensure behaviors don't escalate. Strategies and mechanisms to do this may include:

- Educating department chairs to address and call out harmful behavior
- Developing a range of consequences for initial incidents and potential consequences if the behavior is continued
- Developing a guide to recognizing such behaviors
- Clearly articulating that such behaviors violate the policies and values of the organization
- Incorporating consideration of such behaviors in performance reviews

Treating Sexual Harassment as a Violation of Research Integrity:

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that “academic institutions should consider sexual harassment equally important as research misconduct in terms of its effect on the integrity of research.”⁴⁰ They should:

- Increase collaboration among offices that oversee the integrity of research (*i.e., those that cover ethics, research misconduct, diversity, and harassment issues*);
- Centralize resources, information, and expertise;
- Provide more resources for handling complaints and working with targets; and
- Implement sanctions on researchers found guilty of sexual harassment.”

Implementing this recommendation may also include efforts to clearly classify, communicate, and discipline sexual harassment as a serious violation of research integrity.

Remediation

Increased or Enhanced Confidential Resources and Support Services:

The 2018 National Academies report notes that providing confidential support services, which allow a target or survivor to speak with someone in confidence, can be “the difference between getting help and staying silent” (*Not Alone – The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault*).⁴¹ Providing support services is an important part of organizations reducing the harm that sexual harassment inflicts and creating supportive environments for targets of sexual harassment. Such confidential support services may include:

- On-campus counselors and advocates—like those who work or volunteer in sexual assault centers, victim advocacy offices, women's and health centers, and ombuds offices
- Healthcare providers that specialize in sexual violence and trauma
- Counselors that specialize in sexual assault and trauma
- Legal services

⁴⁰ https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/7#chapter05_pz134-2 and see Recommendation 4d: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/24994/chapter/9#182>

⁴¹ <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#140>

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Importantly, these resources should be made available to populations beyond students (i.e. faculty, staff, post-doctoral candidates, interns, fellows, and medical residents). In order for confidential resources and support services to benefit more than those in the majority, such resources need to incorporate the research on how sexual harassment can combine with other forms of harassment and discrimination (e.g., related to race, disability, sexuality, or religion) and reflect the experiences of individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

Honoring Targets:

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that “institutions should convey that reporting sexual harassment is an honorable and courageous action.”⁴² This type of commitment should be extended to targets, victims, or survivors who come forward to share or report their experience.

Preventing Retaliation:

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that academic institutions should develop approaches to prevent the target from experiencing or fearing retaliation in academic settings.⁴³ Implementing this recommendation may include:

- Anti-retaliation plans
- Policies and educational materials that clearly outline what retaliation looks like and how to identify it when it occurs
- Policies that clearly outline actions that can and will be taken to ensure the target of the harassment is able to continue their academic work (such as mutual no contact orders between the accused and accuser, changing class schedules, changing the locks at the housing facility or workplace, rescinding building access for the accused, and reassigning advisors, mentees, and supervisors)
- Education programs or information on how to not inadvertently retaliate
- Education programs and guides for how leaders should handle retaliation when it occurs

Reintegration Strategies and Programs:

The 2018 National Academies report states that “institutions need to consider the kind of support individual targets might need immediately after the incident(s) and how to help them continue to manage their education and work over the long term.”⁴⁴ Efforts to follow this guidance may include:

- Procedures for and ways to reintegrate those involved in sexual harassment cases (targets, bystanders, and accused persons) into the campus community and into their work
- Use of restorative justice to develop plans for how a target and perpetrator can proceed going forward

Reducing Power Differentials:

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that academic institutions should consider power-diffusion mechanisms to reduce the risk of sexual harassment.⁴⁵ Implementing this recommendation may include:

⁴² See Recommendation 6: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#182>

⁴³ See Recommendation 6: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#182>

⁴⁴ <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#142>

⁴⁵ https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#chapter06_pz154-6 and Recommendation 5: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#182>

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- **Funding Models** to reduce power differentials between Advisors and Trainees, such as programs and policies that provide bridge funding, allow the decision making around student funding to be made by committee rather than a single individual
- **Research or Other Academic Mentorship Structures** to reduce power differentials, such as programs and/or policies that facilitate mentorship through a network, committee-based structure, or that identifies a group of faculty that can serve as advisors outside of a student's department
- **Faculty Professional Development and Mentorship Programs** to reduce power differentials between junior and senior faculty, such as programs and/or policies that facilitate skills development, cohort creation, and navigation of the promotion and advancement processes with peer and near-peer faculty members

Other efforts to remediate the harm of sexual harassment and/or support those that experience sexual harassment, such as:

- Strategies and services that provide support to the target (even if not confidential), and that limit the damage from sexual harassment
- Other avenues for reducing the power differential between advisors and trainees or between junior and senior faculty such that there are fewer opportunities to use harassment to exert power over people
- Strategies, policies, and process that support populations that are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment or experience sexual harassment more often (i.e., Black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and multi-racial women, sexual and gender diverse populations, and international students with visas)

Evaluation

Measuring the Prevalence of Sexual Harassment.

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that organizations should not rely on official/formal reports of sexual harassment as a measure of the prevalence of the problem because it is rare for targets of sexual harassment to formally notify or report their experience. As such, climate surveys that use standardized, well-validated measures are the best way to estimate the prevalence of sexual harassment in a population. The 2018 National Academies report and 2021 Action Collaborative Guidance Document provides evidence-based information about how to conduct climate surveys that measure the prevalence of sexually harassing behaviors.^{46,47} Importantly, any climate survey effort should avoid using the term “sexual harassment” or “sexual misconduct” in the survey (title, questions, answers, etc.), and should assess specific behaviors without requiring the participant to label the behaviors as “sexual harassment” or “sexual misconduct”. Work in this area qualifies if an organization has done one of the following:

- Conducted a climate survey to measure the prevalence of sexual harassment for the first time
- Improved an existing climate survey by adjusting questions, approaches, analyses, etc. to align with research outlined in the Action Collaborative's 2021 Guidance Document

⁴⁶ See Recommendation 8: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#183>

⁴⁷ Merhill, N. M., K. A. Bonner, and A. L. Baker (Eds.). 2021. *Guidance for Measuring Sexual Harassment Prevalence Using Campus Climate Surveys*. Washington, DC: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26346>.

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- Designed or applied a climate survey to assess the experiences of a population that hasn't been adequately studied⁴⁸ (such as faculty, staff, or post-docs; Black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and multi-race individuals; sexual and gender diverse populations; people with disabilities; and immigrants)⁴⁹

Conducting qualitative research on the experiences of sexual harassment.

Though qualitative assessments are not a substitute for climate surveys, they can be useful in providing key background information and highlighting the experiences and perceptions of targets of oppression (such as those who have experienced sexual harassment). Additionally, in small organizations or units in which it would not be possible to ensure anonymity for climate survey respondents, qualitative research methods can be utilized to understand how sexual harassment is being experienced (but will not be able to provide prevalence numbers). This can be particularly valuable for better understanding the sexual harassment experiences of those in underrepresented and/or vulnerable groups,⁵⁰ including Black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and multi-race individuals; people with disabilities; immigrants; sexual and gender diverse populations; and postdoctoral trainees. Your work qualifies if it involves any of the following qualitative research on the experiences of sexual harassment: interviews, case studies, focus groups, exit interviews, and/or sociolegal methods.

Evaluating Prevention Programs.

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that research be conducted on the effectiveness of prevention programs, and not just for white women but also for individuals in underrepresented and/or vulnerable groups, including Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American women; people with disabilities; immigrants; sexual and gender diverse populations, and postdoctoral trainees.⁵¹ While sexual harassment training/education can be useful in improving knowledge of policies and of behaviors that constitute sexual harassment, it has not been demonstrated to prevent sexual harassment or change people's behaviors or beliefs, and some training shows a *negative* effect (or impact). Therefore, sexual harassment prevention efforts need to be evaluated and studied to determine their efficacy (e.g., do they deter harassing conduct?) and safety (e.g., are those who report harassment protected from retaliation?), and also to indicate where they need to be changed or improved. The 2018 National Academies report recommends that academic institutions should work with researchers to evaluate and assess their efforts to create a more diverse, inclusive, and respectful environment, and to create effective policies, procedures, and education programs.

Evaluating policies and procedures.

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that research be conducted on the effectiveness of policies and procedures, and not just for white women but also for individuals in underrepresented and/or vulnerable groups, including Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American women; people with disabilities; immigrants; sexual and gender diverse populations, and postdoctoral trainees.⁵² Research should be conducted to assess ability to prevent and stop sexually harassing behavior, to alter perception of organizational tolerance for sexually harassing behavior, and to reduce the negative consequences from reporting the incidents. This includes research on formal and informal reporting mechanisms, mandatory reporting requirements, and approaches to supporting and improving communication with the target.

⁴⁸ When conducting this research, organizations should utilize methods that allow them to disaggregate their data by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity to reveal the different experiences across populations.

⁴⁹ See Recommendation 14a: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#186>

⁵⁰ See Recommendation 14a: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#186>

⁵¹ See Recommendation 14b: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#186>

⁵² See Recommendation 14 b, c, d, and e: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#186>

Other methods for monitoring climate on an ongoing basis.

Climate surveys are designed to be periodic assessments that occur at >1 year intervals, leaving significant gaps of time during which the climate isn't being monitored. Organizations should monitor climate between survey intervals using mechanisms that do not rely on formal reports and investigations.⁵³ Such methods should be designed to examine the experiences of those in underrepresented and/or vulnerable groups,⁵⁴ including Black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and multi-race individuals; people with disabilities; immigrants; sexual and gender diverse populations; and postdoctoral trainees; and they should utilize methods that allow them to disaggregate their data to reveal the different experiences across populations.

Publicly sharing the results/data from evaluation work.

The 2018 National Academies report recommends that summaries of the results of climate assessments are provided to the public, or at the very least to those within the organization.⁵⁵ This is because transparency helps to demonstrate to the community that the organization takes the issue seriously; it also helps increase accountability for working to reduce sexual harassment.

Using Climate Assessments to Inform Action.

The results of climate assessments can be used to inform next steps that an organization takes in addressing the issue of sexual harassment in their community. This might include:

- Identifying specific populations in the organization that are experiencing more harassment, to determine ways to specifically address that disparity
- Identify specific kinds of behavior that is occurring, to develop interventions targeted towards combating that behavior
- Evaluate the community's understanding of the organizational climate

53 https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/4#chapter02_p250-1

54 See Recommendation 14a: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#186>

55 See Recommendation 8d: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/9#184>

Approaches for Pursuing Organizational Change

This section describes examples of approaches for pursuing organizational change that is research-informed. Identifying effective ways to structure these efforts is an area of interest to the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. The purpose of this section is to provide some optional ways for organizations to share how they are strategically pursuing organizational changes and to learn from the efforts of others.

Campus climate committees that incorporate the principles of Coordinated Community Response (CCR).

At an institution of higher education, this might be a multidisciplinary team of individuals with varying levels of decision-making authority who meet regularly to assess, plan, monitor, and evaluate institutional efforts to address issues of concern.^{56,57}

Using Community Readiness for Change to guide efforts.

This might involve an approach that considers your organization's history (short- and long-term), involves identifying and involving your organization's "culture makers" (e.g., those with power, those who shape the community), intentionally accounts for differences in readiness across groups within your larger organization, or other aspects that align with theories of Community Readiness.⁵⁸

Leveraging the strengths of distinct stakeholder groups and creating partnerships between them.

To encourage collaboration and help to overcome institutional and/or cultural barriers to change, this area of work could span administrative staff, academic faculty, students, and grassroots/advocacy groups. Efforts in this space might include explicit attention to faculty and/or student participation and leadership in organizational change; creative solutions to overcoming obstacles that derive from rights and responsibilities exercised through faculty governance; partnerships between staff, faculty, and students in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of interventions (to engage content specialty or otherwise); etc.^{59,60}

Using the Theory of Procedural Justice in sexual harassment policies, processes, and practices.

These efforts would work to imbue the principles of procedural justice (ethicality, bias suppression, representativeness, voice, consistency, accuracy, and correctability) into policies, processes, and practices, which is shown to increase the perception of fairness—and ultimately trust—in an organization's decision-making abilities.⁶¹

56 For more information, see: Kristy Holtfreter & Jennifer Boyd (2006) A Coordinated Community Response to Intimate Partner Violence on the College Campus, *Victims and Offenders*, 1:2, 141–157, DOI: 10.1080/15564880600626031

57 For more information, see: *Building Coordinated Community Response Teams to Address Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking on Campus: A Toolkit for Institutions of Higher Education*: <http://changingourcampus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/OVW-CCRT-Toolkit-Final-ENGLISH.pdf>

58 Edwards, Ruth W., et al. "Community readiness: Research to practice." *Journal of Community Psychology* 28.3 (2000): 291–307.

59 <https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/8#146>

60 Murray, John W., & Miller, Michael T. (2014). *Staff Governance and Institutional Policy Formation*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Incorporated.

61 For more information, see: Thibaut, J. W., and L. Walker. 1975. *Procedural Justice: A Psychological Analysis*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.