

Learning Activity 5.1

Identifying sexual harassment and violence in the workplace

Overview

This activity is designed to help participants identify what is sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, including verbal and physical abuse. It is divided into two parts: a) is designed primarily for managers and supervisors, b) is designed primarily for workers.

Suggested time

60-90 minutes

Target group

- Activity a: managers and supervisors;
- Activity b: workers.

Aims

- Identify unacceptable workplace behaviour.
- Managers and supervisors will better understand what behaviour in their factories/farms constitutes sexual harassment and violence and appreciate its impact.
- Workers will better understand why they should not have to experience sexual harassment and violence.

Preparation

- Prepare cards showing examples of sexual harassment or
- Make copies for participants of the list of examples provided for in this exercise.
- Pin large sheets of paper to the wall (or use a flip chart) on which participants' ideas are written. Post-it cards may be used instead.

Setting

- A room large enough to accommodate several groups.

Materials

- Handout with examples or
- Pre-prepared cards with types of behaviour
- Flip charts or post-it and space for posting
- Markers
- Tape (if needed)

Time/Steps

Activity a: for managers and supervisors

Optional ice-breaker: (suggested time: 10 minutes)

As an ice-breaking exercise participants are divided into two groups. One group stands still and is spread out across the room. The other group walk freely around them for a few minutes, some walking close or brushing past the standing participants. Then they swap over. In the full group the participants briefly discuss how they felt when someone else came into their personal space.

Step 1: (suggested time: 15 minutes)

- In a group discussion the trainer/facilitator asks participants to use post-it notes or cards to say what they consider to be unacceptable behaviour in the workplace (e.g. sexual harassment, victimization, etc.).
- One example is written on each card and stuck on the board or wall. Participants are asked to write as many examples as they can in 5 minutes. The trainer groups different types of behaviour together and discusses with the whole group.

Step 2: (suggested time: 30 minutes)

- In the full group participants are asked to give examples of what they think classifies as sexual harassment, verbal and physical abuse or violence. The trainer pins up the definition of gender-based violence on the board (see box below with definition). The trainer notes all suggestions on the flip chart, grouping different types of behaviour. A full group discussion follows on what behaviour is acceptable and unacceptable – and why.

Step 3: (suggested time 30-45 minutes)

Participants break down into groups of 3- 5 and are given cards with three examples of sexual harassment, and verbal, physical or sexual abuse (see list below). In their groups they are asked to list:

- three reasons why these behaviours are generally seen as unacceptable (e.g. effect on recipient, against the law, creates tensions in the workplace);
- three possible reasons the behaviour takes place (e.g. production pressure, socially acceptable behaviour workplace culture);
- three suggestions of how to reduce the cause of the unacceptable behaviour (e.g. clear workplace statement on unacceptable behaviour, independent complaints procedures changing the organization of layout of workspace, training, or providing safe transport).

Each group gives a five-minute report back to the whole group, which is followed by a facilitated discussion and conclusions.

Activity b: for workers (the following exercises are 'pick and mix')

Optional ice-breaker: (suggested time: 10 minutes)

As an ice breaking exercise participants are divided into two groups. One group stands still and is spread out around the room. The other group walks freely around them for a few minutes, some walking close or brushing past the standing participants. Then they swap over. In the whole group the participants briefly discuss how they felt when someone else came into their personal space.

Activity 1: (suggested time: 15 minutes)

In small groups participants are asked to use post-it cards to draw three examples of behaviour that makes them feel uncomfortable at work (e.g. physical or verbal abuse or sexual harassment, victimization, etc.). Participants should be asked this question before being given any information on sexual harassment. Drawings are stuck on the board or wall. The trainer groups different types of behaviour together and discusses with the whole group.

Activity 2: (suggested time: 45-30 minutes)

The trainer reads out the definition of gender-based violence and sexual harassment (see Module 3). In the whole (or small) group participants are asked to give examples of what they think classifies as sexual harassment, abuse and violence. The trainer notes all suggestions on the flip chart, grouping types of behaviour. The trainer reads out the completed list. A whole group discussion follows, encouraging a debate about workplace behaviour – if appropriate participants could vote on whether they think different types of behaviour are sexual harassment.

Activity 3: (suggested time: 30 minutes)

- Participants break down into groups of 3-5 people. Examples of sexual harassment, verbal, physical or sexual abuse (see below) are read out. For each example the groups are asked to decide whether the behaviour is sexual harassment or not. They should be encouraged to discuss why these behaviours are generally seen as unacceptable (e.g. affecting the recipient, against the law, creates tensions in the workplace).
- In the small groups conclude the session by asking participants for suggestions about how to reduce unacceptable behaviour.
- Each group gives 5-minute report back to the whole group, followed by discussion (30 minutes).

How to adapt it

- The activities can be adapted to meet particular workplace conditions or they can be merged with one another. Individual elements of the exercise can be used separately.
- A list of quotes from managers and workers can be found in Learning Activity 7.1, which could also be read out for participants to (or written on cards) to promote further discussion.
- Given the sensitivity of the topic, consider whether it is appropriate to have separate groups of women and men.

Tips

Use the examples of workplace sexual harassment (listed below) to prepare cards for your group activity.

Resources

- Definition of gender-based violence which can be pinned to the wall (see Module 3)
- For further information about definitions of gender-based violence, including relevant UN and ILO instruments refer to Information Sheet 1.

**Examples of workplace sexual harassment, verbal, physical or sexual abuse
(for cards – can be changed as appropriate)**

Behaviour that may take place at the factory or farm or on the journey to/from work may include:

- ‘Staring’ or standing too close to the opposite sex
- Inappropriate touching of hands, arms or hair
- Men brushing up next to women on the bus or queue to tag in
- Men touching a women’s breasts
- Comments about women’s or men’s appearance or body or sexual habits
- Asking for sexual favours in return for something (e.g. overtime or job security)
- Forced kissing or fondling
- Coercive sex (rape)
- Sexually explicit language
- Abusive name-calling e.g. ‘prostitute’ ‘slut’
- Verbal abuse or foul language
- Shouting
- Invitations to meet someone of the opposite sex
- Pushing, pulling, hitting or shoving someone of the opposite sex
- Pulling hair
- Slapping, pinching, pricking with pins
- Sexually explicit magazine pictures on the wall
- Electronic pornography
- Abusive or sexual SMS or Facebook messages and photographs