

Learning Activity 5.2

Role-play on sexual harassment in the workplace

Overview

This activity aims to raise awareness of sexual harassment through a role-play using a real life scenario.

Suggested time

60-90 minutes

Target group

Representatives of:

- Lead companies aiming to improve supply chain organization.
- Global, national and local employer organizations and trade unions.
- National and local government responsible for legislative implementation and factory inspection.
- Multi stakeholder initiatives and social auditors.
- Global, national and local NGOs and women's organizations.
- Workers, supervisors, first line managers.

Aims

- Recognise sexual harassment and other forms of unacceptable workplace behaviour, its impact on recipients and its causes.
- Develop a clearer understanding of acceptable workplace behaviour.

Preparation

- Prepare the activity by collecting sources of information for the group work session.
- Provide contextual information and tips about the issues that can be discussed.
- Elaborate a version of the scenario in the hand-out which may be appropriate to the group, then prepare cards for the different roles, as detailed below.

Setting

Any setting where a role-play for the proposed scenario may be easily carried out.

Materials

Scenario and role-playcards

Time/Steps

Step 1: (suggested time: 10 minutes)

Participants are asked to read the scenario below (or alternatively it can be read out):

A supervisor in a garment factory/ fruit farm is responsible for meeting a deadline to produce an order for dresses/grapes by the end of the week. The supervisor is male and the workers are all female. The supervisor is under pressure from the factory/farm owner to meet the deadline and is very stressed. His pay is linked to meeting the high production targets. The manager is under pressure from the lead company to get the order completed in time for the summer season in the chain of shops selling the dresses. If the order is not completed in the time stipulated by the company the factory risks losing future orders from the company. There are similar factories/fruit farms in the country competing for orders from this well-known international brand/supermarket.

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

In small groups, ask participants to develop a role-play between the supervisor, who is putting pressure on the women workers to work faster in order to meet a deadline for an important order, and the women workers who are trying to keep up with the unrealistic targets they are expected to meet every day. The supervisor is shouting and using abusive language.

Each group acts out its role-play to the full group, followed by a general discussion about what happened, what impact it had on the woman worker and why it happened. If time the trainer could guide the discussion to consider ways in which the situations could be avoided in the future.

The group is asked to agree a list of *three* practical changes that could be made in the workplace so that they would not be subjected to behaviour that made them feel uncomfortable, afraid or harassed.

Step 3: (suggested time: 30 minutes)

Each group gives a five-minute report back on what they learnt from the role-play and the three practice strategies they agreed. This will be followed by a full group discussion of possible strategies.

How to adapt it

- Alternative scenarios can be drawn up for other sectors.
- A shorter activity can be run using the scenario as a basis for small group discussions.

Tips

- Encourage participants to be expressive in their role-playing.
- Participants tend to choose the roles they are familiar with. This is less challenging than trying to imagine the perspective of someone who has a different role from them in real life. Facilitators may ask participants to choose their roles and then ask them to swap their role with another participant. In other words, the people playing the trade union member and employer have to swap with each other. If groups are sitting with friends/ colleagues ensure all participants are mixed together.
- If the group is mixed gender, ask the women to play the supervisor role and the men to play the worker – or ask two men to play both parts.
- In the final 30 minutes each group is asked to act out its role-play to the whole group (5-10 min per group). During this time the facilitator can write up the main learning points from each role-play on a flip chart.