

Year 1 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Minnesota

Restorative Justice and Climate Support Network

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): 2, 8 and 14.

Description of Work:

Background.

The University of Minnesota is in the midst of a transformational effort to improve the culture and climate of the University for all who work and learn there. A clear finding of the 2018 NASEM report is that organizational climate is the greatest predictor of the occurrence of sexual harassment. The University's work began in the prevention of sexual misconduct and evolved over three years to be inclusive of addressing the culture and climate contributing to an environment permissive for misconduct. The University developed an institution-wide initiative, the President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct (Presidential Initiative; PIPSM) in 2017. PIPSM is institutionalized with a permanent home in the University of Minnesota Office of Human Resources.

The University of Minnesota leaders recognized that culture and climate at the University are largely driven by the academic unit - the departments. Over 265 departmental and administrative leaders participated in training and in active theater-based workshops focused on the prevention of sexual misconduct. The Vice Provost's office convened listening groups after the workshops to dig deeper into the departmental cultures. The Presidential Initiative established a committee for departmental level interventions based on feedback from the sessions. This feedback indicated the need for concentrated and deep assessment and interventions to improve culture and climate at the departmental level. The Department Development Committee of PIPSM established a Climate Support Network with representation by at least one faculty member from each school with the goal of having representatives from every department. The specific goals of the Climate Support Network are to share and discuss resources that support a positive academic culture, share knowledge about effective practices in creating/sustaining a positive academic culture and increasing the capacity of the University to assess and strengthen its culture.

Restorative justice is a collaborative process used to repair harm, rebuild trust and address inequities and injustices within organizational systems that are permissive for harm. Restorative justice processes are widely used in student affairs in higher education, the criminal justice system and throughout K-12 education. The University of Minnesota uses restorative justice in student conflict resolution. Restorative justice approaches and processes are rare in academic medicine. The University of Minnesota Medical School is participating as a pilot institution in a restorative justice training program provided by the American Association of Medical Colleges. This provides the unique opportunity to leverage the intersection of PIPSM and the Climate Support Network with a national restorative justice training program. Piloting restorative justice approaches at a departmental level, instead of an individual

level, and disseminating process and outcome feedback to the Climate Support Network will add to the University's knowledge on how to improve climate and culture using restorative justice approaches.

Year 1 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Purpose and goals.

The overarching purpose of this work is to improve the culture and climate of the University of Minnesota to reduce the tolerance for gender and sexual misconduct, thereby decreasing the incidence of sexual harassment. The short-term goal is to pilot the use of restorative justice processes in medical school departments to inform further use via PIPSM. The long-term goal is to use restorative justice approaches to improve culture, repair harm and reintegrate faculty members during and after separation throughout the University of Minnesota.

Methods.

Medical school faculty members who are representatives to the Climate Support Network will be trained in the conduct of restorative justice circles to address departmental sources of conflict identified in collaboration with the department leader. They will pilot use of circles in addressing departmental conflicts and disseminate their process outcomes to the overall Climate Support Network.

Current status.

This is a new initiative for the University of Minnesota. The University of Minnesota Medical School is participating in a pilot program through the American Association of Medical Colleges to bring restorative justice processes into academic medicine. Training commences in October of 2020.

Evaluation plan.

The short-term metrics of the pilot are to examine the retention of participants in the departmental restorative justice processes, to evaluate the effectiveness of the process by participants and departmental leaders, and to assess the opportunities and challenges in implementing restorative justice processes in medical school departments. The learning and process outcomes from the pilot will be disseminated to the Climate Support Network and the Departmental Development committee of PIPSM. Long term measures of the impact of integrating restorative justice processes and approaches into the University of Minnesota will be evaluated by tracking the number of complaints to the Title IX Office and other recipients and by results of the University Climate Survey conducted every other year.

Next steps.

Training the "trainers" will occur in October 2020. The departmental pilots will commence within 6 months with anticipated outcomes and dissemination to the Climate Support Network within a year.

Point of Contact Name: Amanda Termuhlen MD, Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs,
University of Minnesota Medical School

Email Address for Point of Contact: atermuhl@umn.edu