

The National Academies of SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

February 16, 2022

Dear Colleague,

The Remediation Working Group of the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education is seeking your input for a forthcoming National Academies activity that aims to document how higher education institutions are addressing the underlying predictors and symptoms of harm on campuses. As a key expert, we hope you would be willing to share your knowledge and help us in this work. Specifically, our team seeks to *honor* and *support* individuals, as well as *remediate* harm in the institution's community (such as bystanders, observers, and those in departments, labs, and other units).

We define those terms as:

- *Honor*: intentionally listening to the experiences of individuals
- *Support*: providing dedicated resources (e.g., faculty-led services, access to third-party counseling or support) and trained personnel (e.g., organizational ombuds) to address harms in workplaces and learning environments
- *Remediation*: efforts that aim to heal a community from the effects of harm caused by harassing behaviors.

Our goal is to produce a document that will (1) compile and categorize practices and other ways that institutions successfully honor and support individuals, and remediate harm—even before an institution is notified, or if they are not formally notified at all, and (2) identify gaps that require further research and development.

Sexual and gender harassment tend to be found in environments where uncivil behaviors (i.e., behaviors that harm individuals and result in a disrespectful culture) also occur.^{1, 2, 3} Research shows that environmental factors enable these behaviors to thrive and continue occurring.⁴ Those who have experienced sexual harassment report various negative feelings that affect their personal and professional well-being. Negative impacts on personal well-being include: increased guilt, anger, alienation, depression, stress, and anxiety. Similarly, impacts on professional well-being include: increased burnout, decreased performance, and lower career satisfaction.⁵ Even those who have observed sexual harassment are also negatively impacted, which can contribute to reduced productivity, increased turnover, and absences.⁶

The National Academies 2018 report, [*Sexual Harassment of Women*](#), recommended that institutions prioritize “creating diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments” for addressing and preventing sexual harassment. Indeed, we believe institutions can use the predictors and symptoms of harm^a as indicators for harassment, and as signals that an institutional response is necessary. Institutions can actively work to honor and support individuals and create positive campus cultures and climates. Additionally, they can intentionally remediate uncivil behaviors and harm. Such an approach to addressing and preventing sexual harassment would be a novel and courageous⁷ example of how institutions can go beyond mere compliance with the law.

^a Predictors and symptoms of harm include evidence of uncivil behaviors, increased anger, alienation, depression, stress, anxiety, increased burnout, decreased performance, and evidence of lower career satisfaction.

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Our Working Group is currently in the information gathering stage. For this call for information, we are seeking information about strategies, methods, and/or practices that demonstrate how an academic institution can respond to the predictors and symptoms of harm. This call also seeks to encourage institutions to strategically utilize existing resources (e.g., prevention training and education material, climate surveys, and climate data) and develop new resources for the unique purpose of providing honor, support, and remediation. Finally, we aim to collect information regarding ongoing efforts, initiatives in development, or proposals for what an academic institution could do to provide honor and support for individuals, and remediate harm in the community.

To illustrate the gaps in knowledge about addressing the predictors and symptoms of harm, we have created a [matrix](#) that categorizes honor, support, and remediation efforts by when they occur and who they focus on (those who experience harm, those who have caused harm, and the community). You will note generic examples in the matrix, that are known services institutions provide at various points before, during, and/or after an institutional response to sexual harassment. If you have information that addresses the predictors and symptoms of harms and would like to share it with our Working Group, please submit it using this link: <https://survey.alchemer.com/collab/6732261/HSR-Call-for-Information-Form>.

This form will ask you to:

1. Describe ongoing efforts, initiatives in development, or proposals for initiatives that address the predictors and symptoms of harm before an incident is reported or an investigation initiated.
2. Explain why you think the efforts, initiatives, and/or proposals provided in your submission will help honor and support individuals, and remediate the predictors and symptoms of harm in the community.

If follow-up questions arise from your responses, we would like to contact you later, if possible. For further information on our Working Group, please email Jeena Thomas (jmthomas@nas.edu). For further information on the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education, please email Frazier Benya (fbenya@nas.edu).

Your efforts and input are greatly appreciated.

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- ³ NASEM (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine). 2018. *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24994>.
- ⁴ Cunningham, P., M. E. Drumwright, and K. W. Foster. 2021. “Networks of complicity: social networks and sex harassment,” *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* 40(4):392–409. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-04-2019-0117>.
- ⁵ NASEM (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine). 2018. *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24994>.
- ⁶ Shaw, E., A. Hegewisch, and C. Hess. 2018. *Sexual Harassment and Assault at Work: Understanding the Costs*. Briefing Paper No. B376. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research. https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/IWPR-sexual-harassment-brief_FINAL.pdf.
- ⁷ Freyd, J. J. 2014. Official campus statistics for sexual violence mislead. [Op-Ed]. *Al Jazeera America*. <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/7/college-campus-sexualassaultsafetydatawhitehousegender.html>.