

# Year 2 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

## Rutgers University

### Faculty and Staff Training Initiative

#### Relevant Rubric Areas(s):

- Bystander intervention programs
- Audience-specific anti-sexual harassment education
- Ally or Ambassador Programs
- Prevention program or toolkits

#### Descriptions of Work:

##### *The Challenge*

Rutgers' large, diverse community of faculty and staff experience and witness multiple forms of sexual and gender-based harassment, but historically there has been little in the way of comprehensive, trauma-informed training for faculty and staff to provide specific, concrete support for them around how to identify, address and intervene when these behaviors occur. Faculty particularly have expressed to academic leadership that they are eager to “do the right thing”, and to intervene in a useful way when they suspect that harassment, discrimination, or other inappropriate behavior is occurring, but they have been forthright in their admission that they “just don’t know how or what to do”. To be sure, all employees are required to participate in basic, compliance-based online trainings, but those trainings have not always been well-received, have had no discernible influence on behavior, and perhaps most importantly, have not provided the tools needed to effectuate true culture change. This is not surprising; as noted in the 2016 EEOC report<sup>1</sup> and National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) 2018 report<sup>2</sup>, “Much of the training done over the last 30 years has not worked as a prevention tool—it’s been too focused on simply avoiding legal liability.” Similarly, after a review of existing training at Rutgers we found that it did not appear to be adequately addressing the root causes of harassment and discrimination, nor reaching staff and faculty in an effective manner. The Staff and Faculty Training Coordinator (TC) was previously hired to address this gap in prevention efforts, and significant improvements have been made to the training initiative this past year in order to reach a broader audience and to respond to lessons learned.

To date, in spite of the 16 months of the pandemic, requiring less-than-optimal virtual sessions instead of preferred face-to-face trainings, over 20 new trauma-informed trainings reaching approximately 300 faculty and/or staff have been conducted across the four Rutgers campuses,

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<sup>1</sup> Folz, C. (2016). No Evidence That Training Prevents Harassment, Finds EEOC Task Force. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/pages/eeoc-harassment-task-force.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2018). Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The National Academies Press.

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with a particular focus over the past year on Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) departments following their campus climate survey. We found that faculty and staff were particularly responsive to the trainings following the release of the survey results. Based on research, feedback, and “lessons learned,” the following enhancements were made to training design and delivery:

### ***Utilizing an Intersectional Lens***

Following a presentation on De-Centering Whiteness in Sexual Harassment Training at the NASEM Summit in October 2020, which outlined a blueprint for a self-audit of all interpersonal violence trainings to address the experiences of multiple marginalized identities, Rutgers’ TC modified all trainings to incorporate an intersectional and anti-oppressive lens. Rather than discussing these issues as a section of an existing training, these principles are infused into every aspect of the workshops—from setting conduct guidelines for the training space, to bystander intervention techniques and the risks marginalized individuals face in implementing them, to diversifying the resources offered. Training evaluations were also changed to gauge inclusivity, and the results are currently being analyzed for continuous improvement.

During Year 2, many departments requested training on microaggressions. Faculty and staff provided the feedback that sexual harassment often takes the form of every day indignities, and—as the 2018 NASEM report<sup>2</sup> states—is often intertwined with gender, racial and other forms of bias. The TC developed a microaggressions module that focuses on this form of harassment, how it manifests in specific environments, and the bystander intervention skills to combat it—including the use of “microaffirmations” to create a more positive and inclusive environment. Recognizing that training delivery methods also need to be inclusive and responsive to staff and faculty needs, the TC has also been collaborating to engage staff in different ways: guest speakers, participating in information ‘coffee chats’ and ‘lunch and learns,’ and hosting dual trainings with other departments, such as Rutgers’ Office of Diversity and Inclusion (DICE) and the Division of Continuing Studies.

### ***Incorporating Trauma-Informed Practice***

Historically at Rutgers, few faculty and staff training initiatives have been trauma-informed. However, Rutgers recognizes trauma-informed intervention as an important piece of any sexual harassment and/or interpersonal violence work. Just as faculty and staff bring with them multiple identities, they also have widely-varied experiences with trauma. Utilizing trauma-informed engagement strategies in supporting staff and faculty, as well as students, takes into consideration how previous and on-going trauma impacts individuals’ experience of sexual harassment in the workplace, and ensures training is more responsive and inclusive.

Aligned with recommendations from the 2018 NASEM report<sup>2</sup>, Rutgers also recognizes that training—especially in unique environments—cannot be a ‘one time’ occurrence, and that support and trauma-informed resources and interventions are needed at every level of the

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university ecosystem, and must be available upon demand. For example, the TC provided a training in a department of software developers that is traditionally male dominated and where non-majority employees often feel isolated. During COVID, despite the belief that sexual harassment only happens in person, a female employee informed the TC she was being harassed by her supervisor. The TC provided support and information to the employee and her supervisor, and linked them with restorative justice resources (upon the targeted employee's request) to repair the harm and create a path forward to continuing to work together. While restorative justice services are only offered to students currently, this case is serving as an instructive pilot and has created conversations about how we might offer these services to faculty and staff as well, going forward. Significantly, the targeted employee cited this 'wrap around' support as a primary reason she decided to stay in her position and not look for work elsewhere.

### ***A 3-step Approach to Tailoring Trainings***

Recognizing the need to tailor training to different contexts and populations, the TC employed a 3-step process to ensure workshops were relevant and addressed the unique barriers and dynamics of each participating unit. First, the TC meets with each department head for a consultation and/or sends out a brief pre-workshop survey for all participants to make sure content is focused on their needs. Next, relevant sections of the training are modified for delivery. Finally, an evaluation is sent to all participants to ensure their needs were met and to gather feedback that can be incorporated for continuous improvement.

Rutgers recognizes that environments, power dynamics, demographics and countless other factors make every single department unique in their training needs. For example, a training for Rutgers AIDS researchers was modified to include information on dealing with sexual harassment and misconduct in their unique community-based setting, while a workshop for the Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) Anesthesiology Department focused on conduct concerns before, during and after surgery. Including relevant Campus Climate data, specific to RBHS, has also greatly helped with engagement during training and illustrates the importance of a multi-pronged approach.

### ***Next Steps***

Building on Year 1 and 2 engagement and lessons-learned with faculty and staff, the TC selected the [B2U Bystander Intervention model](#) for faculty and staff to be modified for Rutgers specifically because it includes an ambassador program. The Bystander to Upstander: Transforming Culture Workshop helps participants learn how to identify sexual- and gender-based harassment, gain confidence in addressing these issues, use engagement and conversational tactics to intervene, and take effective action to create a more positive climate.

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Faculty and staff ambassadors who participate in the “Transforming Culture” train-the-trainer workshop will learn how to facilitate the Bystander to Upstander: Transforming Culture workshop, share the knowledge and skills to help others take appropriate and effective action to stand up to sexual- and gender-based harassment, and connect with other faculty and staff ambassadors.

For the initial Fall 2022 roll out this work will be coordinated and facilitated by the Training Coordinator (TC), but eventually information will be included in departmental toolkits and can be initiated and carried out at any level and any part of the university.

Rutgers has often cited its decentralized structure as a challenge, so its plan to roll out a toolkit for departments in Fall 2022 that provides sustainable guidance in addressing sexual- and gender-based harassment in multiple contexts is vital. Building on Years 1 and 2 feedback from training evaluations and consultation with faculty and staff, the TC will work closely with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs during the 2021-22 academic year to develop a toolkit for departments that will include:

- Guidance on addressing sexual- and gender-based harassment at the departmental level that includes:
  - Identifying and addressing harassment, utilizing a menu of intervention techniques and formal and informal processes
  - Addressing harassment at its root with people who have caused harm, including specific language to use and sanction options
- Sample formal and informal policies and guidelines that can be adapted and adopted by departments
- Recommended training modules (including in-person and online) as well as supplemental trainings (interpersonal violence, LGBTQ+ specific training, anti-racism training and more)
- Information on how to participate in the Bystander to Upstander ally/ambassador program
- Rutgers University as well as outside resources for further learning and information

**Website for further information (if applicable):** <https://sexualharassment.rutgers.edu/>

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