

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

**Soteria Solutions**

**A Comprehensive Approach to Assessing Climate and Culture:  
Workplace Culture Survey**

**Relevant Rubric Area(s):**

Evaluation - Measuring the prevalence of sexual harassment; Conducting qualitative interviews on the experiences of sexual harassment; Publically sharing results from evaluation work; and Using climate assessments to inform action.

**Description of Work:**

Soteria Solutions Workplace Culture Survey© is a thorough assessment of the workplace environment in order to provide actionable data about strengths and assets, as well as prevalence of problematic cultural behaviors and patterns that support sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH) and other inappropriate behaviors (IB) including racism, homophobia, bullying, overly harsh supervision, unwanted attention, unfair judgements, etc. Culture change, related to preventing SASH and IB requires more than documenting the problems. Soteria Solutions developed the Workplace Culture Survey to measure individual and organizational strengths, as well as uncover social norms that will support culture change. The Workplace Culture Survey is based on current prevention science and research with the purpose of:

assessing what may be healthy and what may be unhealthy across the organization and for specific identity groups;

determining the role of colleagues, supervisors and senior leaders in terms of inhibiting or disinhibiting these problems;

identifying problem and risk-areas within the organization and at different levels within the organization in relation to demographic and identity characteristics; and

generating information that can be incorporated into activities designed to reduce and prevent these problems and create safe, respectful and inclusive environments for all members of the organization.

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The base Workplace Culture Survey is administered via Qualtrics, an online survey platform, and contains 11 sections - Demographics, **Navigational Identities**®, General Experiences in Workplace, Workplace Climate, Supervisory Climate, Personal Attitudes Related to Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment and Other Inappropriate Behaviors, General Experiences as a Target, General Experiences as a Bystander, Specific Experiences as a Target, and Specific Experiences as a Bystander.

### Current Status

Soteria Solutions developed the Workplace Culture Survey during winter 2020 - spring 2021 as part of an ongoing consultation with Action Collaborative member the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). Consistent with findings and recommendations of the 2018 NASEM report that encourage the use of qualitative research methods, Soteria Solutions conducted a series interviews and focus groups, prior to the development of the survey, with NOAA employees and key stakeholders, including NOAA Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), NOAA Executive Team members and representatives across NOAA's line offices. NOAA stakeholders provided valuable input on their experiences related to SASH and IB.

One important takeaway from interviews and focus groups is the need for Soteria to take an intersectional approach in the Workplace Culture Survey. As such, we developed a new and innovative concept of **Navigational Identities** - how identities might impact how someone experiences working at NOAA. Survey participants are asked to identify the identities that are most salient to them including, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, age, caretaker status, veteran status, disability status and political views/affiliation. The concept of Navigational Identity is based on the premise that a healthy workplace is one in which everyone – regardless of identity or experience– is encouraged to perform to their fullest potential, is empowered to report and to address problems that they encounter, and in which they feel supported to do so. Navigational Identity data will provide important information on how individuals from different identity groups experience the NOAA workplace environment and will inform prevention strategies to address any problematic areas, as well as to identify strengths and positive experiences associated with working at NOAA.

Additionally, we worked with NOAA to build trust and transparency related to the survey specific to NOAA. We marketed the *We Are NOAA Workplace Culture Survey* by engaging NOAA employees and leaders at all levels. NOAA created a three-minute infomercial with NOAA employees stating why they planned to complete the survey; the NOAA administration invited

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all employees to participate in the survey; and line offices sent consistent communications to employees encouraging them to participate in the survey and indicating that they could use work time to complete the survey. In the end, slightly over 40% of the NOAA Federal employee workforce completed the *We Are NOAA Workplace Culture Survey*.

### **Impact**

Soteria Solutions is committed to partnering with organizations to use data from the Workplace Culture Survey to inform comprehensive prevention and response strategies and policy solutions. This comprehensive plan includes sharing survey findings with community members to demonstrate transparency and a commitment to culture change. Once these solutions are implemented, we recommend that organizations re-administer the Workplace Culture Survey every two years. This will allow for measurement of changes in prevalence and culture over time.

### **Next Steps**

While Soteria Solutions developed and first implemented the Workplace Culture Survey with NOAA, we intend to partner with other academic and workplace organizations to implement the survey and to use findings to develop comprehensive prevention, response and policy solutions. Additionally, as part of our NOAA collaboration we are exploring the psychometric properties of the measures in the Workplace Culture Survey and plan to continue this validation process through additional data collection and partnerships.

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