



**PREVENTING AND  
ADDRESSING  
GENDER-BASED  
VIOLENCE IN  
THE WORKPLACE**

Building a  
**Sexual  
Harassment-Free  
Workplace**  
in Electricity

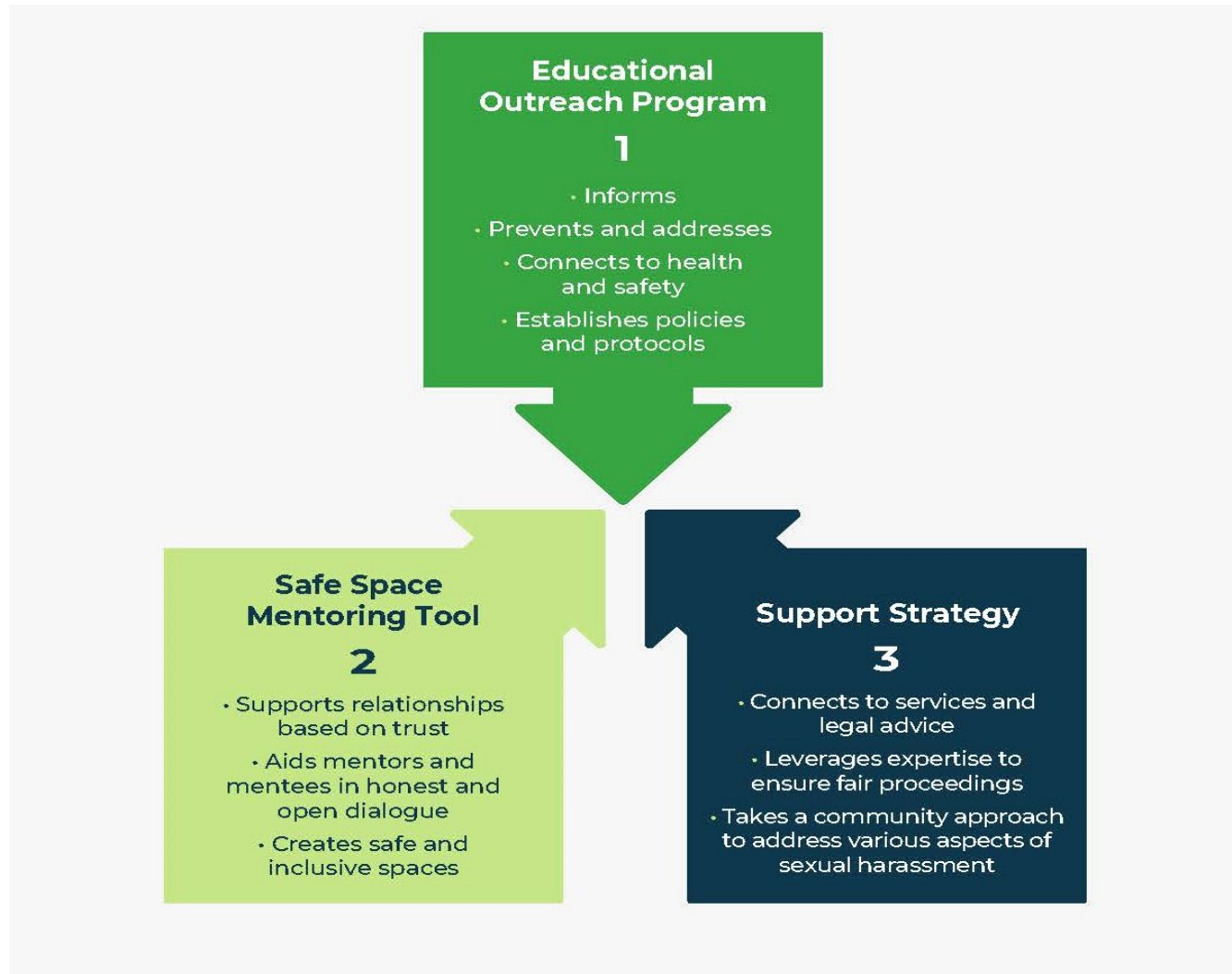
Educational and  
Outreach Program



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada

# Building a Gender-Based Harassment and Violence Free Workplace





# Customizable Slide

Include here specific or additional initiatives your organization may be engaged in to reduce the incidents of GBHV including related initiatives i.e.:

- health and safety ,
- equity, inclusion and diversity
- organizational culture

Include a link to resources or direction on how to access if possible.

# Learning Objectives



1. Identify workplace actions and behaviors that constitute gender-based harassment;
2. Recognize common examples of GBHV that impact the electricity sector in particular;
3. Understand our collective responsibility to prevent and respond to workplace related GBHV.
4. Apply strategies to prevent GBHV, support coworkers



# Invitation to Participants



Listen and participate with respect, curiosity and openness.



Listen to learn, understand and with empathy



Be respectful when sharing your views/opinions.  
Recognize each individual's lived experiences.



Give yourself permission to be uncomfortable and to shift perspectives.



Honour and respect confidentiality.

# Recognizing and Managing Reaction



## Emotions

- Discomfort
- Stress
- Guilt
- Resentment
- Disinterest
- Anger
- Frustration
- Distracted

## Reactions

- Dismiss
- Deny
- Degrade
- Deflect
- Distract
- Defensive
- Argumentative
- Silence

# Ice Breaker



Take a moment to think about and complete the following sentences:

1. My workplace culture when it comes to gender-based interactions is.....
2. How do my actions in the workplace.....
  - Promote a safe and healthy work environment free from GBHV?
  - Foster work environment characteristics that affect the physical and psychological safety of others?

# 01

## Definitions and Language





# What is Gender-based Harassment and Violence [GBHV]



Directed at persons because of their **gender identity** (masculine, feminine, gender non-conforming), or **gender expression**, or  
that **affects persons** or a particular **gender disproportionately**, and  
includes **sexual harassment** and **intimate partner violence**

**\*\*\*While it is recognized that people of any gender can experience GBHV in the workplace, it is well documented in research that **women are at higher risk.****

# What is Workplace Harassment?



*“Any action, conduct, or comment, including of a sexual nature, that can reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation, or other physical or psychological injury or illness to an employee, including any prescribed action, conduct or comment.”*

# What is Workplace Violence?



“Any action, conduct, threat or gesture of a person towards an employee in their workplace that can reasonably be expected to cause harm, injury or illness to that employee.” (COHRS, s. 20.2)

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It may include:

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physical attack or aggression

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threatening behaviour

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verbal or written threats

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domestic /Intimate partner violence that spills over into the workplace

---

sexual violence

# What is Intimate Partner Violence [IPV]



- Also known as spousal or domestic violence, is a prevalent form of gender-based violence (GBV).
  - Behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm.
- IPV can happen:
    - In many types of relationships
    - regardless of the gender and sexual orientation
    - at any time during a relationship and even after it has ended
    - whether or not partners live together

# How do we Define “The Workplace”?



## The workplace is understood to include:

- physical facilities
- workplace related events
- work-related travel
- work related social media:



# Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity



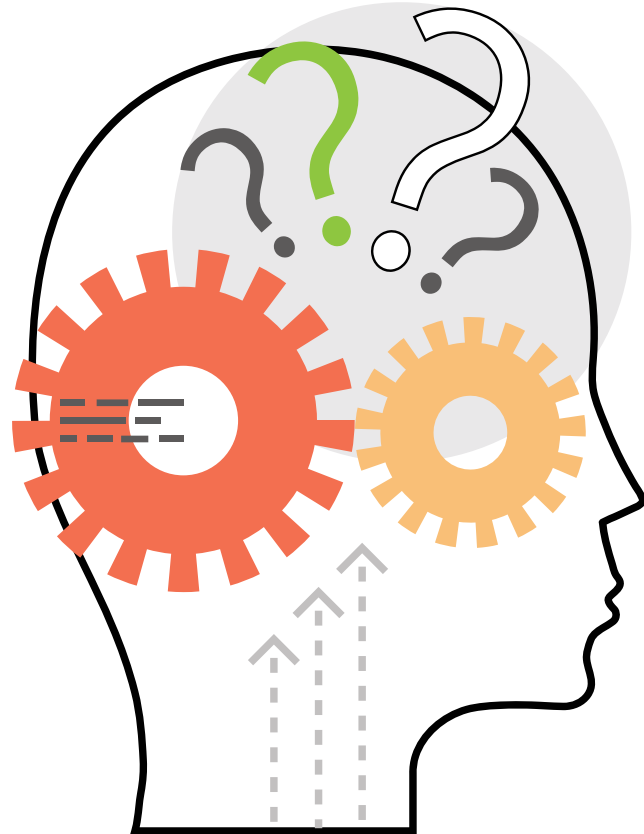
Terms worth knowing:

- Sex assigned at birth
- Intersex
- Gender identity
- Cisgender
- Transgender (Trans) – gender fluid
- Gender expression



[Learning About Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression](#)

# Reflection



**When a person challenges society's gender or sex expectations, i.e.**

- How do I feel?
- What automatic reactions does it evoke?

# 02

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## Recognizing Gender-Based Violence in the Workplace



# Why Focus on Preventing GBHV in the Electricity Sector?



## Research tells us:

- Women were more likely (1 in 5) to be harassed, bullied or experience violence in the workplace
- Male participants were surprised at the GBHV that female participants had experienced

## Actions to be taken:

- Create a “shift” in the electricity sector, to promote respectful work environments



# Forms of Gender-Based Harassment & Violence



**Verbal**

**Physical**

**Psychological**

**Virtual**

# 03

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**What do You Think?  
True or False**





# Statement # 1

**GBHV only affects certain groups of women.**

## **Reality**

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- Anyone regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and ability can be affected.
- Young women, indigenous and racialized women, lesbian women, immigrant and migrant women, trans people and women with disabilities are also at higher risk.

# Statement #2



**It doesn't happen in my workplace**

## **Reality**

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- Violence can happen in any workplace.
- Male-dominated industries and occupations are particularly vulnerable.
- Denial can lead to a false sense of security and ignoring warning signs.
- Know your risks - be prepared to assess, prevent, manage, and mitigate threats.



# Statement #3

## The situation for women and other gender identities is much improved in traditionally male dominated industries

### Reality

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- 28% of women working in male-dominated industries had personally experienced sexual harassment.
- Women pursuing male-dominated university majors experience higher levels of harassment.
- Male-dominated industries and occupations vulnerable to reinforcing harmful stereotypes and creating unfavorable environments.



# Statement #4

**Addressing GBHV in the workplace is the right thing to do  
but is not a business decision.**

## Reality

Companies with greater gender and ethnic diversity:

- are more profitable
- have better employee attendance rates
- are better able to attract and retain employees
- are more creative, innovative, and competitive.

Sources: <https://www.diversityinbestpractices.com/2020-diversityinc-post-virtual-top-50-event-webinar/>; <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>; <https://www.catalyst.org/research/why-diversity-and-inclusion-matter-financial-performance/>; <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28228604/>; <https://hbr.org/2019/02/research-when-gender-diversity-makes-firms-more-productive>; <https://yello.co/resource/white-paper/diversity-and-inclusion-study/>

# Statement #5



**Many “women” lie about being sexually harassed or assaulted.**

## Reality

- False claims is actually a very small minority.
- False reports consistent with the number of false reports for other crimes in Canada.
- Sexual violence carries such a stigma that many women prefer not to report.



# Intent

vs

# Impact



Perpetrator may think:

- It's just a joke
- A simple comment or observation
- Self-gratification

For the **target** and others

- Offensive
- Embarrassing
- Humiliating
- Demeaning
- Intimidated
- Isolated
- Psychologically unsafe
- Isolation
- Depression
- Loss of focus
- Physical harm

# Impact on Survivors/Other Employees

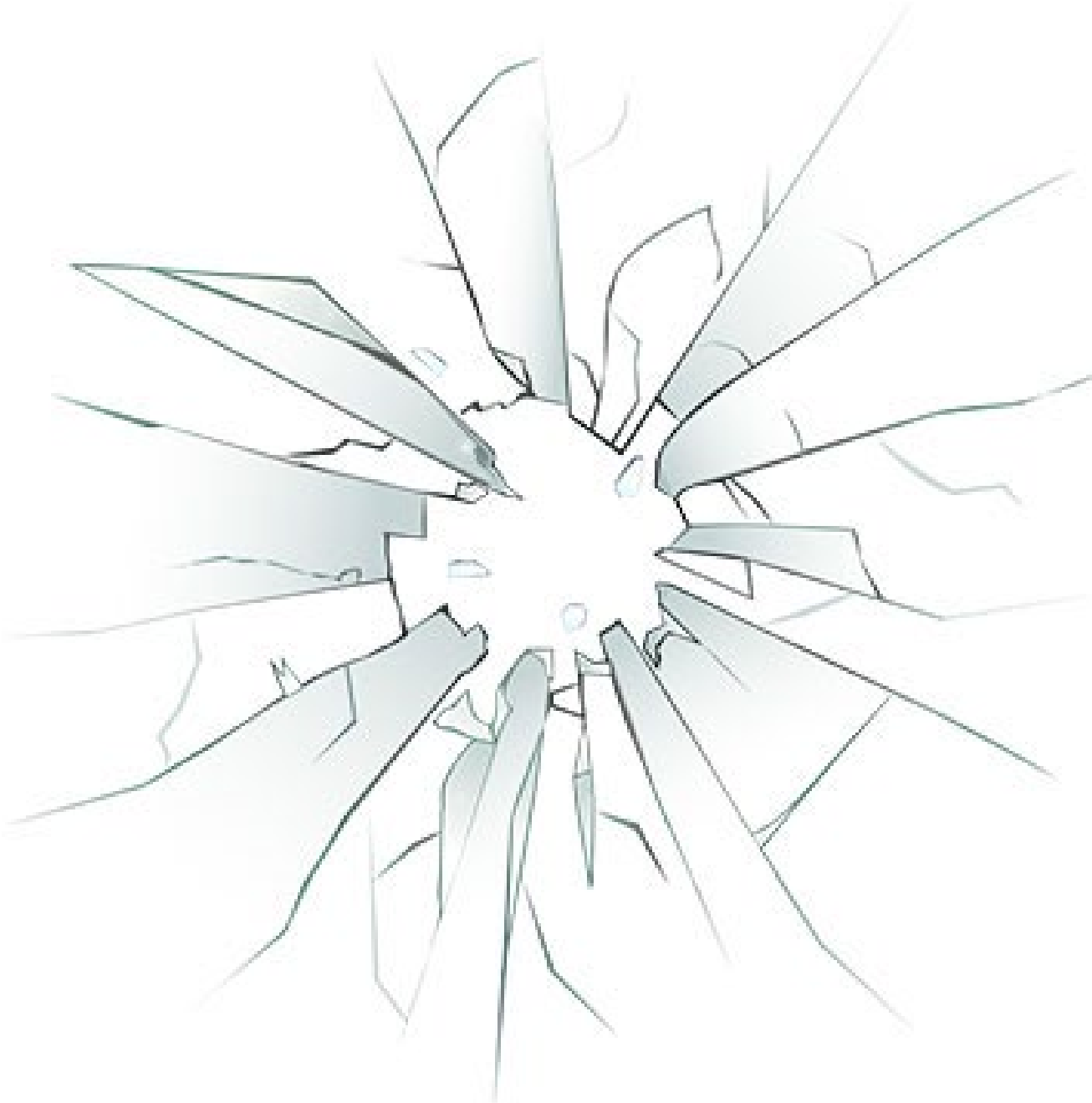


OSTRACISM  
FEAR  
ANXIETY  
BETRAYAL  
TRAUMA

## Intimate Partner Violence in the Workplace



- 54% of survivors said violence continued at work
- Almost half of abusive partners said IPV negatively impacted their job performance
- More than 1/3 of survivors say co-workers were impacted



# 04



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## Interrupting and Reporting Incidents of GBHV

# Employer Responsibility (*Customize*)



- Employers have specific obligations to provide a harassment-free workplace.
- ***INCLUDE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUR PROVINCE***

# Addressing GBHV in The Workplace (*Customize*)



*Review key points of your organization's policy including various options for reporting and addressing*



*Responsibilities of employees*

# Is it GBHV?



In pairs/small group  
discuss the scenario you  
have been assigned



## Questions to consider

- What is the potential impact of this type of behaviour?
  - On the individual(s) or group being targeted
  - In the workplace
  - On the organization
- Is this gender-based harassment/violence?
- What could you do if you were in or witnessed such a situation?



## Scenario 1: Persistent Pete

Over a period of several months a newly hired female worker in a small company/worksites of 10 people is repeatedly asked by a male co-worker to go for drinks with him after work. The male co-worker is senior to her but not in a supervisory position.

The female employee politely declines with phrases such as “sorry, I have plans” or “maybe next time” and similar refusals.

The repeated requests have started to make her uncomfortable. Another worker has mentioned to you jokingly of how persistent the male worker is and remarked that they [the other worker] couldn't take the rejection.





## Scenario 2: A Chance Encounter

Andie and Zain meet at a work-related convention. While they don't work for the same organization, they do work in the same industry.

Zain has been working in the industry for much longer than Andie. Zain is open to sharing their experience with Andie and the two begin exchanging emails.

After a few emails, Andie quickly changes the subject from work to compliments about how attractive and good-looking Zain is. Zain tries to refocus the emails back to work-related topics, but Andie continues to send regular emails to Zain and recently suggested that they meet up for a weekend.



## Scenario 3: Such a Disappointment

Amal, a young Muslim woman has started working as a Junior Engineer. She was excited about her new job because of the organization's policies around diversity. All of her colleagues are much older and more experienced, but Amal's knowledge and skills are quite impressive. She is curious, asks a lot of questions, and has a knack for solving problems that arise by looking at issues from a different perspective.

Amal has noticed that her colleagues are increasingly reluctant to answer her questions and avoid involving her in informal brainstorming conversations. She has also overheard them making inappropriate comments about the fact that she wears a hijab and is always modestly dressed.

Amal feels really hurt and singled out in the group. She begins to take less interest in her work and keeps to herself. She is disappointed and is contemplating looking for a different job.



## Scenario 4: Remote & Rowdy

The workers of this offsite remote workplace are a close-knit group and can be rowdy at times. The cook, is the only worker at the site who identifies as female.

The male workers can often be heard engaging in loud, sexually-based jokes, and insults including speculation about the cook's gender. The cook has never complained but you notice that she seems pretty shaken and upset especially when the conduct becomes pretty extreme.

More and more she has tended to isolate herself from the rest of the group, particularly when the conduct is more extreme than normal.

# If you are the Target of GBHV



**No one should be subject to harassment or sexual violence in their workplace**

- Document details
- Try to resolve the problem through the policies or resolution mechanisms
- Unionized employees: through collective agreements
- Non-unionized through workplace policies and complaint processes
- Other legal forums
  - Human Rights
  - Occupational health and safety legislation
  - Civil suits
  - Criminal charges



# If you Witness an Incident.....

- DIRECT.....** directly confront the harasser and address their behavior.
- DISTRACT...** engage with the targeted person.
- DELEGATE...** seek out a third party i.e. supervisor, HR
- DELAY.....** follow up and offer support
- DOCUMENT..** jot down the details.
- REPORT....** It is your legal right to report the incident.

# If Someone Approaches you With a Complaint or Tells you About an Incident.....



**Listen**



**Encourage**



**Document**

# Failure to Address GBHV: Consequences



**Familiarize yourself with the GBHV policies and procedures of your organization – most require that incidents/allegations of harassment and violence in the workplace be reported**

## **Impacts for failing to address:**

- Can create a poisoned environment
- Impacts the psychological safety of members as well as work productivity and morale
- Negative impact on the industry
- Leave the organization vulnerable
- Can affect your career trajectory within the organization

# Closing Exercise



My workplace  
culture could be...

and I can take the following  
actions to contribute to  
changing  
my workplace...



# Resources



If you or someone you know has experienced gender-based harassment or violence in the workplace

- *INSERT INFORMATION ABOUT WHERE THEY CAN REPORT*

**If you or someone you know has experienced gender-based violence get support**

Crisis lines across the country for those affected by gender-based violence

<https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence-knowledge-centre/crisis-lines.html>

<https://femmes-egalite-genres.canada.ca/fr/centre-savoir-violence-fondee-sexe/lignes-crise.html>



THANK YOU  
THANK YOU

*Have a great day!*

THANK YOU  
THANK YOU