



**RESPONDING TO  
GENDER-BASED  
VIOLENCE IN  
THE WORKPLACE**

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

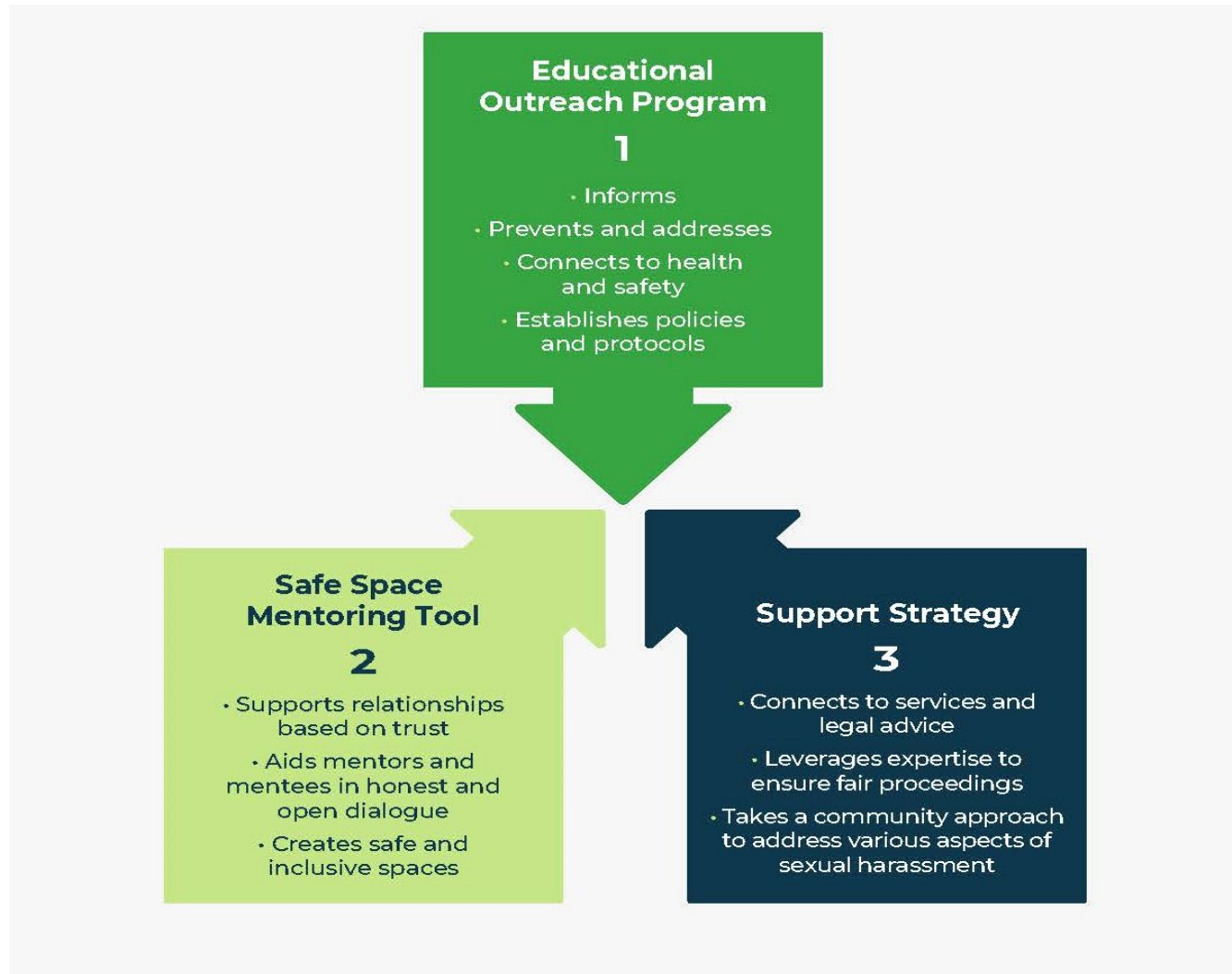
Educational and  
Outreach Program



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. Understand your responsibilities in preventing and addressing gender-based harassment and violence in your workplace
2. Recognize the risks of not taking action in response to inappropriate behaviours or complaints.
3. Be able to apply relevant legislation, policies and procedures
4. Integrate GBHV into workplace frameworks for diversity, equity, inclusion and health and safety
5. More effectively manage reports, complaints and retaliation related to GBHV
6. Apply investigative procedures



# 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 share innovative practices and initiatives in your workplace that contribute to harassment and violence free environments.

# Activating Organizational Shift



**Positive cultural change can only happen when all employees recognize and interrupt harassing behaviours, support coworkers, and affirm coworkers' experience.**

*Catalyst – Workplaces that work for women*





# What is Organizational Culture?

**Simply put, it is the personality of an organization**

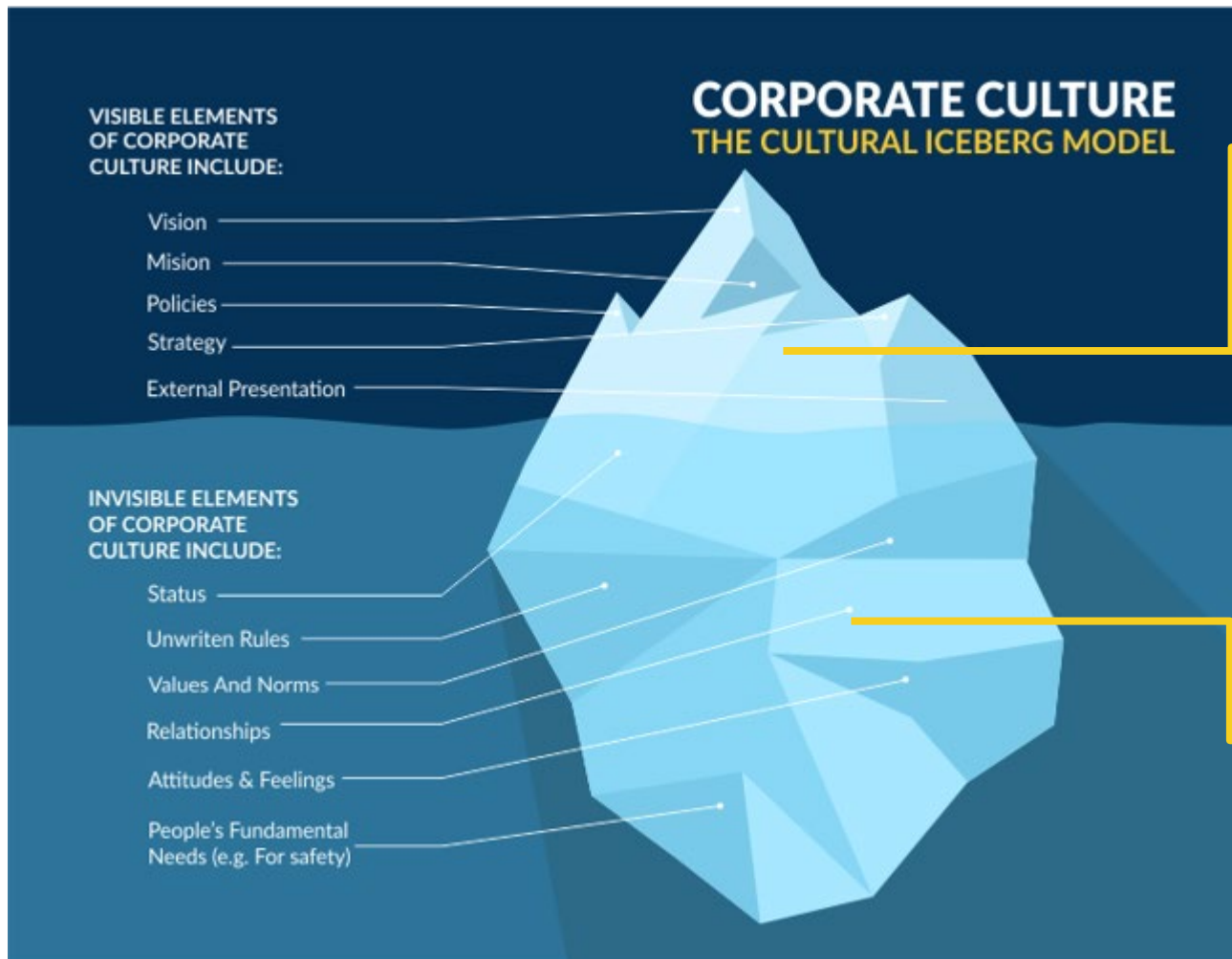


**Shared beliefs, values, assumptions, language patterns**

**Shared values have a strong influence.**

**Culture shift requires recognition of characteristics and sustained effort to effect change.**

# Culture is like an iceberg- it's the underlying elements that will sink an organization



## The way we do things around here

Public aspect of an organization's personality  
Observable  
Conscious  
Requires adaptive changes - relatively minor/easy

## Why we do the things we do around here

- Hidden aspect of organization's personality
- Unconscious
- Underlying beliefs
- Taken for granted
- Requires transformation change dramatic/systemic

# GBHV In the Workplace



- Committed against someone based on their **gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender**
- Targets **women, transgender people and gender non-conforming or non-binary people.**
- Indigenous people, **immigrants and refugees and people with disabilities** at increased risk.

# Shifting Organizational Culture



Not simply an issue of compliance.

Address the underlying power imbalance and behavioral norms that ignore or condone GBHV in the workplace.

Various actions are needed to alter culture, infrastructure and processes.

- Preparation
- Implementation
- Follow-through
- Monitoring and assessment

# GBHV-Free Organizations - Effecting Change



# 01

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## Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Workplace in the Workplace

# Legislation, Policies, Practices



## Protections may be embedded in various legislation

- Human Rights
- Occupational Health & Safety Regulations
- Worker's Compensation Acts
- Labour or Employee Codes & Standards
- Employment Acts
- Criminal Code
- Workplaces policies and practices



# Effective Policies & Procedures



Policies are an important element in setting and communicating organizational culture

- Policies compliant with relevant legislation
- A ZERO tolerance message
- Adopt a comprehensive approach
- Outline specific behaviours
- Recognize diversity; different workplace/work related settings
- Identify employer's expectations
- Address specific protections against retaliation
- Ensure employees are aware of the policies and procedures
- Identify and outline the roles and responsibilities department, bodies
- Outline procedures for reporting complaints
- Encourage complaints by witnesses and third parties



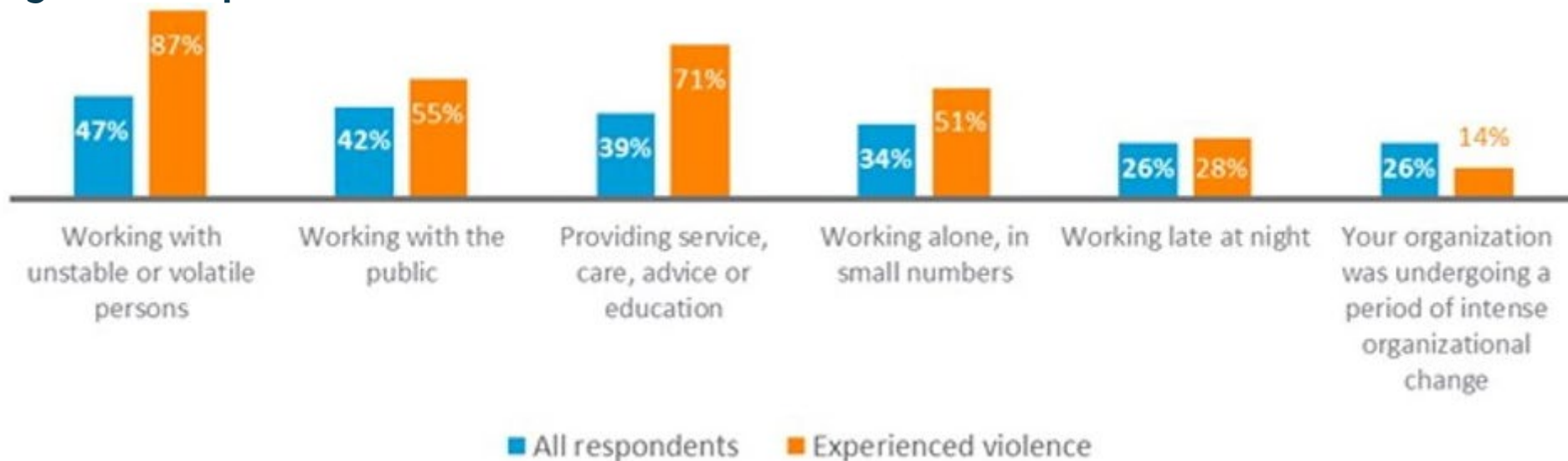
# Risks Factors for GBHV in the Workplace



Figure 3 – Top five risk factors for sexual harassment



Figure 4 – Top risk factors for violence



# Impact on Survivors and Co-Workers



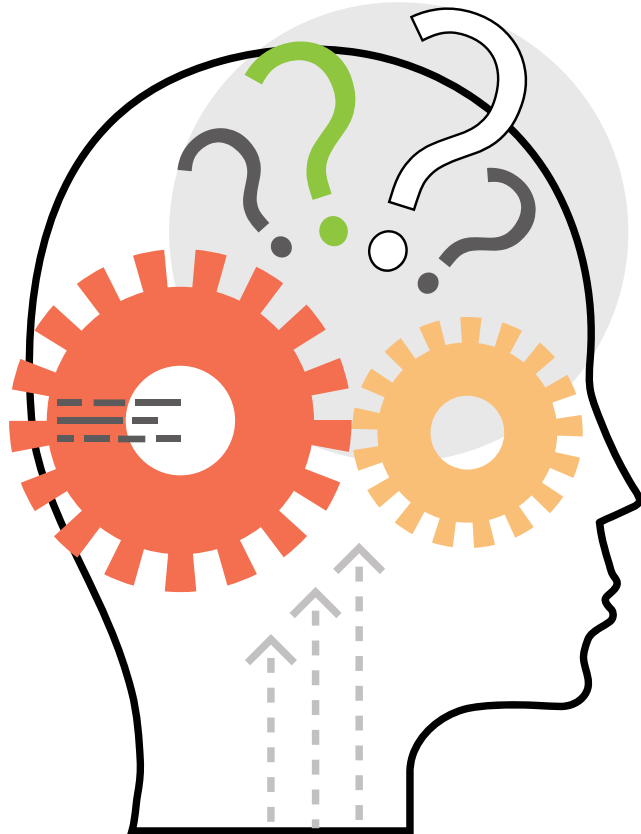
- **90%** of women in Canada report using strategies to avoid unwanted sexual advances
- **25%** of GBHV survivors have difficulty carrying out everyday activities, including work
- GBHV results in social isolation, poor health, work productivity, inequities in pay, promotion, opportunities.
- **54%** of intimate partner violence survivors said the violence continued at work -abusive phone calls or criminal harassment
- **50%** of abusive partners said their violence negatively impacted their job performance
- GBHV impacts colleagues, whether they witness the violence or are affected by the aftermath.
- More than **30%** of survivors of intimate partner violence say their co-workers were impacted

# Creating Psychologically Safe Environments



- Challenge power dynamics that perpetuate GBHV
- Engage survivors and external experts in identifying elements of safe environments
- Conduct GBHV Risk Audits and address situations that increase risk
- Ensure survivors have access to multiple options to report and address issues of GBHV
- Acknowledge that GBHV happens in both in person and virtual workplaces.
- 29% of respondents to a survey conducted by the Purple Campaign experienced unwelcomed behaviour over video calls, text messages, email or other online platforms.

# Reflection



## Small Group/Pair Discussion

What can be done in my workplace to integrate GBHV protections and polices into other workplace frameworks?

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
- Health and Safety

# 02

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**Through a Trauma-Informed  
Intersectional Lens**

# Survivor Centered Approaches



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**Prioritize the rights, needs, and wishes of the survivor**

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## **The survivor has the right to:**

- be treated with dignity and respect
- choose the course of action in dealing with the violence
- be treated with dignity and respect
- privacy and confidentiality
- non-discrimination
- receive comprehensive information

# What is Trauma?



“An event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”



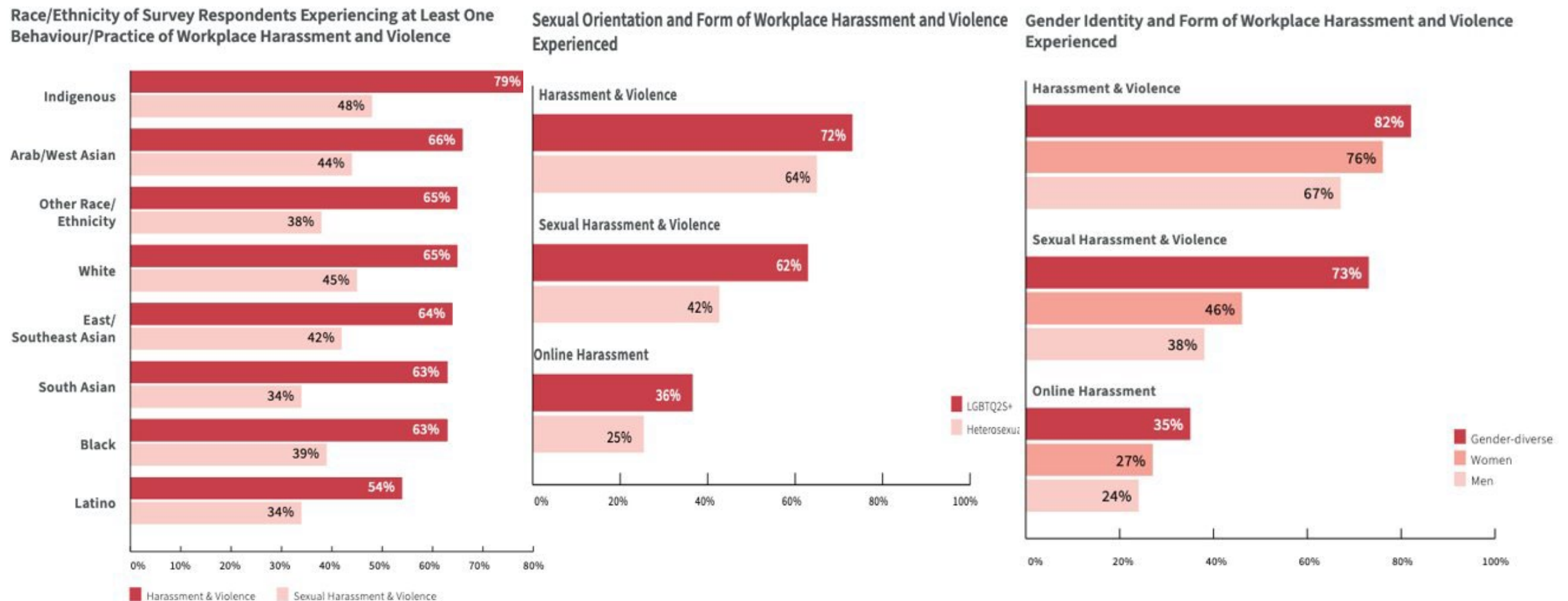
# Trauma & Memory

- Memory loss is a natural survival skill and defense mechanism.
- Traumatic situations can result in survivors suppressing or disassociating from the event.
- However, it can cause confusion and memory loss when recounting or trying to recall the details of the incident.





# The Intersections of Social Identity and Experiences of Harassment & Violence



# Principles of Trauma Informed Approaches



## Safety



Ensuring physical and emotional safety

Common areas are welcoming and privacy is respected

## Choice



Individual has choice and control

Individuals are provided a clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities

## Collaboration



### Definitions

Making decisions with the individual and sharing power

### Principles in Practice

Individuals are provided a significant role in planning and evaluating services

## Trustworthiness



Task clarity, consistency, and Interpersonal Boundaries

Respectful and professional boundaries are maintained

## Empowerment



Prioritizing empowerment and skill building

Providing an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel validated and affirmed with each and every contact at the agency

# 03



## Employer Responsibilities

# Employer Responsibility (*Customize*)



- Employers have specific obligations to provide a harassment-free workplace.
  - Ensure employees are aware of the policy
  - Educate employees about gender-based harassment and violence
  - Take incidents seriously
  - Investigate thoroughly, fairly and timely
  - Respond with appropriate discipline

***INCLUDE SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUR PROVINCE/ORGANIZATION***

# Policies & Supports (*Customize*)



- *Review key points of your organization's policy including various options for reporting, investigating, resolving, reducing risk to complainants and witnesses*
- *Supports available*

# Considerations for Integrating GBHV



Health & Safety

Respectful Workplace

HR

Performance

Employee Information Disclosure



Workplace Violence

DEI

Absenteeism

EAP

# Responding to Gender-Based Harassment and Violence in the Workplace



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



## Questions to consider

- What is the impact of this type of behaviour?
- What are the potential risks to the organization?
- What is your responsibility?
- What processes and options might be appropriate?– reporting, investigating, resolutions
- What supports might a complainant/survivor need through the process?



# Scenario 1: The Supervisor

Chris has recently transferred to a new location within the organization. Their new supervisor is friendly and helps Chris get familiar with the new job duties. After a few days, when no one else is around, the supervisor comes over to Chris' work area to chat. The supervisor talks about their sexual exploits over the weekend – picking up someone at a bar and going back to their apartment etc.

Chris is shocked that the supervisor would bring up such a topic and politely suggests that this is not appropriate conversation for the workplace. The supervisor responds that they didn't realize Chris was such a "stick in the mud" and suggest that Chris "needs to be less sensitive".

After that encounter Chris notices that the supervisor begins to be less helpful and often criticizes Chris' work.



## Scenario 2: Boys Will be Boys



Carla works as a line worker. Some of her male coworkers think it is fun to tease her. Carla often hears comments like “Watch out, here comes the she man” or “just give me a chance baby I could change your mind”.

Someone keeps putting a handmade sign on the only port-a-potty at the worksite that says, “No dykes allowed.” The word “bitch” has also been scratched on her toolbox. One worker doesn’t join in on the jokes, and quietly tells Carla not to be bothered by the jokes and claims it is just “the boys having fun”.

Carla makes a complaint, and the complaint is investigated, but it cannot be determined who made the sign or scratched “bitch” on her toolbox.

## Scenario 3: Not a Good Fit



José works as a clerk typist for a large employer. José likes to wear bright colours, make up and jewelry including earrings and necklaces. His boss, Nathalie, thinks José fashion choices are “weird” and that it’s strange that he wants to be a clerical worker. She frequently makes sarcastic comments to him about his appearance and refers to him “jokingly” as the office boy.

José would like to advance his career in the area of customer relations and applies for a front facing customer service position that would involve working in a “front desk” area, where he would interact with the public. Nathalie advises José that if he wants that job, he had better look “more normal”.



# Scenario Debrief

- Factors to consider in reducing barriers to reporting
- Minimizing risk of retaliation
- Addressing specific needs
- Additional resources and support to feel confident in your role



# 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
- Can affect your career trajectory
- Uptick in external lawsuits
- Increase in negative reports in the media
- Automatic liability for the entire organization
- Negative impact on the industry

# Closing exercise



What can be done to  
improve my  
organization's response  
to GBHV?

# Resources in the Toolkit



See linkages referred to in Facilitator notes.



THANK YOU  
THANK YOU

*Have a great day!*

THANK YOU  
THANK YOU