

Drawing Connections 101:

Promoting Racial Equity and Preventing Sexual Assault in the Workplace



While this card is intended for all audiences, white readers should pay close attention to how workplace power structures and systems may benefit them at the expense of others. It is important that everyone is encouraged to take the time to examine their own potential biases in the workplace. It is up to all of us to shape a racially equitable workplace that promotes respect and to protects against sexual harassment, assault, and abuse.

CREATING A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

- Every employee at every level should feel safe and accepted in their workplace. This means that no one, at any point, should feel as though their body or identity is being targeted by verbal or physical harassment.
- When workplaces take the initiative to create a healthy, safe workplace, employee satisfaction increases and employee output is drastically improved (McCulloch, 2021).

WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

- **Increase employee awareness of sexual harassment and misconduct through educational trainings.** Frequent training sessions among staff reinforces that the employer takes the issue seriously. These trainings also help employees understand what constitutes as sexual misconduct (Workplaces Respond, 2019).
- **Convey to your employees that, if they speak out, they are free from retaliation from their colleagues or the business at large.** Many survivors and bystanders hesitate to speak out for fear of retribution. When everyone knows that their speech is protected, potential perpetrators may be less likely to act knowing their colleagues would feel free to report their misbehavior. If there are not policies currently in place to ensure this, create them and provide supervisory staff with guidelines to ensure these policies are implemented equitably.
- **Encourage your employees to be active bystanders through bystander training sessions.** When employees are empowered to help create an environment where every person is treated with respect and educated how to effectively prevent or interrupt forms of sexual misconduct, fewer of these incidents are likely to occur.

WAYS TO APPROACH RACIAL EQUITY AT WORK

- **Ask for employee input about making workplaces more inclusive for their respective communities.** Invest in organization-wide training by trainers who are experts in anti-racism and organizational change. This is the best way to close gaps in cultural knowledge while also making employees of all races feel that their words have value.
- **Ensure your hiring practices emphasize diverse recruitment.** Employees of color often encounter additional barriers, such as name discrimination, so it is important for employers to be proactive in making sure that hiring processes are equitable and free from bias.
- **Encourage your Human Resources department to advance their cultural competency in the wake of potential sexual misconduct.** Sexual misconduct can be motivated by gender and race. This can include sexually explicit comments about the victim's race and gender. It is important for the Human Resources department to take an intersectional perspective when processing these reports to ensure all potential harassment behaviors are included. If your workplace does not have a Human Resources department, the responsibility of cultural competency should fall on the managers, supervisor(s), or leadership that typically process these reports.
- **Ensure pay equity is an organization-wide standard.** Members of racial minorities and women often see a discrepancy in pay between themselves and their White, male counterparts for the same or similar work. Organizations can conduct regular Pay Equity Audits to ensure all employees are paid fairly.

Additional Resources

South Carolina Race Equity and Inclusion (REI) Partnership. (2019). *A practitioner's guide for promoting race equity and inclusion in the workplace*. Children's Trust of South Carolina. https://scchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/Practitioners_Guide_to_Promoting_REI_in_the_Workplace_web.pdf

Work Places Respond to Domestic & Sexual Violence. (n.d.). *Workplace toolkit: Resources for employers or managers* [Webpage]. <https://www.workplacesrespond.org/resource-library/workplace-toolkit/>

References

McCulloch, A. (2021, June 7). *Businesses with racial equity achieve 58% higher revenues*. Personnel Today. <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/businesses-with-racial-equity-achieve-58-higher-revenues/>

Workplaces Respond. (2019, September 3). *5 ways training can help prevent sexual harassment in your restaurant*. <https://www.workplacesrespond.org/media/5-ways-training-can-help-prevent-sexual-harassment-in-your-restaurant/>