

Violence and Harassment Against Women in the Workplace

Adebayo D. Oluwole, PhD.

Department of Counselling & Human Development Studies

University of Ibadan, Ibadan

08034105253

daoluwoledr@gmail.com

<https://www.positivepsychology.org/>



Training Objective

- The overall purpose of the training programme is to increase participant's knowledge and understanding of the concept of gender, and gender-based violence, sexuality, and rights.
- It will further take a look at the various forms of gender-based violence and the core principles for a code of conduct, reporting mechanisms and developing a programmatic response.

Women around the world face unacceptable levels of violence and harassment in the workplace.

This is a serious issue that impacts women's safety, well-being, and ability to participate fully in the economy.

The issue about our dynamics and influence, and of course our social constructs as a people makes it obvious that women usually suffer the brunt of whatever issues that is going on at work.

The union leaders must understand what GBVH and discrimination at work is all about and they must organise, reorganise and put themselves together to stop this menace

What is GBV?

Any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, girls, men, and boys, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

What is GBV?

GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females.

It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such actions, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

Key Points - context

- GBV is rooted in gender and power inequalities that exist outside of conflict or disaster.
- However, there are particular ways that GBV can manifest in an emergency context.
- Efforts to reduce GBV in emergencies must therefore *address the immediate needs of affected populations AND promote long-term social and cultural change toward gender equality*

In Nigeria, violence against women is evident in many forms, including

- ✓ Domestic,
- ✓ Verbal, and
- ✓ Physical abuse,
- ✓ Rape and sexual assault,
- ✓ Early and forced marriages,
- ✓ Incest,
- ✓ Female genital cutting,
- ✓ Acid baths and
- ✓ Outright killing.

Women continue to suffer all forms of degradation and deprivation in public and private spaces.

All procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or other non-medical reasons.



Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, girls, men, and boys, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.



Acid baths

- Acid baths are actions of violence where the perpetrator throws acid onto his or her victim's body, resulting in disfigurement and possible loss of eyesight.
- Acid baths are a large issue for women that needs to be addressed.



Child marriage



- Child, early and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU) are human rights violation that rob girls of their childhood, education and limit their possibilities for growth and stability.
- CEFMU also results in increased risks of violence, abuse, rape, sexual assault, early pregnancy and maternal mortality and morbidity.

The Scope of the Problem

Prevalence

Studies show that up to 35% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at work.

Forms of Abuse

Abuse can take many forms, including verbal harassment, unwanted sexual advances, stalking, and physical assault.

Devastating Impacts

This violence harms women's mental health, career prospects, and overall quality of life.

Causes and Enablers

1 Power Imbalances

Perpetrators often exploit hierarchical structures and dependencies in the workplace.

2 Social Norms

Harmful gender norms and rape culture contribute to the normalization of abuse.

3 Insufficient Protections

Weak laws, limited enforcement, and inadequate reporting mechanisms enable abuse to continue.

4 Victim Blaming

Attitudes that shift blame onto victims rather than perpetrators compound the problem.





Strategies for Change

Strengthening Laws

Enacting and enforcing robust laws to protect workers and hold companies accountable.

Fostering Inclusive Cultures

Promoting respect, equality, and zero tolerance for harassment in the workplace.

Empowering Workers

Enabling women to report abuse safely and ensuring their complaints are taken seriously.

Engaging Men as Allies

Mobilizing male leaders and colleagues to be active partners in ending workplace violence.



The Role of Employers



Prioritize Safety

Implement robust policies and procedures to prevent and address harassment.



Foster Inclusion

Promote a culture of respect, equality, and zero tolerance for abuse.



Provide Training

Educate all employees on identifying and reporting workplace violence.



Empower Workers

Ensure reporting channels are safe, confidential, and responsive.

Things Men Can Do To Prevent Gender Violence

1 Approach Gender Violence as a MEN'S Issue Approach sexual harassment and all forms of gender violence as a MEN'S issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. View men not only as perpetrators or possible offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers.

2 Don't Remain Silent If a brother, friend, classmate, teammate, or colleague is abusing his female partner—or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women in general—don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. Urge him to seek help. If you don't know what to do, consult a trusted friend, parent, professor, or coworker. DON'T REMAIN SILENT.

3 Have the Courage to Look Inward Question your own attitudes. Don't be defensive when something you do or say ends up hurting someone else. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate misogyny and violence, and work toward changing them.

4 Ask If You Can Help If you suspect that a woman (or anyone else) close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted, gently ask if you can help.

5 Get Help If you are emotionally, psychologically, physically, or sexually abusive to women, or have been in the past, seek professional help NOW.

6 Join the Cause Be an ally to women who are working to end all forms of gender violence. Support the women whose courage and empowered voices have catalyzed the historic #MeToo and #TimesUp movements. Attend “Take Back the Night” rallies and other public events. Raise money for community-based rape crisis centers and battered women’s programs. If you belong to a team or fraternity, or another student group, organize a fundraiser.

7. Be an Ally Recognize and speak out against violence against genderqueer and nonbinary people.. This abuse also has direct links to sexism (e.g. the “manhood” and sexual orientation of men who speak out against sexism are often questioned, a conscious or unconscious strategy intended to silence them. This is a key reason few men do so). Educate Yourself Attend programs, take courses, watch films, TED talks, and YouTube videos, and read articles and books about gender inequality, and the root causes of gender violence. Educate yourself and others about how larger social forces affect the conflicts between individual men and women.

9 Mentor Others Mentor and teach boys and young men about how to be men in ways that don’t involve degrading or abusing girls and women (or anyone). Volunteer to work with gender violence prevention programs, including anti-sexist men’s programs. Lead by example.

10. Avoid excessive use of alcohol or other drugs.

These substances may make you aggressive and impair your ability to think clearly or communicate effectively. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not a defence against criminal behaviour, and rape is a criminal act.

Collective Responsibility

1

Government Action

Stronger laws, robust enforcement, and comprehensive support services for victims.

2

Corporate Leadership

Proactive policies, training programs, and public commitments to end workplace abuse.

3

Community Engagement

Awareness campaigns, public-private partnerships, and grassroots mobilization.



A Call to Action

Prioritize Safety

Ensure robust policies and procedures to prevent and address harassment.

Foster Inclusion

Promote a culture of respect, equality, and zero tolerance for abuse.

Empower Workers

Enable safe and confidential reporting, and take all complaints seriously.

Collaborate for Change

Government, employers, and communities must work together to end workplace violence.



Thank You!

Other relevant materials are
found on

<https://www.positivepsychology.org.ng/>