

10 Tips For Developing An Effective Sexual Harassment Training Program



3-4 Minute Read

Sexual harassment in the workplace is internationally condemned and seen as a violation of human rights. It lowers workplace productivity and increases absenteeism and staff turnover. Despite this, it remained underreported and pervasive for many years until the #MeToo movement sparked national awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Initially founded in 2006, the #MeToo movement became well-known in 2017 when certain high-profile actresses came forward about their experiences with sexual harassment in the film industry. The #MeToo movement provides empowerment by showing the world that sexual harassment in the workplace is common and lets survivors know they are supported.

The prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace is also supported by The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Their primary goal is to create better workplaces where employers and employees thrive together.

Subsequently, more cities and states are mandating [sexual harassment training](#) for all workers – not just managers.

So, where do you start when you create a sexual [harassment training program](#) for your company, and how do you ensure it is effective?

10 Essential Tips for Sexual Harassment Training Program

- Get management approval for [sexual harassment training](#).
- Provide [workplace sexual harassment training](#) workshops for your managers and supervisors.
- Define your sexual harassment training goals.
- Focus on more than just legal compliance and don't only discuss the obvious
- Develop a sexual harassment policy booklet
- Customize [sexual harassment training](#) to match your workplace
- Decide on the format of your training and buy the courseware
- Define the scope and focus of your training
- Decide if you are going to go in-house or outsource your training
- Determine the length and frequency of your training sessions

Sexual harassment is never acceptable. It's important to create a workplace where everyone feels safe and respected. That's where [sexual harassment training](#) comes in.

Get management approval for sexual harassment training

It is vital to get the leadership team's support to implement an effective sexual harassment training policy. After all, management has to provide the funding and motivate their employees to participate in the program.

You might find yourself running into some resistance unless management can see value in this initiative. Some objections you may encounter are:

There's no budget for this.

Our company doesn't have a sexual harassment problem.

We're too busy, too big, or too small.

These objections can be countered by mentioning that the #MeToo movement has brought a lot of visibility to sexual harassment issues in the workplace. Also, governments and states are getting more involved in implementing sexual harassment training programs in the workplace, which leads us to the next point:

Provide workplace sexual harassment training workshops for your managers and supervisors

Your managers and supervisors should receive [sexual harassment training](#) workshops separately and before you present them to the rest of the employees. Management should be aware they are responsible for preventing sexual harassment in the workplace and implementing effective [sexual harassment training programs](#).

Make it clear to them what the consequences can be if the company is non-compliant and the penalties that apply.

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Define your sexual harassment training goals.

Before you begin, determine what you want to accomplish with your sexual harassment training.

Here's a list of goals to help you:

- There should be high standards for personal conduct in the company.
- The organization must be compliant with local or state laws.
- Staff must be familiar with the definition of sexual harassment and the behaviors that go with it.
- Employees should know what to do and who to report to if they are a target of sexual harassment or witness an incident, without fear of retaliation.
- Everybody should know what the consequences are if the sexual harassment policy is violated.
- In the event of criminal charges, the company must have a legal defense.

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Focus on more than just legal compliance and don't only discuss the obvious

Most workers already know what obvious behaviors are unacceptable, like groping, unwelcome hugging or kissing, or requests for sexual favors or dates. It is, however, important to discuss "grey areas," as well, meaning behaviors that might seem unintentional, harmless, or "innocent."

Would it be seen as sexual harassment if someone stood "uncomfortably" close to you or told an inappropriate joke? Is it wrong if you compliment a female colleague on the dress she is wearing?

Describe all inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors in detail and make the staff aware of the consequences. They should know that sexual harassment can lead to criminal charges and civil lawsuits and is punishable by employment termination.

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Develop a sexual harassment policy booklet

Create a sexual harassment policy booklet, which each employee must read and sign-off, confirming that they understand the booklet's information. All new hires should also be introduced to the booklet.

Customize sexual harassment training to match your workplace

Your sexual harassment training must be consistent with your company's practices and policies and align with its mission and values. If your employees get the impression you are merely doing this to comply with the minimum legal requirements, staff may not be motivated.

Decide on the format of your training and buy the courseware

Training must be relevant, engaging, interactive, and practical. It's up to you to decide whether it will be online or live training – the most important thing is to deliver quality training.

Take the step and purchase the courseware you need for your training program. If you are part of a very large organization with thousands of employees, it may be viable to create your own courseware, but if not, it doesn't make sense to build it yourself. There are loads of excellent options on the market that are cost-effective, well-researched and well-designed.

Enroll Now – [Employee harassment training](#)

Define the scope and focus of your training

Consider a broader scope of training if you want it to impact your team and workplace positively. Instead of focusing solely on sexual harassment, you can, for example, bring the aspect of respect into your training.

Teach your employees that teasing people about religious practices or derogatory comments about ethnic groups can also be a major problem. This will make your training sessions more positive, ensuring more effective learning. It might be more time-consuming, but the end result may be well worth it.

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Decide if you are going to go in-house or outsource your training

The decision you have to make is, do you and your team want to handle this problem internally, or are you going to outsource it?

If you decide to do the training yourself, you might save money because external trainers are more expensive. On the other hand, if you and your staff are tied down with creating courses and training sessions, there may be crucial high-value work being left undone.

Determine the length and frequency of your training sessions

Although [sexual harassment training](#) is not required by Federal law, your legal advisors will highly recommend it. Certain local governments and states also stipulate minimum lengths and frequency of sexual harassment training sessions.

To ensure your training is effective and compliant, you should plan sessions of at least one hour for all employees. Supervisors and managers will probably

need 90 to 120 minutes to understand their responsibilities fully. It is good practice to repeat the training annually.

Conclusion

Overall, ongoing and interactive training is mandatory for it to be effective and to prevent and address sexual harassment in the workplace. Creating a practical and effective sexual harassment training course for your company will ensure your employees are up to date with the latest changes in policies and procedures and that sexual harassment is top of mind throughout the year.

Coggnos has a wide range of online sexual harassment training courses.

You can have a look at our free courses like this one [here](#) and our course catalog [here](#).