

WORKPLACE SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT POLICIES

Policies are the backbone of our societies and govern so much of our daily lives, without us often even knowing. As an employee, understanding the importance of workplace policy will help you know what policy is in place to protect you, which policy needs to be challenged and which policy doesn't even exist. As an employee with valuable lived experience and knowledge you should be on the fore front of policy creation and renewal.

"I HAD NO IDEA THAT MY WORK ACTUALLY WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE A POLICY ON HOW TO DEAL WITH A SEXUAL ASSAULT DISCLOSURE. THEY JUST TOLD ME TO CALL THE COPS"- BARTENDER, TORONTO, 26 YEARS OLD.)

BAD POLICY AND PRACTICE

Forcing the survivor to work with or have contact or communication with perpetrator

Lack of documentation

Calling the police without asking the survivor

Asking the survivor if they are sure it happened? Insisting on hearing details or more explanation from the person disclosing assault.

No follow up, after a decision is met, the survivor has no additional support.

No additional support for other staff.

No community accountability, if you have been called out, your silence is bad practice.

No specific person to go to- confusion of who to trust if wanting to disclose.

No confidentiality practice for reporting, everyone gossips and knows about private information.

GOOD POLICY AND TACTICS

All staff are given these policies and briefs about hows this policy effects them before they start the job or on their first day.

Clear communication about reporting process rooted in **survivor centric** practices.

I know who to go to if the complaint is about another employee.

If the complaint is about manager or owner- there is a secondary reporting person and process that is clear to me.

Reporting process is time sensitive and will not be delayed.

Survivor determines follow up to reporting with workplace- police? Supports? Other forms of justice.

Investigation process is done through an equitable and unbiased lens- We believe survivors.

Documentation is kept up to date and confidential

Written and verbal confirmation of actions taken

Example of a good survivor centric policy:

If an employee has experienced sexual assault they can report to the manager or designated point of contact through email or request to speak in person. We will not require any "proof" or documentation of the alleged crime and will instead ask what the staff (person disclosing) what they would like to do next. We will then provide resources if they do not have a clear answer. These resources have been provided by the Dandelion Initiative and include Justice for Survivors. There will be a written and verbal follow up in 5-10 days after initial report was taken.

What is a workplace policy you would want to see or have implemented at work?
