**Workplace Harassment Risk Factors**

Assessment Tool

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| **Present** | **Risk Factor & Indicators** | **Connection to Harassment** | **EEOC Mitigation Strategies** | **Selected Strategies** |
|  | **Homogeneous Workforce*** Historic lack of diversity in the workplace
* Currently only one minority in the work group (team, department or location)
 | * Employees in the minority can feel isolated and may actually be, or at least appear to be, vulnerable to pressure from others.
* Employees in the majority might feel threatened by those they perceive as “different” or “other,” or might simply be uncomfortable around others who are not like them.
 | * Increase diversity at all levels of the workforce, with particular attention to work groups with low diversity.
* Pay attention to relations among and within work groups.
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|  | **Workplaces Where Some Employees do not Conform to Workplace Norms*** “Rough and tumble” or single-sex dominated workplace cultures
* Remarks, jokes or banter that are crude, “raunchy,” or demeaning
 | * Employees may be viewed as weak or susceptible to abuse.
* Abusive remarks or humor may promote workplace norms that devalue certain types of individuals.
 | * Proactively and intentionally create a culture of civility and respect with the involvement of the highest levels of leadership.
* Pay attention to relations among and within work groups.
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|  | **Cultural and Language Differences in the Workplace*** Arrival of new employees with different cultures or nationalities
* Segregation of employees with different cultures or nationalities
 | * Different cultural backgrounds may make employees less aware of laws and workplace norms.
* Employees who do not speak English may not know their rights and may be more subject to exploitation.
* Language and linguistic characteristics can play a role in harassment.
 | * Ensure that culturally diverse employees understand laws, workplace norms, and policies.
* Increase diversity in culturally segregated workforces.
* Pay attention to relations among and within work groups.
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|  | **Coarsened Social Discourse Outside the Workplace*** Increasingly heated discussion of current events occurring outside the workplace
 | * Coarsened social discourse that is happening outside a workplace may make harassment inside the workplace more likely or perceived as more acceptable.
 | * Proactively identify current events – national and local – that are likely to be discussed in the workplace.
* Remind the workforce of the types of conduct that are acceptable in the workplace.
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|  | **Young Workforces*** Significant number of teenage and young adult employees
 | * Employees in their first or second jobs may be less aware of laws and workplace norms.
* Young employees may lack the self-confidence to resist unwelcome overtures or challenge conduct that makes them uncomfortable.
* Young employees may be more susceptible to being taken advantage of by coworkers or superiors, particularly those who may be older and more established in their positions.
* Young employees may be more likely to engage in harassment because they lack the maturity to understand or care about consequences.
 | * Provide targeted outreach about harassment in high schools and colleges.
* Provide orientation to all new employees with emphasis on the employer’s desire to hear about all complaints of unwelcome conduct.
* Provide training on how to be a good supervisor when youth are promoted to supervisory positions.
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|  | **Workplaces Reliant Upon Customer Service or Client Satisfaction*** Compensation directly tied to customer service or client satisfaction
 | * Fear of losing a sale or tip may compel employees to tolerate inappropriate or harassing behavior.
 | * Be wary of a “customer is always right” mentality in terms of application to unwelcome conduct.
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|  | **Workplace with “High Value” Employees*** Executives or senior managers
* Employees with high value (actual or perceived) to the employer, e.g. the “rainmaking” partner or the prized, grant-winning researcher
 | * Management is often reluctant to jeopardize high value employee’s economic value to the employer.
* High value employees may perceive themselves as exempt from the workplace rules or immune from consequences of their misconduct.
 | * Apply workplace rules uniformly, regardless of rank or value to the employer.
* If a high-value employee is discharged for misconduct, consider publicizing that fact (unless there is a good reason not to).\*

\* *There could be several reasons not to so publicize.* |  |
|  | **Workplaces with Significant Power Disparities*** Low-ranking employees in organizational hierarchy
* Employees holding positions usually subject to the direction of others, *e.g*. administrative support staff, nurses, janitors, etc.
* Gendered power disparities (e.g., most of the low-ranking employees are female).
 | * Supervisors feel emboldened to exploit low-ranking employees.
* Low-ranking employees are less likely to understand complaint channels (language or education / training insufficiencies).
* Undocumented workers may be especially vulnerable to exploitation of the fear of retaliation.
 | * Apply workplace rules uniformly, regardless of rank or value to the employer.
* Pay attention to relations among and within work groups with significant power disparities.
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|  | **Workplaces Where Work is Monotonous or Tasks are Low-Intensity*** Employees are not actively engaged or “have time on their hands”
* Repetitive work
 | * Harassing behavior may become a way to vent frustration or avoid boredom.
 | * Consider varying or restructuring job duties or workload to reduce monotony or boredom.
* Pay attention to relations among and within work groups with monotonous or low-intensity tasks.
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|  | **Isolated Workplaces*** Physically isolated workplaces.
* Employees work alone or have few opportunities to interact with others.
 | * Harassers have easy access to their targets.
* There are no witnesses.
 | * Consider restructuring work environments and schedules to eliminate isolated conditions.
* Ensure that workers in isolated work environments understand complaint procedures.
* Create opportunities for isolated workers to connect with each other (e.g., in person or on-line) to share concerns.
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|  | **Workplaces that Tolerate or Encourage Alcohol Consumption*** Alcohol consumption during and around work hours.
 | * Alcohol reduces social inhibitions and impairs judgment.
 | * Train co-workers to intervene appropriately if they observe alcohol-induced misconduct.
* Remind managers about their responsibility if they see harassment, including at events where alcohol is consumed.
* Intervene promptly when customers or clients who have consumed too much alcohol act inappropriately.
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|  | **Decentralized Workplaces*** Corporate offices far removed physically and / or organizationally from front-line employees or first-line supervisors.
 | * Managers may feel (or may actually be) unaccountable for their behavior and may act outside the bounds of workplace rules.
* Managers may be unaware of how to address harassment issues and may be reluctant to call headquarters for direction.
 | * Ensure that compliance training reaches all levels of the organization, regardless of how geographically dispersed workplaces may be.
* Ensure that compliance training for area managers includes their responsibility for sites under their jurisdiction.
* Develop systems for employees in geographically diverse locations to connect and communicate.
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