



## Sexual Harassment Prevention Strategies

Sexual harassment prevention strategies should consider proactive measures that can address concerns, reinforce positive behaviors, and attempt to reduce or prevent future occurrences.

Sexual harassment prevention strategies include policies and programs divided into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

- **Primary** prevention strategies can mitigate behaviors before they become problematic sexually harassing behaviors.
- **Secondary** prevention strategies respond immediately after the occurrence, holding perpetrators responsible for the behaviors to set the expectation that such behavior is unacceptable.
- **Tertiary** prevention strategies are to mitigate the lasting effects of sexually harassing behaviors, aimed at preventing future occurrences.

### Examples of Primary Prevention Strategies

- Conduct sexual harassment prevention training (tailored to the target audience). Training should focus on the following:
  - Defining what is and what is not sexual harassment (by providing realistic examples)
  - Ensuring a thorough understanding of reporting procedures, policies, and regulations
  - Identifying the responsibilities of individuals and leaders to eliminate sexual harassment, which can include the following:
    - Identify the following for potential targets:
      - Emphasize that being sexually harassed is NEVER the target's fault.
      - Ensure individuals know how and where to report sexual harassment.
      - Provide clear guidance on rights and protections for making a report.
    - Identify the following for potential bystanders:
      - Convey knowledge of appropriate intervention techniques to remove someone from a precarious situation.
      - Establish additional options for intervention other than directly confronting the perpetrator.
      - Define rights and protections for bystanders who intervene.
  - Identifying sexist and sexually harassing behaviors and immediately correcting them
  - Informing all members of the organization of reporting procedures
- Mandate leader awareness in all workplace settings; educate leaders and hold them appropriately accountable for stopping inappropriate behavior.
- Conduct climate assessments (per service requirements) to do the following:
  - Identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement in current measures.
  - Develop, improve, and implement proactive measures.
- Discuss the effects of sexual harassment on the individual and the organization.
- Display and frequently (e.g., annually) review policies to prevent sexual harassment.



### **Examples of Secondary Prevention Strategies**

- Respond with sincerity and urgency to all allegations and reports of sexual harassment.
- Take appropriate actions to resolve allegations, including responding in a timely manner and without bias.
- Remain neutral and professional by ensuring that all Service members are treated with dignity and respect throughout the investigation process, including targets and suspected perpetrators.
- Identify why sexual harassment occurred (e.g., a lack of policy, education, or enforcement of the rules).
- Provide resources and support (e.g., spiritual, medical, or legal) to all personnel involved.
- Separate nonconforming members from military service as required.

### **Examples of Tertiary Prevention Strategies**

- Develop and consistently reinforce strong service, ethos, and values.
- Monitor trends (e.g., monthly or quarterly), identify patterns, and establish a plan of action to prevent sexist or sexual harassment behaviors.
- Conduct follow-up assessments (on formal and informal complaints) 45–60 days after the complaint resolution to ensure the complaint is fully resolved and ensure no retaliation has occurred.
- Leverage lessons learned from past experiences to further inform and develop prevention training and prevent possible future sexual harassment events.
- Conduct unit activities that build group inclusion, cohesion, trust, and respect through participation in unified goals or experiences.
- Review current policies and revise as needed, based on observed trends, and when they are outdated or no longer applicable.
- Discuss this issue at open forums with other leaders, outlining your prevention philosophy.
- Ensure required climate assessments are completed (based on service requirements or as directed).
- Work with community members to leverage resources available for Service members, civilians, and family members, especially newcomers.

