



## Strategies to Prevent Sex Discrimination

Strategies for preventing sex discrimination include both proactive and reactive measures.

- Proactive strategies include creating and enforcing policies, providing rigorous and unique training/ learning opportunities, and reinforcing positive behaviors.
- Reactive strategies include providing immediate support to targets of inappropriate behaviors and holding offenders appropriately accountable for their actions

Prevention strategies are divided into three categories: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary. The overarching goal is to prevent future occurrences.

- **Primary Prevention Strategies** can mitigate behaviors before they become problematic.
- **Secondary Prevention Strategies** efforts focus on responding immediately after the occurrence, while supporting the target, holding the perpetrators accountable, and setting the expectation that such behavior is unacceptable.
- **Tertiary Prevention Strategies** aim to mitigate the lasting effects of behaviors and prevent future occurrences.

### Examples of Primary Prevention Strategies

- Conduct facilitated training tailored to the target audience. Training should focus on:
  - Defining key terms associated with sex discrimination, such as sexism, sexist behaviors, gender identity, sexual orientation, prejudice, and discrimination.
  - Ensuring a thorough understanding of reporting procedures.
  - Discuss causes of sex discrimination and how to prevent them from impacting the workplace. Find resources in the Center of Excellence Portal on [deomi.mil](http://deomi.mil) to understand these causes.
  - Identify sex discrimination behaviors and provide opportunities for members to practice what to do if they observe or experience sex discrimination.
- Mandate leader presence in all workplace settings; educate leaders and hold them accountable for preventing inappropriate behavior.
- Conduct climate assessments to:
  - Identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement in current measures.
  - Develop, improve, and implement proactive measures.
- Discuss the impacts of sex discrimination on individuals and the organization.
- Display and frequently discuss policies to prevent sex discrimination.
- Create opportunities for members of all gender identities and sexual orientations to work, learn, live, eat, and compete in a diverse environment together.





- Provide opportunities for members to gain awareness about all gender identities and sexual orientations' customs and traditions and encourage others to ask questions when they don't understand.

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

- Respond with sincerity to all reports of sex discrimination.
- Take appropriate actions to resolve complaints, including responding promptly and without bias and holding offenders appropriately accountable.
- Inform leaders higher up the chain of sexist comments and complaints.
- Remain neutral and professional by ensuring all members are treated with dignity and respect throughout the investigation process; targets, suspected perpetrators, and members participating in the investigating process alike.
- Identify why the sex discrimination occurred (e.g., lack of policy, education, enforcement of the rules).
- Provide resources and support (e.g., spiritual, medical, legal) to all involved members.

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

- Develop and consistently reinforce strong organizational values by holding leaders accountable for modeling conduct expectations and responding consistently to conduct infractions.
- Monitor trends (e.g., monthly, quarterly), identify patterns, and as needed, revise your action plans to prevent sex discrimination.
- Conduct follow-up assessments (on formal and informal complaints) 45-60 days after complaint resolution to ensure complaints are resolved and no retaliation occurs.
- Leverage lessons learned from past experiences to further inform and develop prevention training and prevent possible future sex harassment incidents.
- Coordinate activities that build group inclusion, cohesion, trust, and respect within units, teams, and the organization through participation in a unified goal.
- Review current policies and revise as needed, leverage data from sources like case reports, climate surveys, and general observations for policy improvement.
- Outline the leader's prevention philosophy at open forums; discuss sex discrimination, sexist behaviors, and the actions leaders will take to ensure offenders are held accountable. Share experiences on the strengths and weaknesses in prevention and response practices and make improvements.
- Work with community members to leverage resources available for DoD employees.

