

‘Stepping in’

A bystander action toolkit to support equality and respect at work

A RESOURCE FOR STATE SPORTING ASSOCIATIONS

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Contents

Glossary of key terms	5
Introduction	
Why bystander action?	6
Bystander action in your SSA	6
Using this toolkit	7
SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS	
Information sheets	
1. Getting your SSA on board with bystander action	9
2. Policies for bystander action	11
3. Your equal opportunity policy	12
4. Code of conduct	13
5. Complaints process	14
6. Sexual harassment policy	15
Checklist	
Policy checklist	16
Action options	
1. Creating policies	17
2. Policy content	17
3. Developing procedures	18
4. Support	18
5. Explaining bystander actions	19
6. Accessing policies	19
7. Policy training	20
8. Induction	20
Examples	
1. A definition of bystander action	21
2. Bystander actions	21
3. Support for bystander action	21
Additional resources	
Links	22
References and resources	22

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS

Information sheet

7. Preparing for bystander action	23
-----------------------------------	----

Checklist

Motivated leader checklist	24
----------------------------	----

Action options

9. Know your policies	25
10. Refresher training	25
11. Preparing to set expectations	26
12. Setting expectations	26
13. Getting feedback	27
14. Monitoring progress	27
15. Preparing to respond	28
16. Giving feedback	28
17. Equipping your team	29
18. Supporting staff	29
19. Training your staff	30

Examples

4. Key messages for discussing bystander action in team meetings	31
5. Scenarios for team meeting discussions	32
6. Setting ground rules for team behaviours	32
7. Respectful behaviours in teams	33
8. Checklist to monitor team behaviours	34
9. Checklist to review changes in team behaviours	35

Additional resources

Links	36
Workplace behaviour descriptions	36

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS

Information sheet

8. Implementing bystander action in your team 37

Checklist

- Team checklist 38

Action options

20. Preparing to do bystander action 39
21. Agreeing on behaviours 39
22. Addressing sexist language 40
23. Implementing bystander actions 40
24. Team practice 41
25. Champions 41
26. Monitoring impacts 42

Examples

10. Using non-sexist language in our team 43
11. Role of bystander champions 43
12. Ground rules for the use of bystander action in our team 44
13. Checklist for reviewing the use of bystander action in our team 44
14. Assessing the advantages and challenges of using bystander action 45

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS

Information sheets

9. Understanding individual action 47
10. Steps to taking bystander action 48

Checklist

- Self checklist 49

Action options

27. Understanding sex discrimination and sexual harassment 50
28. Preparing to act 50
29. Plan for responses 51
30. Showing commitment 51
31. Four steps to bystander action 52

Examples

15. Bystander action at work 53
16. What to say in the moment 53
17. What to say after the moment 54
18. Individual commitment to take bystander action 54

Glossary of key terms

The following key terms are used throughout the toolkit.

- **Bullying:** repeated unreasonable behaviours directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.
- **Bystander action:** the action taken by a person or persons not directly involved as a subject or perpetrator of violence against women, to identify, speak out about or seek to engage others in responding to specific incidences of violence and/or behaviours, attitudes, practices or policies that contribute to violence.
- **Gender equity:** men and women having access to and enjoying the same rewards, resources and opportunities.
- **Sex discrimination:** treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of his or her sex. This includes characteristics associated with a person's sex, such as carer responsibilities, pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- **Sexism:** the application of the belief or attitude that there are characteristics implicit to one's gender that indirectly affects one's abilities in unrelated areas.
- **Sexual harassment:** unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which a reasonable person having regard to all the circumstances would anticipate would offend, humiliate or intimidate the other person.
- **Victimisation:** where a person subjects or threatens to subject another person to any detriment because they have brought a dispute to the Commission or have made a complaint against any person under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.
- **Vilification:** behaviour that encourages others to hate, disrespect or abuse a person or group of people because of their race or religion.
- **Violence against women:** any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, whether occurring in public or private life.
- **Workplace flexibility:** reconciling the needs of employers and employees. Employers have specific obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act to provide flexible working arrangements for parents and carers, provided that it is reasonable to do so.

Introduction

VicHealth has identified the important role sporting clubs can have in shaping positive community attitudes about, and behaviours towards, women and girls. VicHealth has also identified the key leadership role State Sporting Associations (SSAs) have in helping their members strengthen the participation of women and girls by building fair, inclusive and respectful sporting environments on and off the playing field.

The 'Stepping In' toolkit has been specifically designed for SSAs as workplaces. With Victoria's equal opportunity laws requiring you to do all you reasonably can to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation, this resource provides guidance on the leadership role of SSAs as employers. In doing so, you help build and maintain a fair, inclusive and respectful work environment for the women you employ.

This toolkit provides an excellent companion to the 'Everyone Wins' resources, dedicated specifically to working with clubs in their endeavours to increase the involvement of women and girls.

As well as the benefits this brings to your organisation, meeting this responsibility positions your SSA as an effective role model for your sport. It shows your commitment to 'walking the talk', encourages your members to follow suit and gives you the authority to provide leadership where they are missing the mark.

Why bystander action?

A key aspect of creating such a safe and inclusive workplace is to equip all staff to step in when they see or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment taking place at work.

'Stepping in' at work can take many forms, and is often referred to as 'bystander action'. It can include speaking up against sexist or disparaging language or jokes, or identifying and changing workplace practices and policies that discriminate against women.

It does not include intervening in unsafe or violent situations! Your employees should only step in when it is safe to do so.

Research shows that constructive bystander action can positively influence your workplace culture and build organisational health by:

- cultivating more equal and respectful relationships between men and women
- increasing the retention of women in your organisation
- improving the productivity and morale of all staff.

Importantly, research shows that constructive bystander action that helps to create more equal and respectful relationships between men and women can also help to change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence against women. Bystander action is therefore an important preventive technique in a community strategy to eliminate violence against women.

Bystander action in your SSA

A workplace culture in which employees are equipped to take bystander action doesn't just happen. It requires strong leadership that specifically works to develop the following components:

- an agreed understanding of your responsibility to eliminate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in your workplace
- explicit leadership endorsement of bystander action as a key strategy in doing this
- clear policies that demonstrate your commitment to eliminating sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in your workplace and support staff in taking constructive bystander action
- explicit support for and role modelling of constructive bystander action by managers and team leaders
- explicit team support for bystander action as an agreed way of addressing sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment, and reassurances that bystanders will not be victimised if they do step in
- an agreed way of speaking or acting for staff to follow when they witness or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment.

This requires a 'whole of organisation' approach with staff across your organisation working together to build ownership and commitment and ensure everyone is 'on board'. This toolkit is designed to help you do this.

Using this toolkit

This toolkit aims to help SSAs:

- develop policies, procedures and culture that support staff taking constructive bystander action against sexist language, sexual harassment and sex discrimination
- increase staff awareness and knowledge of sexist language, sexual harassment, sex discrimination and victimisation and the impact these can have on the prevalence of violence against women
- increase the capacity of staff to take constructive bystander action around sexist language, sexual harassment and sex discrimination.

Each section supports a key component:

1. **Committed organisations**
2. **Motivated leaders**
3. **United teams**
4. **Confident individuals.**

Each section contains a range of practical tools to support these actions. These are clearly colour-coded for ease of use, see below.

INFORMATION SHEETS

Information sheets provide important background information to help you understand the 'whats' and 'whys' of bystander action. They may include summaries of relevant research, definitions and explanations of key concepts, and the rationale and benefits for actions. You can use this information to build your own understanding, and cut and paste into other documents and tools to communicate to others.

ACTION OPTIONS

Action options support the checklists and describe practical steps you can take to address any gaps you have identified. They are not presented in a sequential order and are not designed to be done one after the other. Choose the ones related to the checklist items you identified as requiring work. Some action options have the same indicators as the checklists to direct you to further related tools.

CHECKLISTS

Checklists allow you to do a 'stocktake' of what you already have in place and highlight what you may need to work on to help get bystander action happening. These will point you towards which action options to consider. They don't give you a score or a rating, but the items you tick as 'no' or 'partly' will highlight issues you should consider addressing.

Next to the questions in the checklists are indicators that will guide you to the appropriate information, actions or examples. They are colour-coded and numbered so you can find the specific tool that will help you with the relevant issue. Examples of these are:

- i3** go to Information sheet 3
- A12** go to Action option 12
- E9** go to Example 9
- R** go to the additional resources sheet in the current section.

EXAMPLES

Examples are generic examples that you can adapt for your workplace. They take some of the hard work out of creating exercises for your organisation. Some examples have the same indicators as the checklists to direct you to further related tools.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources link you to other resources or point you in the right direction.

You can use the tools separately or in any sequence, depending on where you are up to. For ease of reference, they are numbered by section and colour-coded by type (e.g. checklist, information sheets etc.). As a guide, we suggest the following steps.

Suggested sequence when using the toolkit:

STARTING	Choose the level you want to start at (i.e. Organisations, Leaders, Teams or Individuals). We suggest taking them in order so they can build on each other.
INFORMATION SHEETS	Read these to build your understanding of what's involved and related key issues.
CHECKLISTS	Complete these to get an idea about how your workplace is going and which issues you need to focus on.
ACTION OPTIONS	Pick one or more of the activities to help with the issues you identified from the checklist.
EXAMPLES	Adapt these to use in documents, meetings or communications, or for help with your action options.
RESOURCES	Follow the link for more information and ideas.
REPEAT	Repeat this process on a regular basis, as the issues needing attention will change over time.

This toolkit is designed to be used by organisations of all sizes and types. Even if your SSA is quite small and you have only a few staff, you will find practical activities relevant to you.

Even if your whole organisation is not following the steps above, individuals and teams can use the tools to initiate actions at any stage.

However, the tools will work best when your organisation is prepared and committed to taking bystander action across the board, and is ready to work together to make it happen.

If you have any questions or feedback about this toolkit, its content or its use, please contact VicHealth.

Beyond the toolkit

This toolkit is specifically designed to help implement effective bystander action to help eliminate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in the workplace – all of which are prohibited under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The Equal Opportunity Act includes 16 other protected attributes (e.g. race, religious belief, gender identity, disability, parental/carer status), and SSAs are encouraged to consider bystander action as a strategy to reduce discrimination on the basis of all attributes.

SECTION 1:

Committed organisations

“...a ‘whole of organisation’ approach across your SSA, working together to build commitment and support staff in taking constructive bystander action”

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
[AN EVIDENCE REVIEW: SUMMARY REPORT]. VICHEALTH 2012

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS

INFORMATION SHEETS

1. Getting your SSA on board with bystander action

To implement bystander action effectively in your SSA, you need to have your whole organisation on board, including your leaders.


A good first step in doing this is to help staff and other stakeholders (e.g. your Board) understand the 'whats' and 'whys' of bystander action in your SSA.

They need to know:

- Violence against women is the biggest contributor to ill health and premature death in women aged 15–44, with one in three women experiencing physical violence and almost one in five women experiencing sexual violence from intimate male partners.
- Your organisation has a responsibility to do all it reasonably can to provide a safe and inclusive workplace for all, including women.
- Bystander action is an effective strategy to address sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment and an important part of what you do to provide a safe and inclusive environment.
- Implementing bystander action will have benefits for your organisation. It can positively influence your workplace culture and build organisational health by:
 - cultivating more equal and respectful relationships between men and women
 - increasing the retention of women in your organisation
 - improving the productivity and morale of all staff.

- Constructive bystander action that helps create more equal and respectful relationships between men and women can also help to change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence against women, and is therefore an important preventive technique in a community strategy to eliminate violence against women.

You can educate staff and others about bystander action in a number of ways, including:

- discussing bystander action at staff and board meetings 
- talking to new staff at induction
- providing information in the staff handbook
- posting information on the intranet
- incorporating information in policies and procedures.

The following page outlines some key messages to include in your information.

It's time to get your SSA on board!

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS

INFORMATION SHEETS

What is bystander action and why is it important?

- As an employer, our SSA has an obligation to do what it reasonably can to prevent and address sex discrimination and sexual harassment in our organisation and keep our workplace safe and inclusive for women.
- A key part of creating such a safe and inclusive workplace is to equip all staff to step in when they see or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment taking place at work.
- 'Stepping in' can take many forms, and is often referred to as 'bystander action'. It can include speaking up against sexist or disparaging language or jokes where safe to do so, or identifying and changing workplace practices and policies that discriminate against women.
- Our organisation supports and endorses the use of bystander action and has embedded this in our policies and procedures so that all staff are clear that we will not tolerate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation, and all staff know what to do when they see it or are told about it.
- Bystander action fits with what we are already doing to strengthen the participation of women in our workplace.
- Bystander action says we all share the responsibility to tackle sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment in our organisation.
- Using bystander action to tackle sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment will help us create a positive work environment for everyone, including women. It will lead to staff who:
 1. want to come to work
 2. are committed to doing a good job
 3. work well together
 4. stay on in the job.
- As well as these benefits, using bystander action will help us be an effective role model for our sport: it shows our commitment to 'walking the talk', encourages our members to do the same, and gives us the authority to step in where they are missing the mark.
- We will also be helping to reduce violence against women by eliminating the sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment that can contribute to this. For a useful resource on the link between bystander action and preventing violence against women, follow the video link on the additional resources page.
- The bystander actions and strategies contained in this toolkit are designed to be a part of our prevention strategy.

Bystander actions should never involve someone putting themselves or others in a potentially dangerous or risky situation. Staff should only take bystander action when they consider it is safe to do so.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS

INFORMATION SHEETS

2. Policies for bystander action

Your policies are the ground rules that help staff and other stakeholders know what to do about any workplace issue.

Your policies also reflect your organisation's values and beliefs, and provide the blueprint for the kind of workplace culture you want to achieve.

To implement bystander action, you will need policies that let staff and other stakeholders know where they stand and what they should do in relation to:

- tackling sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment
- maintaining appropriate workplace behaviour
- sorting out grievances and complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation.

Staff and other stakeholders will also need policies that help them understand how and when to take bystander action.

This information does not have to be contained in a stand-alone bystander action policy, but can be included in other policies aimed at building a safe and respectful workplace, for example:

- equal opportunity/diversity/discrimination
- workplace behaviours/code of conduct
- sexual harassment
- bullying
- recruitment and selection
- leave and workplace flexibility
- pregnancy at work
- grievance and complaints resolutions.

Having these policies and procedures in place will help staff and other stakeholders understand that:

- they share the responsibility for tackling sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment at work and are expected to act
- they have organisational support for taking bystander action
- taking bystander action 'fits in' with your organisation's commitment to building a safe and inclusive workplace for women and is a part of your strategy to do so.

To be effective in supporting the use of bystander action, your policies should be communicated to staff and other stakeholders.

It is good practice to:

- provide formal and informal induction and refresher training about your policies
- include policies in your staff handbook
- discuss policies at team meetings
- talk about policies at staff induction
- promote the policies via email, the intranet or social media
- regularly review your policies and your employees' compliance with them.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



INFORMATION SHEETS

3. Your equal opportunity policy

Your equal opportunity policy sets the context and rationale for implementing bystander action in your organisation.

It also provides a reference point to help staff recognise the opportunities to step in when they see or hear about sexist or discriminatory language, behaviours and practices or sexual harassment.

Your equal opportunity policy spells out your organisation's legal obligation to do what it reasonably can to eliminate sex discrimination and sexual harassment in your workplace, and the need for all staff to share this responsibility. (It should also include vilification and victimisation.)

An equal opportunity policy provides clarity about the:

- standards of behaviour expected at your organisation
- responsibility of all staff (including team leaders and managers) to comply with these standards
- right of all staff to a safe and inclusive workplace free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment (and other forms of discrimination)
- rights of staff to raise a complaint without fear of victimisation.

Having an equal opportunity policy will help your organisation fulfil its obligations. Specifically including bystander action in this policy will encourage staff to take constructive actions as part of their shared responsibility to eliminate sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

An effective equal opportunity policy that supports bystander action would include:

- a clear statement about your organisation's commitment to eliminate sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment in your workplace
- explicit leadership endorsement of bystander action as a key strategy in doing this
- a clear statement that team members are expected to support bystander action as an agreed way of addressing sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment
- an agreed approach to taking bystander action for staff to follow when they witness or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment.

For the policy to be effective, you should:

- communicate it to staff and other stakeholders at induction, and provide appropriate training
- regularly remind staff about the policy during team meetings and via email or social media promotions (e.g. your intranet)
- monitor compliance with the policy and take complaints about breaches of the policy seriously.

Having an equal opportunity policy that incorporates support for bystander action can help your organisation reduce the risk of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and other unlawful behaviours, and the liability that comes with this.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



INFORMATION SHEETS

4. Code of conduct

A code of conduct is an important guide for employees when thinking about how they are expected to behave in the workplace.

A code of conduct:

- outlines the standards of behaviour set by your organisation
- reinforces your commitment to respectful interactions between staff and effective conflict resolution
- communicates your organisation's expectation that these standards will be met by all staff.

A code of conduct is a key way of letting staff know how to behave towards each other and other stakeholders. It clarifies what behaviours are acceptable and appropriate in the workplace and what are not. It describes behaviours expected of staff when at work, including:

- working with colleagues in teams or one-on-one
- interacting with members of the public
- using email, the internet or other social media
- representing or undertaking work duties off site and when travelling to and from these activities
- participating in work-related social events.

In this way, it communicates your organisation's values and beliefs and your commitment to regulating how staff represent these values and beliefs in their day-to-day work – it makes a clear statement about the kind of workplace you want to have.

This is very important in the context of bystander action, because it helps staff recognise appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, serving as a reference point for staff wanting to take action and giving them the confidence that taking action is in line with the kind of organisation you want to be.

For your code of conduct to be effective, you should:

- communicate it to staff and other stakeholders at induction, and provide appropriate training
- regularly remind staff about it during team meetings and via email or social media promotions (e.g. your intranet)
- monitor compliance with the code of conduct and take complaints about breaches of it seriously.

Having a code of conduct that clearly spells out standards of behaviour can help your organisation reduce the risk of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and other unlawful behaviours, and the liability that comes with this.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS

INFORMATION SHEETS

5. Complaints process

A complaints process provides the framework for effectively resolving complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and other unlawful behaviours.

It gives guidance to staff about how they can make a complaint and spells out how you will deal with it.

Having a complaints process in place can support the use of bystander action in the workplace by clearly reinforcing that sex discrimination, sexual harassment and other unlawful behaviours will not be tolerated, and that complaints around these behaviours will be taken seriously.

This is very important, because research shows many women who experience these behaviours remain silent or leave work, rather than make a complaint.

This makes support for bystander action all the more important – it spreads the responsibility to speak out to everyone, not just victims.

A fundamental principle of a complaints process is that people can speak up against sex discrimination and sexual harassment, or support someone who is making a complaint about these behaviours, without fear of victimisation. If enacted effectively in a workplace, it provides a 'safety net' for people to take action and ensures that unlawful or inappropriate conduct is dealt with appropriately.

A complaints process needs to be transparent and make it clear that complaints will be dealt with efficiently, with all parties treated fairly throughout and able to have their say (in line with the principles of natural justice).

A complaints procedure should detail:

- the responsibilities of managers and team leaders in responding to complaints
- informal and formal complaints resolution options
- investigation processes and possible outcomes
- external complaint resolution agencies (such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission)
- internal and external support options
- the importance of confidentiality and preventing gossip.

A complaints process should also detail the role of your contact officer to help staff members who wish to make a complaint of discrimination, including sex discrimination and sexual harassment. It may also reference the role the contact officer could play in supporting staff wanting to take bystander action.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS

INFORMATION SHEETS

6. Sexual harassment policy

A sexual harassment policy describes the actions an organisation and its staff will take to prevent sexual harassment.

This could include the use of bystander action as a preventive strategy, where people speak up and challenge the attitudes and behaviours that can lead to sexual harassment.

An effective sexual harassment policy:

- clearly defines what sexual harassment is and the workplace situations or circumstances in which it may arise
- explains that in certain circumstances, sexual harassment may constitute a criminal offence
- details the informal and formal mechanisms available to staff and volunteers to address sexual harassment in their workplace
- spells out the responsibility of managers and supervisors to act if they are made aware of an incident of sexual harassment
- encourages all staff to take bystander action when they see or hear about such behaviours
- assures staff that expressing concerns around sexual harassment will be taken seriously.

The vast majority of people who are sexually harassed are women, so having a sexual harassment policy in place is central to building a safe environment for women in your workplace.

Having a sexual harassment policy in place also provides a legitimate platform for staff to engage in bystander action. In many instances, the victims of sexual harassment choose not to speak up, so it is both appropriate and important that others do so whenever they are aware of it.

For the policy to be effective, you should:

- communicate it to staff and other stakeholders at induction, and provide appropriate training
- regularly remind staff about the policy during team meetings and via email or social media promotions (e.g. your intranet)
- monitor compliance with the policy and take complaints about breaches of the policy seriously.

Having a sexual harassment policy that incorporates support for bystander action can help your organisation reduce the risk of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and other unlawful behaviours, and the liability that comes with this.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



CHECKLIST

Policy checklist

Question	Yes	No	Partly	Ref
1 Do we have any policies that describe the sort of behaviour we expect from employees while at work? (List them in the space below.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A1
2 Do any of these policies specifically mention the following as being unacceptable, inappropriate and not tolerated here? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexist language • Sex discrimination • Harassment or sexual harassment • Bullying • Vilification • Offensive language or actions • Victimisation 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A2
3 Do they clearly describe what employees can do if they want to raise a concern or lodge a complaint about actions, decisions or behaviours that are contrary to our values, policies or code of conduct?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A3
4 Do they include a list of people and organisations employees can contact if they want help to deal with issues related to actions, decisions or behaviours that are contrary to our values, policies or code of conduct?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A4
5 Do they include an explanation of what bystander actions are and how they are implemented and supported here?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A5
6 Is it easy for employees to find our policies and procedures if they want to find out more?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A6
7 Is there regular training and reminders for employees about these policies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A7
8 Is a discussion about our values, policies, code of conduct and workplace culture included in our induction process for new employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A8
9 Do we have policies to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay equity • career progression for women • women in leadership roles? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A1

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



ACTION OPTIONS

1. Creating policies

It is really important that your organisation has up-to-date policies and procedures that cover all your legal obligations and clearly spell out rights and responsibilities for all employees.

Create clear written policies that address:

- equal opportunity, diversity and discrimination **i3**
- workplace behaviour (or code of conduct) **i4**
- harassment or sexual harassment **i6**
- bullying
- occupational health and safety
- recruitment and selection (non-discrimination)
- leave and flexible working arrangements **R**
- pregnancy at work
- grievance and complaints procedures. **i5**

Make sure you check that all of your legal obligations (including any in your industrial instruments) are met.

Communicate these to all employees in electronic and paper formats and through discussions at team meetings and individual catch-ups.

As a start, you can adapt policy templates and samples from the websites of:

- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- Business Victoria
- Victorian WorkCover Authority (Worksafe Victoria).

2. Policy content

You need to inform your employees about the specific behaviours that will not be tolerated in the workplace.

Insert additional text into your policies and procedures to ensure employees understand what is expected of them while they are at work and the consequences of non-compliance for behaviours such as:

- using sexist language or behaviour
- sex discrimination (or any other prohibited discrimination)
- harassment or sexual harassment
- bullying

- vilification
- using other offensive language or actions
- victimisation. **R**

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



ACTION OPTIONS

3. Developing procedures

To encourage employees to raise concerns about behaviours or actions, your organisation needs to have appropriate procedures in place.

Create clear complaint and grievance procedures that describe the options employees have for raising issues or concerns about behaviour, actions or decisions that contravene your values, policies, procedures and code of conduct. **i5**

These processes should spell out how to make a complaint or raise a concern, who will manage it, how it will be done, the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved and any support that can be provided.

Be mindful of your legal obligations and any industrial agreements with which you need to comply.

As a start, you can adapt procedure templates and samples from the websites of:

- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- Business Victoria
- Victorian WorkCover Authority (Worksafe Victoria)
- Workplace Gender Equity Agency.

4. Support

In addition to written policies, your staff should be aware of where they can get further information or support when they need it.

Identify who are the support people and organisations that your employees have access to and publicise these in a range of formats (e.g. listed in policies, on your intranet, on noticeboards, in newsletters, in employee handbooks).

If you don't have any (or have only a few) support options available, consider how you could expand these.

Support options could include:

- internal people – managers with specific people management or HR responsibilities, contact officers, health and safety reps, union reps
- external groups – employee assistance programs, complaint or investigatory bodies (e.g. VEOHRC, Victorian WorkCover Authority), advice lines (e.g. Lifeline, beyondblue), unions, Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA), the domestic violence helpline and WIRE Women's Information. **R**

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



ACTION OPTIONS

5. Explaining bystander actions

The idea of taking bystander action could be new to many of your staff.

To encourage staff to take such action, it helps to specifically include bystander action in your policies and procedures.

Your policies and procedures should explain what bystander actions are, why they are important and how they are supported in your organisation. [E1](#) [E2](#) [E3](#)

This information should be included, or at least referenced, in all your relevant policies and procedures.

Use Information sheet 1: 'Getting your SSA on board with bystander action' in Section 1 and amend as needed. [i1](#) [i2](#)

6. Accessing policies

Your staff need to be able to locate policies and procedures whenever they need them.

Think about when and why employees may want to access the policies and procedures and the most likely places they will look.

Have links, references or pointers that direct them to a single place that contains all your policies and procedures (e.g. in a clearly labelled location on your intranet).

Make sure they are well indexed or can be searched easily, so people can find the information they need quickly and easily.

Check how easy they are to find by randomly asking a few employees to find particular procedures.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



ACTION OPTIONS

7. Policy training

Both employees and managers need regular training to remain up-to-date on all key policies and procedures.

Having all staff trained is also a key part of your compliance as an organisation and employer.

Create a schedule for regular updates or refreshers for all employees and keep a record of attendance or completion.

As managers have particular responsibilities, make sure they receive more detailed training that covers these responsibilities too.

8. Induction

Your new employees will be wondering about the cultural ‘norms’ that operate in your organisation.

They will need to learn what is expected of them and where they can go if they have any problems.

Put a representative group of people together to create an induction program that includes clear information about the relevant policies and procedures, and have conversations with managers and colleagues about behaviour expectations and the type of culture you are striving to create and maintain.

Listing the people new staff can talk to about these issues and having a buddy system for the first few months can help orient new employees to their new workplace environment.

When you are reviewing your induction program, ask a couple of staff who have recently joined what they really wanted to know at induction, what worked well for them during their induction, and what they feel could be improved.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



EXAMPLES

1. A definition of bystander action

Bystander action in our organisation is when an employee steps in when they see or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment taking place at work.

Stepping in can take many forms: it can include speaking up against sexist or disparaging language or jokes, or identifying and changing workplace practices and policies that discriminate against women.

It can also include encouraging others to speak out or take action. It can be taken before, during or after an incident.

2. Bystander actions

Some examples of bystander action in the workplace are:

- speaking to a colleague about their recent disrespectful behaviour
- 'calling' disrespectful language or behaviour (e.g. challenging colleagues' sexist remarks or jokes)
- letting managers know when issues relating to policy compliance, codes of conduct or behaviour need addressing
- highlighting workplace or organisational cultures and practices that exclude or make it difficult for women to participate equally
- identifying opportunities to improve policies so they are supportive of women with disabilities
- challenging stereotypes or rigid attitudes to gender roles.

3. Support for bystander action

In [organisation name], we expect all employees to uphold our values and conduct themselves in accordance with this policy and our code of conduct at all times.

We also support and encourage employees to promote respect for our values, such as **[list values]** through team discussions, reporting actions or behaviours that contravene our values, policies and code of conduct, and taking appropriate bystander action to prevent sexism, sexual harassment and sex discrimination.

To learn more about this and the actions you may take, speak with your manager and read our policies in the staff handbook.

SECTION 1: COMMITTED ORGANISATIONS



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Links

- www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au
- www.business.vic.gov.au
- www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
- www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/workplaces
- www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/bystander
- www.wgea.gov.au
- www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/PVAW-bystander-action

References and resources

- VicHealth 2012, *Preventing violence against women in the workplace [An evidence review: summary report]*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, Australia.
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic).
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth).
- *Guideline: Sexual harassment – complying with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission.

SECTION 2:

Motivated leaders

“...explicit leadership
support and role modelling of
constructive bystander actions...”

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
[AN EVIDENCE REVIEW: SUMMARY REPORT]. VICHEALTH 2012

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



INFORMATION SHEET

7. Preparing for bystander action

What you say and how you behave matters!

As a manager, you have an important role to play in implementing bystander action in your State Sporting Association.

It is your responsibility to:

- ensure your workgroups behave in ways that are fair and respectful towards each other, including towards women
- create and maintain an environment in which staff are encouraged and supported to speak up against sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

The first and most critical step in meeting these responsibilities is to behave respectfully and fairly yourself.

Research shows the behaviour of managers has a direct impact on the behaviour of individuals within their teams, as well as on the team culture.

In order to encourage fair and respectful behaviour towards women, you need to be aware of your own attitudes and behaviours, and think about whether you ever operate in ways that could be sexist, discriminatory or sexually harassing.

To do so, you will need to have a clear understanding of:

- the definitions of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment
- the circumstances in which these behaviours arise in the workplace
- the impact sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment have on women and the workplace as a whole
- your own beliefs and prejudices and the impacts these can have on your decision-making and behaviour.

Once confident about your own behaviours, you can begin to set and regulate your team's behaviour.

This is best done by talking with your teams about your organisation's:

- commitment to providing a fair and respectful workplace for women
- expectations of appropriate workplace behaviour
- processes to address inappropriate workplace behaviour
- support for using bystander action.

Once you have taken the lead in this way, you need to continue to take action to address issues or incidences of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment by:

- providing training to staff about these behaviours
- setting and regulating team behaviours
- providing training about bystander action
- providing feedback to staff about behaviour
- responding to complaints
- communicating SSA policy and procedures
- monitoring work environments, team relationships and policy and procedure compliance.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



CHECKLIST

Motivated leader checklist

Question	Yes	No	Partly	Ref
1 Can I easily identify sexist, discriminatory and harassing behaviours at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R
2 Do I know the impact these behaviours could have on my team and our workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i1
3 Do I know what our policies say about these behaviours and our procedures for dealing with them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A9
4 Do I arrange regular refresher training for my staff on these policies and procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A10
5 Do I understand bystander action as a strategy to address sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i1
6 Am I clear about my responsibility to set the standards of behaviour for my team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A11
7 Do I role model appropriate workplace behaviours all the time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A13
8 Do I have the skills and knowledge to lead my team in working on these issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R
9 Have I talked with my team about the behaviours expected of them at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A12
10 Do I provide feedback to staff about their behaviour?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A16
11 Do I actively monitor my team environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A14
12 Do I know what to do when I become aware of sexist, discriminatory or harassing behaviours at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A15
13 Have I discussed bystander action with my team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A17
14 Do I show my team I support bystander action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A18 A19

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



ACTION OPTIONS

9. Know your policies

As a manager, it is critical to respond quickly and effectively to inappropriate behaviours and language in the workplace.

To do so, you need to be familiar with your organisation's policies and procedures. These may include:

- code of conduct
- policies that address:
 - bullying and sexual harassment
 - equal opportunity, diversity, inclusion and discrimination
 - workplace behaviour
 - health and safety
 - recruitment, selection, merit and equity
 - pregnancy, leave and flexible working arrangements
 - grievances and complaints procedures.

We recommend:

- reading all relevant policies carefully, so you know what behaviour or conduct is expected and what is unacceptable
- reading your discipline, complaint or grievance procedures, so you know how to deal with behaviour issues
- reading any industrial agreements covering your staff, so you are clear about them and other relevant obligations you must meet
- talking with your HR manager, so you are sure you haven't missed anything and can clarify any questions you may have.

For more help, see the list of external bodies that can help in the additional resources section. **R**

10. Refresher training

To be able to meet your organisation's expectations, your staff need to be clear about what they are.

It is absolutely critical your staff receive regular refresher training on their legal obligations, your policies and all relevant procedures. Face-to-face training is typically more effective than other forms of training for these issues.

We also recommend scheduling regular team meetings to review and explain your workplace policies and procedures and discuss how they apply to your team and their work.

Make sure you cover:

- workplace behaviour policy and/or code of conduct
- bullying, sex discrimination and sexual harassment policies
- complaints policy and procedure
- victimisation policy
- where to find your organisation's policies
- who can help when staff have any concerns.

Reinforce your spoken messages about acceptable behaviour and where to go for help or information regularly by using screen savers, message boards, newsletters and your intranet.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



ACTION OPTIONS

11. Preparing to set expectations

Sometimes, managers are reluctant to set boundaries for others because they are unsure about how to do it effectively.

As a manager or leader, it is important to be clear about your responsibility to set and manage workplace behaviour and take clear and decisive action when needed.

We recommend explicitly discussing your role to manage workplace behaviours and interactions with your own manager and:

- exploring how best to model the sort of behaviour you expect from staff so they can learn from you
- determining what support you will have from your manager and other areas of the organisation
- agreeing on some initial steps (e.g. the other action options in this section) and ask your manager (or someone you think does this well) to give you coaching tips and feedback as you put your steps in place.

12. Setting expectations

To support a fair and respectful workplace for women, expectations for team behaviour need to be clear and understood.

Managers and leaders play a key role in setting these expectations.

We recommend leading a team discussion to clarify expectations of workplace behaviour and to:

- discuss and agree on what a fair and respectful workplace for women would be like
- identify the specific behaviours that support this sort of workplace, and those that get in the way
- discuss how these relate to your organisation's policies and code of conduct and clarify what behaviours are expected of all staff.

When you have this discussion, it is important you talk about actual behaviours, not attitudes. For example, talk about 'interrupting others', rather than 'being arrogant'.

For a list of behaviours that might help your discussion, see the examples of behaviours in the resources section.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



ACTION OPTIONS

13. Getting feedback

As a leader in your organisation, what you do and say will set the tone for what others do and say.

Your staff look to you to lead by example, and even if you aren't aware of it, your behaviour is the yardstick for what is acceptable.

Ask a member of your team to give you feedback on your behaviour and language.

Don't make this a general request, but be specific about which sort of behaviours you want them to watch out for (these can be both positive examples and areas for improvement). Let them know you want specific examples to help you improve.

Set a regular time to get the feedback, so they know you are serious.

When they give you the feedback, just listen. Do not explain why, argue or justify. This will discourage honesty and give the impression you don't value what they have to say.

Before you put this into practice, put some rules around what sort of feedback can be given and how it is given. This will help you manage any inappropriate comments or staff using the opportunity to 'have a go'.

A useful rule is to ask that feedback be fair, frank and friendly:

- Fair means justified (i.e. real and specific examples of occurrence and impact).
- Frank means being honest and direct (i.e. no need to beat around the bush).
- Friendly means delivering the feedback in a warm and courteous manner.

Of course, the feedback should also be confidential.

When staff see that you are serious about working on your own behaviour, they will know you are serious about helping them with theirs.

14. Monitoring progress

It is important to understand and monitor how fair and respectful your team environment actually is for women.

You can begin to assess this by observing how your team works together.

Undertake a behaviour observation audit during: **E8** **E9**

- team meetings
- working together on a task or project
- sharing the office space
- work social events.

Share your assessment with your team (without focusing on individuals) and discuss ways of strengthening positive team interactions.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



ACTION OPTIONS

15. Preparing to respond

As well as preventing inappropriate behaviours, managers and leaders have a clear responsibility to take action to address such behaviours or interactions when they do occur.

This is both a legal responsibility and a critical component of building high-performing teams. Ignoring the behaviour or avoiding taking action has the practical effect of condoning it and is poor leadership.

Having to react 'in the moment' can be tricky. It is worthwhile thinking through your options, so whenever you need to respond, you are prepared and can respond with confidence.

We recommend:

- re-reading your procedures so you know how you will be expected to respond
- discussing examples of questionable behaviour you may have seen with your manager or HR manager and considering how you can respond
- identifying different options for responding so you are ready to decide in the heat of the moment, e.g.:
 - immediate response – “This is not the sort of thing we do here.”
 - individual follow-up – “I noticed when you were speaking with xxxx on Tuesday that...”
 - team feedback – “We need to look at the way we are...”
 - initiating a formal investigation – “This behaviour contravenes xxx and...” **A21**
- setting the ground rules in your team about what is expected (see Action option 21 in Section 3) and advising team members how you will respond when things go off track. **E6 E7**

16. Giving feedback

Providing improvement feedback to individual team members can be one of the more difficult tasks a manager has to do.

However, it is critical that it is done consistently and well. Making feedback a normal and expected part of your work environment is a key foundation step.

When you discuss behaviour expectations with your staff, ensure you have clarified the need for giving and receiving feedback as an essential part of your team culture and have made it safe to do so.

People will typically react badly to negative feedback when they didn't ask for it, didn't expect it and weren't prepared for it. To overcome this, it is useful to establish how staff can ask permission to give feedback and how they will deliver it.

To establish team permission for giving feedback, ask your team to agree on:

- the behaviours for feedback
- how the feedback will be given.

This should include a way of letting each other know when you would like to give feedback, so no one is taken by surprise.

Providing effective feedback is a critical management skill, and it is important to learn how to do this well. Many training programs are available to assist, so if you haven't done one, talk to your manager about enrolling in one that best fits your needs.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



ACTION OPTIONS

17. Equipping your team

To enable your team to successfully implement bystander actions that help create a fairer and more respectful workplace for women, they need to understand what bystander actions are and how to use them.

Run a team meeting to discuss the use of workplace bystander action as a way to challenge sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

Discuss: **E4** **E5**

- what bystander action is
- how it relates to violence against women
- the workplace benefits of using bystander action
- how and when to take bystander action
- the team ground rules for taking bystander action.

If you are not confident in this, think about using external expertise to help your organisation or team work on these issues. See links to organisations that can help in the resources section.

18. Supporting staff

Individual team members may find it difficult to implement bystander action on their own.

You can support your staff by giving feedback and coaching in formal supervision and informal meetings.

Discuss:

- times and context of bystander action
- what was said or done
- impact of bystander action
- personal response to using bystander action
- strategies for strengthening use of bystander action
- personal response to having one's own behaviour challenged
- strategies for changing sexist, discriminatory or harassing behaviours
- allocating time to follow up.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



ACTION OPTIONS

19. Training your staff

Training will help your staff gain the skills and knowledge to implement bystander action confidently in their team environment.

Training can take place in a team meeting by discussing: **E5**

- the definition of bystander action
- bystander action and violence against women
- challenging sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the moment and after the moment
- organisational policy to support the use of bystander action

- team ground rules for use of bystander action
- brainstorming responses to examples of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

See links in the additional resources section for external training options.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



EXAMPLES

4. Key messages for discussing bystander action in team meetings

Our SSA has a legal responsibility to do what we reasonably can to provide a safe and inclusive workplace for women free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation and bullying.

Bystander action is an effective strategy to address sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment and an important part of what we do to provide a safe and inclusive environment.

Implementing bystander action is also good for our organisation. It can improve our workplace culture for everyone by:

- encouraging more equal and respectful relationships between men and women
- increasing the retention of women in our organisation
- improving the productivity and morale of all staff.

It is also important we 'walk the talk' for our sports and show them how to meet their legal obligation to create safe and inclusive clubs for women and girls. This means tackling sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment in our workplace.

Every staff member is encouraged to speak up against sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment at work. This is bystander action.

Not speaking up may be seen to be going along with these behaviours.

As well as using bystander action to help keep our workplace safe and respectful for women, we encourage you to use bystander action to challenge any form of discrimination.

Staff who take appropriate bystander action will be supported and protected from victimisation. **i1**

You can read more about bystander action in our policies on... [list your relevant policies], in these information sheets (see Section 1), or at these websites (see resources section).

i2 **R**

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



EXAMPLES

5. Scenarios for team meeting discussions

Break up into small groups.

Discuss the impact on the team of the behaviours in the following scenarios .

Discuss what our policies and team ground rules say about these behaviours.

Decide what you could say in and after the moment. Share your responses.

SCENARIOS

1. Mick sends around a link to a YouTube video that has 'fat people doing funny things'.
2. Sally talks about an event she went to and described it as being 'so gay'.
3. In a job interview, Allen asks the candidate Rachel, if she has a bloke and what sport he plays.
4. Kate talks about the 'girls' in reception.
5. Trish says the club uniforms make the male players look sexy.
6. Ellie likes to massage Kevin's shoulder when she thinks he looks stressed.
7. John talks about 'the bird' he hooked up with on the weekend.
8. Andrew tells 'mother-in-law' jokes at every opportunity.
9. Roger has his arm around Carlene, who looks really uncomfortable.
10. Sam brings in a new promotional calendar featuring naked sports women and passes it around in the tearoom.
11. Sarah tells Amy that she dresses 'like a lesbian'.

6. Setting ground rules for team behaviours

This exercise helps staff set ground rules for their behaviours. To help run this exercise, you can use the behaviours list in the resources section.

Ask your team to identify:

- three behaviours your SSA already does that support a fair and respectful team environment for women
- three behaviours your SSA does that do not support a fair and respectful team environment for women
- six ground rules for how your SSA behaves to provide a fair and respectful workplace for women when:
 - in meetings
 - sharing the office space
 - getting together outside of work
 - working on a project or an event
 - using email and the internet or texting.
- three ground rules for giving each other feedback when behaviour sits outside these agreed behaviours and how you want to work together.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



EXAMPLES

7. Respectful behaviours in teams

When we talk about behaviours, we are describing what we do or say rather than our thoughts, feelings, attitudes or values.

The following list of behaviours will help you focus your conversation. These are examples only: your team will be able to identify other helpful and harmful behaviours.

Behaviours that support a fair and respectful team environment include:

- using non-sexist language
- using positive language to describe the efforts of all team members
- encouraging the participation of all staff
- sharing resources equally
- acknowledging the efforts and contributions of all staff
- encouraging the equal contribution of ideas
- listening to everyone attentively and empathically
- apologising when we inadvertently offend a colleague
- taking agreed bystander action
- following agreed team processes.

Behaviours that do not support a fair and respectful team environment include:

- using sexist humour
- speaking with a threatening or intimidating tone
- ignoring team members when they speak
- letting sexist language or behaviour go unchecked
- allocating stereotypical tasks to women and men
- excluding individuals from meetings or events
- excluding individuals from decision-making
- glaring, pointing, yelling or other aggressive 'standover' actions
- sitting or standing very close to someone without asking permission (i.e. invading personal space)
- deliberately brushing past or touching someone without permission
- encouraging others to engage in sexist behaviour or interactions
- expressing cynicism or doubt about agreed behaviours.

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



EXAMPLES

8. Checklist to monitor team behaviours

This checklist will help you identify real examples of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment that may be occurring in your SSA.

Use it to record your observations over a few days to a week, and then share your observations with your team. Talk with them about the examples of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment you may have seen and generate some shared ideas about addressing them.

During your first conversation, remember that people may not be aware they have been doing these behaviours or even that they are inappropriate. It is therefore important to approach this sensitively to encourage a constructive discussion. Always concentrate on the behaviour, not the person who did the behaviour.

How often did you observe:	Never	A bit	A lot
Staff commenting on the weight of female staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff talking about the sex life/sexuality of female staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff engaging in sexual banter or jokes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female staff referred to as ladies, girls or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff making jokes about violence against women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members dominating meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members gossiping about other staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The 'in crowd' excluding other staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff working well together on a project/task	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff giving constructive feedback to each other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff withdrawn or quiet during meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff engaged in conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff making homophobic jokes or comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexualised images of women on display	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All staff contributing during a meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male and female staff members working well together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff emailing each other sexual jokes/images	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff commenting on clothing of female staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff ganging up on a staff member in a meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff disclosing experiences of sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff speaking up against a sexist joke or taking other constructive bystander action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



EXAMPLES

9. Checklist to review changes in team behaviours

This checklist will help you review the changes your teams have made in their behaviours that they have decided are inappropriate, particularly sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

How often did you observe:	Never	A bit	A lot
Staff engaging in language that is agreed to be inappropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff engaging in behaviours that are agreed to be inappropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff implementing immediate ('in the moment') bystander strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff implementing follow-up ('after the moment') bystander strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff resolving interpersonal conflict effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff giving constructive feedback about behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff engaged in planned equity projects/tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff receiving positive feedback from external stakeholders about behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff taking sick leave or other unplanned absences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff using humour appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff supporting the use of agreed bystander actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff supporting colleagues who have been targets of sexist language, sexual harassment and sex discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff demonstrating a shared understanding of sexist language, sexual harassment and sex discrimination in day-to-day work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff engaged in agreed processes to address equity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 2: MOTIVATED LEADERS



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Links

Some relevant training programs for managers can be found at:

- www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/shortcourse
- www.mbs.edu/facultyresearch/ethicalleadership/Pages/CFEL_GEP.asp
- www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/training

Workplace behaviour descriptions

When we talk about behaviours at work, we are describing how we act as individuals or together. Therefore, when we list behaviours we want 'more of' or 'less of', it is useful to describe visible actions rather than thoughts, feelings, attitudes or values. Below is a list of examples that you may find helpful in describing behaviours for our team. You can of course add your own to these lists.

Helpful team behaviours	Unhelpful team behaviours
Offer to and/or ask for help	Interrupting while others are talking
Speak politely to each other	Speaking with a sarcastic, cynical or critical tone
Speak enthusiastically about our goals	Assigning blame when a problem arises
Acknowledge each other's efforts and contributions	Criticising someone behind their back
Contribute ideas openly	Criticising 'the person' rather than critiquing the work
Ask for and listen to each other's opinions or thoughts	Making jokes at other team members' expense
Request and offer feedback for improvement	Withdrawing in group discussions
Discuss concerns directly with each other and encourage others to do the same	Ignoring someone's contribution
Explain why you don't agree – politely	Glaring, pointing, yelling, banging tables or any other aggressive sort of actions
Ask "what do we need to do?" when a problem arises	Saying what won't work without suggesting alternatives
Take a turn to do the mundane stuff	Reacting to things as if they are meant personally
Speak up to support someone else	Forming cliques that exclude others

SECTION 3:

United teams

“...team support for an agreed way of addressing sexism, gender discrimination and sexual harassment...”

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
[AN EVIDENCE REVIEW: SUMMARY REPORT]. VICHEALTH 2012

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS

INFORMATION SHEET

8. Implementing bystander action in your team

People are more likely to speak up against sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment if they believe they will be supported.

This can come from colleagues and teammates who share the aim of building a fair and respectful environment for women.

To implement bystander action effectively, it is best to have your work teams actively involved. Achieving this requires teams to reflect on their shared behaviours and on whether they:

- support a fair and respectful work environment for women
- encourage team members to raise issues and challenge individual and group interactions.

This reflection can take place in discussions led by managers who can guide teams to:

- identify whether the types of behaviours they individually or collectively engage in may be sexist, discriminatory or harassing
- identify and agree on the types of behaviour they want to be present in their team
- identify and agree on strategies to modify or change individual and collective 'unwanted behaviours'
- identify and agree on the 'ground rules' that support team members speaking up and challenging sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

The purpose of these discussions is to enable your work teams to take responsibility for their work environment and their individual and group behaviours, and recognise the value of bystander action as a key strategy to keep workplace behaviour on track.

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS



CHECKLIST

Team checklist

Question	Yes	No	Partly	Ref
1 Do we have an agreement about how we behave as a team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A21
2 Do we discuss what our policies and procedures say about how we should behave at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A10
3 Are we able to identify sexist, discriminatory and harassing behaviours that may be happening in our team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A20
4 Do we have an agreed process to deal with conflict in our team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E6
5 Do we have an agreed process to give each other feedback about our behaviours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A16
6 Do we regularly check in to see how well we are working together as a team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A14
7 Do we have ground rules to guide team members to take bystander action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A23
8 Do we actively encourage equal participation from everyone in team meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E6
9 Do we take steps to build a welcoming, respectful and inclusive culture in our team and organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A26
10 Do we take collective responsibility for addressing sexist, discriminatory and harassing behaviours in our team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A22 A24
11 Have we made a collective agreement to use bystander action in our team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A25
12 Are we committed to providing a fair and respectful workplace for women?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A24

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS



ACTION OPTIONS

20. Preparing to do bystander action

In a workplace, people are most likely to take bystander action in a supportive team environment.

It is important that your team has a shared understanding of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment and how these behaviours and practices can happen at work.

Use a team meeting to discuss the behaviours and practices that you want to address through bystander action:

- Clarify definitions of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.
- Identify potential examples of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment in team environments.
- Discuss the impact such behaviours can have on team members.

21. Agreeing on behaviours

For bystander action in teams to be effective, team members need to agree on the behaviours they will and will not engage in to support a fair and respectful workplace for women.

Use a team meeting to develop some 'ground rules' for team behaviours that support the use of bystander action:

- Identify team behaviours and language that will help provide a fair and respectful workplace for women.
- Identify ways to strengthen helpful behaviours.
- Identify ways to address unhelpful behaviours including bystander action.
- Identify ways to monitor team behaviours.

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS



ACTION OPTIONS

22. Addressing sexist language

The use of sexist language in a workplace contributes to an environment in which women are not valued or treated with respect, and team members should use bystander action to address it.

This means your team needs to understand what sexist language is and how it affects women in the workplace.

Use a team meeting to discuss the use of sexist language and develop some ground rules for the use of non-sexist language in the workplace, including: **E10**

- during team meetings
- in office conversations
- in email, telephone and written communication
- on your intranet and website.

Points for discussion:

- What constitutes sexist language?
- Examples in our team.
- What harm does it do?
- What about having fun?
- What about when women use sexist language?
- The link between the use of sexist language and violence against women.

23. Implementing bystander actions

To build acceptance of bystander action in your organisation, staff should understand and agree on how it will be implemented in their team environments.

Use a team meeting to clarify the use of bystander action.

E12

Discuss:

- how the team will use bystander action in the team
- the pros and cons for the team in using bystander action
- what may help or get in the way of taking bystander action
- 'ground rules' for taking bystander action, including assessing whether a situation is safe to do so.

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS



ACTION OPTIONS

24. Team practice

Your team will most likely need some time to get used to taking bystander action. Practising bystander action in your team environment will build familiarity and confidence.

Use a team meeting to practise bystander action using role-plays. Debrief the role-plays, and discuss the application of bystander action in your team.

Debriefing questions:

- What did you do well in the role-play?
- What would you have done differently?
- What further skills and knowledge do you now think you need?
- How did you feel when you were taking bystander action?
- How did you feel when your behaviour/language was challenged?
- How did you feel when you watched that role-play?

25. Champions

It is important your team maintains its commitment to taking bystander action as a strategy to address sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

Identify or elect 'bystander champions' who motivate and support staff to speak up and challenge sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment and are the 'go to' people for information and support about bystander action.

E11

This role can be rotated around your team, so all team members become bystander champions in your organisation.

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS



ACTION OPTIONS

26. Monitoring impacts

Your team's use of bystander action should be reviewed at regular intervals to check that it is making a positive contribution to relationships and helping to build a fair and respectful workplace for women.

Team members can take turns to complete the checklist to review your team's progress. **E13**

When the checklist has been completed, use a team meeting to discuss the results. **E14**

Ask:

- What has worked?
- What hasn't worked?
- What other strategies could be introduced to strengthen bystander action?
- What else could be done to build a respectful workplace for women?

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS



EXAMPLES

10. Using non-sexist language in our team

When we are speaking or writing, we want to avoid making sexist or discriminatory references about women's:

- age or appearance
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- family responsibilities
- physical attributes
- health or disability
- cultural background.

11. Role of bystander champions

The role of a bystander champion is to:

- model appropriate behaviours and attitudes
- advocate for the use of bystander action in your organisation
- model the use of bystander action in team settings
- support others to use bystander action
- talk about the use of bystander action in sports
- help others practise bystander actions
- keep informed about and have input into SSA policy and procedures relating to bystander action.

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS



EXAMPLES

12. Ground rules for the use of bystander action in our team

In this team we will:

- speak up and challenge sexist, discriminatory or harassing behaviours or practices in our team in a respectful and fair manner
- receive feedback about sexist, discriminatory or harassing behaviours and practices with goodwill and agree to make appropriate changes
- report to management any concerns about the safety of our team members
- support colleagues who take bystander action
- support colleagues who experience sexist, discriminatory or harassing behaviours or practices
- not gossip about incidents where bystander action has been taken, but talk about them in appropriate settings such as team meetings and supervisions.

13. Checklist for reviewing use of bystander action in our team

How often did you observe:	Yes	No	Not sure
More agreed bystander actions being used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less sexist language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less sexist behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less sexist humour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greater participation of women in meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More talking about team behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved relationships between male and female staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved working together on tasks/projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More people talking about using bystander action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 3: UNITED TEAMS



EXAMPLES

14. Assessing the advantages and challenges of using bystander action

Using bystander action	Positive results for team	Challenges for team
Short term		
Long term		

SECTION 4:

Confident individuals

“...acting on our personal responsibility to speak up and respond when seeing or hearing sexism, discrimination or sexual harassment...”

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE
[AN EVIDENCE REVIEW: SUMMARY REPORT]. VICHEALTH 2012

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS

INFORMATION SHEETS

9. Understanding individual action

Bystander action is speaking up against and challenging sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

To take effective bystander action, it is useful to develop your skills and knowledge about this new type of workplace action.

We recommend:

- finding out about your SSA's policies, procedures and expected standards of behaviour
- talking to colleagues about the:
 - kinds of behaviours and practices that constitute sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment
 - negative impact sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment can have on them and the workplace
 - 'ground rules' about what to say and do when taking bystander action.
- reflecting on your own commitment to building a fair and respectful work environment for women.

To take on the challenge of speaking out against the behaviours or practices of colleagues and peers, you need your SSA to stand right behind you.

We recommend:

- talking to your managers and fellow team members about where they stand on taking bystander action
- looking at your policies and procedures to see whether they reference, and provide some guidance around, the use of bystander action and offer protection for staff who take bystander action.

Speaking up against sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment is everyone's responsibility, but working towards building a respectful and fair workplace starts with you!

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS

INFORMATION SHEETS

10. Steps to taking bystander action

Research around bystander action shows that by the time people speak up and challenge sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment in the workplace, they have gone through some quick thinking and decision-making.

This thinking and decision-making is described here as four steps to bystander action.

STEP 1

Decide whether the behaviours or practices you are seeing or hearing are sexist, discriminatory and/or sexual harassment. What do your policies and procedures say about them? Are they outside of your agreed or expected team behaviours? If you are not sure, check with your manager or supervisor.

STEP 2

Decide whether you feel safe to step in. Will you be supported by your manager or supervisor if you do? Would this be something your manager or supervisor would expect you to challenge? Has your team agreed to challenge this kind of behaviour? Is there a risk of violence or escalation of the situation if you intervene?

STEP 3

Decide whether taking bystander action will be helpful. If you were on the receiving end, would you want someone to step in for you? Will it result in a positive outcome? Will it make a positive difference to a person's behaviour or to the workplace culture?

STEP 4

Weigh up the seriousness of the behaviour or practice to decide how you might step in. If your team has already agreed on how to step in, then act accordingly.

Workplaces should have a zero tolerance approach to sex discrimination and sexual harassment and be doing all they reasonably can to eliminate it.

You may be committed to stepping in and doing something when you see or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment. This decision may be based on putting yourself in the other person's shoes and thinking about the impact these behaviours may have on them. It may also be influenced by the expectations placed on you by your organisation to play a role in stopping or preventing sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment at your workplace.

These decisions can be hard to make on your own or in the moment, and it is helpful to talk with your manager and team about why and how best to take bystander action. Putting this on your team agenda will:

- prepare your whole team to take bystander action when it is needed
- help people who are on the receiving end feel they will be supported
- let people who deliberately or inadvertently behave inappropriately know to expect bystander action and how to respond when they do
- start realigning your workplace culture to one that is safe, inclusive and respectful for everyone.

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS



CHECKLIST

Self checklist

Question	Yes	No	Partly	Ref
1 Can I easily identify sexist, discriminatory and harassing behaviours at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i9
2 Do I know the impact these behaviours could have on women?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i1
3 Do I know what our policies and procedures say about sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A27
4 Do I accept it is my responsibility to do something when I hear about or see sexist, discriminatory and harassing behaviours at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A27
5 Do I feel okay about speaking up against or challenging the behaviours and practices of colleagues or peers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A28
6 Do I know what to do or say, when I witness or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A29
7 Am I okay if someone gives me feedback about my behaviour at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A16
8 Do I understand what bystander action is and where my SSA stands on it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i9
9 Do I understand the four steps to taking bystander action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A31
10 Do I know my team's agreed way of taking bystander action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A23
11 Am I committed to the use of bystander action at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A30
12 Do I know who I could talk to if I want support to take bystander action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	R

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS



ACTION OPTIONS

27. Understanding sex discrimination and sexual harassment

It is important to have an understanding of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment and the use of bystander action at work as a way to address these behaviours and practices.

As a starting point, look at your workplace policies as well as the VicHealth 'Everyone Wins' and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission websites.

Find out about:

- legal definitions of discrimination (including sex and gender identity discrimination, and victimisation) and sexual harassment
- your organisation's policies on sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment
- the impact of sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment on individuals and workplaces
- the use of bystander action in the workplace
- why bystander action can be an important preventive technique in a community strategy to eliminate violence against women.

28. Preparing to act

Taking bystander action requires confidence about what you are going to say and do, which can come from practising the actions you will take when you witness or hear about sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment in your workplace.

Think about the difference bystander action can make to building a fair and respectful environment for women and write a list of things you can say and do as a bystander at your workplace. **E15**

Consider scenarios like these where bystander action could be helpful:

- Your manager asks a discriminatory question in a job interview.
- You hear another staff member tell a crude joke over the phone to a mate.
- A staff member makes a comment about the weight of a female coach.
- A staff member comments on a colleague's sexuality.
- Your social club organises a 'boys only' day.
- Your manager makes a decision to cut part-time hours for female staff.
- You see staff ignoring another staff member who has complained about sexual harassment.

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS



ACTION OPTIONS

29. Plan for responses

Taking on bystander action for the first time may create some challenging questions and reactions from people around you.

Being ready to answer those questions can help overcome barriers in your workplace.

Think about some questions you may be asked and draft some answers. **E16**

Here are some examples: **E17**

- Are you always going to watch what I say or do?
- Can't you take a joke anymore?
- Are you going to tell the boss about this?
- What are you – the thought police?
- What gives you the right to tell me how to behave?
- What about when we are just out as mates?
- Why aren't you saying something about jokes about men?
- What do you say when a woman makes an off joke?
- How does speaking up change what we do around here?

30. Showing commitment

Successfully implementing bystander action at your workplace depends on your commitment to addressing sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment and to providing a fair and respectful environment for women.

Take advantage of opportunities presented to you at work to voice your commitment to the use of bystander action as a strategy to address sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment. **E18**

Opportunities include:

- staff meetings
- meetings with your sporting club/s
- informal discussions with colleagues
- discussions with managers and board members
- network meetings with other organisations
- professional development forums
- consultations with stakeholders.

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS



ACTION OPTIONS

31. Four steps to bystander action

The four steps of bystander action describe key steps in making a decision about when and how to step in against sexist language, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

To prepare yourself to act, work through the four steps with a specific example in mind. **E15**

STEP 1

Is the behaviour sexist, discriminatory and/or sexual harassment? What do our policies and procedures say about it? Is this outside your agreed or expected team behaviours? If you are not sure, check with your manager or supervisor.

STEP 2

Is it safe to step in? Would your manager or supervisor act on this? Would this be something your manager or supervisor would expect you to challenge? Has your team agreed to challenge this kind of behaviour?

STEP 3

Would bystander action be helpful? If you were on the receiving end, would you want someone to step in for you? Will it make a positive difference to a person's behaviour or to your workplace culture?

STEP 4

How serious is it and how could you respond proportionately? How as your team agreed to respond? What could you say or do?

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS



EXAMPLES

15. Bystander action at work

Speaking up and challenging behaviours, attitudes and practices that are sexist, discriminatory or harassing is a key strategy to provide a fair and respectful workplace environment for women.

Bystander action can be taken:

- in the moment when you see or hear about the event, behaviour or practice
- after the moment when the event, behaviour or practice took place.

Taking bystander action at any time is important, because doing nothing supports and encourages the behaviours and attitudes.

Some action examples are:

- telling a colleague their behaviour is not appropriate in the workplace
- stepping in when a colleague is behaving inappropriately to another colleague
- speaking up when someone tells a sexist joke or shows you sexist images
- telling your manager when you hear of an incident of sexual harassment or sex discrimination
- speaking up if staff use sexist language
- noting any language or content in your policies or procedures that you think may need to be updated or changed to promote inclusiveness and discussing this with your manager
- talking to colleagues or managers about your workplace culture
- talking to your managers about workplace safety concerns for women
- supporting a colleague who is making a complaint about sex discrimination or sexual harassment
- looking for opportunities to be inclusive and actively making room for people to join in wherever appropriate.

16. What to say in the moment

- Is that respectful?
- I think what you are saying may be sexist/discriminatory.
- I don't think that fits in with how we have agreed to talk to each other here.
- Is anyone else uncomfortable with that joke/email/image?
- Is anyone else concerned that doing that goes against our policies about discrimination?
- I don't agree with that.
- Our policy/code of conduct says we are not to tell sexist jokes in our workplace.

SECTION 4: CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS



EXAMPLES

17. What to say after the moment

Opening lines:

- I have thought about what happened before and I'm not sure it fits with our agreed behaviours.
- I'd like to follow up what you said before...
- I am concerned about the joke you told earlier. We have agreed that those types of jokes are not on.
- Can we please have a quick conversation about the remark you made earlier?
- That might not have been a big deal to you but...

18. Individual commitment to take bystander action

It is useful for you to think about your own willingness to take action and make a commitment to yourself about what you will do.

I will endeavour to:

- speak up against the use of sexist language in my workplace
- speak up against any behaviour that discriminates against women
- speak up against any policy or practice that discriminates against women
- speak up against any behaviours that constitute sexual harassment
- support colleagues who engage in bystander action
- support colleagues who make complaints about sex discrimination and sexual harassment
- encourage others to take bystander action
- seek feedback from colleagues and supervisors about my behaviour
- graciously receive feedback about my own behaviour
- change my language and behaviour in response to feedback.



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