Fundraising Workplace Climate Survey Results: Understanding and Preventing Sexual Harassment

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Content Warning: Discussion of sexual harassment and assault
PURPOSE

• What is sexual harassment? What does it look like in the fundraising profession?
• Why another survey?
• What did we learn from the OSU survey? How does it align with fundraiser interviews?
  • Overall experiences with sexual harassment
  • Experiences with harassment across intersectional identity groups
  • Organizational efforts to prevent harassment
• What actions can we take to prevent sexual harassment in fundraising?
OSU-AFP PARTNERSHIP: TWO PARTS

INTERVIEWS
Conducted a total of 74 in-depth interviews with fundraisers who have been affected by sexual harassment; held both before and after survey was fielded (2018-2021)

SURVEY
Reviewed data from initial survey that was conducted on behalf of the AFP and Chronicle of Philanthropy by Harris Polls; conducted a follow-up survey of our own in 2020
What is sexual harassment?
What does it look like in the fundraising profession?
SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS:

US Legal: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when this conduct… affects an individual’s employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. (US EEOC)

Canadian Legal: any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offence or humiliation to any employee; or that might… be perceived by that employee as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion. (Canada Labour Code)

Psychological: unwanted sexual behavior “that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding her resources, or threatening her well-being.” (Fitzgerald et al. 1997, p. 15)

Behavioral: defines sexual harassment as a list of unacceptable behaviors of different types or forms.
# Forms of Sexual Harassment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Colleague Example</th>
<th>Donor Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Hostility</td>
<td>Unwelcome behaviors that disparage or objectify others based on their sex or gender</td>
<td>A colleague calls a fundraiser his “work wife” despite her visibly uncomfortable reaction</td>
<td>A donor talks about their sexual prowess in front of a fundraiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Sexual Attention</td>
<td>Unwelcome behaviors of a sexual nature that are directed toward a person</td>
<td>The Director of Development commonly massages the shoulders of his fundraisers during meetings without consent</td>
<td>A donor texts a “dick pic” to a fundraiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Coercion</td>
<td>Pressure or force to engage in sexual behavior</td>
<td>A fundraiser’s more senior colleague hosts a party at his house and asks him to stay after to “relieve the tension”</td>
<td>A donor puts his hands up a fundraiser’s skirt while sitting next to one another at a dinner event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples drawn from personal interviews with fundraisers who experienced these behaviors.
“[My supervisor] then would say things to me about the way that I dressed...like, ‘Oh we're going to send you out to talk to so-and-so because he's going to love it, and you should not wear a bra.’”

Associated Behaviors:

- Pressure to dress in an attractive manner because it will benefit the organization
- Pressure to put yourself in situations where you are vulnerable to unwanted sexual attention because it benefits the organization


Resource dependence (RD) theory is an influential theory for public affairs and nonprofit studies (Abag, et al. 2014; Malanima and Smith 2014). It suggests that resource providers will enjoy a degree of power and influence over organizations dependent upon those resources (Pfeffer and Salancik 1981). Individuals that manage relationships with important external stakeholders can help shape stakeholders’ perceptions and mitigate RDs (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003: 18). Research shows, however, that there are unintended consequences (Merton 1936; for the individual employers that serve in these positions, such as conflict (Floyd and Wooldridge 1997; Hennock et al. 1993; Mann and Stevenson 2001; Van Sell et al. 1991). These unintended consequences are important because negative effects may lead to boundary spanner’s withdrawal and ineffectiveness (Dilts 1997; Van Sell et al. 1981), which would counterproductive undermine their ability to mitigate dependencies. We draw together the two separate streams of literature on RD and sexual harassment to surface unintended consequences that have been overlooked.

While research on sexual harassment tends to focus on employees-to-employer harassment (e.g., Thibodeau and Zhao 2019), some research finds that boundary spanning employees in for-profit organizations experience
Why another survey?
NEED FOR RIGOROUS SURVEY DESIGN

Based on MSPB survey of Federal Employees
Account for different understandings of sexual harassment

- Original survey asked: “Have you ever personally experienced sexual harassment in the fundraising profession?”
- OSU survey asked about specific behaviors:
  - **Gender Hostility** - The presence of sexually oriented material in any format (e.g., photos, videos)
  - **Unwanted Sexual Attention** - Unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures
  - **Sexual Coercion** - Pressure for sexual favors
  - Questions designed to capture experiences of sexual exploitation by organizations

Need to locate experiences in clear time frame and organizational settings
## NEED FOR REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AFP Members (US &amp; CA)</th>
<th>Harris Poll Survey</th>
<th>OSU Survey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>20127</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>1270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>6217</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender non-conforming/ Self-describe/ Prefer not to say</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>26344</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>1782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What did we learn from the OSU survey?
There were, unfortunately way too many [experiences of sexual harassment] for me to remember, but often from older males, either donors that were considering large gifts, or donors that had been with an organization for a long time. You were meeting them for coffee, taking them to dinner or lunch, and they were more forward than should be allowed, but it just happened. For the most part, very rarely did I directly say, “What you just said makes me uncomfortable.”
OVERALL EXPERIENCES WITH SXH

Experiences of sexual harassment Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coworker</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Either</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harris Poll – All respondents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever in Career</td>
<td>8.26</td>
<td>13.65</td>
<td>21.01</td>
<td>78.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OSU Survey – Estimates for all AFP members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ever in Career</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>57.15</td>
<td>75.78</td>
<td>24.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over past two years</td>
<td>31.77</td>
<td>23.91</td>
<td>42.13</td>
<td>57.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MSPB Survey – Estimates for all Federal Employees</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over past two years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>86.00</td>
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</table>
## Experiences with Sexual Harassment in Past 2 Yrs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Coworker</th>
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<th>Either</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL AFP MEMBERS</strong></td>
<td>31.77</td>
<td>23.91</td>
<td>42.13</td>
<td>57.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Hostility</td>
<td>18.74</td>
<td>17.36</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted Sexual</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>15.79</td>
<td>24.47</td>
<td>75.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Coercion</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>93.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were men who groped me at one event, and one man leaned in and whispered to me something about, "Black women like it like this?" Or, "I've never had a black woman." I can't tell you how many times I've had people reference my race in terms of sexuality. Without even a second thought about how disgusting in inappropriate, and hurtful that is.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Gender Hostil.</th>
<th>Sexual Attn.</th>
<th>Sexual Coerc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER: Female</strong></td>
<td>44.37</td>
<td>37.76</td>
<td>26.59</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female &amp; BIPOC</td>
<td>43.05</td>
<td>37.58</td>
<td>29.88</td>
<td>10.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female &amp; Caucasian</td>
<td>44.56</td>
<td>37.79</td>
<td>26.13</td>
<td>6.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female &amp; Hetero</td>
<td>42.93</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female &amp; LGB+</td>
<td>60.58</td>
<td>56.58</td>
<td>43.33</td>
<td>16.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER: Male</strong></td>
<td>30.32</td>
<td>27.26</td>
<td>13.19</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male &amp; BIPOC</td>
<td>28.22</td>
<td>26.61</td>
<td>18.01</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male &amp; Caucasian</td>
<td>30.61</td>
<td>27.35</td>
<td>12.51</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male &amp; Hetero</td>
<td>28.29</td>
<td>25.53</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>3.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male &amp; LGB+</td>
<td>36.47</td>
<td>32.48</td>
<td>15.76</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RACE: BIPOC</strong></td>
<td>41.24</td>
<td>36.46</td>
<td>28.27</td>
<td>9.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIPOC &amp; Hetero</td>
<td>41.73</td>
<td>36.83</td>
<td>28.56</td>
<td>8.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIPOC &amp; LGB+</td>
<td>38.00</td>
<td>34.04</td>
<td>26.36</td>
<td>14.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE: Caucasian</strong></td>
<td>42.26</td>
<td>36.05</td>
<td>23.92</td>
<td>6.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian &amp; Hetero</td>
<td>40.88</td>
<td>34.39</td>
<td>22.68</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian &amp; LGB+</td>
<td>53.54</td>
<td>49.68</td>
<td>34.01</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td>42.13</td>
<td>36.10</td>
<td>24.47</td>
<td>6.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Often, there's no HR department. There's no one to go to. I think in my 30 years, [I've] only ever worked [at] a place once for two years that had an HR person. I've never worked anywhere that had a policy or anything like that. My experience isn't uncommon. It's becoming more frequent to have policies and procedures, but we're still talking about tens of thousands of nonprofits who run on a shoestring... That all contributes to folks' incidents, because people are getting away with it, but also the lingering trauma because there's no one to talk to.
# Organizational Efforts

## Org Policy and Harassment over Past 2 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coworker</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Either</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31.78</td>
<td>32.71</td>
<td>54.67</td>
<td>45.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31.75</td>
<td>23.70</td>
<td>41.65</td>
<td>58.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>32.36</td>
<td>22.95</td>
<td>42.82</td>
<td>57.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Org Training and Harassment over Past 2 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coworker</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Either</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Offered</td>
<td>35.27</td>
<td>29.16</td>
<td>47.88</td>
<td>52.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered</td>
<td>31.35</td>
<td>22.29</td>
<td>40.91</td>
<td>59.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>23.65</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>31.87</td>
<td>68.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What actions can we take to prevent sexual harassment in fundraising?
Disclaimer: We don’t claim to have all the answers. The answers are evolving and are likely to be different for each organization.

However, we have:
- spoken with a lot of fundraisers
- reviewed the data
- read the literature/research
SXH PREVENTION PRACTICES

1. Demonstrate a Commitment to Equality and Inclusion
   • 7 embedded practices including having diverse leadership/board

2. Follow or Exceed Federal and State Laws
   • 3 embedded practices including knowing the laws in your area

3. Write a Clear Anti-Harassment Policy
   • 9 embedded practices including involving multiple stakeholders in drafting/revision of the policy

4. Educate stakeholders on Sexual Harassment
   • 8 embedded practices including regularly sharing information on sexual harassment, not just during a training

5. Encourage Stakeholders to report Sexual Harassment
   • 5 embedded practices including making reporting simple and safe

6. Properly Investigate Complaints
   • 11 embedded practices that includes taking action before a complaint is made if necessary

7. Take Appropriate Action on Sexual Harassment Complaints
   • 5 embedded practices including taking remedial action

My first thought was, “Well, he’s a volunteer, he’s a board member. If it was a colleague of mine harassing me, I would have an avenue with which to report that and be responsible for reporting that. Does that really apply to volunteers?” My understanding then was that it doesn’t.
WHAT CAN BE DONE: POLICIES

Have a policy and ensure that it addresses:

- Behavior of board, volunteers, donors, and other stakeholders
- Note multiple parties to which SXH can be reported, consider a third-party expert for reporting and investigation of complaints
- Also, review the policy regularly to ensure it is meeting needs

The Research

- Effective policies should include a definition of sexual harassment, procedures for dealing with complaints, safeguards for confidentiality, and specific sanctions for sexual harassment
- A zero-tolerance policy may increase the likelihood that a bystander will report an incident
- Women rely more heavily on formalized rules

(Jacobson & Eaton, 2018; Lindenberg & Reese, 1996; Portillo & DeHart-Davis, 2009)
OTHER “POLICIES” RAISED AS OPTIONS:

- No alcohol at hosted events
- Discourage meetings outside an office environment, and/or at a donor’s homes, and/or encourage “pairing up” for such meetings
- “No questions asked” if a fundraiser chooses to abruptly leave a meeting with a donor
- Create a secret code in the donor management system to caution about a donor’s behaviors
- Formal mentorship programs for younger fundraisers about how to deal with sexual harassment by donors

Available as a link (along with other useful resources) at: https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/sexual-harassment-the-nonprofit-workplace
During the harassment training, I asked the trainer, "What do I do?" Because they were going to sexual harassment for your boss or for colleagues. I was like, "What about a donor? What do I do when a donor asks me to sit on his lap?" …

"Oh yeah. You…I don't know" [laughs] was basically the response.
WHAT CAN BE DONE: TRAINING

Have trainings and ensure they:

- Are given to volunteers, board members, and other stakeholders
- Are interactive (e.g. role play) and customized to the organization
- Are customized by group or include examples relevant to different groups of employees (e.g. fundraisers, managers, generational differences, etc.)

The Research

- Policies are not effective without training
- Training is not effective when it is one-size-fits all
- Training should include role playing to be most effective
- Training can be just as effective online as in-person

(Newman et al., 2003; Preusser, Bartels, & Nordstrom, 2011; Reese & Lindenberg, 2003, 2005)
What I tell my team now here… [and my previous employer] was really good about this. They would say, "If you are ever in a situation where you feel uncomfortable or don't feel comfortable going into it, or something is happening, I don't care if this person wants to give $100 million, get out. You are more than welcome to leave. You will never get in trouble. We will never question your decision to get out."
WHAT CAN BE DONE: LEADERSHIP

Help build a culture of awareness and support:

• Talk to other members of your organization and raise awareness about the specific ways fundraisers may be vulnerable
• Identify other groups of stakeholders in the organization that might have vulnerabilities (e.g. social workers)
• If you lead a team, make it explicit that you prioritize their safety and comfort above all else

The Research

• An inclusive culture can decrease incidence of harassment
• Putting women in leadership positions may increase reporting and decrease the incidence of harassment

(Choi, Hong, & Lee, 2018; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, & Magley, 1999; Yu & Lee, 2019)
said something like, "Claire, let's take you for example. If we're out on a date, I'm not going to just immediately ask you to have sex with me. We're going to go on dates and then we'll..." He was trying to be funny or just be gross and parallel a relationship between a man and a woman between relationship between the donor and the donor development officer. Basically, you don't just want to jump in bed with the donor or you don't just ask them for the money. You have to court them. That's what he was trying to say and that was his example.
FROM POSTSTRUCTURAL FEMINISM: ATTEND TO LANGUAGE

- Talk openly about the issues
- Replace terms like “solicitation” with “ask” or something similar
- Phase out metaphors that compare fundraising to dating or sexual relationships
- Instead of speaking about developing relationships between fundraiser and donor, speak about developing relationships between organization and donor
This donor that I referred to that was harassing my staff person. High-powered donor, military official, board member, committee member. They celebrated him rolling off the board and thanked him for his years of service… I sat in that room going, "This guy's an ass, [laughs] has treated women in this organization badly and you're celebrating him as if he's the best thing since sliced bread."
FROM ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE: HOLD HARASSERS TO ACCOUNT

- Especially as a bystander but also as the target, if possible, say something in the moment
- Take remedial action on formal reports of harassment, and be transparent about what those are
- Do not give positive references for harassers that are moving on to the next organization (“pass the trash”)
- Have gift acceptance policies that prevent the organization from honoring harassers and/or give the organization the basis for turning down such a donation
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