

Executive Summary

There is a good deal of research related to the incidence of sexual harassment in schools, and to the incidence for adults in the workplace, but little is known about the incidence and effects of sexual harassment of youth placed in workplaces as interns and through various school and non-school organizations. Research indicates that the incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace is significantly higher for high school girls than it is for adult women, and that sexual harassment affects girls' work engagement and performance and their school commitment and achievement.

Over the last two years, CWEALF staff administered anonymous surveys, via Survey Monkey (year 1) and paper (year 2), to over 150 high school students. The surveys asked students about their knowledge of what constitutes sexual harassment, student experiences of being harassed, any reporting of the harassment, comfort level with discussion of sexual harassment, and training/materials related to sexual harassment.

Most students could identify the behaviors that constitute sexual harassment, especially the most egregious acts related to physical touch and quid pro quo type behaviors. Yet, knowledge of the kinds of behaviors that constitute a hostile environment is not as evident.

Students, by their own report, are experiencing sexual harassment. While rates are lower for most types of harassing behaviors in school sponsored workplaces than in non-school sponsored workplaces, all students are experiencing these behaviors with some frequency (table for 2012-2013 study follows on page 2). Not surprisingly, only a third of students report that they have been targets of sexual harassment and are more likely to tell friends than they do adults.

These are not the work experiences we want students to have as a foundation for their work lives. We must equip students with accurate information that describes the types of sexually harassing behaviors they might encounter in the workplace, the law pertaining to sexual harassment and the procedures for reporting. We must also infuse training in both school-sponsored and non-school sponsored career/work education programs with relevant information and guidance related to sexual harassment. In addition, students need training to support their peers as they are more likely to discuss their experiences with them. A review of materials used to train students and their teachers in Connecticut and other states suggests that the subject does not receive attention proportional to its importance. Adults must be able to be guides for students in their formative work experiences.



**Findings
2012-2013 Sexual harassment survey (n=138)**

Experience

	School sponsored	Non-school sponsored
Has someone made sexual or sex-based jokes that made you uncomfortable?	26.8%	31.9%
Has someone told rumors or spread information about your sex life?	26.8%	23.9%
Has someone threatened you if you do not comply with a sexual request?	6.5%	11.6%
Has someone made derogatory gestures or facial expressions of a sexual nature?	31.9%	34.8%
Has someone stared or made comments about your clothing, body, or appearance?	42%	37.7%
Has someone requested sexual favors in which you did not want to engage?	10.9%	24.6%
Have you been touched, hugged, kissed, stroked, and patted in a sexual way when you did not want to be?	22.5%	21%
Have you been promised an employment incentive (salary raise, promotion, new office, etc.) in exchange for engaging in sexual behavior?	5.1%	9.4%
Have you received unwanted texts, emails, phone calls, IMs, Face book messages, or Tweets of a sexual nature (ex. sexing, etc.)?	16.7%	30.4%
Has someone called you gay or lesbian in a negative way?	21%	29.3%
Have you received or been exposed to unwanted posters, drawings, pictures, or screensavers of a sexual nature?	18.8%	29.3%

Reporting

37% of students who experienced sexual harassment in their workplace reported the harassment to someone. Of those who did report, 78% reported to a friend, 70% to a parent, sibling or family member; 35% a teacher, principal or school counselor. Only 4% reported the harassment to an employment supervisor. When asked why they did not report, 75% said they didn't think it was a big deal; 34% thought nothing would be done about it; 12% thought no one would believe them; 7% thought they brought it on themselves; 5% thought they might lose their jobs; and, 6% thought their grade might be negatively impacted.

Training and materials

Of all respondents, 49% indicated that they discussed how to report workplace sexual harassment in school. Vehicles that at least half of students identified as the best vehicles for instruction on sexual harassment included (in order of percentage of responses): website, flyer/poster, phone app, Facebook page; pens/pencils, and book covers.

