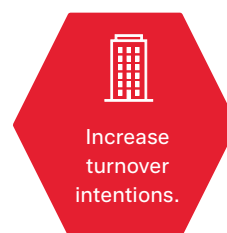# Psychosocial Safety tip sheet

Psychosocial hazard #14: Harassment, including Sexual Harassment

Workplace harassment refers to behaviour that is unwelcome or unsolicited, offensive, humiliating or intimidating, and relates to someone's age, disability, race, sex, relationship status, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. It may be directed towards an individual or group of workers, and may be a single act or an ongoing pattern of behaviour.

Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that is done either to offend, humiliate, or intimidate another person, or where it is reasonable to expect that the person might feel that way. It includes uninvited physical intimacy, such as touching in a sexual way, uninvited sexual propositions, and remarks with sexual connotations. It may be a single act or an ongoing pattern of behaviour.

Harassment and sexual harassment may be committed by co-workers, supervisors, managers, customers, students, patients, visitors, suppliers, or others who interact with employees. Harassment is very serious behaviour that can:

Contribute to psychological injury.

Contribute to physical injury.

Decrease job satisfaction.

Increase turnover intentions.

Are We OK?

Watch out for:

- Workplaces or teams with a low understanding of what harassment and sexual harassment is.
- Workplaces or teams with low levels of diversity.
- Teams with a strong 'in group' or clique.

- Workplaces or teams that do not adhere to workplace norms (e.g., banter, 'rough and tumble', insulting jokes).
- Cultural and language differences that are not well understood by employees.
- Workplaces or teams that are very hierarchical, where there are large power distances or where there is the perception of employees being 'protected'.
- Employees who may work in isolation or remotely.

It looks & sounds like:

Examples of harassment include:

- Telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups.
- Making derogatory comments or taunts about someone's disability.
- Sharing inappropriate images, videos, texts, emails, social media messages, letters, or notes about an individual or group's personal characteristics.
- Asking intrusive questions about a person's body.
- Staring, leering or unwelcome touching.
- Sexual or suggestive comments, jokes, or innuendo.
- Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person.

For More Info:

- Visit the Work Safe Queensland Website.
- Contact us on: HealthandWellbeing@griffith.edu.au.

Tips for building psychosocial safety:

- Set clear expectations around appropriate workplace behaviour, proactively respond to instances of inappropriate behaviour, including banter or jokes that may have been well intended but could cause offense.
- Communicate Griffith's Code of Conduct and the definitions of harassment and sexual harassment to employees. Encourage examples of harassment and sexual harassment to be reported.
- Increase diversity in teams and continuously develop skills and understanding around how to work with a diverse range of people.
- Proactively build positive team dynamics, reduce power differences, and establish clear standards of behaviour that apply equally to all employees.
- Use psychosocial hazard tip sheets to proactively manage other psychosocial hazards and reduce workplace stress.