

Sexual Harassment Awareness Week



Sexual Harassment Awareness week is being proclaimed in memory of Theresa Vince, who was brutally murdered in Chatham by her workplace supervisor. For years, Theresa Vince was a victim of ongoing and persistent sexual harassment perpetrated by her supervisor.

JUNE 2 MARKS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THERESA VINCE'S DEATH

The first week of June has been chosen as Sexual Harassment Awareness Week because June 2 marks the anniversary of Theresa Vince's death. The majority of women will experience sexual harassment at some point in their working lives. The objective of proclaiming Sexual Harassment Awareness Week is to raise and increase public awareness, to foster change in societal attitudes and behaviour surrounding sexual harassment and to prevent another tragedy from occurring. Everyone has the right to full, equal and safe participation in the community.

Sexual Harassment is defined as any unwanted comment, gesture, or action that is sexual in nature. There are many supports in place to support victims of sexual harassment.

There are many different forms of sexual harassment. Some examples are:

Gender-based harassment is one type of sexual harassment. Gender-based harassment is "any behavior that polices and reinforces traditional heterosexual gender norms" (Elizabeth J. Meyer, "Gendered Harassment in Secondary Schools: Understanding Teachers")

Sexual Harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment is a type of discrimination based on sex. When someone is sexually harassed in the workplace, it can undermine their sense of personal dignity. It can prevent them from earning a living, doing their job effectively, or reaching their full potential. Sexual harassment can also poison the environment for

everyone else. If left unchecked, sexual harassment in the workplace has the potential to escalate to violent behaviour.

Sexual Harassment in Education. Education providers have a legal duty to take steps to prevent and respond to sexual harassment. They must make sure they keep poison-free environments that respect human rights. From a human rights perspective, it is not acceptable to ignore sexual harassment, whether someone has formally complained or made a human rights complaint.

Some people who are sexually harassed also lose their appetite, get stomach-aches, and find it hard to



concentrate. In some cases, people have reported using drugs or drinking to cope. In extreme cases, they might think about or even try suicide.

30% of all women aged 15 or older report experiencing sexual assault at least once in their life. The rate of sexual assault against Indigenous women is approximately three times higher than among non-Indigenous women.



The rate of sexual assault against people with disabilities is about two times higher than those with no disabilities.

Only 1 in 3 people



In Canada understand what it means to give consent to sexual activity

DID YOU KNOW?

SOME SUPPORTS THAT ARE IN PLACE ARE:



Sexual Assault Centres, Crisis Lines, and Support Services

The Facts About Sexual Assault and Harassment

Sexual violence

Providing support to survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence in Ontario is a priority for the Government of Canada

ARTICLES AND VIDEOS OF INTEREST



- Women's Health Collective Canada Is Addressing the Gap in Women's Health
- Pandemic Has a Negative Impact on Women in the Workplace: Research
- Women still aren't being promoted, even as entry-level hiring approaches parity
- 20 biases that still impact black women today
- Student and youth groups call for free menstrual products on post-secondary campuses
- Divorce of Kanye West and Kim Kardashian shines spotlight on toxic breakup behaviour
- 'Very toxic environment': Canadian gymnasts allege years of abuse, call for action
- Back To Normal Is Not Enough
- Keira's Law aims to educate judges about domestic violence

A Message from the OSSTF/FEESO Election Readiness Team



On Saturday February 13 the Status of Women Committee was updated on our OSSTF/FEESO Election Readiness plan. Susan Rab, Vanessa Stoby and Rose LePage, along with 5 other Organizers, are working full time on efforts to ensure we elect an education friendly government and opposition on *June 2*.

They spoke about the many ways women have been left behind by the current government: the 1% wage cap, reduction of childcare subsidies, failure to legislate sick days and much more.

Ford Tracker—exhaustive list of Ford government cuts

[CLICK HERE](#)

THE CALL TO ACTION IS FOR ALL MEMBERS AND HAS 3 COMPONENTS: VOTING, VOLUNTEERING, AND DONATING.



VOTE early and help others get to the polls on Election Day

VOLUNTEER four hours of your time when the campaign begins on May 4. Think of four hours of your time as an investment to achieve 4 years of rebuilding and feeling good about your profession again.

DONATE to an endorsed candidate. Small dollars add up so just give what you can; 75% will be given back when you file taxes

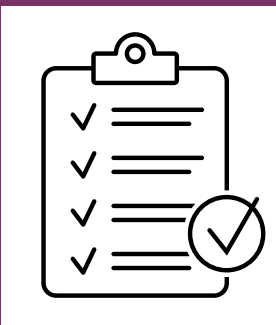
Many other actions will help elect an education friendly government.

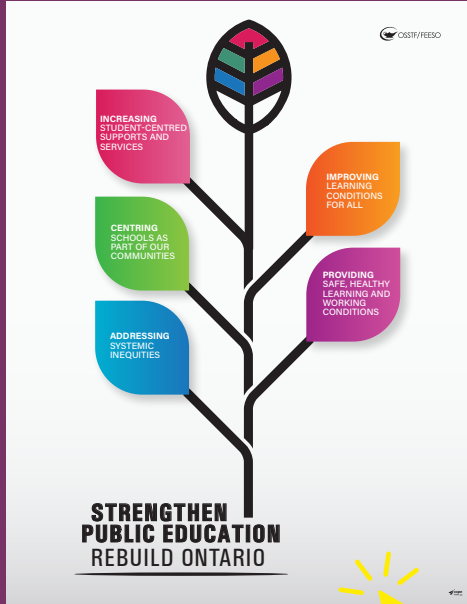
TINY ACTIONS

- follow OSSTF on social media, talk to your friends, family, colleagues and neighbours about public education

SMALL ACTIONS

- read the education platform and bring up election readiness at BU meetings, committee meetings, share/retweet OSSTF/FEESO messages on your social media platforms





MEDIUM ACTIONS

- participate in training, conferences, canvass days to drop leaflets, call hub activities, attend a rally, join your local political action committee

BIG ACTIONS

- have one-on-one conversations to draw others and share stories, organize a canvass, join a riding association, contact the campaign of your preferred candidate, sign up to volunteer for a progressive candidate in your area

The power of our work together as strong women in our union and communities will influence the outcome of the election on June 2.

ANNOUNCING OSSTF/FEESO's NEWEST CURRICULUM RESOURCE!



CANADIAN
**WOMEN'S
LIVES**

AVAILABLE HERE

Canadian Women's Lives (CWL) is a new, OSSTF/FEESO member and staff created curriculum resource that highlights the history and the accomplishments of women over the course of Canada's history.

In this resource, there are many women who do not identify as Canadian but who live and have lived on Turtle Island. The resource includes the lived experiences from a wide variety of people who identify as women.

OSSTF/FEESO and the CWL writing team strongly believe that educational content about women must be deliberate, purposeful and genuine. It cannot be tokenistic and taught only on International Women's Day or for the month of October during Canadian Women's History month. This knowledge must be woven throughout the curriculum.

By sharing this resource our hope is that teachers, education workers, and students are able to engage in learning that more accurately reflects and celebrates the lived experiences, contributions, and inspiring stories of women.





Dollars and sense: to truly understand the crushing impact of sexual harassment, you must include its financial costs

Teachers discuss it in class. Workplaces mandate against it. Movements like “#METOO” empower survivors to talk about it. But despite all best efforts, sexual harassment in the workplace is still pervasive. Over a third of Canadian women have experienced sexual harassment at work and seven in 10 women have faced gender-based discrimination. Between 85 and 95 per cent of women don't report incidents of sexual harassment (Jackson, 2018).¹

The emotional cost to survivors is overwhelming. But there is another cost: the financial one. “It's not exaggerating to say that survivors of sexual harassment can suffer financial consequences for the rest of their lives,” says Karen Hubbard, Vice-President, Client Advisory Services, Educators Financial Group. “I'd say the financial impact of sexual harassment on survivors is the ultimate example of ‘adding insult to injury’, but that's too glib, too trite, for something with this kind of impact.”

To date, most research on the financial consequences of sexual harassment has focused on the impact on employers, rather than the price survivors pay. It may be because data can be hard to come by. Settlements often come with non-disclosure agreements, and businesses aren't required to report if people leave due to harassment. However, the 2017 Harassment and Violence against Educators (Ontario) Survey by EdCan NETWORK called the financial impact of harassment and violence “considerable”. Educators took an average of 6.84 days off work after their worst instance of harassment in 2017-2018. The costs associated with lost time due to harassment and

violence against public school educators in Ontario are conservatively estimated to more than 3 million dollars annually.²

A 2017 U.S. report of 16 sexual harassment survivors studied the lifetime financial costs.³ It concluded that sexual harassment can limit a survivor's economic security during their working lives, and into retirement. Losses over a lifetime ranged from \$125,600 in lower-wage, service jobs, to \$1.3 million in well-paid, male-dominated occupations such as an apprentice in a construction trade.

These costs were the result of:

- **Reduced earnings:** Either because their performance was affected by the harassment, or in retaliation from speaking out, many individuals lost thousands of dollars due to reduced shift hours, denied promotions, and lost bonuses.
- **Job loss and unemployment:** Nearly all interviewed spent some time out of work as a result of the harassment. In some cases, harassment and retaliation forced the worker to leave.
- **Forced career change and delayed advancement:** Several women in well-paying, male-dominated fields were pushed out of their occupations and into lower-paying, female-dominated fields, contributing to the gender pay gap. The case of Heather McWilliam is interesting. She worked in the RCMP and the Toronto Police Force and launched a suit of sexual harassment in 2014. She won, and was awarded \$85,000, less than the \$120,000 in lawyers' fees. But she found a new purpose, founding a not-for-profit,

and speaking publicly in support of victims of police culture abuses and sexual violence, those with post-traumatic stress disorder and mental health injuries.⁴

- **Lost benefits:** Losing these jobs meant losing income *and* valuable benefits, such as retirement fund contributions, healthcare, and tuition subsidies.

Loss of income had *indirect* consequences also, such as lower credit ratings, mounting student loan debt, repossession of cars, evictions from housing including temporary homelessness, and reduced retirement security.

Figures like the above show that the financial impact of sexual harassment must be considered in order to understand its full and terrible impact. They also make clear that the cost of sexual harassment doesn't just affect survivors – it affects us all, as a society. By reducing people's abilities to use their skills, support themselves and their families, and make their maximum contribution to society, we are all less.

If you need a little guidance on how to financially navigate through the impact of harassment or are looking for financial advice specifically geared to the education community, we're here for you. Call us at 1.800.263.9541 to talk to one of our financial advisors about your situation.

¹ https://www.principals.ca/en/opc-resources/resources/Documents/OPC_Winter19-web.pdf

² <https://www.edcan.ca/articles/the-dirty-little-secret/>

³ “Paying Today and Tomorrow: Charting the Financial Costs of Workplace Sexual Harassment” – TIME'S UP Foundation and the Institute for Women's Policy Research

⁴ <https://engendered.us/tag/heather-mcwilliam/>