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Exploring the Experience of Disclosing in the Workplace

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Psychology

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Abstract

An alarming rate of workplace violence/harassment is observed each year, with negative outcomes that affect the organization (i.e., financial loss) and those directly involved (i.e., job loss, financial strain, fear of being blamed, being labeled a ‘troublemaker’). The literature indicates that, for many victim-survivors, there is little hope for positive outcomes following a disclosure of workplace violence/harassment. In fact, some studies show that negative reactions to disclosure can compound and intensify the impact of violence/harassment on psychological functioning. However, minimal research has been devoted to the experiences of victim-survivors regarding the outcomes of a disclosure. Utilizing virtual semi-structured interviews, the present study qualitatively examined the experiences of 15 victim-survivors following a disclosure of workplace violence/harassment. Thematic analysis of these interviews identified eight ways that workplaces and work colleagues could react to participants’ disclosures that led to victim-survivors feeling worse. Themes included: (a) lack of accountability, (b) lack of commitment to justice, (c) feeling blamed or invalidated, (d) damaging expectations, (e) inconsistency in responses, (f) deteriorating conditions and relationships, and (g) minimization of harmful effects. These themes offer insight into the lived experiences of victim-survivors who have disclosed workplace violence/harassment and suggest that there is much work needed to be done to positively change these outcomes and experiences. This work could motivate future studies investigating disclosures and the types of responses that victim-survivors receive in various settings.

Summary for Lay Audience

Violence and harassment in the workplace cause harm to the workers, employers, organizations and communities that host them. There are numerous studies that illustrate these effects, such as financial strain, emotional harm, decreased psychological functioning, and fear of being blamed or fired. This fear has led victims of workplace violence or harassment to feel as though there is little hope for positive outcomes or reactions from others if they were to come forward. There is also significant research that demonstrates the importance of the responses that victims receive when they disclose their victimization. Negative reactions to disclosure of victimization (i.e., blaming, disbelief, minimizing the experience) can worsen the effects of the violence/harassment on that individual. However, there is limited research that investigates disclosure in the workplace context, and that seeks to understand the experience of the disclosure for those victim-survivors. The current study explored the experience of disclosure by interviewing victim-survivors of workplace violence or harassment; this enabled the researchers to examine the themes that arose from their experiences, and what can be done in order to better support workers in the future. This study found several examples of responding to the victim's disclosure in a way that led them to feel worse. Some of these responses included an overall sense that the organization was unwilling to support the victim-survivor and commit to ensuring that they felt the issue was resolved. Other responses led the participants to feel blamed, invalidated, silenced, disbelieved, or that their situation continued to deteriorate as they continued to pursue a resolution. While this study provides a description of the experience of disclosing workplace violence, further exploration of disclosure and the types of responses they receive is required in order to understand both harmful and supportive reactions.

Dedication

To my parents and sister, thank you for being my rock and my lighthouse. Your consistent support is the reason I can do this work and feel so excited to share it with you. Thank you for believing in my ideas and helping me bring them to life.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the strength and openness of the participants who chose to share their stories with our research team, thank you for trusting us to hold your experiences.

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Exploring the Experience of Disclosing Harassment in The Workplace

Interpersonal relationships are foundational to individuals' psychological well-being (Wills, 1985). The connections that are formed in a workplace are directly associated with positive outcomes for both the individual and the organization, such as improved physiological symptoms (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008), organizational effectiveness (Velmurugan, 2016), feelings of being respected and involved at work (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003), among others. When interpersonal relationships are disrupted by factors such as workplace violence or harassment, these beneficial factors are at risk. Research has connected workplace bullying, harassment, and violence to decreased organizational commitment, thus impacting employee turnover (Leblanc & Kelloway, 2002). Workplace violence has also been linked to low levels of work satisfaction regardless of compensation level (Borzaga & Depedri, 2005).

The impacts of workplace violence have been briefly explored in terms of the resulting reactions from others, such as perceived bias that distorts a relationship, or colleagues wrongfully blaming the individual for their victimization. The disclosure of interpersonal violence, as described by the Rape, Assault, and Incest National Network (RAINN; 2022) as telling others in the person's life about their victimization, can be a difficult barrier to overcome. RAINN (2022) identifies fear and shame that victims of sexual violence feel when facing the possibility of disclosure, including a pressure to take action and report the incident if they were to come forward. Sabina and Ho (2014) note that negative responses to disclosure are related to a decrease in psychological functioning. These researchers also note that shame and blame were among the most commonly cited reasons for victim-survivors to refrain from disclosure in the form of formal reporting (i.e., informing police, crisis lines, victim-support services). The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE; 2018) reports that workers face a

variety of barriers to disclosure including fear of losing their position, feelings of shame or embarrassment, avoidance of reliving the incident, concerns regarding confidentiality and being blamed or disbelieved, among others. Therefore, there is a perception from victim-survivors that disclosure, whether formal or informal, can be harmful and potentially have negative consequences.

There is an opportunity to expand the literature on these subjects by further exploring the experiences of victim-survivors to better understand their interactions outside and inside of work (e.g., managers, colleagues, employers, or clients) in relation to workplace violence. The research herein enables further understanding of the lived experiences of victimization for an adult population with previous work experience from a range of potential occupations, industries, and identities. In addition, this study presents an opportunity to explore the reasons why it is that disclosure can make things worse instead of better? This is the question that the current study seeks to delve into for deeper understanding. These factors are examined through qualitative and trauma-informed research methods.

Respect at Work Report

The current study builds on the *Respect at Work Report*, which was based on research conducted by the Center for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC) at the University of Western Ontario, from October 2020 to April 2021, on workers across Canada who had experienced or observed workplace violence and harassment over the past two years (Berlingieri, et al. 2022). This original study was conducted using a nation-wide survey and interviews with the intent of understanding the effects of workplace violence and harassment in various industries, and how these experiences impact victim-survivors. High prevalence rates were documented; specifically, 65% of respondents reported

experiencing one or more incidents of workplace harassment and violent behaviour over the past two years (Berlingieri, et al. 2022). The study was able to investigate the prevalence of workplace violence and harassment across a variety of unionized and non-unionized industries, gender identities, and sexual orientations, finding that overall, workers in non-unionized workplaces and those identifying with equity-seeking populations experienced higher rates of harassment. Results of the survey also suggested wide variation in the impact of workplace violence and harassment, such as a “negative impact on social life” (p. 15), “loss of trust in team, department, or unit”, or “loss of trust in superiors” (Berlingieri, et al. 2022, p.16). These initial findings regarding social life and the loss of trust in others support the need for additional investigation into the experience of workplace violence for victim-survivors in terms of the types of reactions they received from others related to their experiences. The current study seeks to add to the understanding of workplace violence and harassment for respondents of diverse backgrounds, specifically delving deeper into the journey of disclosing their experiences.

Definitions

The primary constructs for the current study include interpersonal relationships and workplace violence. *Interpersonal relationships*, as adaptation from Heaphy and Dutton (2008), include ongoing interactions that are subjectively interpreted by each of the members involved. These can include co-worker, managerial, personal, client, or employer interactions that are in-person, written, or indirect contact. Personal relationships can include relationships with people in and outside of the workplace.

Workplace violence and harassment is defined in accordance with the *International Labour Organization Violence and Harassment Convention* (ILO; 2019, No.190) as “a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats, therefore, whether a single occurrence or

repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual, or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment” (Article 1). Furthermore, the ILO (2019) defines gender-based violence and harassment as harassment or violence targeting an individual because of their gender or sex, or impacting an individual who identifies as a particular gender or sex disproportionately. This is inclusive of sexual harassment. Throughout the current study, workplace violence is an inclusive term that incorporates these features of workplace harassment, bullying, sexual harassment and violence, threats, and perceived risk of harm. Therefore, there is no requirement for an individual to have sustained a physical injury or for there to be clear intent of harm for an experience to be defined as violence.

Other concepts explored in this work include interpersonal biases and victim-blaming. *Biases* are defined as individuals being evaluated inappropriately (Kluemper et al., 2019) or with the limited information that influences the perception of either party in the interpersonal relationship, such as prejudice. As a result of bias, an individual may engage in *victim-blaming*, which can be defined as an observer perceiving the individual in the situation as responsible for their harassment (Hafer & Begue, 2005; Harber et al., 2015; Cramer et al., 2013).

Literature Review

Individuals who experience workplace violence typically describe feeling reluctance to report and fear of coming forward, feeling uncertain of their job security, being afraid that they would not be taken seriously, that they would be labeled a ‘troublemaker’, or that the situation may get worse (Babiarczyk et al., 2020; Carter et al., 2013; Chambers et al., 2018; Colenbrander et al., 2020; Gaston, 2020; Song & Wang, 2021). Recent research has indicated that for many victim-survivors, there is little hope for positive outcomes: in a study of the experiences of workplace bullying among medical professionals in New Zealand, 42% of respondents believed

reporting their victimization would make the situation worse, and approximately 44% of respondents believed they would not be offered any support (Chambers et al., 2018).

Additionally, a study conducted on the outcomes of reporting workplace sexual harassment found that reporting offered no improvements for victim-survivors who reported. In contrast, they found that the formal reporting of workplace violence resulted in reduced resiliency (Ford et al., 2021).

Regardless of the amount of support that a worker may want to seek out for themselves, there is a common understanding that these procedures or policies may not be readily available at all. Worse still is the notion that disclosing abuse at all can be harmful, or that negative reactions to the disclosure can lead to worsened psychopathological symptoms (Dworkin et al., 2019; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; McNulty et al., 1994). Often, when victim-survivors disclose their victimization, they are left feeling that no helpful outcomes will arise, regardless of the presence of regulations or procedures that encourage them to do so (Song et al., 2021). What is going on that causes disclosure to often result in a worsening condition as opposed to improving and adding supports to the victim-survivor's environment? This is the question that the current study seeks to delve into for deeper understanding.

Research investigating workplace violence demonstrates the resulting emotional, psychological, physiological, and behavioural harms that arise for victim-survivors (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Mento et al., 2020). This literature highlights the dangers of workplace violence for individuals and their organizations, in addition to a few factors that can influence these negative outcomes, such as a person's intersectional identity (i.e., ethnicity, gender, or sex; Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005). For example, Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005) note that there are specific parallels between the experiences of those who are victimized through

sexual assault and racism, which can each result in feelings of isolation, blame, and disbelief. These experiences, therefore, not only result in symptoms of trauma in their own right, they are also relevant to the workplace as they can occur for those who experience multiple levels of oppression.

While the negative effects of workplace violence have been demonstrated, there are also relevant articles that are beginning to investigate the profound impact that negative reactions to disclosure can have on the victim's psychological well-being (Ullman & Filipass, 2005). These articles have begun investigating disclosures of violence, reactions to disclosures, and the possible effects that negative reactions would have on the victim-survivors, although these have focused on sexual abuse, childhood abuse, and low-risk populations (Ullman, 2002; Ullman & Filipass, 2005; Savoie, 2014). Filipas and Ullman (2001) specifically investigated the psychological effects of receiving positive and negative reactions to the disclosure of sexual assault. The authors note that negative reactions can be detrimental whether they are coming from formal or informal support, such as a supervisor or family member. They also found that those who were seeking formal support more often encountered negative reactions that included controlling behaviour, stigmatized reactions, or blaming the victim. While these studies offer important information about responses to sexual assault disclosures or specific workplace violence incidences, additional investigation is required to expand the research regarding workplace violence disclosures, and more specifically, qualitatively analyze how victim-survivors experience victim-blaming and reactions from others.

Currently, there are few workplace studies examining the role of blaming by individuals with various levels of power over the victim-survivor. For instance, a recent study found that individuals were evaluated differently regarding their perpetration of workplace harassment

based on limited perceptions of both the victim-survivor and the perpetrator (Kluemper et al., 2019). These findings suggest that biases among employees can impact the level of acceptance and tolerance of workplace harassment based on the level of power or the usefulness each person is perceived to have.

For example, recent studies have found that blame may be attributed to a victim when there is a misunderstanding of how the harassment occurred, who was involved, or what position they hold. A particular study investigated the perception of employee harassment, specifically between the reaction of a manager and an employee reporting the victimization (Kluemper et al., 2019). The study suggests that due to the inability of managers to witness the harassment directly, they may be influenced to perceive the victim as responsible for the ambiguous situation. Moreover, the study found that if the supervisor perceived the perpetrator to be an asset to the workplace and a “good employee,” this placed the perpetrator in a position of power and increased the likelihood of blaming the victim-survivor instead (Kluemper et al., 2019). A limitation of the study is that it focused specifically on rudeness in the workplace and the dyadic relationship of supervisor and employee who was receiving the rude comments. There is an opportunity to elaborate on these findings in regards to the biased reactions from colleagues and managers in response to other forms of workplace harassment. This could provide insight into the experiences of victim-survivors who receive negative reactions from their workplace due to an inaccurate understanding of the circumstances or influence of power in the workplace that contribute to blaming.

Additional findings suggest that social identity can influence who is blamed for their harassment. Studies show that members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community are disproportionately harassed, discriminated against, and targeted at work (Sears & Mallory, 2011; Sears et al., 2021),

and that these individuals can feel blamed, shunned, or fearful of additional victimization (Calafell, 2014; Garcia Johnson & Otto, 2019). As part of an equity-seeking group, members of the 2SLGBTQ+ and gender-diverse community may feel less accepted in the workplace generally (Brassel et al., 2019), which may create added stress when experiencing workplace violence or harassment. These individuals may begin from a place of less perceived or expected support than those who feel accepted and safe in the workplace. It is crucial that workplaces consider these power dynamics and particularly how to address intersectionality for violence and harassment for workplace policies because a failure to do so can contribute directly to the allowance of those harassing behaviours (Calafell, 2014).

Another position of power that may play a role in the exacerbating experience of workplace harassment is the dynamic between workers and superiors. Buunk and Schaufeli (1999) note that, when there is a lack of reciprocity between coworkers or superiors and their subordinates, this lack of effort may lead to negative perceptions of workplace relationships. Reciprocity in the workplace is part of a mutually supportive system. However, if an imbalance of power arises, the inability of victim-survivors to access supportive relationships at work may result in reduced feelings of psychological safety. These power dynamics between coworkers or managers may cause workers to feel that they do not have access to a positive work environment, and therefore exacerbate their experiences of workplace harassment. Furthermore, the victim-survivors may feel that their environment is not conducive to reporting harassment because their harasser is in a position of power and may receive documentation regarding the reporting process, which further deters subordinates from seeking support (Blando et al., 2015).

The *just world theory* of victim-blaming helps to make sense of these various findings on the influence of power and identity on people's experience of support. This theory suggests that

observers may perceive a victim as responsible for their own harassment in order to preserve the observer's perception of a just world rather than contradict their belief by acknowledging a victim who has experienced injustice (Hafer & Begue, 2005; Delker et al., 2019). The just world hypothesis is described as a firm belief that good things happen to good people, as well as the inverse (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). This belief would be contradicted by the acknowledgement that a person who is innocent has been targeted by workplace harassment. Therefore, the hypothesis states that observers are less inclined to believe that the victim is innocent or free of blame. Observers make these judgements, it is proposed, to maintain their belief system and therefore reduce their emotional distress (Harber et al., 2015). In doing so, rather than facing their own discomfort and showing emotional support to the victim-survivor, observers are instead inadvertently contributing to the negative interactions that victim-survivors face in relation to their harassment or experience of violence in the workplace.

A foundational study in victim-blaming further promoting just world theory found that, if an observer views the victimization as contradicting their worldviews, for example that a victim will continue to suffer without end, the observer is more likely to attribute negative characteristics and blame to the victim (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). However, when they perceive the environment as negative and view the victim's suffering as temporary, the observers are more likely to attribute positive qualities to the victim (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). This foundation enables further exploration of the theory as a basic need for meaning and justice, similar to believing in a just world, which can influence an observer's understanding of workplace violence and act as a moderating factor for victim-blaming (Hafer & Begue, 2005; Harber et al., 2015).

Research suggests that having negative attitudes about the victim led to increased likelihood of victim-blaming (Felson & Palmore, 2018). Additionally, according to the literature, the negative perceptions and beliefs about victims can also exacerbate the experience of a victim-survivor. Persson and Dhingra (2022) identified that those who identified with *rape myth acceptance*, defined as beliefs about the victim-survivor's behaviour, physical presentation, character, and the perpetrator's assumed motivations, had an overall increased rate of attributing blame to the victim. These types of beliefs that presume a person's presentation, character, or motivation can demonstrate the level of responsibility that a person has for their victimization place emphasis on the part of the victim-survivor only, rather than viewing the victimization as an act of exerting power over the victim. Therefore, the influence of others is directly related to the experiences of victim-survivors as they face being blamed or held responsible for their victimization based on the beliefs and attitudes of others. Such negative perceptions of the victim-survivor not only create strict expectations for socially acceptable behaviour from women and contribute to poor self-image, they also impact those who are victimized in a situation that is counter to the norm and as a result may feel that if they do come forward they would not be given the same support.

Another example of beliefs that can affect the attribution of blame from others includes the *hindsight bias* (Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985; Roesse & Vohs, 2012). This bias can be described as the tendency for observers or third-parties to be unable to separate the biased understanding of the outcome from the predictability of the incident (Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985). For example, workers who hear about the outcome of a victim-survivor's harassment may find themselves unable to believe that the victim-survivor was unable to predict or anticipate that their own behaviours would result in victimization, regardless of the level of reasonable predictability

(Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985). This bias leads others to feel that victims are in some position of power during their experience, and thus able to influence the outcome.

The *defence attribution hypothesis* (Maes, 1994) offers another example of the way that others' perceptions can negatively affect a victim-survivor. The defense attribution hypothesis suggests that others who observe or hear about a victimization are likely to believe that they would have behaved in a different way, which in turn can lead to attribution of blame falling onto the victim (Shaver, 1970). This deference of blame onto the victim became more distinguished when the observer perceived themselves to be different from the victim, either in personality characteristics or relevance of the situation. Those who found that the situation or person were similar to themselves attributed less blame and responsibility onto that victim (Shaver, 1970). This type of thinking may influence workers or superiors in the workplace to be more prone to attribute blame to the victim-survivor when they do not perceive any similarities between themselves and the victim, either in personality or in situational factors. These factors help illuminate barriers that those who are in positions of power may have to challenge in their own assumptions about the reporting process and who is responsible for offering help to the victim-survivor. That is, are those in the helping role making decisions about how to offer support based on their own assumptions or avoidance of blame? These studies contribute to the understanding of bias against victim-survivors as they navigate interpersonal relationships and the beliefs of others, including in the workplace, where the workers are judged through the lens of each observer and their worldviews, judgements, fears, and desires to avoid blame.

In addition to the perceptions of others, the culture of a workplace can negatively influence victim-survivors by leading workers to believe that harmful behaviours are part of the job, or that they are normalized, promoted, and ignored (Chambers et al. 2018; Carter et al.,

2013). Evidence suggests that including policies in the workplace to prevent harassment or other forms of victimization does not necessarily prevent workplace harassment or facilitate reporting of those incidents (Colenbrander et al., 2020; Gaston, 2020). Instead, the culture of the workplace is demonstrated to have an impact on the experiences of workers, such as those in healthcare, law enforcement, food service, among others (Brous, 2018; Geoffrion, et al., 2017; Havaei & MacPhee, 2021; Marin et al., 2021; Meiser & Pantumsinchai, 2021). This environment contributes to the mentality that workplace violence is “part of the job”, so victim-survivors may conclude that victimization is not worthy of being reported (Chung et al., 2020; Song et al., 2021). This normalization of harassment and violence is facilitated when employees believe that these harmful behaviours will continue regardless of whether they report the incidents, or that the behaviours will escalate (Carter et al., 2013). Once these behaviours have become normalized and understood as part of the workplace culture (Ashforth & Anand, 2003), not only do workers feel that they may not be supported or listened to, they can also experience blaming (Babiarczyk et al., 2020; Chambers et al., 2018; Song et al., 2021). Establishing victim-blaming as part of the environment, according to Harber, Podolski, and Williams (2015), contributes to the victim’s own self-blame and distrust in themselves and others. Workplaces must evaluate how their culture and normalization of violence play a role in the further victimization of those workers in addition to causing harm to their well-being. The attribution of blame and interactions that victim-survivors encounter in the workplace are also relevant for the organization because these reactions can influence the behaviour of the victim-survivor. Bowling and Beehr (2006) note that if the targeted individual feels responsible for their victimization, they may desire to leave the organization.

The prioritization and implementation of support to address reported incidents has also been shown to contribute to workplace culture. Underreporting may be more prevalent in organizations where there is confusion due to unclear policies regarding whether the victim should report the incident or if the behaviour is classified as harassment (Brassel et al., 2019). Underreporting, in turn, can lead organizations to misinterpret the issues as mild, infrequent, or resolved (Song et al., 2021), which further perpetuates the belief that no additional measures are needed. Howard (2001) notes that a workplace that believes the harassment is resolved is then less active in implementing measures to prevent or address further harassment. Victim-survivors may also experience reduced support and increased disbelief when reporting, as there have been infrequent reports from other instances of the same problematic behaviours. Furthermore, Blando et al. (2015) state that workplace culture that prioritizes profit can negatively impact workplace violence and worsen the working conditions due to the lack of funding allocated to workplace violence training and prevention resources. These concerns are relevant to victim-survivors who are faced with addressing workplace violence in an environment that does not acknowledge or value the reports of victimization, and thus are not responsive when victim-survivors come forward.

In summary, workers' experience of support and blame following experiences of workplace violence are likely influenced by a number of factors: varying levels of oppression, biases, prejudice, power imbalances, workplace culture, and social identities. A few of the theories that offer exploration of these experiences include just world hypothesis, rape myth acceptance, hindsight bias, and defense attribution hypothesis. Therefore, exploration of these factors is important to develop better understanding of the experience of disclosing workplace violence for victim-survivors.

Research Question

The aim of the study is to build on the literature on further understanding of the lived experiences of victimization for an adult population with previous work experience from a range of potential occupations, industries, and identities. In addition, this study presents an opportunity to explore how and why disclosure can result in a worsening condition for victim-survivors. It is this lived experience that is the phenomenon at the focus of this inquiry.

Methods

Methodology

Phenomenology, as a qualitative methodology, allows for the common meaning of individual's experiences (i.e., the phenomenon) to be described (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Gadamer (2004) describes understanding human phenomena as seeking to “understand the phenomenon itself in its unique and historical concreteness” (p. 4), rather than seeking to identify a law or rule that can be extended from the phenomenon to create future predictions. The purpose of the inquiry is to uncover the commonalities and the essence of the phenomenon in terms of the “what” and “how” of the experience from persons who have lived the phenomenon (Moustakas as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2016). Phenomenology acknowledges the continuum between subjective and objective experiences that are both an individual's lived experience and experiences that are shared with others (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This process also requires openness to reflecting on subjectivity and phenomenon as it is experienced by both the researcher and the participants (Sundler et al., 2019). Furthermore, as the process of acquiring data continues and specifically when analyzing, researchers must actively question and examine their own preconceived notions or ‘pre-understandings’ about the data and the phenomenon (Sundler et al., 2019; Dahlberg, et al., 2008).

Data collection

Participants

Participants included female-identifying (N = 15) individuals from across the country. In order to participate, these individuals were required to confirm that they were over the age of 18 years old and had experienced workplace harassment and/or violence in Canada. These participants were employed in various fields of the Canadian workforce, including federally funded institutions. All participants had experienced non-sexual forms of workplace violence/harassment; almost half had also experienced sexual harassment. The types of violence/harassment that the participants endured varied, although verbal harassment, sexual and non-sexual harassment, intimidation, and isolation were among the most reported. These instances could have occurred on an ongoing basis or may have been a single or limited experience of workplace violence/harassment. The workplace violence/harassment was perpetrated by a range of people within the workplace setting, including coworkers, managers, and supervisors. This group of participants' stories may not be representative of all participants' experiences.

Interviews

The participants were recruited from the Respect at Work Project through random email recruitment for 29 individuals, and only those 15 individuals who responded to email recruitment and gave consent to participate continued to engage in an interview via Zoom. Therefore, the participants are numbered from initial recruitment and include participant numbers that are not reflective of the 15 individuals who continued through the interview process. The interviews lasted from 45 to 90 minutes in length, and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. This

research was conducted with open-ended interviews with a semi-structured format to encourage collaboration from participants.

To address the safety and confidentiality of the respondents, the open-ended nature of the questions was emphasized to give space and time for each person to respond in their own words. Read et al. (2007) suggest that practitioners ask all participants directly about trauma in a way that is normalized and clear, within the context of seeking information on their psychological and social well-being. While workplace violence may not result in symptoms of trauma, there is an ethical responsibility for the researchers to use trauma-and violence informed practice in case these symptoms are present. The normalization of the participant's reactions and use of empathy within the interview enabled the participants to feel an increased sense of security.

The respondents were assured that they were able to control if and when they disclosed information in the interview, that they could leave at any time, and could ask questions as needed. Respondents were also able to request the presence of a support person within the interview. There was a need for compassion and warmth when conducting these interviews to build rapport with respondents so they felt comfortable sharing their experiences, and interviewers were required to be able to recognize signs of distress to know when it was necessary to pause the interview. For example, interviewers may have worked with a participant who began to cry or feel overwhelmed, and at this point the interviewer would have been responsible for prioritizing the participant's wellbeing by offering to pause the interview, move on to a different subject, or facilitate participant access relevant resources.

The participants were provided a document listed with bilingual resources upon receiving the invitation to the study, and again at the end of the process. The resources contained information about mental health organizations and front-line workers to help them with

processing the incident and any ongoing needs. While the researchers were unable to treat mental health concerns within the interview, they were trained and instructed in how to respond to self-blame and how to avoid the risk of potentially using blaming statements. Instead the researchers were instructed to emphasize that the harassment was not the participant's fault if needed.

Examples that could have facilitated the interviewing process include the following statements:

“we can pause the interview at any time,” “please let me know if you feel uncomfortable at any point in the process,” “I am noticing some discomfort, I want to emphasize that it is normal to have certain feelings come up during this process, and we do not need to rush through if you need some time before proceeding.” Campbell et al. (2009) noted that interviewers have the critical responsibility of providing a non-judgemental space for the respondents to describe their experiences, which was something that they may not have experienced within their other personal relationships.

Current trauma-informed literature conceptualizes trauma-informed care as a change in focus from analyzing what is wrong with the person, to what is happening around them (Read et al., 2007; Sweeney et al., 2018; Wathen et al., 2023), while trauma-informed practice requires being cognizant of the impact of past trauma on the individual's life and the responsibility of avoiding retraumatization (Isobel & Edwards, 2016). This lens informed the interview questions and responses to participants in order to maintain a trauma-informed approach. Researchers were obligated to consider that participants may have been experiencing ongoing trauma, or may experience re-traumatization, and therefore had to create a space that was collaborative to decrease risk of re-traumatization (Wathen, et al., 2023). Wathen et al. (2023) further promote supporting the participants by developing cultural safety and understanding, which allowed for

victim-survivors to express their experiences in an emotionally and physically welcoming environment.

A study on disclosure of past trauma noted that researchers should ask about the trauma in relation to current safety, and assess for level of risk, and emotional wellbeing throughout the interaction (Read, et al., 2007). The following examples include broad open-ended questions from the interviews: what were the consequences for you from experiencing harassment? How have these experiences impacted your relationships with those around you? How would you describe these changes? How have these responses impacted you? Other respondents spoke about blame, was that part of your experience at all? Did you report your experience of harassment at your current/previous workplace? If so, how would you characterize the experience? Who did you tell/report to? How did they respond? What was their response to you? Did anything impact/influence their responses? Have you or a coworker experienced retaliation for reporting or otherwise objecting to being harassed at work? If so, please describe your experiences, was there any experience of blame? The questions were adjusted to the information that each respondent provided to clarify or describe their experiences. This process of interviewing participants was overseen by senior members of the research team who were available for debriefing as needed in order to support the interviewers. This practice was supported by research on the presence of vicarious trauma for professionals in the helping field who work with victims of trauma. Joubert et al. (2013) conducted a study on the impact of supervision for vicarious trauma for social workers and noted that the participants found professional supervision specific to emotional wellbeing, workload management, and relevant frameworks were critical for developing as professionals in the field.

Role of the Researcher

The social and theoretical frameworks that influence this research were also critical to the creation of this study. As a cisgender, middle class, able-bodied White woman who has not experienced workplace violence or harassment, the interviewer had to be cognizant of how these identities influenced the approach to interview questions, analyses, and understanding of the phenomenon. The interviewer must be aware that as an able-bodied White woman in the workforce, she is less at risk of experiencing discrimination, bullying, and abuse than workers in non-dominant groups (Okechukwu et al., 2013). The interviewer must also be aware that while working with participants who had not self-disclosed prior to the interview, there may have been a broad range of intersectional identities and lived experiences with workplace violence. Therefore, there could not be any prior assumptions about the types of violence or harassment that the participants will have witnessed or experienced. This awareness helped the researcher to build this knowledge base from an anti-oppressive lens, which also required supervision from senior lab members.

An additional strength for the process of this study was the researcher's previous experience working with children with developmental disabilities and youth and families on a crisis line. Each of these work experiences gave the research team member an opportunity to identify and address the emotional or psychological distress that a client was experiencing. This developed an ability to communicate clearly during a crisis and to conduct safety planning using a calm demeanour to offer safety in that space.

To maintain a trauma-informed approach as suggested by Read and colleagues (2007), the interviewer had to have completed an ethics training module for working with vulnerable populations and continue to develop skills through training with the Centre or Research and

Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC). Furthermore, a humanist and feminist lens centralizes encouraging the voices of marginalized and targeted female participants, while also encouraging male-participants who experience alternative barriers alongside victimization, such as social stereotypes, biases, and stigmatization of reporting (Depraetere et al., 2020). These theories inform the current study through the approach to asking questions and engaging with participants (i.e., humanist focus each person's inherent worth and the value that they offer in sharing their subjective experience), and the way that the transcripts were coded and analyzed for meaning (i.e., noting the types of power that affect certain individuals and the underlying assumptions that contribute to their experiences).

Data Analysis

To understand the respondents' experiences, the data analysis began through the identification of specific significant statements, defined as statements from a participant that were relevant to guiding the current research (Flanagan & Babchuk, 2022). There were then coded using MaxQDA software to create first-level codes. Prior to applying the first-level coding process to all transcripts, three transcripts were chosen to be read and coded by each of the three research team members to agree upon a central and consistent list of codes (pictured in *Figure 1*). In order to agree upon a central list of codes, the three research team members each coded the selected transcripts separately, then returned to review the three coded transcripts to ensure accurate and consistent coding. This enabled the researchers to discuss the significant statements that each researcher had identified in their transcripts. Once the first-level codes were established, the researchers were able to begin reviewing the other 12 transcripts (frequency data for first-level codes pictured in *Table 1*). The interviewers then analyzed the codes for thematic saturation, which can be described as the point at which the transcripts do not offer new

variations of codes (Saunders et al., 2017), and commonalities in the experience of the phenomenon (Campbell et al., 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2016). After reaching thematic saturation, it was possible for statements to be coded into various level-one coded areas (i.e., statements could be double-coded into multiple level 1 coding categories).

Prior to beginning the second-level coding, each researcher identified first level codes separately in accordance with each researcher's questions. For the purpose of this study, the researcher investigated codes that were relevant to disclosure and the experience for that participant following a disclosure. Therefore, coded segments that were relevant to the impact on the organization, or that were specific to the experience of workplace harassment or violence without indication of disclosure were not included in this study. Additionally, due to the focus of a fellow research team member's analysis on the value of support for participants, this researcher did not investigate the coded segments and significant statements that fell into the first-level code of support, as seen in *Figure 1*. Rather, this researcher was able to examine the experiences of disclosure external to the *support* codes. The frequency of themes that are listed in *Table 1* indicate the frequency of codes that were identified as significant statements from the interviews

After identifying the relevant codes, the researcher examined all significant statements as contextual and created a description of the contexts and experiences that led to the respondent's experiences of the phenomenon to create second-level codes. The researcher was also responsible for being aware of her own situations or experiences that influenced how she perceived the phenomenon, which is described herein as the role of the researcher (Moustakas, as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2016). The researcher was also required to question her assumptions and analyses to focus on accurately portraying the content and themes relevant to each respondent's journey.

The analysis was conducted through a trauma-informed lens, as proposed by previous studies (Read et al., 2007; Sweeney et al., 2018) while using an inductive approach to building knowledge about the essence of this experience. At this point in second-level coding, reflective thematic analysis was used to extrapolate and analyze themes, and in order to explore the responses to broad questions and interpret explicit, implicit, and common themes regarding their journey (Guest et al., 2012). Braun and Clarke (2019) note that coding is a creative process that enables the researcher to reflect on the data, their chosen analytic process, and their own subjective understanding. They state that thematic analysis is intended to be “about meaning and meaning-making, and viewing these as always context-bound, positioned and situated, and qualitative data analysis is about telling ‘stories’, about interpreting, and creating, not discovering and finding the ‘truth’...” (p. 4). This analysis enables the researcher to create a composite description of the lived experience and its’ meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Sundler et al., 2019). Reflexive thematic analysis is “about the researcher’s reflective and thoughtful engagement with their data and their reflexive and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process” (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 6). This analytic process recognizes that all knowledge is considered contextual and informed by the researcher, their understanding of the process, the data, the environmental context, and the purpose of the research. Finally, the researcher wrote a composite description of the essence of the phenomenon as experienced by victim-survivors in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Table 1.

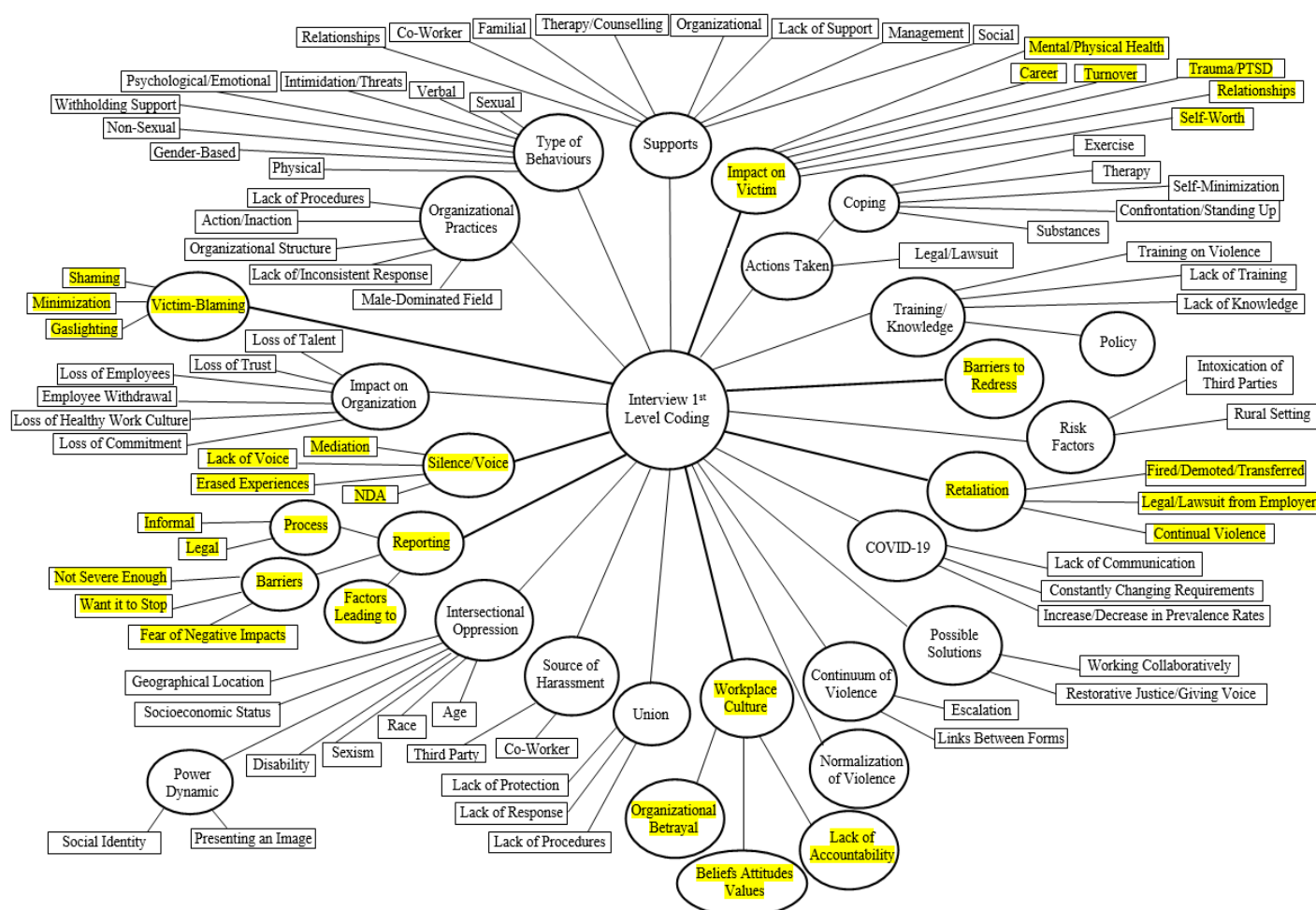
Generated codes and sub-codes including frequency in initial coding and in generating meaning.

Code	Sub-Code Total	Frequency 880
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	Total relevant for Disclosure	420
Victim-Blaming	Minimization/responsibility left to victim Shaming/judging Internalization Gaslighting Total	32 19 9 2 26 88
Reporting	Informal Reporting Factors leading to reporting Barriers to reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not severe enough - Just wanting it to end - Fear of negative impact Total	37 3 8 38 2 2 13 103
Silence/Voice	Mediation/not able to access past incidents Non-Disclosure Agreement Lack of voice embedded in org. practices Ways that victim's experience is erased Total	16 4 7 26 24 77
Workplace Culture	Beliefs, Attitudes, Values Lack of Accountability Accountability Organizational Betrayal Total	45 47 54 1 27 174
Retaliation	Being Fired/Demoted/Transferred Continual/Continuum of violence Total	41 5 19 65
Barriers to Redress		39
Impact on Victim	Financial loss Impact on relationships Impact on career/jobs Trauma/PTSD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational practice - Lack of supports Turnover intentions Self-worth/self-esteem Physical health Mental health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear Total	110 4 23 17 32 5 6 18 56 8 53 2 334

Figure 1.

A map of codes and sub-codes related to the participant's experiences of workplace harassment and violence



Results

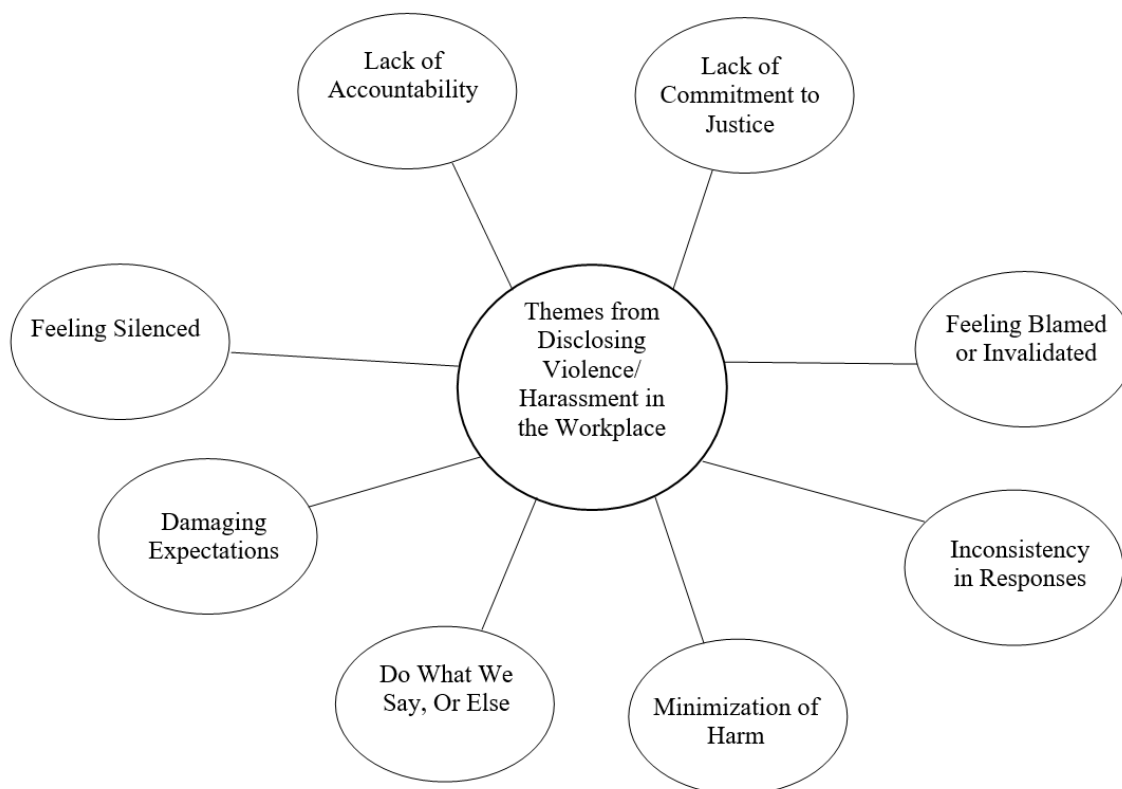
A common theme for the participants' experiences of workplace violence/harassment was that the person who perpetrated these harmful behaviours was frequently in a position of power

within that setting, whether due to their social location, position and ability in the workforce, or length of time with that organization. Another less common theme was described by participants as enduring harassment from clients, customers, volunteers, or donors of the organization.

In analyzing the various experiences of disclosing their incidents of workplace violence/harassment, various themes emerged. For the purpose of this paper, the focus of themes remains on the essence of disclosing in the workplace, including both reactions and outcomes. An outline of these themes is identified in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2.

A map of prevalent themes and sub-themes from the experience of disclosing workplace violence/harassment.



The focus of this research paper is the experience of disclosure among workers in Canada. The themes and components or sub-themes that were prevalent appeared for multiple participants in nuanced and varying ways. The themes are described in order to illustrate how each category broadly applied to many participants, although no two experiences of disclosure were the same. Some of the themes included the following, beginning with the organization's role in responding to disclosure: 1. Lack of accountability; 2. Lack of commitment to justice; followed by the participant's experiences in workplace following the disclosure: 3. Silencing, feeling discouraged from seeking support; 4. Feeling invalidation or blame, whether from self or others; 5. Damaging expectations – patriarchy and workplace culture; 6. Inconsistency in

responses; 7. Do what we say, or else – deteriorating relationships and conditions; 8.

Minimization of harm on the participant (gaslighting, either from others or themselves).

To provide context for the participants' situations, the themes have been organised in order of organizational responses followed by the outcomes they endured and the feelings that came with them. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the settings in which these participants were reaching out for support and choosing to disclose the workplace harassment or violence.

Theme 1: Lack of Accountability

One relevant theme identified in the actions of the organizations following disclosure is the lack of taking responsibility for the harm that has been perpetrated within the organization. For those who addressed the workplace violence/harassment directly, there were neglectful responses from the organization and those in positions of power. For example, Participant 8 described an interaction with a manager as “And I said, ‘I’m not sure how you expected me to behave when you and others in this department have harassed me and discriminated against me’. And she says ‘well, the harassment went both ways’. I said, ‘no, that is a pile of crap, and you know what, I have been very clear with you in creating boundaries, and you have disrespected not only the boundaries, but you disrespected me’.” This lack of accountability from the manager in addressing the initial harassment was even further exacerbated by the failure to hold space for the worker’s experience. Furthermore, other participants described the organization’s Human Resources Department as failing to offer any accountability, and instead supported the person who perpetrated harm. Participant 23 describes her experience: “was there retaliation? There was retaliation from the director. She was the only one who was aware that I had filed and she had HR protecting her. HR didn’t protect me. They were there for her.” This environment did not

allow for the participants to feel supported or for those causing harm to acknowledge their behaviour. Participants voiced some frustration in the investigating system within their workplace as one that is ineffective. Participant 3 reported that the organization had no need to react poorly, as she had primarily been seeking change:

So this is not this was not a small issue. And in that case, is it that the [organizations] just worried about the legal ramifications? Will I sue them? I know they were worried about that. I wasn't ever after money. I was after accountability.

The organization's response to disclosure of workplace harassment or violence then continues to create a negative and harmful environment for participants as a result of the lack of commitment to pursuing accountability, restoration, and justice on the participants' behalf. This is echoed in the following theme.

Theme 2: Lack of Commitment to Justice

The lack of commitment to justice reflects the actions and outcomes for the organization in terms of their failure to uphold the rights and standards of care of their employees. A few participants described the difficulty with which they navigated reporting the incident, seeking justice, and feeling left with an overall sense that the organization was not committed to their wellbeing. Participant 9, for example, described the process that followed reporting workplace harassment:

They sat down with [harasser] and said, '[P9] has made these claims against you' because they had asked me to submit it in writing as well. And he didn't deny it. He said, 'I did do all those things, but I didn't mean it that way. I was just having like being funny' or whatever and apparently was very like, 'Oh, let me go talk to her and fix this', And they told him that I didn't want to talk to him right now about it, which is true. And so that's

kind of the end of their response because he didn't deny the allegations. They never did an investigation.

Participant 3 also illustrated the outcomes from the organization that followed their disclosure:

And tragically, why I'm saying that is because I do think [organization] ultimately handled this in ways that were very bad. And they've certainly left consequences for me and for others that are not good or fair. Right. So I'm still being bullied. It's just I'm not being bullied by the [superior] because she was removed. But we're all part of a secret. And this is where secrets can be deadly.

This lack of organizational commitment to justice and victim-centered care left this participant with ongoing workplace harassment that affected their overall wellbeing and experience of that organization. Participant 14 also received unsupportive and unhelpful responses from the organization:

So [organization] really allowed a lot of it to continue the harassment at work, the texting, the calling, using my co-workers to send me messages. And [organization] said, 'we don't have anything to do with it. That's too bad. That's your problem'.

This disinterest in ameliorating the working conditions of this participant was not only shown in the continued harassment that they experienced from other workers, it also came from the direct commentary of those in positions of power. Participant 25 offered another their perspective on the actions of their organization, which provided no resolution to the harassment and instead justified the harassment:

Well, I know a number of us at one institution definitely experience the same thing from the same person. And again, taking that next step when some of us did make complaints, or at least give this guy like talk to him, give him a chat. This is not okay. And it still

continues. And it still continues. You're told that 'it doesn't matter like you are there because you're there. And if you chose to walk into work today, that means you chose to be in front of that person'.

Participant 25 also clearly described their impression of the organization after having these interactions:

So, I mean, in terms of further supports. Nothing was offered. Nothing. That's that's again, the culture of [organization] with both the offenders and their staff is, it's not 'take care of things, make sure we're doing the right thing'. It's 'cover your ass'. So when they go through that little tick box of after an incident, 'did you do A, B and C offering EAP offering, CISM offering'. That's all on their little tick box. And they say the words to make sure they can tick the box.

In summary, the organizations seemed to provide little to their workers in terms of meaningful and actionable change, rather offering little to no accountability or justice. The participants then reacted to these blaming, silencing, and invalidating statements in the aftermath that followed their disclosures.

Theme 3: Feeling Silenced and Dissuaded from Seeking Support

A prevalent theme for the victim-survivors was the inability to share their experiences and seek support from others. While some were asked to sign non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) explicitly, others were quietly directed not to share the incident with others in the workplace. These actions were received with mixed reactions from the participants. Some participants were uncomfortable and unable to share their experiences in the interview due to the NDA that had been signed with their workplace upon disclosing the workplace violence/harassment. Participant

23 was able to describe the way that signing an NDA affected their ability to connect with coworkers:

So their [the union's] lawyer contacted me and said she was ready to proceed. She reached out to the HR department and asked for all of the documents related to my case. Next morning, H.R. called me and packaged me out. [...] They called me the next morning, offered me a package, gave me five days to decide. And you have to, of course, sign a nondisclosure. So then I had to deal with my friends and colleagues because I, I was gone within a week. And the message to them was I'd opted into an early pension. I couldn't tell them exactly what had happened.

Participant 9, when asked if they had been given an NDA, describes the ways that they were implicitly told that discussing the workplace violence/harassment would be against the workplace's recommendations:

Researcher: Was that looking to get a non-disclosure agreement (NDA)?

No, they never asked me to. Well. They never called it an NDA, [...] I was told directly because they caught wind of the fact that I had some allies at work that were supporting me and the HR manager did directly say to me – she didn't say I have to sign anything but she did say like, 'whatever is said, you are going to have to keep it confidential'.

Another example from Participant 9, that the workplace culture led the management to encourage them to refrain from discussing the incidents with others:

And then actually, speaking of blame, HR came and talked to me and told me that I had to keep this confidential and not talk to people about it because they wanted to keep it like completely internal between me and [perpetrator] and them.

Participant 9 continues to illustrate how challenging it was to be actively managing the effects of workplace violence/harassment and trying to hide this from others who are not directly involved:

But of course, I had friends at work who were also my witnesses that were checking in on me, and I was basically told that I couldn't tell them anything. I didn't care. I still did because I was on my way out anyways. But and it's not like I ever signed an NDA or anything like that. And so it was kind of an informal encouraging me to keep quiet and like only talk to friends outside of work kind of thing. But like they saw me having those friends at work, saw me literally falling apart every day so that it's kind of hard to hide that.

To summarize their experience, Participant 9 states the following regarding the harm of NDAs in the workplace:

Oh, NDAs, I was never asked to sign an NDA, but I think the NDA should be not ever used in the cases of sexual harassment because silencing people is just harming them further. And I don't think there should ever be a use of an NDA, whether there's a formal resolution or not. I just think that they're really harmful and perpetuate a culture of silence.

Theme 4: Feeling Blamed or Invalidated for the Experience

A few participants found that they experienced blame and invalidation from others, or of themselves. This was described as a direct comment, such as in the experience of Participant 10, “well, that’s a you problem”, or Participant 14 who described the general reaction from others in the workplace, “... we don’t care. It’s your problem”, or Participant 25 who received comments like “why are you being such a girl about it?”, “You know, you’re causing problems.” These individuals faced blame from a range of sources in their workplace: coworkers, management,

union representatives, owners or leaders in the organization. For example, Participant 20 describes her experience navigating workplace violence/harassment that affected a whole team of employees, and found that management often placed blame on her:

I was trying to get more mental health support for my staff when the incidents happened so that we could have someone come in. And they were very resistant to that. Oftentimes, I was blamed. Which makes absolutely no sense.

This participant illustrates the victim-blaming that occurs when people who receive a disclosure are suspicious about the victim-survivor's role in causing those behaviours, in addition to the frustration that the victim-survivors feel when faced with this blame.

Alternatively, select few participants received support from those closest to them (i.e., coworkers, family, friends), while experiencing blame and invalidation from those who were more distant, such as upper leaders in the organization. Participant 25 describes feeling that there was more support offered from coworkers or those who had experienced similar workplace harassment than from management positions: "I had more support than from the officers that had experienced the same thing from her than anyone else. But in terms of management and [organization] disciplining or doing anything, they did nothing." Another participant described the contrast between her own experience of workplace harassment and her coworkers, as she had the benefit of family support while they did not, and were left with responses from upper management. Participant 4 describes their situation:

I was consistently, what do you call it, or gaslighted by this individual who was also another union representative, but a new union representative. And unfortunately, she was vicious. She was absolutely vicious. But because the supervisor didn't like me and she knew the supervisor didn't like me, she played on that. And the union does nothing. They

do nothing. Yeah. [...] Yeah. I'm pretty lucky that I have my husband and my stepson that both work there. So they get it. They get where I'm coming from.

Not only is Participant 4 able to clearly illustrate the treatment she received from those in upper management or union positions, she also describes how the support that she received from family was an exception within the workplace. Another perspective from Participant 23 suggested that while the workplace harassment did not affect the relationships with most of her coworkers, who were supportive, it did change with one individual when a director offered instructions about how to behave around her:

My colleagues were very supportive and understanding and provided good support for me. The person who was a manager on more than one – well on one occasion was a colleague who had been promoted, and my relationship with her substantially changed. [...] we could hardly talk to each other anymore because she was receiving directions from the director about how to respond to me and how to manage me.

This gradual change began as support from all colleagues, then became distant and unsupportive as particular individuals were instructed how to engage with the participant. Participant 9 also noted that her time in her workplace was nuanced because the coworkers had offered a supportive and positive environment, although this was not sufficient when she faced workplace harassment:

So yeah, it was a very complicated place in that sense because it's still one of, I would still say other than the situation, it was one of the best work cultures I ever worked at, which is like very confusing. But obviously like the way I left it completely negated any of that positive workplace culture because it was such a bad situation for the last six months.

This participant then illustrates the complexity in responses that contributed to an overall negative experience after disclosing her workplace harassment, as she was unable to rely and depend upon the coworkers who intended to be supportive:

I eventually realized it was gaslighting and it was like contributing to my unraveling because it was just so confusing[...] I was told directly because they caught wind of the fact that I had some allies at work that were supporting me and the HR manager did directly say to me, she didn't say I have to sign anything but she did say like, whatever is said, you are going to have to keep it confidential.

Rather, Participant 9 was told to refrain from telling others in a way that places emphasis on the participant's responsibility for the outcome. This form of gaslighting, blaming, and shaming behaviour appeared to be consistent throughout the other participants' circumstances. For example, some participants described an alternative form of blame that was indirect and imbedded in the culture. Participant 16 noted the following regarding her experience of indirect blame:

So, for harassment, there tends to be: 'Did you tell the harasser?' Normally they'll say, 'did you say something? Did you say it was you didn't want to do this?' Our members tend to be ill-educated or miseducated because they'll say, 'did you do anything that would make them think that was be that was okay?' Like, did your behavior somehow bring this on, number one.

This participant states that the ways in which workplace harassment is described indicated to the victim-survivors that those who received disclosure felt that the survivor's behaviour somehow contributed to or invited the harmful behaviour. This way of thinking and relating to the victim-survivors can become recognized as part of the workplace, such as in the experience of

Participant 25, who describes the accepted mentality in that workplace as “it’s almost that mentality of if you wear a short skirt to a bar, you’re-you’re asking to be raped. If you show up to work, you’re asking to be harassed. Well, no, no, that’s-that’s not it.”

Another common theme in the experience of disclosing was the invalidation and diminishing of the violence/harassment in the workplace, including the level of imminent risk that the workers faced. Sub-themes of this theme included failure or refusal to identify reported behaviours as legitimate forms of harassment rather than typical workplace conflict. As an example of invalidation and placing blame, Participant 23 found that both the management and the union were unwilling to recognize the harmful behaviours as violence/harassment while also implying blame regarding the participant’s level of stress; “they said my they said that my stress was related to changes in work expectations and not about the fact that I was being treated unfairly.”

In the case of Participant 14, who experienced a legitimate reason for concern in her workplace due to intimate partner violence from a co-worker, she described being repeatedly dismissed and invalidated:

So I reported to [organization] in August of 2017. I said, ‘Hey, this guy is dangerous’. I said I’m not dating him anymore. I said, ‘something’s wrong. Something’s up. You better handle it,’ and they said, ‘No, no, no. Too bad.’ So then he sent the death threat like November of that year. So from August to November, it just got progressively worse. And I was telling [organization], ‘Hey, something’s happening. This guy’s, you know, something’s wrong.’ [Yeah]. They just kind of went, ‘No, no, no, that’ll never happen.’ And I said, there’s signs something’s wrong. And they said, No.

This participant further describes how her organization, once faced with having to validate the harmful behaviour of an employee, placed blame on the participant for the perpetrator's behaviour. "So in the end, [organization] was deemed at fault. You know. The co-worker slash ex-boyfriend was arrested in the building, in the processing plant. And I was I was made to be the bad guy, it was my fault." The invalidation of serious violence/harassment in the workplace was common among participants who found that the organizations appeared to be unwilling to take action in support of the victim-survivor. Participant 14 clearly illustrates the point that the organization preferred to let the victim-survivor leave the organization than take action to offer support:

In the end, I ended up leaving [location] to go to [location] because the threat of violence got so bad. I ended up having to leave. And [organization] said, 'We're not going to help you. So if you want to leave, you can leave'.

Additionally, some participants felt that their lived experience was discounted in various situations, including Participant 1 who explained "then I reported the incident to the [management]. He told me if I expected to last as a woman in business, I'd better get a tougher skin." Not only is this invalidating and blaming behaviour, this is direct feedback from the highest level of the organization, which offers little room for that workplace to redeem itself. Furthermore, these invalidating responses appeared to come from outside of the organization as well, such as in the experience of Participant 25, who sought out support from a mental health agency:

... Another counsellor I had access through EAP basically kind of had me relive the entire incident, which was awful and then asked me about my personal life. And she said, 'Well, you've got good parents, your brother's here and it sounds like your boyfriend's

okay. So you've got all that. You don't need to come see me anymore.' And, that made me feel very disregarded, very lost, and like, well, maybe this thing isn't that big of a thing, and maybe I should just get over it. Maybe I should just like. It shouldn't affect me like this. Just be stronger. Be tougher. Because she said so. Right where, like, I knew I'm like, lady, you're cracked. Like, you can't say that to someone. That's come in and just spent 40 minutes talking about one of the worst experiences of their life and then say, 'Oh, you got good people around you so carry on.' Like. But you've just made it worse.

Other participants described the ways that workplace culture was influencing the workers, managers, and employers who responded to instances of workplace violence. Participant 16 listed some of the factors that impacted workplace culture in their work setting, including statements such as the following:

Is it a senior employee? Is it a person that we deem important? Is it someone we like? Is this girl considered trouble? Is this a new worker? It tends to all tilt and rotate around the person making the complaint or the group of people making the complaint.

These statements show that the participant's experience of the workplace was affected by the implicit and explicit expectations of other workers, as was further demonstrated by Participant 21, who notes that if they were to come forward to a manager, "we can kind of be seen as a snitch or as they're potentially going to get in trouble", while there is no indication that the complaint and reason for coming forward is seriously considered and addressed. The workplace has cultivated an environment where workers know that they would be met with resistance, disbelief, or blame. For this reason, the participants described having little faith in support from the workplace. Many felt that the workplace culture did not align with victim-centered support, such as in the example of Participant 9:

The way the mediator was presented to me was that she was going to be someone who would help us figure out how to move forward together. But we couldn't talk about what happened like it was. It was presented like conflict resolution, not sexual harassment resolution. And so I actually pulled out of doing that mediation because it just didn't sound like they understood what I needed in the process, which was accountability and voice.

This theme was relevant across participants, who found that the way the workplace was presenting their values and approach to supporting employees was inconsistent with the actions they took. The organizations were actively putting victim-survivor's needs aside. This resulted in real harm for workers, including poor mental health, reduced capacity to work, increased stress, among others. Participant 4 describes the way her workplace engaged with her as influencing her mental health:

I experienced PTSD. A form of PTSD where I was put on medication. As a result, my mental state of mind was just it was awful. It was an experience I would not want anybody to experience [that], and how management promoted it.

Other participants further describe how the workplace culture and, therefore, the behaviours that were accepted as part of the workplace culture affected their mental health. Participant 25 describes the workplace violence/harassment as deeply ingrained and normalized:

It was never discussed because we all just knew it was it was part of the job. Just like doing [other responsibilities]. It was what happened. And I know personally for myself those those impacts did affect my health in after one particularly rough incident, I it went into a very, very deep depression.

Theme 5: Damaging Expectations – Patriarchal Influence and Workplace Culture

A deeply influential part of disclosing workplace violence/harassment is the societal norms and values regarding what is acceptable, professional, and normal for the ways that workers conduct themselves. The effects of societal norms, expectations, and further workplace cultures are not blatantly named in many participant transcripts, although there are consistent themes related to the harm that participants experienced as a result of these various levels of expectations. One participant in particular, Participant 25, offered a detailed description of the role of patriarchy and misogyny in their own worldview, and therefore how they experience the workplace:

I've never described how intense or crossing boundaries into, in essence, criminal behavior things were for me, and it was a lot of it was I needed to continue to portray self-preservation a bit too, that I'm tough and I can handle it. I can roll with the boys, you know. And I've always been as a child, I've been a tomboy. I played softball, you know, I didn't wear overalls. I got dirty, I scraped my knees, you know, I was never a princess. So if I said, 'no, this isn't okay and it's really hurting me,' in my head that meant you can't roll with the boys, you need to go do a girl's job. And I didn't want to let myself think that or share my story with anyone so that they would tell me that.

This participant illustrated how they began internalizing self-blame and believing that if they acknowledged the harmful behaviour, it meant they were too weak for the position. This participant then continued to describe how the workplace culture would not allow female employees to come forward to report their workplace violence/harassment.

So if we're just 'taking it and shut up' is the theme that we're learning as women employees, is that what we're all modeling for our female offenders? 'Well it happened?

Take it. Take it, you know, shut up and take it' 'Well, your drug dealing for your boyfriend, your stupid choice. Shut up and take it'.

Participant 25 describes how these societal expectations for workers also affect the clients and the population they serve, as well as the greater public. The participant then continues to say that in order to be able to avoid workplace violence harassment that was so ingrained in the workplace, they felt the need to alter themselves and how they present in the workplace as a form of protection:

And I brushed it off. As you can say, you can do what you want. But I mean, I wore jeans and a hoodie for the first 20 years of my of working because if I could have worn mittens and hat every single day, I would have, too. Because the less you portray yourself as a female, I guess the better. I felt that I was like de-sexualising myself as a female and just being I'm a person, I'm not a man, I'm not a woman. There's nothing in this area, just hoodie and jeans. (...) So then when I went to work in the prisons, I was back to a hoodie and jeans. So I think my-my self confidence and self-worth in the first years weren't affected. But now, given the compilation of everything with the PTSD, the the harassment experience, the weight gain, the not feeling good about myself physically or mentally, it's all gone together.

This participant's experience demonstrates the influence of patriarchal standards within the workplace in the ways that they avoided presenting in any way that would be perceived as feminine in order to minimize risk.

Researchers also sought to clarify whether there were any additional consequences that occurred as a result of experiencing workplace violence/harassment, such as isolation, health

consequences, or others. Participant 25 confirmed that not only were there consequences from the incidents themselves, the workplace culture exacerbated these consequences:

Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. And like I said, you know, a lot of women that were very good at their jobs ended up leaving because I mean, part of it was they did not want to be exposed to it and didn't feel like they would be supported if they came forward with anything or that they would be iced out.

Participant 1 echoed this sentiment, as they found that coworkers or colleagues would prefer not to report or come forward with an instance of workplace violence/harassment, as it was considered a waste of time and effort:

They just roll their eyes like they're like, it's not worth it to even go forward because it's so much effort. And then you tend to also be seen as the person who's rocking the like, the environment and then makes it harder for like other people.

This participant also described the effects of this workplace culture on their own identity in that setting, as they were seen to be the 'troublemaker' who has made the workplace more challenging for others by reporting.

Theme 6: Inconsistency in Responses

Various participants described being initially supported, whether by coworkers or by a superior, only to find that once the investigation continued, the perpetrator became involved, or the complaint escalated, that these individuals often failed to continue being supportive.

Participant 9 also illustrated this inconsistency in responses as she reported the incident, and then was told by the union that preference was given to the individual who was the subject of the investigation: "Then the union reached out to me and was super dismissive and basically it was made very clear to me that they were interested in protecting his rights as the person who whose

job was at risk, essentially because a complaint had been made against him. And they just kind of treated me like I was mentally unstable, basically, and that it was that was why they were having to get a mediator. So not – not a good not a good response from the union either.”

Participant 9 was also able to describe the inconsistencies in responses over time, as a manager who initially offered understanding and support gradually became less understanding and increasingly dismissive:

And that's one of the times where she got very dismissive and she was like, ‘Look, P9, if you're so upset, just talk to him yourself’. Like really just getting frustrated, I think with what I was asking for, as if I was asking for too much...

An experience such as this was described frequently amongst participants, who found that those who reported workplace harassment would be seen as difficult or challenging, whereas the individual was accused of harassment would often be treated with the respect and protection of a valued member of the team.

This lack of consistent support for participants caused a variety of adverse outcomes, such as poor mental health, worsened sleep, inability to engage in intimacy, among others. Participants found that the treatment from others changed over time and became gradually less supportive, or when faced with backlash from the organization did not choose to continue their investigation.

Participant 3 described a manager who initially vocalized their interest in advocating for the victim-survivor, but became reluctant:

So she's not wanting to create problems for herself. And creating a problem for herself would be to actually be courageous and stand up to some of the bullies. So I think she did have an initial go, but she – she talked to the president. And I think he was clear he didn't want to get involved in it.

While there were some individuals who were initially supportive, although upon trying to escalate the violence/harassment and take actionable steps towards addressing it, these individuals were no longer interested in pursuing the issue further. This left those who were seeking support from the workplace with little sense of understanding from their peers, management, or organization.

... I had more support than from the officers that had experienced the same thing from her than anyone else. But in terms of management and [organization] disciplining or doing anything, they did nothing. They defined it as regular workplace harassment or regular workplace conflict, and the union sided with them. My union rep refused to support me in filing an actual grievance against the management decision, and I actually ended up having to take the situation to the Human Rights Commission of Canada, where we did end up going to investigation.

These variations in responses created a sense of uncertainty among participants; some were able to continue in their pursuit of justice, while others felt silenced.

Theme 7: Do What We Say, Or Else – Deteriorating Relationships and Conditions

A prevalent theme in the participants' experiences was the presence of fear and deteriorating relationships and conditions of the workplace, including increased financial strain, threats, retaliation, or negative repercussions, or concern about being removed from that position. Participant 14 described how the organization's lawyers managed the federal lawsuit, using threats and fear tactics:

So the [organization] lawyers threatened to fire me if I didn't drop the federal lawsuit.

And I said, well, if you'd like to discuss me working closer to home to care for my

children, I would be happy to drop the lawsuit'. And they told me, no, we don't want to discuss it. Do what we tell you or else. And I said, 'No'.

These deteriorating conditions affected not only the participant's working conditions and general wellbeing, a few participants also explicitly named feeling fearful of what would come from the organization or those in positions of authority. For example, Participant 14 noted that they felt continuously pursued by the organization as retaliation for seeking justice:

You know, for years, they're going to retaliate against me because I went to the press and I won a \$50,000 settlement, and they're just going to keep coming. And I'm by myself with three kids and they're just going to keep coming.

Participant 14 offers a clear demonstration of how the deteriorating conditions continued to escalate after the participant came forward following their workplace harassment. Participant 8 also describes how coming forward to express concern about the organization gradually led to isolation and being removed entirely: "speaking my truth and setting my boundary, boundaries with them got me excluded from my responsibilities, from partaking in luncheons, and eventually my position." This theme is further illustrated by the changing of relationships to become less supportive. Some participants found significant barriers as their fellow workers feared experiencing violence/harassment themselves. Participant 9 found they were met with resistance when reaching out to colleagues for support as the harassment and retaliation that she received continued:

But for example, I asked that guy [observer/co-worker] to be a witness and he immediately panicked and he was like, 'I want to support you, but I don't want to be involved because [harasser] could turn it around to make it about me.' He's very paranoid

about getting into trouble himself. So that was a very hard day because I was asking witnesses for support.

This invasive fear of becoming a target prevented the victim-survivor from accessing effective representation, connection, and support. This participant noted that the fear was consistent amongst workers:

So there definitely a pattern of behavior there that people just felt very fearful in terms of repercussions of my report because I had some – a support network within the workplace that knew about it. They – those people then felt that much less comfortable ever going to H.R. about anything after that. So there was quite a fallout on that front where there was like ripple effects throughout the organization.

Participant 9 then specifies how challenging it was to be working in an organization when this deterioration was occurring [after briefly losing network connection, continues where the interview left off]:

I think I was probably talking about how it had impacted my relationship with my manager and kind of a loss of trust there in a manager that I otherwise really quite enjoyed working with before that. And so I think I was talking about how it was almost a bigger disappointment to be failed by people that had kind of earned my trust up until that point or that I liked or felt respected by in comparison to the actual perpetrator, if you will. There wasn't a positive relationship there to start from. [...] But the the ways in which the two people in HR as well as my manager, failed to support me I think was a bigger hurt because of the trust that had previously been there.

The participant clarified that there was eventually some effort to offer help, although after losing these meaningful and supportive relationships, it was not an option for the participant to continue:

[...] they did actually agree to do restorative justice, but by that point it was like six months into my suffering at work and I had applied for other jobs and the same week that they agreed to do restorative justice, I got a job offer and I decided that I didn't trust him and I didn't trust them enough to believe that they would follow the restorative justice process as I wanted them to. And so I left the organization instead.

When asked if this could be described as fear of retaliation from the harasser specifically as well as lack of support from Human Resources (HR), the participant confirmed:

Yes. Exactly. Yeah. And not just like not wanting to be the next [victim-survivor] in terms of it being this big thing that blows up, you know, like it's just it was easier to just kind of grumble about whatever stupid thing he said to friends and push it under the rug. But yeah, there was definitely like a lot of rising sentiment amongst the young women in the office, especially, that he was a problem in the office and that they were not doing something about it and they should do something about it. So it was definitely like a general feeling, I would say, but people just stayed silent because that was easier.

In summary, rather than feeling safe to offer support to the participant and offer a witness statement, or report observed instances of violence/harassment, this fear created a sizeable barrier and led to silencing other workers and deteriorating that supportive relationship. In exploring the experiences that occurred following disclosure, Participant 2 also reported that they were unable to continue engaging with others as a result of the deterioration and the treatment they received thereafter, “I pretty much cut off all relationships with with coworkers who were

my my colleagues and my peers simply because I did not trust anything that I said would be accurately repeated”. A few of the other participants reported that the fear became invasive in their lives, such as Participant 25 who stated that “there's always that fear of consequence and ah, management needs to do a better job at protecting people who report,”, and Participant 6 who describes being preoccupied with the types of retaliation that could arise:

If it is your manager and all, then you are in trouble because you are working for your manager. At the same time the manager is harassing you. So, you may have the fear that if you complain against him, your time, I mean, your duration or your possibility of you might get a bad remark in your assessment, or he might deny you a promotion or something like he might block some entitlement to you. That is one possibility.

Participant 16 shared this guardedness and suggested caution regarding workplace harassment in order to maintain their position:

We're now saying document everything. And if we have to lodge a human rights complaint at this point, we will. Because like [Company Name] retail, they already had a big movement, a hashtag MeToo in the States. But everyone's scared. We need our jobs.

Participant 23 stated that they too felt fear, and that their other relationships were affected by the director who could dictate how others would engage with them:

I was afraid. And this this director who trickled down, provided instructions to the people I reported to about how to treat me, would would just walk down the hall and say hi to everybody, not hi to me. Just completely dismiss me.

Theme 8: Minimization of Harm

Another critical finding was found in the responses from others, the participants found that the adverse outcomes and harm that they endured was minimized. While some participants

identified feeling that they were not believed regarding the experience of workplace violence/harassment (identified previously as blame and invalidation), others found that the extent to which they were negatively impacted was discounted. For example, some participants were told upon disclosure that their experiences were less harmful than they claimed, or that what they were describing was not worthy of describing as violence or harassment, whether sexual or otherwise. This could also be labelled as gaslighting the participants, who were told that their reactions to the experience were unjustified, such as the responses Participant 8 received from management: “when I reported to the manager, the same manager as before, the... she’s been the, was the manager, the entire time that I worked at the [organization], she said ‘well it was probably my fault’, that you know I encouraged her, or said something to her. And this manager then decided it would be fun to harass me on a new level, so I’m stuck in between the two of them.” The manager had instead told her “‘it was probably an accident’” although this participant had a contradictory understanding of the situation. While management is responsible for being a leader and a supporter of others on their team, this leader contributed to the ongoing experience of workplace harassment for this participant, while also placing blame on this participant. Other participants described how they themselves minimized the harm that came from the violence/harassment. Participant 9 described how they were encouraged to take the incidents seriously and record them as a result of the outside support of their friends:

And I talked to my friend. I talked to a couple of friends about it, and one of them who's in social work suggested that I document it and I was like, ‘No, it's not a big enough deal to report it.’

Experiences such as these led the participant to question their reactions and emotions related to the abuse, rather than feeling supported. Some participants then ceased relying on and believing

in their organizations or support structures, as they felt that the avenues available for disclosing would lead to blame. For Participant 14, who sought out mediation between herself and the organization, found that the organization responded to the negotiations with little acknowledgement or validation of the extent of her suffering, as is demonstrated below:

And he [mediation] looked at [organization] across from the table and said, ‘what do you have to say for yourself?’ And [organization] said, verbatim, they said, ‘give her what she wants’. No apology, no I’m sorry for destroying the last two years of your life.

Participant 10 described being unable to disclose to their workplace because there was no sense of trust in the organization’s response: “... I don’t want to normalize that and say that that’s okay. But that is, essentially how that situation works. [Yeah]. If you go and cry to your boss. Like, right off the bat. Now you’re just causing problems in their eyes like you know, you sort of have to be able to take care of yourself.” This comment has provided insight into the experience of workers at that organization, similarly to the experiences of many other participants. Participant 25 described how they felt unable to accurately and authentically describe their experiences to others when they were being harassed in the workplace as a typical daily occurrence. When asked if there were any supports that the participant was able to disclose to, Participant 25 offered the following explanation:

Not at the time. I’m only actually in the last maybe three years starting to actually. Talk to – I can say honestly two people like outside of yourself now there’s two people that know some of the things I’ve experienced. And other than that, like I’ve made general comments before where it’s like it’s hard being a woman in a prison and you get hit on and you get this and that. But I’ve never described how intense or crossing boundaries

into, in essence, criminal behavior things were for me, and it was a lot of it was I needed to continue to portray self preservation a bit too, that I'm tough and I can handle it.

This minimization of harm mirrors the silencing that participants encountered from their workplaces, their coworkers, and external supports regarding workplace violence and harassment. Their descriptions of the essence of disclosure has clarified that only censored version of events was accepted by their organizations, while the magnitude of the negative consequences they endured was invalidated, feared, and met with overall inconsistency.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of disclosing in the workplace, including workplace violence or harassment. The intention of exploring disclosure in the workplace is to further the literature on bias and blame for victim-survivors in workplace, and to understand the types of responses to disclosure the victim-survivors are receiving. There is existing research that has delved into each of these concepts but has fallen short of qualitatively investigating the experience of disclosure for workers. The participants engaged in semi-structured interviews that were available to those aged 18 years or older who had experienced workplace violence or harassment and have disclosed their experience. The researchers were then able to identify the significant statements from the transcripts of these participants, identify relevant codes to represent these statements, and reflect on the meaning of the first-level codes in order to create second-level codes and meaning statements regarding the experience of disclosure in the workplace. This qualitative analysis sought to better understand the essence of disclosure as it relates to potentially worsening conditions for the victim-survivors, such as experiencing bias and blame within those interpersonal relationships, including from management, coworkers, union representatives, clients, volunteers, donors, or personal relationships. The major findings

included the conditions of the environment where the participants disclosed their workplace violence or harassment, including some organizations who failed to take accountability for the harm, or who failed to commit to justice within the organization and uphold the rights of their employees. These contextual factors offered a deeper understanding of the experience of workplace violence/harassment within Canadian workplaces, and the outcomes that those workers then face. These outcomes included some participants feeling silenced and discouraged from seeking support, blamed and invalidated, minimized in the harm they encountered, damaging expectations, and feeling fearful or threatened. Each of these outcomes played a role in illustrating how and why workers can experience workplace violence/harassment and many find that their situation worsens after coming forward.

Deteriorating Relationships and Conditions

As previous studies have shown, it is common for individuals who have experienced workplace violence to fear coming forward with the incident, as they may face job insecurity, disbelief, blaming, or worsened conditions (Babiarczyk et al., 2020; Carter et al., 2013; Chambers et al., 2018; Colenbrander et al., 2020; Gaston, 2020; Song & Wang, 2021). This was also reflected in the experiences of some participants, as fear was one of the prevalent themes to emerge. Not only did some of the participants themselves experience fear, some of their coworkers also felt fearful of becoming targeted or becoming involved in retaliation from the perpetrator. This fear could affect not only the participant and their relationship with the perpetrator, but also the interpersonal relationships throughout the organization that became less comfortable in that space. These judgements based on limited information that occurred for participants in turn could influence their coworkers to be less likely to come forward. While the literature has established that there is concern about negative outcomes for victim-survivors in

disclosure, these detailed accounts of the threats and retaliation that they experienced first-hand illustrate why that is the case. Regardless of the policies and procedures in place that document the organization's processes, various participants described finding that they received responses that were negative, harmful, unsupportive, and worrisome. Not only had they experienced the harm of workplace violence or harassment, several then also faced financial insecurity, instability in the workplace, and disconnection from their relationships. Many of the participants were unable to look to the future with reassurance that their experience would be addressed or resolved, or that they would remain employed in that organization; each of these factors contributed to the instability and emotional turbulence that these participants described.

Inconsistency in Responses

The results found that not only were there inconsistencies in responses, that there was also a range of unsupportive responses that were offered from their organizations, regardless of the written policies or initial support that was offered by management. These inconsistent responses contribute to the literature by further explaining why victim-survivors often describe feeling that there is little hope for a positive outcome if they were to come forward, or that their situation would worsen upon disclosing the harassment (Chambers et al., 2018). The literature has described these hopeless and helpless attitudes from victim-survivors regardless of whether they have disclosed their experiences, and the statements of these participants in particular illustrate why this might be the case. Not only were there inconsistencies in whether or not they were offered support at all, some participants also found that when they were offered support that this could change and gradually lessen over time. Other examples from the literature that describe their inability to feel hopeful for positive outcomes include the bias and responses from those in positions of power. These types of responses were described in the literature as having a

bias towards the perpetrator, who may be seen through the lens of an “asset to the organization”, or a “good employee”, who deserves to be supported (Kluemper et al., 2019), which then leads to increased tendency to blame the victim-survivor. In these situations, a manager who is not able to assess the situation directly or with adequate information will be reacting to the victim-survivor in a biased way that can lead to victim-blaming (Kluemper et al., 2019). Regardless of the policies and procedures in place that are utilized during an investigation, this type of response to the victim-survivor is neither positive nor helpful. According to past literature when a victim-survivor discloses their experience and receives negative or unsupportive responses to the disclosure, this can result in worsened psychological symptoms (Dworkin et al., 2019; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; McNulty et al., 1994). This was prevalent in the current study as well as in the literature, as participants who began disclosing their workplace violence and received mixed and unsupportive responses became gradually less confident in the supports of that workplace (Song et al., 2021), let alone those who were responsible for addressing the harmful behaviours. Therefore, not only are these participants receiving negative and unhelpful responses woven in with the supportive responses, which in itself causes harm to the victim-survivor’s wellbeing, many of the participants also found that those who were initially ready to be supportive became gradually less willing as the reporting process continued. The journey of disclosure, in this respect, is unreliable for victim-survivors who are seeking meaningful, victim-centered, trauma-informed care and responses that promote agency and overall wellbeing of the workers.

Damaging Expectations: Patriarchal Influence and Workplace Culture

The variation in responses to disclosing workplace violence or harassment was also deeply affected by the societal and workplace-specific cultural expectations. For those participants who felt that the expectations for them as victim-survivors was to simply endure,

this was entrenched in societal expectations about how women can behave and what they should expect in the workplace, especially one that is primarily dominated by men. However, the workplace violence and negative responses to disclosure were prevalent regardless of gender distribution. These themes suggest that for some organizations, the societal influence of patriarchy and workplace culture become intertwined, as what is considered a norm in general society becomes a part of the workplace culture. An example of this is the description of how femininity is viewed in the workplace in some of the participant's statements, and that it provides an excellent example of how broader conventional views of gender infiltrate the workplace and how workers experience that environment. The belief that a person who portrays themselves as feminine or dresses in a way that could be described as feminine is deserving of blame for their harassment can be described in the literature as *rape myth acceptance* (Persson & Dhingra, 2022). Those who adhere to this belief, which can be described as the belief that a victim-survivor's behaviour, physical presentation, and character influence the behaviour of the perpetrator, are more likely to attribute blame to the victim.

Additionally, the participants illustrated the impact of power on the victim-survivor's experience, as those who were responsible for workplace violence/harassment were often in a position of power within that workplace, and therefore were not challenged. As a result, some workers left their position because of the deeply entrenched beliefs around workplace culture and the lack of support if they were to come forward. These findings suggest that the level of power that that individual or group has within the workplace can dictate whether they will be considered important enough to be taken seriously. These participants were able to illustrate the barriers that continue to exist when coming forward to disclose, as there are limited avenues

through which to pursue justice or support when those perpetrating harm are often in positions of power.

Furthermore, a major finding was that societal influence could become a part of the workplace culture in the way that some organizations investigated and sought to resolve workplace conflict. Doolittle (2022) has established the cultural and workplace norms regarding sexual assault that exist in Canada, dating back to the days where women were not considered trustworthy or able to make their own decisions, and therefore could not be taken seriously when making such accusations. Thankfully, this historical belief is changing in the policies, laws, and cultural beliefs of Canada, however slowly (Doolittle, 2022). These participants support Doolittle's investigative research into sexual harassment in that they too continue to experience blame and investigation, as opposed to voice, belief, and victim-centered support for the trauma they endured. This method of investigating disclosures of workplace violence echoes the harmful traditions of investigating sexual assault within law enforcement, which has long been considered the responsibility of the investigators to evaluate the testament of the victim-survivor in case of false accusation, as opposed to considering a disclosure as an opportunity to support a victim of trauma (Doolittle, 2022). In continuing with the lack of trauma-informed care, participants also described the theme of damaging expectations outside of the workplace, including being asked to relive their trauma in the process of seeking support or justice, which can be emotionally harmful. Retelling the incident in this way, and receiving little belief or support, runs the risk of retraumatization for those victim-survivors (Jackson et al., 2017).

Justice, Accountability, and Minimization of Harm

The lack of commitment to justice and accountability in the workplace also affected the experience of disclosure for these participants, as they found that while they were responsible for

leaving the organization, whether with a retirement package, or of their own volition, many participants described finding that the perpetrator of workplace violence stayed in relatively good standing within that workplace. These themes illustrate the context where many Canadian workers are facing workplace harassment, and trying to begin healing. These organizational responses that fail to take responsibility and to uphold their employees' rights are not encouraging future disclosure or accountability on the part of the perpetrator. In fact, as stated in the previous findings, some participants described feeling quite discouraged. While very few participants were successful in having the perpetrator held accountable and removed from the workplace, the majority were not able to continue at that organization due to one of the proposed situations.

In terms of minimizing harm, a few of the participants had felt that their victimization did not warrant being reported or telling others in their lives, while others encountered professionals who labelled their experiences as minimally disruptive so that they would be able to continue without additional support. These reactions to the victim-survivor fail to acknowledge the extent of negative effects that workplace violence or harassment can have on the victim-survivor, and verge on blaming the participants if they should continue to experience any of those outcomes.

Silence and Blame

The journey of disclosure in the workplace has also been characterized by silencing and blame, which are themes that were common amongst the participants. The silencing that participants described included formal methods, such as required signing of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), or informal methods. These instances of silencing, through a feminist lens, also enable patriarchal standards and workplace harassment to continue. The themes of silencing, invalidation, minimization of harm, workplace culture, and societal influence all become a part

of the fabric of oppression that allows these behaviours to become normalized. As a result, many of the participants also felt significant blame; whether self-blame, blame from coworkers, management, family, or external supports, participants named that this was one of the primary reactions to their disclosure. The literature describes *hindsight bias*, which is the inability of an observer who has learned the outcome of an incident to remove this information when deciding on the predictability of that outcome, and therefore the level of blame that should be directed to the victim-survivor (Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985; Roese & Vohs, 2012). The statements that these participants received may reflect some hindsight bias from those who are hearing of the event, and are unable to identify that the victim-survivor's behaviour was in no way predicting or welcoming those harassing behaviours to occur. Similarly, some of these statements may reflect some *defense attribution hypothesis*, which is a bias in thinking highlighted in the literature that occurs when a person who hears of harassment believes that they would have behaved in a different way, therefore placing blame onto the victim-survivor for their own sense of self-preservation (Shaver, 1970). Therefore, the bias created from limited information and assumed differences between observers and the victim-survivors affected the journey of disclosure for participants as they received blaming comments based in these biases.

The literature also suggests that some of these responses may come from a place of self-preservation; those who believe that 'good things happen to good people' would find it hard to believe that harassment could occur to someone innocent of blame, and therefore in order to maintain these beliefs and protect their own emotional wellbeing, they become more likely to place blame on the victim-survivor (Harber et al., 2015). Just World Hypothesis can also influence an observer when the person perceives the victimization to be contradicting their worldviews and that the victimization may be occurring for a long period of time, in which case

the observer may protect their worldview by attributing more blame to the victim-survivor (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). However, blame can appear in other forms as well. Some of the prevalent themes suggest that there was a mentality of accepting and expecting to be harassed. This blatant victim-blaming is related to the negative responses and invalidation that were also present as themes, and all of which contribute to the negative outcomes that can arise when a victim-survivor is not supported upon disclosure. Not only is there clear evidence of the harmful effects of the victimization itself, there is building evidence for the importance of having supportive, trusting, and helpful responses to the disclosure in order to mitigate additional harmful and lasting effects. However, while this study has identified some of the types of responses that workers have received, in order to understand the phenomenon of disclosure in its entirety, additional research would be required. For example, future studies may intentionally incorporate categories that include supportive responses to disclosure to illustrate examples of successful reactions.

The presenting image that captures the overall experience of disclosing workplace violence and harassment in Canada is one of unsteady and unpredictable grounds; the aftermath of an earthquake where residents are distraught and deeply affected already, only to continue in uncertainty as they navigate their environment with ground that continues to crumble away from under their feet. Not only have they faced incredible difficulty in the initial incident, many victim-survivors are now left trying to pick up the pieces in a world where their supports are limited and they are disconnected from others who have not faced similar circumstances.

Implications and Future Considerations

Researchers are encouraged to continue investigating disclosure in various contexts and with participants who may not have experienced the violence/harassment first-hand. This would

allow for broader understanding of the culture and environment where the disclosure is taking place. Additional research could also generate discussion highlighting the importance of these inconsistent responses to disclosure, and how to enhance those that are positive and helpful.

Understanding the experiences of disclosure for those who endured workplace violence can also help shape the development of policies and procedures in organizations, for example, specifically related to how reports are handled and how victim-survivors are supported when they do report. Furthermore, York and Brookhouse (1988) note that to combat workplace harassment, there should be policy in place that defines how the behaviour impacts the victim, the perpetrator, and the business itself, as the perpetrators may be oblivious to their influence on the journey. Research investigating the impact of this harm on victim-survivors therefore can address this obliviousness and create clear guidance for policy or additional research to improve workplace safety.

A recent article suggests that exposure to workplace violence in the past year increased the likelihood of depression among employees who did not exhibit these symptoms prior to beginning work (Madsen et al., 2021). This study supports the notion that mental health can be directly impacted depending on the experiences in the workplace. Bowling and Beehr (2006) also state that when injustice occurs in the workplace, the victim-survivor can experience symptoms of physiological and psychological distress. Therefore, the researchers note that to promote mental health and well-being at work, the workplace should mitigate these harmful experiences (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). The current exploration of the journey of disclosing workplace violence and the experience of blame offers an opportunity to identify factors that contribute to harmful workplace experiences, while contributing to the literature and relevant policies for mental health and wellbeing at work. Therefore, additional research could also

provide an in-depth understanding of why it is that victim-survivors may be received in a negative or blaming way as opposed to supportive one. This exploration of nuance in responses could illustrate the gaps in interpersonal responses and provide a guide for reactions that are beneficial for their mental health.

Additionally, the literature suggests that positive responses to the initial disclosure result in overall positive outcomes for mental health, including a study that found positive engagement upon disclosure could result in “re-establish[ing] trust and attachment, promot[ing] self-efficacy and mastery” (Easton, 2019, p. 211) among the participants. The contrary has also been established, negative responses can result in fewer disclosures in the future (Easton et al., 2014). The initial study concludes that training is necessary. Studies such as these, alongside the testimonials of these participants, demonstrate the need for positive and helpful responses to disclosures of abuse, violence, and harassment by professionals and family members. The importance of responding in a timely and supportive manner has been established in a variety of other contexts as well, which underscores the harm that the victim/survivors of the current study have experienced, as most did not receive helpful or supportive responses. O’Leary et al. (2010) state that when working with clients who have a history of abuse, professionals should seek to identify their experience of disclosure, as this can predict risk for poor mental health symptoms. Therefore, not only have these participants illustrated the experience of disclosing workplace violence/harassment in Canada, they have also provided sufficient information to warrant re-evaluating the systems that are currently in place to support mental health of workers. If there are unhelpful, blaming, and negative responses given to a victim-survivor upon disclosure, regardless of other policies and procedures that are in place within that organization, these victim-survivors are at higher risk for negative mental health outcomes in the future and will not

necessarily be more likely to come forward with future occurrences. Rabelo and colleagues (2019) also provide support for the participant's belief that institutions that are responsible for responding to disclosure in a way that supports the victim-survivor's, in their dignity, confidentiality, and safety because these are essential for the workers' mental health and overall wellbeing in the workforce. Therefore, studies such as these are critical for the developing understanding of workplace violence or harassment and the journey of disclosure, including the variety of responses that they may receive and the possible outcomes that can arise as a result.

Limitations

As a continuation of the Respect at Work study, the research herein was able to pull from a large sample of participants who had experienced workplace violence or harassment, although only a limited number of interviews that were conducted as a result of a small research team and short timeframe. The sampling strategy was a limitation of the study, as the researchers were unable to intentionally ensure representation from diverse groups. Furthermore, there was no opportunity for triangulation in order to better support the analysis. Triangulation would support this study by reducing the likelihood of including personal bias and to improve overall understanding of the phenomenon. There is, therefore, possible variation in the understanding of meaning from the perspective of the research team and the participants. Finally, there is potential bias in the sample of first-level codes that were selected to explore themes. These codes may include a bias towards negative responses, as participants may be more likely to come forward and express their negative experiences than positive ones. Some research has found that individuals can be more likely to report a bad experience, and to disclose it to others (Dimensional Research, 2013). The potential for bias in this sample may also be the result of purposefully excluding the codes that were identified as 'Support' in first-level coding, as this

category was specific to another researcher's thesis study. Therefore, while there is a deeper level of comprehension of disclosure from these participants' stories, this study does not provide information about how often a victim-survivor receives a negative response or whether there are any positive experiences.

Conclusion

Through an exploration of the journey of disclosure in the workplace, the study herein has established a number of themes that address the question "how and why is it possible that disclosing injustice can lead to victim-survivors feeling worse?", including the crumbling ground that is left following a disclosure: (a) lack of accountability, (b) lack of commitment to justice, (c) feeling blamed or invalidated, (d) damaging expectations, (e) inconsistency in responses, (f) deteriorating conditions and relationships, and (g) minimization of harmful effects. These themes offer insight into the lived experiences of victim-survivors who have disclosed workplace violence/harassment, and suggest that there is much work needed to be done in order to positively change these outcomes and experiences. While some victim-survivors have reported that the workplace may otherwise have a positive workplace culture and that there were some helpful responses, there are obvious and devastating flaws. This study offers support for the continued investigation of workplace violence disclosures to explore how often a person may receive such harmful responses as opposed to support. This information can be used to better understand the cultural shift that is required to offer improved interpersonal responses within the workplace and in personal relationships, specifically in moments of disclosure when the victim-survivors need it most.

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Appendix A

Script for Email Recruitment

Subject Line: Invitation to participate in research

Hello,

We have received your email (from a survey you completed) indicating interest in participating in a study being conducted by the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University, and the University of Toronto. The aim of this study is to improve workplace practices (e.g., policies, procedures, and training programs) to prevent and respond to harassment at work and to support those affected. Your responses will provide important information to help us assess how well workplaces are meeting the needs of workers.

Anyone 18 years of age or older who has experienced harassment at work may participate in this study. If you agree, you will be invited to participate in an interview for the duration of approximately one hour (via telephone or virtually (online) using an online platform).

Please answer the following questions so that we can schedule your interview:

1. When are the best days and times to conduct the interview?
2. We are using Zoom to conduct interviews online. Are you comfortable using Zoom for the interview?
3. Please indicate the province/territory in which you live (so that we can consider the time zone when scheduling the interview):

If you would like more information on this study or would like to receive a letter of information about this study, please contact the researcher at the contact information given below.

Thank you,

[Your name]

Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children
Western University

Appendix B

Scheduling Interview Email Script

Scheduling Interview Email – second email to be sent to survey respondents who agreed to participate (VIA ZOOM) in an interview to schedule the email.

NOTE: Attach the following documents: Zoom tutorial; Letter of Information and Consent, List of Support Resources-BILINGUAL

If participants return their completed LOI/C, save it in the subfolder *Completed Letters of Info & Consent* (in OneDrive). Add their unique code (e.g., P1, P2...) to the beginning of the file name when saving their letter/form (this way they appear in order by code.)

Subject line: Scheduling interview

Hello [Name],

Thank you for your continued interest in participating in an interview for this study.

Your interview has been scheduled for [Date/Time – e.g., **Wednesday, December 2, at 2:00pm EST**].

Please confirm (by replying to this email) your availability to attend the interview or if you would like an alternative date/time. *A zoom link and telephone numbers (if you prefer to call in) will be sent prior to our interview.* (A brief Zoom tutorial is attached).

Please find attached a Letter of Information and Consent containing information about the study.

Please complete the last page of the letter and return a copy to us. Alternatively, please answer the following questions (by reply to this email):

This study has been explained to me and any questions I had have been answered. I know that I may leave the study at any time. I agree to take part in this study. (Yes/No):

Do you agree to the audio-recording of this interview? (Yes/No):

Direct quotes from this interview may be used in research reports. However, only pseudonyms will be used to accompany quotes. No information that identifies you will be used. Do you agree to the use of the quotes? (Yes/No):

We will review the letter together and you will have the opportunity to ask questions before the interview begins. You have the option to have a support person present during the interview (e.g., friend, relative, advocate). Anyone present **must be 18 years of age** or over and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Thank you for your participation and I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,

[Researcher Name]

Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University

Appendix C

Letter of Information and Consent – Worker Interview

Study Title: Harassment and Violence at Work in Canada

Principal Investigator: Barb MacQuarrie, Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study that will examine the types of actions taken by workers who have experienced harassment at work and the related workplace responses, supports, and preventative measures and their effectiveness. You are being asked to participate because you are a member of one of the organizations collaborating in this study or you have previously completed our online survey and have indicated an interest in participating in further research.

This study is a collaboration between the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children (CREVAWC), Western University, and the University of Toronto.

Why this study is being done

Harassment occurs across all occupations and industries. It can have negative short- and long-term impacts on employees who directly experience harassment and who observe their coworkers experiencing harassment. The aim of this study is to improve workplace practices (e.g., policies, procedures, and training programs) to prevent and respond to harassment at work and to support those affected. Your responses will provide important information to help us assess how well workplaces are meeting the needs of workers and learn more about the impacts of harassment.

Confidentiality

All information collected during this study will be kept confidential and only authorized members of the research team will have access to it. Anyone outside of the research team (i.e., translator and transcriptionist) will have signed a confidentiality agreement. The data will be stored at Western University on encrypted and password protected computers/servers and any hardcopy material will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked and secure area at the University. Unless you choose to tell them, no one, including your employer, supervisor, union representatives or coworkers will know whether you have participated in this study. Your name, email address and/or telephone number will be collected only for the purposes of contacting you in relation to this study. You will not be named in any reports, publications, theses, or presentations that may result from this study. The interview transcriptions will not contain actual names or any identifying information. An ID Number and pseudonym will be used in place of original names and all other identifying information will be removed or substituted. A list of ID numbers, pseudonyms, and names will be maintained and securely stored separate from all other data. All data will be destroyed after 7 years. A translator may be present during this interview, if you have indicated one will be with you when scheduling the interview. Delegated

institutional representatives of Western University and its Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research in accordance with regulatory requirements.

If you agree to participate

Anyone 18 years of age or older who has experienced harassment at work may participate in this study.

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in an interview for the duration of approximately one hour.

Interviews will be conducted via telephone or virtually (online) using an online platform with available security options (e.g., password for entry). It is possible that information could be intercepted by unauthorized people (hacked). This risk cannot be completely eliminated. Interviews will be audio-recorded, if you permit, and will be transcribed in their entirety by a professional transcriptionist who will sign a confidentiality agreement. Recordings will be transferred via Western's corporate online secure file sharing platform, Microsoft Office OneDrive. If you prefer not to have the interview audio-recorded, written notes will be recorded instead.

If required, you have the option to request a translator be present during the interview. We use the free services of Across Languages. Their translators are qualified and certified.

Potential Risks and Benefits

By participating in this study, you may learn some new information about harassment as a workplace and societal issue. It may help you understand your experiences and the possible actions that workplaces can take to provide appropriate responses and supports to workers affected by harassment. It is possible that there are no direct benefits to you from participating in this research, but information gathered may provide benefits to society as a whole which include, an increased understanding of workplace and government practices to address harassment, ways to improve these practices, and how they shape the experiences of workers affected by harassment.

If you are currently or have in the past been impacted by harassment, you may find it distressing to respond to some questions. Attached to this letter is a list of resources by province so that if you feel distressed you can speak to someone for support or obtain information about local supportive services. You may also have a support person present during the interview (e.g., friend, relative, advocate).

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time, even once the interview is complete, with no negative consequences. Please note: once the study has been published we will not be able to withdraw your information.

Questions

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics , email:

. This office oversees the ethical conduct of research studies and is not part of the study team. Everything that you discuss will be kept confidential. If you have any questions about this study, please contact

Study Title: Harassment and Violence at Work in Canada

Principal Investigator: Barb MacQuarrie, Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University

Consent

You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study.

This study has been explained to me and any questions I had have been answered. I know that I may leave the study at any time. I agree to take part in this study.

Print Study Participant's Name

Signature

Date

(You will be given a signed copy of this consent form.)

Do you agree to the audio-recording of this interview? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Direct quotes from this interview may be used in research reports. However, only pseudonyms will be used to accompany quotes. No information that identifies you will be used. Do you agree to the use of the quotes? ☐ Yes ☐ No

The person below acted as a support person for the participant during the consent process and attests that the study as set out in this form was accurately translated and has had any questions answered.

Print Name of Support
Person

Signature

Date

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

Print Name of Person Obtaining
Consent

Signature

Date

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Appendix D

Resources for Participants



Workplace Harassment and Violence Resources /

Ressources de soutien relativement au harcèlement et à la violence au travail

If you, or anyone you know, need support or information on sexual harassment and violence, below is a list of Canadian resources organized by province/territory.

Si vous, ou quelqu'un que vous connaissez, avez besoin d'aide ou d'informations en rapport avec la violence et le harcèlement sexuel, n'hésitez pas à vous servir de la liste d'organismes canadiens et de ressources de soutien ci-dessous. Notez que les ressources bilingues ou francophones sont marquées d'un astérisque.

***Alberta : Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Alberta – ajefa.ca**

La mission de l'AJEFA est de faciliter l'accès au public aux services juridiques en français et de promouvoir l'utilisation de la langue française dans l'administration de la justice en Alberta.

Alberta: One Line for Sexual Violence – 1-866-403-8000

Offers talk, text and chat to people in all areas of Alberta who have been impacted by sexual violence. *(Seulement disponible en anglais)*

Alberta: Workers Resource Centre: 1 (844) 435-7972 / 1 (403) 264-8100 / www.helpwrc.org

The Case Work program provides individual assistance to workers who live or work in the Alberta area and need help with Employment Standards complaints, Employment Insurance claims and appeals, Workers' Compensation claims (we do not do WCB appeals), employment-related complaints under the Alberta Human Rights Act, and claims for employer short/long term disability and Canada Pension Plan disability benefits.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Alberta: Sexual Assault Services in Alberta - <https://aasas.ca/get-help/>

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

***Colombie-Britannique : Inform'Elles – <http://www.informelles.ca/>**

Depuis 1998, l'équipe d'Inform'Elles travaille auprès des femmes francophones en situation de violence en Colombie-Britannique. Notre mission est de favoriser l'accès à des services d'information, de sensibilisation et de soutien aux femmes et aux jeunes filles francophones en Colombie-Britannique en situation de violence.

***British Columbia/Colombie-Britannique: WorkSafeBC – <https://www.worksafebc.com/>**

We are committed to creating a province free from workplace injury or illness, and to providing service driven by our core values of integrity, accountability, and innovation. By partnering with workers and employers, we help British Columbians come home from work safe every day.

Si vous avez été accidenté.e au travail et si vous voulez faire une demande d'indemnités à WorkSafeBC, communiquez avec son Centre de télé-réclamations (en anglais) où des représentants

de WorkSafeBC qui parlent français pourront vous aider à remplir un rapport de blessures et à comprendre le processus de réclamation.

British Columbia: VictimLinkBC – 1-800-563-0808

a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone service available across B.C. and the Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence, including victims of human trafficking exploited for labour or sexual services.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

British Columbia: Access Pro Bono's (APB) Employment Standards Program – 1.877.762.6664 / <http://accessprobono.ca/>

Provides free legal representation by volunteer lawyers and law students to low income employees or former employees appearing before the Employment Standards Branch and the Employment Standards Tribunal (e.g. vacation pay, termination pay, overtime, statutory holiday pay, etc.)

Standards Program accepts clients from across the province. Legal representation is contingent on eligibility for Access Pro Bono's services, a merit assessment of the case, and volunteers' availability.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

British Columbia: TAPS Employment Standards Legal Advocacy Project - 250.361.3521 / www.tapsbc.ca/

Provides free face-to-face advocacy representation services for non-unionised employees. TAPS Advocates are available to assist employees in resolving disputes with their employers under the BC Employment Standards Act.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

British Columbia: Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse – (604) 682-6482 / [http:// bc-malesurvivors.com/home/](http://bc-malesurvivors.com/home/)

A non-profit society, established to provide therapeutic services for males who have been sexually abused at some time in their lives.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Manitoba: The Workers' Organizing Resource Centre – (204) 947-2220 / www.worc.ca/intro.asp

The mandate is to help establish, maintain and facilitate community organizations that represent and enforce people's rights within our community and to advocate on behalf of workers who do not have access to a union for protection of their rights in the workplace and beyond.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Manitoba: Sexual Assault Crisis Line – 1-888-292-7565

A 24-hour phone line that provides information and crisis intervention to sexual assault victims and those close to them.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

***Manitoba: Justice Victim Services – 1-866-484-2846 /**

www.gov.mb.ca/justice/crown/victims/index.html

In general, Victim Services helps people access their rights, understand their responsibilities and

connects them to other services or agencies. Services are provided free of charge and are available in person, by phone, fax or Internet.

En général, le personnel des Services aux victimes aide celles-ci à faire valoir leurs droits et à comprendre leurs responsabilités et les met en contact avec d'autres organismes et services. Les services sont offerts gratuitement en personne, par téléphone, par télécopieur et sur Internet.

***Manitoba : La ligne provinciale d'information et d'aide confidentielle en cas de crise de violence familiale – 1-877-977-0007**

Appelez sans frais, 24 heures par jour, la ligne provinciale d'information et d'aide confidentielle en cas de crise de violence familiale

***Manitoba : Chez Rachel – 204-925-2550 / chezrachel.ca**

Chez Rachel fournit des services accessibles et sécuritaires, du counselling et du soutien pratique. Nous aidons les femmes à retrouver une vie normale et un avenir meilleur. Nous avons des programmes variés pour les femmes et leurs enfants qui leur permettront de développer de meilleures aptitudes, d'avoir confiance en elles-mêmes et de vivre de façon indépendante.

***New Brunswick/Nouveau Brunswick: Chimo Helpline / Ligne d'écoute Chimo – 1-800-667-5005**

A provincial crisis phone line, accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to all residents of New Brunswick. Provides a listening ear, helpful information, crisis intervention and referrals to resources in the province of N.B.

Chimo est une ligne d'écoute provinciale ouverte à tous les résidents du Nouveau-Brunswick et accessible 24 heures par jour. Nous offrons une écoute active et des renseignements pertinents.

***New Brunswick/Nouveau Brunswick: Sexual Assault Support Line / Ligne d'écoute en matière d'agression sexuelle – 506-454-0437**

A 24-hour confidential sexual assault support line for anyone affected by sexual violence, or anyone supporting someone affected by sexual violence. The support line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Our mission is to serve our community by providing a competent level of crisis intervention, referrals and vital information in a caring, confidential manner.

Si vous avez été victime de violence sexuelle, vous pouvez recevoir de l'aide. Lorsque vous serez prête, VSNB vous propose des services et des programmes offrant un soutien, de l'information et des options.

Newfoundland: Newfoundland & Labrador 24 Hour Support and Information Line - 1-800-726-2743

A 24-Hour Support and Information Line where callers can reach an empathetic, non-judgmental volunteer.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Newfoundland: NL Sexual Assault Crisis & Prevention Centre - www.endsexualviolence.com

A non-profit, community-based, charitable organization that exists to support individuals of all genders who have been impacted by sexual violence.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Nova Scotia: The Sexual Assault and Harassment Phone Line – 1-902-425-1066 Non-judgmental, active listening and support to anyone who has experienced or has been affected by sexualized violence. Calls are taken from 12pm - 12am, 7 days a week. There are only 2 phone line operators taking calls and they may be helping another person when you call. If you are unable to get through, please try again later. The phone line is operated by Dalhousie Student Union.
(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Nova Scotia: NS Mi'kmaq Crisis and Referral Line – 1-855- 379-2099
The Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Crisis and Referral phone line is available 24/7 toll free to Mi'kmaq people across the province. The Centre also provides online support through the Eskasoni Crisis Worker Facebook account. Both are a service of Eskasoni Mental Health.
(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Nova Scotia: Halifax Workers Action Centre – (902) 221-0755 / www.halifaxworkersaction.ca
Provides help to workers with labour standards issues, unpaid wages, terminations, workplace discrimination, and more. We provide free, one-on-one assistance at our employment law information clinics.
(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Nova Scotia: Sexual Assault Centres – www.novascotia.ca/coms/svs/sexual-assault-centres
(Seulement disponible en anglais)

***Nova Scotia/ Nouvelle-Écosse: Legal Advice for Sexual Assault Survivors Program / Consultation juridique pour les personnes qui ont subi une agression sexuelle**
Call 211 to register. You do not need to provide details about what happened. You only have to say that you were sexually assaulted in Nova Scotia, and that you would like to speak with a lawyer.

Composez le 211 au téléphone pour vous inscrire. Il n'est pas nécessaire de donner des détails sur ce qui s'est passé. Il suffit de dire que vous avez subi une agression sexuelle en Nouvelle-Écosse et que vous voulez parler à un avocat.

***Nova Scotia/Nouvelle-Écosse: Nova Scotia Sexual Violence – breakthesilencens.ca**

***Northwest Territories/Territoires du Nord-Ouest: NWT Help Line / La Ligne d'aide des TNO – 1-800-661-0844**

Offers free support to residents of the Northwest Territories, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is 100% free and confidential. The NWT Help Line also has an option for follow-up calls.

La Ligne d'aide des T.N.-O. offre du soutien aux résidents des Territoires du Nord-Ouest en tout temps. Il s'agit d'un service entièrement gratuit et confidentiel. Nous pouvons également offrir du suivi par téléphone.

***Nunavut: Nunavut Kamatsiagtut Helpline – Toll Free (867) 979-3333**

For all people who need someone to talk to about their troubles, concerns, and anything that bothers you. trained volunteers are on the phone 24 hours every day of the week. Volunteers come from

many walks of life and are always available with an open mind and listening ear for those who need someone to talk to about issues that matter to you. All of our volunteers speak English and many speak Inuktitut and French.

Bien que le site Web de cet organisme ne soit disponible qu'en anglais, il indique que plusieurs de leurs bénévoles parlent français et Inuktitut.

Ontario: Workers' Action Centre – 1-855-531-0778 / www.workersactioncentre.org/resources/

Our organization and members are committed to improving the lives and working conditions of people in low-wage and unstable jobs. We want to make sure that all of us have a voice at work and are treated with dignity and fairness. On this page you will find materials on your rights at work. You can phone us if you need advice about a workplace problem you are facing, and request to speak to someone in your language.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Ontario: Assaulted Women's Helpline – 1-866-863-0511 / Toll-Free TTY 1.866.863.7868 /

#SAFE (#7233) on your Bell, Rogers, Fido or Telus mobile phone

Offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY crisis line to all women who have experienced abuse. We provide counselling, emotional support, information and referrals.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Ontario: Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres – www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/support

Sexual assault centres provide free counselling and information about sexual violence. Get contact information for a centre near you.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

***Ontario: Ontario Network of Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Care and Treatment Centres / Réseau ontarien des centres de traitement ou de soins en cas d'agression sexuelle ou de violence familiale – www.sacc.to/gylb/satc/SATCcentres.htm**

Specialized teams of doctors, nurses and counsellors provide emergency medical treatment and emotional support to youth (over the age of 12), women, and men who have experienced a recent sexual assault (within two years). Services are confidential and free of charge. Able to take care of victims who have physical disabilities. Will arrange for interpreters to help understand individuals who have difficulty with the English language. On call 24 hours a day.

Le ministère de la Santé de l'Ontario finance 34 centres de traitement et de soins en cas d'agression sexuelle et de violence familiale basés dans des hôpitaux. Une équipe d'infirmières et de médecins est disponible sur demande 24 heures par jour, 7 jours par semaine par le biais du service des urgences, de telle sorte que les victimes d'agressions sexuelles peuvent recevoir des soins médicaux et psychologiques spécialisés.

***Ontario : FEM'AIDE – 1.877.336.2433 / 1.866.860.7082 (ATS)**

Fem'aide offre aux femmes d'expression française aux prises avec la violence sexiste, du soutien, des renseignements et de l'aiguillage vers les services appropriés dans leur collectivité 24 heures par jour.

***Ontario : Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes (AOcVF) – <https://aocvf.ca/>**

AOcVF a pour mandat de travailler à la prévention de la violence, à la formation continue des intervenantes et des directions, au démarchage en vue de mettre en place de services en français, à l'analyse des enjeux et à la réalisation de matériel éducatif et de sensibilisation en français, selon une analyse féministe de la situation sociale et communautaire.

Ontario: Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Exchange (SHARE) – 1-866-625-5179 or 416-597-4900 / TTY: 416-597-4903 or 1-866-612-8627 / <https://www.hrlsc.on.ca/share/welcome>

The Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Exchange (SHARE) is a service that supports all workers who have experienced sexual harassment or assault at work. We provide free, confidential legal information to workers about all their available options to address their experience. Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Exchange's (SHARE) goal is to support diverse groups of workers who are exposed to sexual harassment and assault by providing them with legal information to make informed decision about which steps, if any, they would like to take. SHARE is a project of the Human Rights Legal Support Centre and is funded by the Department of Justice Canada.

Le programme Échange de ressources pour le Harcèlement et l'Agression Sexuelle (ÉRHAS) offre des services de soutien à tous les travailleurs qui ont subi du harcèlement sexuel ou des agressions sexuelles en milieu de travail. Nous offrons des renseignements juridiques gratuits et confidentiels aux travailleurs sur les options qui s'offrent à eux pour faire face à leurs expériences. L'objectif du programme ÉRHAS est de soutenir les groupes diversifiés de travailleurs exposés au harcèlement ou aux agressions sexuelles en leur fournissant des renseignements juridiques leur permettant de prendre des décisions éclairées sur les démarches qu'ils pourraient vouloir entreprendre, le cas échéant. ÉRHAS est un projet du Centre d'assistance juridique en matière de droits de la personne. Il est financé par le ministère de la Justice du Canada.

***Prince Edward Island/L'Île-du-Prince-Édouard: The Island Helpline / Ligne d'écoute de l'Î.-P.-É. – 1-800-218-2885**

When you call the Island Helpline, you can expect a kind and caring staff person to answer who is trained in crisis intervention. Staff provide emotional support, problem solving and crisis intervention services 24/7. Staff can also help by offering information about community resources and supports near you.

La Ligne d'écoute de l'Î.-P.-É. est un service gratuit et confidentiel qui offre un soutien affectif et des interventions en cas de crise aux Insulaires de tout âge. Bien formés et bienveillants, nos bénévoles et nos employés peuvent recevoir vos appels 24 heures par jour.

Prince Edward Island: The PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre – 1-866-566-1864 / <http://peirsac.org/index.php>

The mission of the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre is to support survivors of sexual assault and abuse in their healing and to ensure that all people living in PEI are safe from sexual violence.

Does not provide support or crisis intervention outside of regular work hours.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Prince Edward Island/L'Île-du-Prince-Édouard: Victim Services - Queens and Kings County / Services aux victimes des comtés Queens et Kings – (902) 368-4582

Prince Edward Island/L'Île-du-Prince-Édouard: Victim Services - Prince County / Services aux victimes du comté Prince – (902) 888-8218

Victim Services assists victims of crime throughout their involvement in the criminal justice system. Assistance is available to victims of crime anywhere on Prince Edward Island. If you live off-Island and are victimized by a crime that occurred on PEI, you are also eligible for services.

Aucune description des services aux victimes n'est disponible en français sur le site Web de cet organisme. Cependant, certaines pages du site sont traduites en français et des services en français sont peut-être disponibles.

***Québec : Le Groupe d'aide et d'information sur le harcèlement sexuel au travail de la province de Québec inc. / The Help and Information Center on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace – (514) 526-0789 / <https://www.gaihist.qc.ca/>**

Le Groupe d'aide et d'information sur le harcèlement sexuel au travail de la province de Québec inc. (G.A.I.H.S.T.) est un organisme communautaire établi en 1980 et qui vient en aide aux personnes ayant subi du harcèlement sexuel et/ou psychologique dans leur milieu de travail.

A non-profit community center established in 1980 that has been helping individuals who have been subjected to sexual and/or psychological harassment at work.

***Québec : Tel-Aide – (514) 935-1101 / www.telaide.org**

Offers a free listening service, in English and in French, which is anonymous, confidential and 24/7. Our service is accessible to everyone who suffers from loneliness or stress, who are emotionally distressed or angry, or who simply need to confide in someone who will listen without judgement.

Centre d'écoute téléphonique fondé en 1971 et le plus important au Québec, Tel-Aide a pour mission d'offrir un service d'écoute en français et en anglais, gratuit, anonyme et confidentiel 24 heures par jour. Ce service est accessible à toute personne qui souffre de solitude, de stress, qui est en détresse psychologique ou en colère, ou qui a simplement besoin de se confier à quelqu'un qui les écoutera sans les juger.

***Québec : Le Centre de Travailleurs et Travailleuse Immigrant-e-s / The Immigrant Workers Centre – (514) 342-2111 / <https://iwc-cti.ca/>**

Le Centre de Travailleurs et Travailleuse Immigrant-e-s défend les droits des immigrant-e-s dans leurs lieux de travail et se bat pour la dignité, le respect et la justice

Defends the rights of immigrants in their places of work and fights for dignity, respect, and justice.

***Québec : Centres locaux des services communautaires (CLSC) / Local Community Service Centres (CLSCs) – <https://santemontreal.qc.ca/population/ressources/clsc/>**

Les CLSC offrent des services de santé et des services sociaux dans leurs installations, mais aussi à l'école, au travail et à domicile.

Offer basic front-line health and social services. They also have the mandate to provide the population within the territory they serve with preventive or curative health and social services and rehabilitation and reintegration services.

Saskatchewan: Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan – 306.757.1941 / www.sassk.ca

A provincial non-profit organization that works collectively with front-line agencies, community partners, and governments that provide support and advocacy for those affected by sexual violence in Saskatchewan.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Saskatchewan: Victim Services – www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/victims-of-crime-and-abuse/help-from-victim-service-units-and-agencies

The Victim Services programs work closely with police and assist victims in the immediate aftermath of a crime or tragedy and throughout the criminal justice process. Services offered, provided by staff and volunteers, include crisis intervention, information, support, referrals to other specialized programs and services.

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Saskatchewan: Emergency/Crisis Hotlines –

www.sk.211.ca/saskatchewan_247_hour_crisis_hotlines#

(Seulement disponible en anglais)

Yukon: VictimLinkBC – 1-800-563-0808

A toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone service available across B.C. and the Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence, including victims of human trafficking exploited for labour or sexual services.

Bien que le site Web ne soit disponible qu'en anglais et qu'il ne précise pas si des services en français existent, le service téléphonique serait offert en plusieurs langues.

5

*** Yukon: Women's Directorate / Direction de la condition féminine –**

<https://yukon.ca/en/womens-directorate>

We're responsible for ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into government policy-making, legislation and program development. We offer a range of public education materials on gender equality, health and violence prevention. We also provide funding support to groups and initiatives that enhance gender equality and security. We work closely with a network of gender equality seeking groups and non-government organizations and agencies throughout Yukon for ensuring that equality concerns are brought forward.

Notre mandat : veiller à ce que la problématique hommes-femmes fasse partie intégrante du processus d'élaboration des politiques, lois et programmes du gouvernement. Pour ce faire, nous proposons un éventail de ressources éducatives sur l'égalité et la santé des femmes et sur la prévention de la violence envers les femmes; offrons du soutien financier aux groupes et aux initiatives qui favorisent l'égalité et la sécurité des femmes et collaborons étroitement avec un réseau de groupes de femmes et d'organismes non gouvernementaux de partout au Yukon pour faire avancer la cause des femmes.

Appendix E

Interview Guide

This interview guide is intended to prompt discussions with workers regarding their experiences of harassment, their knowledge and impressions of resources available, and supports that are available to those who experience harassment in the workplace, as well as the barriers workers may face when reporting. In order to gather detailed, contextually specific information from a diverse array of workers across Canada, interviews will be semi-structured using qualitative questions that are broad and open-ended. Follow-up questions will be adapted as needed. Note for Interviewer: Watch for any signs of distress. Stop occasionally to check in with participants – are they ok, would they like to continue, etc. Remind them that “we can stop anytime”.

Confirm that the participant is over 18 years of age and has experienced harassment at work.

Introductory Questions:

- Please tell me about your workplace, industry/sector, and the work that you do.
 - What is your current job title? In what industry do you hold this position?
 - Follow-up: How long have you been in your current position? In your profession?
 - Employment status?
 - Follow-up: How your workplace organized? For example, small, large, separate departments, work in groups/independently, is there an HR department, the organizational hierarchy (team lead, supervisor, etc.).
- How would you describe your work environment?
 - Follow-up: What is the gender balance of your workplace? Mostly men, women, evenly distributed?
 - Follow-up: What is the gender of your immediate supervisor?
 - Follow-up: Do you consider your workplace to be diverse?

Experiences of Harassment:

Ask participant to describe their experience of harassment. Pay particular attention to the context within the workplace of the experience– e.g., how participants describe their experiences, whether they use specific words/terms repeatedly, how they label their experience(s), where the harassment took place (at office, at a workplace event, online), duration of harassment, who was involved (position within the workplace of the harasser, where coworkers present, etc.). Be attentive to not label a participant’s experience for them.

- For you, what is harassment (sexual, psychological, discriminatory)?

COVID-19:

- Has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your experiences of harassment in any way?? If so, how? (Listen for ways in which the harassment has escalated/intensified, whether behaviours

are manifesting themselves more overtly online, examples of online harassing behaviours, whether there has been pressure to meet in person notwithstanding COVID restrictions, etc.)

Impact of Workplace Harassment:

- What were the consequences for you from experiencing harassment (health, isolation, job loss, etc.)?
- Have these experiences had an impact on your confidence, sense of self, feelings of self-worth, or other aspects of how you view yourself? If so, how?
- Have these experiences impacted how you view yourself as a worker? Your relationship with your employer or workplace? If so, how?
- How have these experiences impacted your relationships with those around you? How would you describe these changes?
 - Personal relationships, e.g., with family, friends, or children? For example, has your experience of trust with those relationships changed?
 - Work relationships, e.g., with co-workers or management?

Reporting & Retaliation

- Did you report your experience of harassment at your current or previous workplace? If so, how would you characterize that experience? Who did you tell/report to? Was it a formal or informal report?
 - Follow-up: What made you decide to report (or not)?
 - Follow-up: Were the outcome positive or negative for you? Why/why not?
 - Follow-up: What happened to the person who harassed you?
 - Was an investigation conducted? If so, were you informed of the outcomes? How long did the investigation take?
 - Follow-up: Do you think this process for reporting is effective? Please describe why/why not.
 - Follow-up: Are there changes you would like to see to the reporting procedures? If so, please describe.
- Have you or a coworker experienced retaliation for reporting or otherwise objecting to being harassed at work? If so, please describe.
 - Follow-up: Does retaliation differ based on whether it occurs before reporting or after?
 - Follow-up: What about retaliation more broadly, for example forms of retaliation (such as increased harassment) that might occur as a result of a worker rejecting someone's initial sexual advances?

Effective Supports and Areas for Improvement

- Was there anyone you shared your experiences with and, if so, how would you describe their response and the support you received, if any?
 - Did their response(s) meet your expectations? Why or why not?
 - Did their response change over time?

- Based on these responses, how did you cope with your experiences? (For example, going to private therapy, exercising, withdrawal, etc.)
- Thinking about the current supports at your workplace available to workers who experience harassment, what do you think is effective?
- What are the changes and/or improvements that you would like to see? This could include ways to improve existing supports and resources or thinking of new ones.
- Thinking about your work environment, what kinds of things might prevent or encourage harassment?
 - Follow-up: Are there changes you would like to see in your workplace? If so, please describe.

Workplace Practices Related to Preventing and Responding to Harassment and Supporting Workers:

Resources and Supports

- What kind of measures helped (or would have helped you) to get through your situation?
- What resources or supports are available in your workplace for those who experience harassment at work?
 - Follow-up: Are these internal or external to your workplace? Both?
 - Follow-up: What are your thoughts on these resources/supports? Are they effective?
 - Follow-up: What would you change about them?
- Are there resources or supports outside of your workplace that you have found helpful? If so, please describe them.
 - Follow-up: What prompted you to connect with them?
 - Follow-up: Do you feel these external resources would be able to provide support for workers that have experienced harassment at work?
- Does your workplace have a policy on harassment?
 - Follow-up: Was it readily available or you? /Easy to access?
 - Follow-up: Did it contain information that was useful/helpful (e.g., reporting procedures, investigations procedures, deadlines for filing, etc.)?
- Did you take legal steps or speak to a lawyer about your experience(s)? Why? What were your expectations?

Barriers/Challenges

- What kinds of challenges or barriers might people at your workplace that are experiencing harassment face?
 - Follow-up: Thinking about sexual harassment, do the barriers/challenges change? Are there additional ones?
 - Follow-up: Are there issues specific to workers social and/or employment status? For example, issues related to gender, race, length and type of employment, language, sexual orientation, etc.
- What do you think could be done to change this/protect workers?

Training

- What kinds of training or information (if any) have you received related to harassment at work?
 - Follow-up: What did you think about them?

Closing:

- What areas do you think we should pay more attention to regarding harassment at work?
- What kinds of outcomes do you hope to see from our research?
- Do you have any additional comments or things that are important for us to know that we have not touched on already?

Reminder to researcher: Check in with the participant before concluding the interview. Remind them of the resource list provided to them prior to the interview/via email.

Thank you very much for your time!

Jillian Auger

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology graduate with skills developed in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), conducting behavioural assessments, group counselling, mental health support, and working in interdisciplinary teams servicing a range of populations: children, adolescents, and adults with developmental or mental health disabilities, and adult offenders.
 - Attained Dean's List with distinction throughout post-secondary while engaging in volunteer and field placement positions.
 - Poster presenter at the 2020 International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies virtual conference.
 - Demonstrated ability to provide bilingual treatment plans addressing emotional regulation, crisis intervention, and conflict regulation skills with 1300 hours of placement experience.
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EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Education Studies in Counselling Psychology at Western University 2021 – 2023

Honours Bachelor's Degree of Behavioural Psychology at St. Lawrence College 2016 – 2020

WORK EXPERIENCE

Intern Counsellor (Part-time) – Anova Sexual Assault Counselling September 2022- May 2023

- Acted as intern psychotherapist with full caseload of clients for ongoing sessions focused on the healing process following an experience of sexual assault or abuse.
- Developed and implemented content for group therapy sessions for clients on the waitlist to encourage building coping and grounding strategies prior to beginning therapy.
- Explored therapeutic goals with clients in order to create a plan of action that allowed for processing and healing in a way that intended to actively avoid retraumatization.

Youth Crisis Worker (Full-time) – Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa March 2021-August 2021

- Engaged with youth in crisis over the phone or online chat, assessing level of risk and collaborating on safety plans with youth and families.
- Provided referrals and resources related to child and youth services in the community, and offering short-term virtual follow-up to support with transition between services.

Behaviour Therapist (Part-time) – Ottawa Art Therapy Inc. April 2020-March 2021

- Worked with individual clients teaching academic, social, fine-motor, and communication skills using Applied Behaviour Analysis principles.
 - Experienced using natural environment training strategies with early learners.
 - Conducted ABLLS assessments related to the client's abilities and progress.
 - Supported adolescents with emotion regulation and grounding techniques when navigating difficult emotions and social skill acquisition.
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PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

Co-Facilitator in Group Counselling for Domestic Violence Offenders Sept.- Dec. 2019
Resolve Counselling Services Kingston (Full-time)

- Actively engaged with victim support, crisis intervention, and providing resources or referrals as needed, controlled documentation of confidential client files and academic research.
- Co-facilitated Partner Assault Response (PAR) group counselling sessions and assisted with healthy relationship skill discussions.

- Contributed to program development by creating evidence-based psychoeducational handouts for participants in the PAR program.

Assistant Behaviour Analyst (Full-time) – Ottawa Art Therapy Inc.

March- April 2019

- Co-facilitated art therapy group sessions for youth who experienced child abuse, using evidence informed counselling and psychoeducation to create safety plans, containment strategies, and building mental health supports.
- One-on-one and group work with children with Autism, implementing individualized applied behaviour analysis (ABA) programs, and guided creative expression for children of various intellectual abilities who are nonverbal with various mediums of visual and instrumental arts.
- Increased compliance for a child on the Autism spectrum to 100% of opportunities, over 60% above baseline.

Behavioural Assistant (Full-time) - Limestone District Schoolboard

Nov.- Dec. 2017

- Supported students in a French-Immersion classroom with written, oral, and reading work.
- Assessed a student's needs using evidence-informed practices to create a behavioural intervention for a child victim of trauma, reducing the high-risk behaviours including property destruction and aggression by 80%.
- Participated in group meetings on an interdisciplinary team for the client while increasing communication and implementation success with teachers, social workers, and other professionals.
- Engaged with French-immersion students daily to create a positive environment while assisting the teachers with classroom preparations.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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|---|-----------|
| • Working Through Trauma seminar series | 2023 |
| • Healthy Relationship Groups, Youth program | 2023 |
| • Bilingual Certification, Level B2 | 2021 |
| • Safewards | 2021 |
| • Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) | 2019 |
| • Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training (CPI) | 2019 |
| • Safety Modules completed: | 2016-2019 |
| ○ AODA, WHMIS | |
| ○ Integrated accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) Training | |
| ○ Training on Human Rights Code (OHRC) | |
| ○ Occupational Health and Safety Awareness Training for Workers | |
| ○ Workplace Violence, Harassment Employee Training (Ontario Bill 168) | |
| • G Drivers License | 2018 |

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Best Buddy Volunteer

2016 - 2020

- Organized community outings and activities with a person who has a form of developmental disability, fostering friendship and connection.

Connect Youth Inc.

2019

- Attended Connect Youth student support and connection activities, including mental health awareness and homeless youth initiatives.
- Assisted planning future group activities to promote inclusion during a high school's spare period.