

The Facts Behind the

#metoo

Movement:

A National Study on Sexual
Harassment and Assault



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*Stop Street Harassment
Reston, Virginia · February 2018*

A NATIONAL STUDY ON SEXUAL
HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT

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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS AND AUTHOR

Stop Street Harassment

Stop Street Harassment (SSH) commissioned this study. SSH is a volunteer-run nonprofit organization dedicated to documenting and ending gender-based street harassment worldwide through public education and community mobilization. Our work includes the annual International Anti-Street Harassment Week, the National Street Harassment Hotline, a blog correspondents program, and website resources. Visit: www.stopstreetharassment.org.

GfK

GfK conducted the 2,000-person survey online using the Knowledge Panel, the largest probability based online panel that is representative of the general population. GfK is the trusted source of relevant market and consumer information that enables its clients to make smarter decisions. More than 13,000 market research experts combine their passion with GfK's 80 years of data science experience. This allows GfK to deliver vital global insights matched with local market intelligence from more than 100 countries. By using innovative technologies and data sciences, GfK turns big data into smart data, enabling its clients to improve their competitive edge and enrich consumers' experiences and choices. Learn more at www.gfk.com.

Raliance

Raliance is a national collaborative committed to ending sexual violence in one generation. Comprised of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), and California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA)–PreventConnect, Raliance was founded in 2015 through a multi-million-dollar seed investment by the National Football League. They are making prevention possible by awarding grants, advancing research, policymaking and more. Visit: <http://www.raliance.org/>.

UC San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health

The Center on Gender Equity and Health aims to improve population health and development by improving the status, opportunities and safety of women and girls, globally. The overarching goal of the Center is reducing gender inequities and gender-based violence to improve population health, through research and training. To achieve sustainable and large-scale change, the Center seeks and maintains partnerships with governmental and non-governmental agencies around the globe. A social justice framework is utilized by the Center, and innovative technologies are employed to facilitate change at individual, community and national levels. Visit: <http://gph.ucsd.edu/cgeh>.

Holly Kearl

Holly Kearl authored the report. She is the founder of SSH, the author of three books about street harassment, and the author or co-author of two other national studies on sexual harassment. She has consulted and advised various organizations about sexual harassment, including UN Women, WMATA, New York City Council, Lyft, and Runner's World. She works as a community manager at the Aspen Institute. She wrote her master's thesis on street harassment at The George Washington University.

SSH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The full SSH Advisory Committee reviewed the survey questions and several members reviewed the report draft, providing valuable input on both.

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In addition to the Advisory Committee whose input helped inform this study and report, the following entities and individuals played a primary role in funding, shaping and ensuring this project succeeded:

Raliance contributed to the funding of the survey and provided key strategic counsel and expertise throughout the process. Special thanks to Raliance representatives Laura Palumbo, the Communications Director for the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, and David Lee, Director of Prevention at the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault/PreventConnect.

Pro bono data analysis was provided by staff at the University of California, San Diego's Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH), namely, by the Center's Director, Dr. Anita Raj and Research Analyst Nicole Johns. Staff member Natalie Wyss created the charts used in the report. GEH also contributed funds to cover expenses associated with the report, like the SPSS file and the collection of additional demographics, like disability and sexual orientation.

DEFINITIONS FOR THE REPORT

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines sexual violence as “a sexual act that is committed or attempted by another person without freely given consent of the victim or against someone who is unable to consent or refuse.”¹

This is inclusive of forced sex acts, as well as unwanted non-penetrative sexual contact, or non-contact unwanted sexual experiences.

For this report, we used the terms as follows, delineating forced sex acts from other sexual abuses and using the terms sexual assault and sexual harassment, to be more consistent with the terms of the #MeToo movement.

Sexual assault:

This term involves a sexual act that someone was forced to do against their will and without their consent.

Sexual harassment:

This term includes verbal sexual harassment (e.g., sexually explicit talk, homophobic slurs, repeated requests for a date after a person has said no), cyber sexual harassment (the use of text/phone and Internet to sexually harass), and physically aggressive sexual harassment (flashing or indecent exposure, being physically followed and being touched or brushed up against in a sexual way without consent). Forced sex acts are excluded from this term for this study.

¹ Basile KC, et al. 2014. “Sexual Violence Surveillance: Uniform Definitions and Recommended Data Elements, Version 2.0.” National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv_surveillance_definitionsI-2009-a.pdf.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sexual harassment and assault are widespread problems that cause pain, limit people's lives, and impact communities and society. The findings in this study are a necessary wake-up call to leaders and ordinary citizens alike to examine our culture in the United States to understand how it allows so much sexual abuse to take place, particularly against women and other historically marginalized communities. Not only is it necessary to understand the scope of this issue, but it is imperative for people from all walks of life to work on both short-term and long-term concerted and coordinated efforts to prevent sexual harassment and assault.

Methodology

This report presents the findings of a nationally representative survey of approximately 1,000 women and 1,000 men, ages 18 and up conducted online using the GfK Knowledge Panel, the largest probability based online panel, representative of the general population. GfK, a top surveying firm, conducted the survey in January 2018, and the UC San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health conducted all data analyses.

Key Findings

1. Sexual harassment and assault pose a significant problem, especially for women.

81% of women and 43% of men reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment and/or assault in their lifetime.

- More than 3 in 4 women (77%) and 1 in 3 men (34%) experienced verbal sexual harassment;
- 1 in 2 women (51%) and 1 in 6 men (17%) were sexually touched in an unwelcome way;
- Around 4 in 10 women (41%) and 1 in 4 men (22%) experienced cyber sexual harassment;
- More than 1 in 3 women (34%) and 1 in 10 men (12%) were physically followed;
- Close to 1 in 3 women (30%) and 1 in 10 men (12%) faced unwanted genital flashing;
- More than 1 in 4 women (27%) and 1 in 14 men (7%) survived sexual assault.

2. Women with disabilities are more likely than women without disabilities to report experiencing assault.

Sexual harassment and assault is so common for women that most differences by demographic are insignificant. One example of an exception is disability status. 40% of women with disabilities reported experiencing sexual assault compared with 23% of women without disabilities.

3. Men in socially marginalized groups are more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment and assault than other men.

Among men, those in socially marginalized groups were more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment and assault than other men. This is especially true of sexual assault and includes Hispanic men, men with disabilities, men living below the poverty level and gay and bisexual men — in addition to men in rural areas.

4. Sexual harassment and assault incidents often begin at a young age.

Among those who reported experiencing sexual harassment and assault, 57% of women and 42% of men said it had happened by age 17. High school-age, 14-to-17-years-old, was the most frequently selected age people reported for their first experience (27% women, 20% men).

5. Sexual harassment takes place across a range of locations, but the most frequently listed location is a public space.

Women most frequently reported sexual harassment in a public space (66% of women), at their workplace (38% of women), and at their residence (35% of women) in terms of location. Men's most frequently reported locations were a public space (19% of men), their school (14% of men), and for 13% of men, their workplace, own residence, and by phone/text, each respectively.

6. Most sexual assault takes place in private homes or residences.

For sexual assault, women listed someone else's residence (15%) and their own residence (11%) as the top locations. Men listed someone else's residence (2%) and a public space (2%).

7. A public space is the most frequently reported location for a person's first experience of sexual harassment and the place where it occurs the most overall.

A public space was the location most frequently reported by respondents for their first experience of sexual harassment (37% of women and 29% of men), and where they experienced it the most across their lifetime (38% of women, 27% of men).

8. Sexual harassment and assault are most frequently perpetrated by men, and most often by strangers for harassment and a known person for assault.

When persons who had experienced some form of sexual harassment and assault were asked about the perceived gender of the perpetrator/s in their most recent incident, 85% of women and 44% of men reported either one male or two or more males. In contrast, 30% of men and 3% of women reported one female or two or more females. For those reporting only sexual harassment, the most frequently reported perpetrator across their life was a stranger in person. For those reporting sexual assault, it was a family member/relative, friend, or romantic partner.

9. Most people experience sexual harassment across multiple locations.

Among persons who experienced sexual harassment and assault, 88% of women and 86% of men reported experiencing it in more than one location and most indicated at least 4-5 locations.

10. Sexual harassment and assault cause persons across all demographics to feel anxiety or depression and prompt them to change their route or routine.

Among those who reported experiencing sexual harassment and assault, 31% of women and 20% of men said they felt anxiety or depression, while 23% of women and 12% of men changed their route or regular routine.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2017, numerous women in Hollywood came forward with sexual abuse allegations against Harvey Weinstein, an incredibly influential film producer with the power to make or break careers. While stories about sexual abuse are not new, the climate of the country was such that the stories about Weinstein and the individuals and institutions complicit with his abusive behaviors hit a nerve.

Long before this national moment, Tarana Burke created a “Me Too” movement in 2007 to help victims of sexual harassment and assault. Initially inadvertently building on Burke’s work, on October 15, 2017, actress Alyssa Milano invited people to use a #MeToo hashtag to show just how widespread sexual harassment and assault are in the United States beyond Weinstein and the stories in the headlines. Soon, millions of people had used the hashtag. Within a few days, Facebook reported that 45% of users in the US had at least one friend who had posted #MeToo on their timeline.²

Now, four months later, dozens of high-profile men have been fired or resigned from their jobs in the entertainment, arts, political, sports, and business industries because of women and some men who came forward with their allegations of abuse. In many cases the accounts of abuse were confirmed by multiple victims sharing similar stories about the same perpetrator, showing a clear pattern of abuse and predatory behavior, which was all too often ignored by individuals and institutions who failed to hold these perpetrators accountable.

Many of the #MeToo headlines and media stories have focused on wealthy and/or white women’s experiences, specifically in the workplace. Part of the reason for this oversight is the lack of recent data documenting the entirety of the problem.

Initially in October 2017, SSH received inquiries from journalists asking if there was a study that tracked a single statistic on the full scope of sexual abuses women face, including sexual harassment and assault, across locations like workplaces and public spaces. As it turned out, existing research was segmented (such as SSH’s 2014 national study on sexual harassment in public spaces³ or AAUW’s 2011 national

#MeToo Origins

Tarana Burke created a “Me Too” movement in 2007 to help victims of sexual harassment and assault. In October 2017, actress Alyssa Milano helped popularize the term with this tweet.



² “More than 12M ‘Me Too’ Facebook posts, comments, reactions in 24 hours.” CBS News. 17 October 2017. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/metoo-more-than-12-million-facebook-posts-comments-reactions-24-hours/>.

³ SSH. 2014. “Unsafe and Harassed in Public Spaces: A National Street Harassment Report.” <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/our-work/nationalstudy/>.

study on sexual harassment in grades 7-12⁴) and often dated. Further, while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a comprehensive study, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)⁵ that encompasses many of the behaviors tracked in this study, it focuses more heavily on physical forms and does not distinguish respondents' experiences by locations like public spaces, workplaces, schools and homes.

So, when asked for one, comprehensive figure across locations, the answer was complicated and not easily ascertainable. They also wanted to see where these abuses most often occur and who demographically was at greater risk and while the CDC NISVS has demographic information for sexual violence, it again was not available across the locations where such violence typically occurs. Nor does it break down who perpetrators are in relation to the people they harm. Now, thanks to the help of our partners, donors and advisory committee, we have that information.

This report contains the facts and figures behind the #MeToo movement and the stories so many people have shared. But the findings go beyond #MeToo.

The findings demonstrate that this is not just an issue that affects women; it affects any group that is marginalized. The findings show that sexual harassment and assault are abuses of power, disrespect, and disregard for human dignity. And, long after #MeToo fades away, these findings will remain to show how far we must go to ensure that everyone who lives in the United States feels free and safe from sexual abuse, from the time they are born until the time they die.

The report covers information on these five main topics:

- 1) The prevalence of sexual harassment and assault overall.
- 2) The locations where sexual harassment and assault take place.
- 3) When sexual harassment and assault occurs, from persons' first experience to their most recent.
- 4) The perpetrators of sexual harassment and assault.
- 5) How sexual harassment and assault makes people feel and what they do because of it.

Demographic information is broken down by gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, household income, disability, age, and region of the country for each section, when the sample size allowed.

Methodology

SSH commissioned a nationally representative survey of women and men on sexual harassment and assault with top surveying firm GfK (www.gfk.com). GfK recruited and surveyed a total sample of N=2009 adults aged 18 and older, all of whom were required to complete a forced choice item on sex, in which they identified themselves as female (n=996) or male (n=1013). Half the sample were surveyed between January 12-14, 2018, and the second half between January 19-21, 2018.

⁴ AAUW. 2011. "Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School." <https://www.aauw.org/research/crossing-the-line/>.

⁵ Smith, S.G., et al. 2017. "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report." National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.

The GfK KnowledgePanel is the largest national, probability-based online panel in the marketplace, allowing study results to be projectable to the general population with sample weighting. The weighted sample yields n=1000 women and n=1000 men. The representativeness of the GfK panel sample, including hard-to-reach groups, has been documented in numerous academic papers. Their approach differs from the typical opt-in panel in the following ways:

- To recruit panel members, GfK uses address-based sampling — a probability-based approach that includes cell-phone only households — as the primary methodology.
- For non-Internet households, GfK provides Internet access and a laptop for the completion of online surveys. Thus, the sample is not limited to only those who already have Internet access.

The survey included this introductory text, to clarify how pervasive the assessed behaviors are and the confidentiality of the survey, a typical practice for surveys on sensitive topics:

“This survey is focused on people’s experiences with sexual harassment and abuse, which includes all forms of **unwanted** sexual, homophobic, transphobic and/or sexist experiences across all areas of their lives. These things can happen to anyone, and we want to understand better the different ways and places these types of experiences occur. This information has never been collected in this way on a national level, making your participation in this survey very important. Your answers to the questions will be strictly confidential. We are not collecting your name nor any identifying information.

If you have experienced sexual harassment and abuse, we appreciate and honor you for sharing your experiences in the survey. We know it can be upsetting and challenging. The information from the survey will help advocates, policymakers and educators better understand how to address these issues and make communities safer for everyone. Your help matters, and it will make a difference.”

The full survey is available at tinyurl.com/ShaNationalStudy2018.

Who Took the Survey?

All data were analyzed by the UC San Diego’s Center on Gender Equity and Health. To determine the representativeness of the sample in the US, they made comparisons to national data.

Gender: 1,013 males and 996 females (based on the forced choice response on gender) took the survey and this was weighted to become a sample size of 1000 males and 1000 females.

Note: There was an item that asked respondents for their preferred gender identity, with the options of cisgender, transgender, or other. For this response, 13 people identified as transgender (3 female and 10 male), five people identified as other (2 male and 3 female), and 63 people did not respond to this question (28 female and 35 male). Due to the small size of people who did not identify as cisgender and in order to include all participants for analysis, the forced choice gender item was used to define the male and female subsamples (996 females and 1013 males) in our analyses.

Region: Geographic distribution is on par with the 2017 US Census information.⁶ Thirty-eight percent of the sample was from the South (685 persons), 18% came from the Northeast (279 persons); 21% from the Midwest (465 persons), and 24% from the West (480 persons). The majority (76%) resided in an urban/suburban area; 16% were rural, and 8% did not report on this.

Age: Among respondents, 28% were aged 18 to 34, 24% aged 35 to 49, 27% aged 50 to 64, and 20% aged 65 and older. Because persons under 18 years old were not included in the survey, the percentages for the age groups that were included are larger than the general population. Also, the 2010 Census does not have the exact same age groups. But for a comparison, 37% of people in the 2010 Census were age 18 to 44 years, 26% were 45 to 64 years, and 13% were 65 years or older.⁷

Race/Ethnicity: Participants were mostly non-Hispanic White (64%). An additional 16% were Hispanic; 12% were non-Hispanic Black, and 8% were mixed-race/other race (8%). This was comparable to the US population as a whole, which is 77% non-Hispanic White, 18% Hispanic, and 13% non-Hispanic Black.⁸

Income: Fifteen percent of participants resided in households with an annual income below \$25,000, which is below poverty for the average sized household in the United States,⁹ and a comparable prevalence to the 13% of people living below poverty seen nationally.¹⁰

Sexual Orientation: For the total sample, 8% reported being gay/lesbian or bisexual, which is higher than national data indicating that 4% of people in the US identify as gay/lesbian, bisexual or transgender.¹¹

Disability: One in four respondents reported having some type of disability (23%), which is comparable to national data indicating that 19% of those in the general population live with a disability.¹² The disabilities included blindness or severe visual impairment; deafness or hard of hearing; a long-lasting condition/s affecting physical abilities; and a long-lasting condition/s affecting intellectual abilities.

Gender Identity: Thirteen people identified as transgender and five people identified as other. The rest of the respondents identified as cisgender. This is on par with the US population, in which about one-half-of-a-percent of adults identify as transgender.¹³ As noted above, because there were so few persons who did not identify as cisgender, those 18 people were categorized as the gender they selected in order to include them in the analysis. Generally, to be able to say anything meaningful about the experiences of

⁶ US Census. "US Population Growth by Region." 2017.

https://www.census.gov/popclock/data_tables.php?component=growth.

⁷ US Census. "Age and Sex Composition." 2010. <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-03.pdf>.

⁸ US Census. "Quick Facts: United States." n.d. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045216>.

⁹ US Census. "Poverty Thresholds. Preliminary Estimate of Weighted Average Poverty Thresholds for 2017." 2017. <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html>.

¹⁰ US Census. "Quick Facts: United States." n.d. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045216>.

¹¹ Gallup News. "In U.S., More Adults Identifying as LGBT." Social & Policy Issues. Jan 11, 2017.

<http://news.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx>.

¹² US Census. "2017 U.S. Census Bureau Disability Statistics Facts for Features." 2017.

<https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/statistics/cbfff.php>.

¹³ The Williams Institute. "How Many Adults Identify as Transgender in the United States?" 2016.

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf>.

transgender individuals, research must be conducted solely on that population, otherwise the sample size is much too small for direct comparisons to cisgender respondents.

Notably, there were no significant differences by sex on the above variables, though women were marginally more likely than men to be poor and disabled ($p=.07$), which is also seen nationally in US Census data.

Study Limitations

1. **Sample:** By creating a nationally representative sample, some groups like transgender or gender non-conforming folks, Native Americans and Asian Americans, were too small in number to allow for findings specific to these populations. Fortunately, other research has been conducted on various smaller demographics. Appendix B highlights examples of studies on specific demographic groups whose experiences are unable to be reflected in the current study. Also, this survey excluded persons without phones, such as persons in prison or jail.
2. **Age:** Due to the added expense and challenge of gaining parental consent for this topic, the sample is limited to those aged 18 and older. To compensate for not having younger persons' experiences included, we asked respondents about their earliest sexual abuse experiences.
3. **Survey Length:** Due to a limited budget and to conduct the study quickly, the survey was limited to eight-questions. It is SSH's hope that this survey can inspire other institutions and organizations to procure more funding and time to undertake larger and more comprehensive studies to build upon issues this survey brings forward – or missed.

SURVEY FINDINGS

All survey respondents answered the first of eight questions to indicate whether they had experienced sexual harassment and/or assault. They were shown 14 types of sexual harassment and also, sexual assault. They were asked to select the type/s of sexual harassment and assault they have experienced and where it occurred (with 16 location options). If they answered “none,” the survey concluded. Respondents who selected at least one sexual harassment or assault experience went on to answer seven more questions.

Analyses were weighted to provide nationally representative prevalence estimates. Bivariate analyses and significance testing ($p < .05$) were conducted to assess associations between sexual harassment and assault on key demographics, when the sample size allowed.

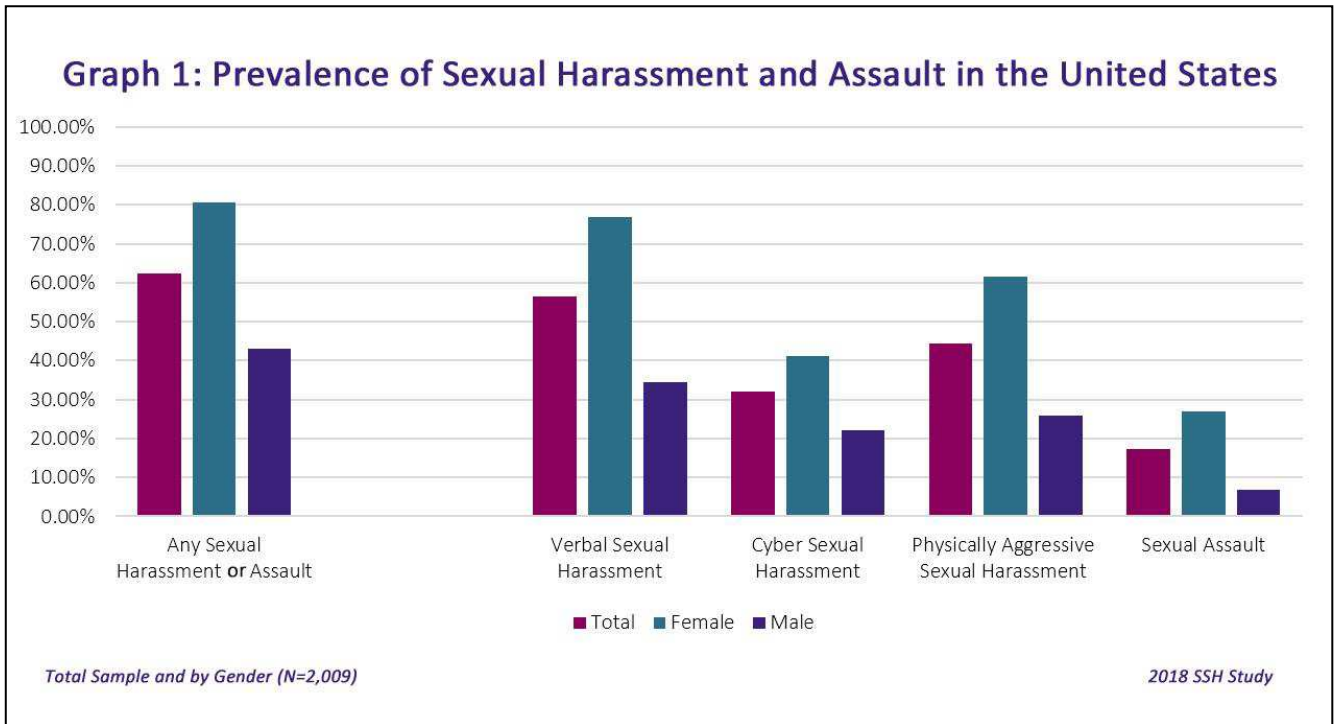
Prevalence of Sexual Harassment and Assault

Sexual harassment and assault pose a significant problem in the United States.

From verbal to virtual to physical forms, millions of people in the United States experience sexual harassment and/or assault, especially those who are: female, low-income, a person of color, identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, or live with a disability.

Most women (81%) and many men (43%) in the survey reported experiencing sexual harassment and/or assault (see Graph 1).

- **Verbal sexual harassment** is most common, as reported by 77% of women and 34% of men.
- **Physically aggressive forms of sexual harassment** were reported by 62% of women and 26% of men. This more severe form of sexual harassment included being sexually touched in an unwelcome way (51% of women and 17% of men); being physically followed (34% of women and 12% of men); and being flashed or shown genitals against their will (30% of women and 12% of men).
- **Cyber sexual harassment** (via text, phone, on-line) was reported by 41% of women and 22% of men.
- **Sexual assault** was reported by an alarming 27% of women and 7% of men, and almost every person had also experienced sexual harassment.



The top five most frequently selected forms of sexual harassment and assault by gender are:

Women:

- Someone whistling, honking, making kissy noises, “Pssst” sounds, or leering/staring aggressively at you. (65%)
- Someone saying things like, “Hey Baby,” “Mmmm Sexy,” “Yo Shorty,” “Mami/Mamacita,” “Give me a smile,” or similar comments in a way that is disrespectful and/or unwanted and/or made you feel unsafe. (59%)
- Someone purposely touching you or brushing up against you in an unwelcome, sexual way. (51%)
- Someone calling you a sexist slur, like “Bitch,” “Slut,” “Cunt,” “Ho” or “Thot.” (46%)
- Someone talking about your body parts inappropriately or offensively (such as your legs, crotch, butt, or breasts), saying sexually explicit comments (“I want to do BLANK to you”) or asking inappropriate sexual questions. (43%)

Men:

- Someone misgendering you or calling you a homophobic or transphobic slur, like “Fag,” “Dyke,” or “Tranny.” (17%)
- Someone purposely touching you or brushing up against you in an unwelcome, sexual way. (17%)

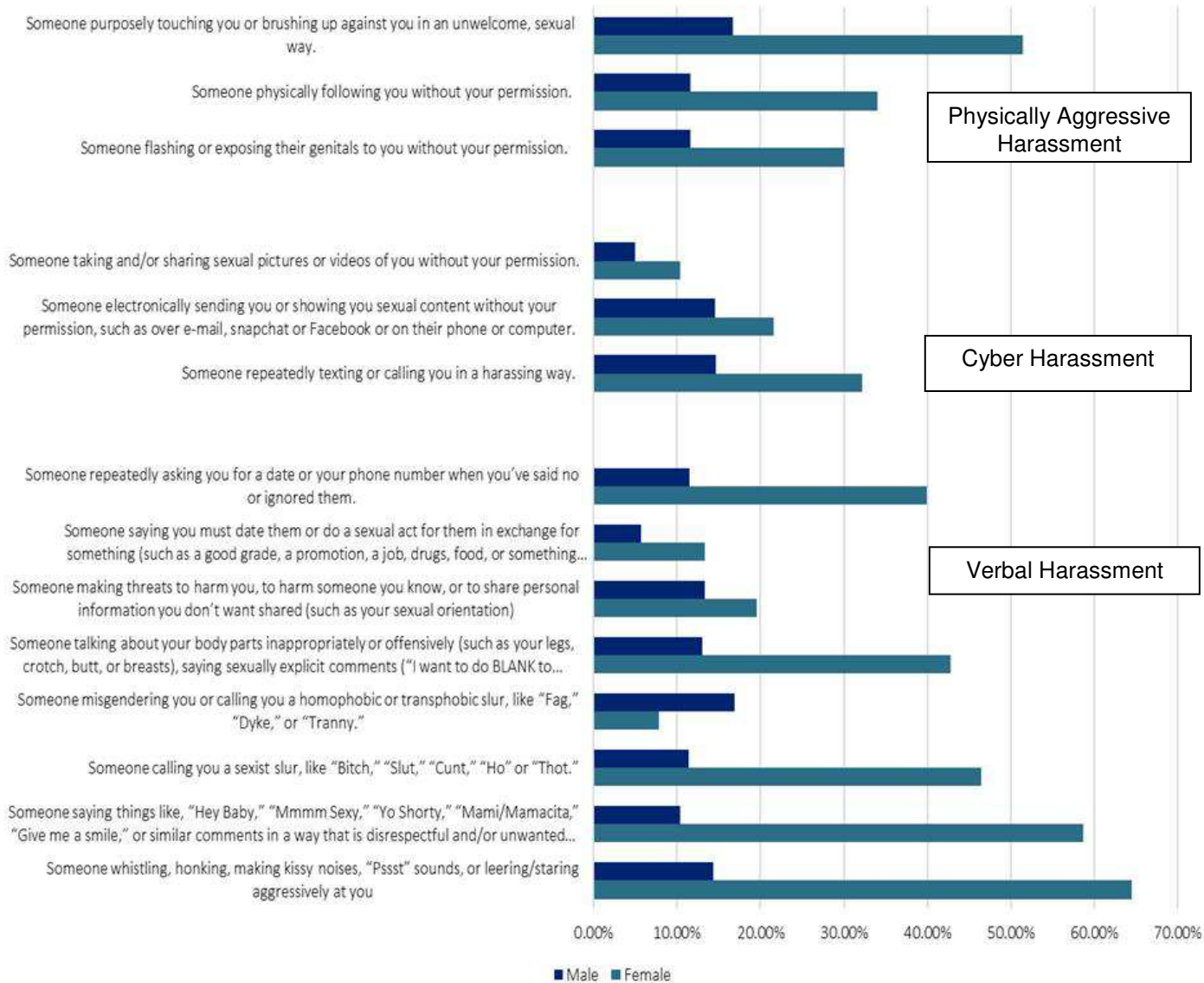
- Someone repeatedly texting or calling you in a harassing way. (15%)
- Someone electronically sending you or showing you sexual content without your permission, such as over e-mail, snapchat or Facebook or on their phone or computer. (15%)
- Someone whistling, honking, making kissy noises, “Pssst” sounds, or leering/staring aggressively at you. (14%)

See Graph 2 for more information.

It is also worth highlighting the following two findings:

- Being called a homophobic or transphobic slur was the most frequently selected form of sexual harassment for men (17%), while it was the least for women (8%).
- Quid-pro-quo sexual harassment (in this context meaning “something for something” between someone with power over someone else) was not as frequently selected as other forms, but it was still notable. Around 13% of women and 5% of men said someone told them they must date them or do a sexual act for them in exchange for something (such as a good grade, a promotion, a job, drugs, food, or something similar) or instead of something (like paying rent or a citation).

Graph 2: Most Frequently Experienced Forms of Sexual Harassment



996 Females, 1013 Males

2018 SSH Study

Prevalence of Sexual Harassment and Assault by Various Demographics

Overall, sexual harassment and assault are so common for women of all backgrounds, that most differences by demographic are not statistically significant. Two main exceptions are disability status and sexual orientation. Women with disabilities and women who identify as lesbian or bisexual were more likely to report experiencing sexual assault than women without disabilities and straight women, respectively.

Among men, those in marginalized groups were more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment and, especially, sexual assault. This includes Hispanic men, men with disabilities, men living below the poverty line, gay and bisexual men and men in rural areas.

Race/Ethnicity

Any slight difference in experiences across racial/ethnic groups for women was not statistically significant.

Overall, among men, Hispanic men reported experiencing sexual harassment and assault the most for every category, while Black men reported experiencing it the least for almost every category. This difference across racial/ethnic groups was particularly significant for physically aggressive harassment (36% of Hispanic men versus 25% of White men and 18% of Black men) and for sexual assault (12% of Hispanic men versus 8% of Black men and 6% of White men).

Sexual Orientation

While the difference in sexual harassment based on sexual orientation for women was not statistically significant, lesbian and bisexual respondents reported experiencing each type slightly more than straight women. The difference for sexual assault was significant, however: 48% of lesbian or bisexual women reported experiencing sexual assault compared with 25% of straight women.

The difference in all sexual harassment and assault experiences based on sexual orientation for men was significant. Notably, 42% of gay and bisexual men reported facing physically aggressive sexual harassment compared with 25% of straight men, and 19% of gay and bisexual men reported experiencing sexual assault compared with 6% of straight men.

Household Income

Overall, there was little difference based on annual household income for sexual harassment for both women and men; by a small but significant margin, those in the household income bracket of \$50k to \$74.9k were the most likely to experience sexual harassment.

When it came to sexual assault, women and men in the under \$25k category (below the poverty level) were the most likely to report experiencing sexual assault (36% for women and 16% for men), though increased risk for sexual assault among those living below poverty was significant for men but not for women.

Disability

Persons with disabilities were significantly more likely to experience all forms of sexual harassment and assault than people without disabilities. The strongest findings were for the more severe forms, for

physically aggressive sexual harassment (among women, 69% vs 59%, and among men, 39% vs 23%, for those with and without a disability, respectively) and sexual assault (among women, 40% vs 23%, and among men, 18% vs 4%, for those with and without a disability, respectively).¹⁴ See Table 1.

	Physically Aggressive Sexual Harassment	Sexual Assault
Women with Disabilities	69%	40%
Women without Disabilities	59%	23%
Men with Disabilities	39%	18%
Men without Disabilities	23%	4%

Age

Persons were asked about their experiences of sexual harassment and assault *ever*, so one would expect older respondents to be more likely to report experiences than younger respondents. This was not the case. Overall, participants in our older categories (50 to 64 and 65 and older) were the least likely to report experiencing sexual harassment and assault, with the 65 and older age group revealing even lower levels compared to the 50 to 64-year-olds.¹⁵

Age + Women

Age was significantly related to reports of sexual harassment and assault among women. Women in the 25 to 34-year-old category were the most likely to report experiencing nearly all forms of sexual harassment and assault, while women in the 65+ category were the least likely to report experiencing every form, except for physically aggressive harassment. See Table 2.

¹⁴ Unpublished federal crime data obtained by NPR in January 2018 from the Justice Department found that people with intellectual disabilities are “sexually assaulted at a rate seven times higher than those without disabilities.” <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/08/570224090/the-sexual-assault-epidemic-no-one-talks-about>.

¹⁵ The reason for this lower reporting among the oldest individuals is unclear: 1) If most incidents of sexual abuse take place in people’s younger years, do older people not remember many of those incidents but they did have them? 2) Are older people less likely to identify the examples provided of sexual abuse as sexual abuse compared with younger people? 3) Did sexual harassment and assault occur less in decades past, perhaps due to fewer women being in public spaces, workplaces and institutions of higher education? 4) Were forms of sexual violence so normalized that older people do not identify them as abuse? 5) Some other reason?

Table 2: Prevalence by Age for Women

	Verbal Sexual Harassment	Physically Aggressive Sexual Harassment	Cyber Sexual Harassment	Sexual Assault
18-24	74%	50%	49%	24%
25-34	86%	67%	56%	32%
35-49	81%	68%	45%	29%
50-64	78%	64%	35%	28%
65+	66%	53%	30%	22%

Age + Men

Age was also related to sexual harassment and assault among men. Men aged 25 to 49 tended to report experiencing a higher prevalence of sexual harassment than those of other age groups, and men aged 35 to 49 were more likely to report experiencing sexual assault than all other age groups. See Table 3.

Table 3: Prevalence by Age for Men

	Verbal Sexual Harassment	Physically Aggressive Sexual Harassment	Cyber Sexual Harassment	Sexual Assault
18-24 years	29%	10%	22%	6%
25-34 years	37%	32%	27%	5%
35-49 years	45%	34%	27%	12%
50-64 years	30%	22%	18%	5%
65+ years	28%	25%	16%	6%

Urban/Suburban and Rural and Region

There was no increased risk for sexual harassment and assault based on urban/suburban versus rural residence for women generally, but urban women were significantly more likely than rural women to report experiencing sexual harassment in public settings. Men in rural areas were significantly more likely than men in urban/suburban to face all forms of sexual harassment and assault (for instance, 11% of rural men faced sexual assault versus 6% of men in urban/suburban areas).

Both male and female respondents from the Western United States were significantly more likely to report experiencing physically aggressive sexual harassment than the respondents in other regions. There were no other significant differences by region.

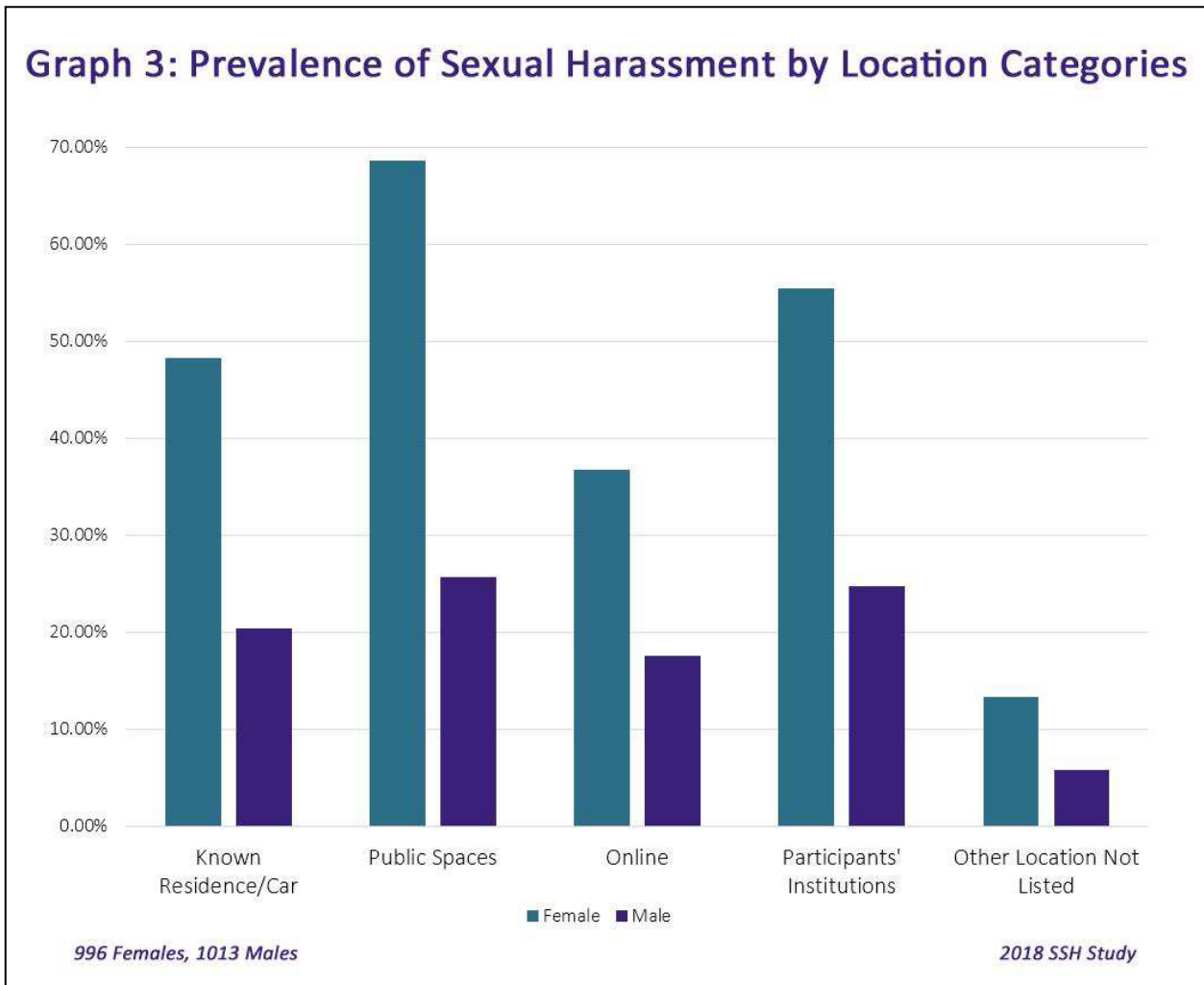
Locations Where Sexual Harassment and Assault Occur

A public space was the most frequently reported location for sexual harassment, and a private residence was the most frequently reported location for sexual assault.

The top five most selected locations for sexual harassment are as follows. See Table 4 for a complete list.

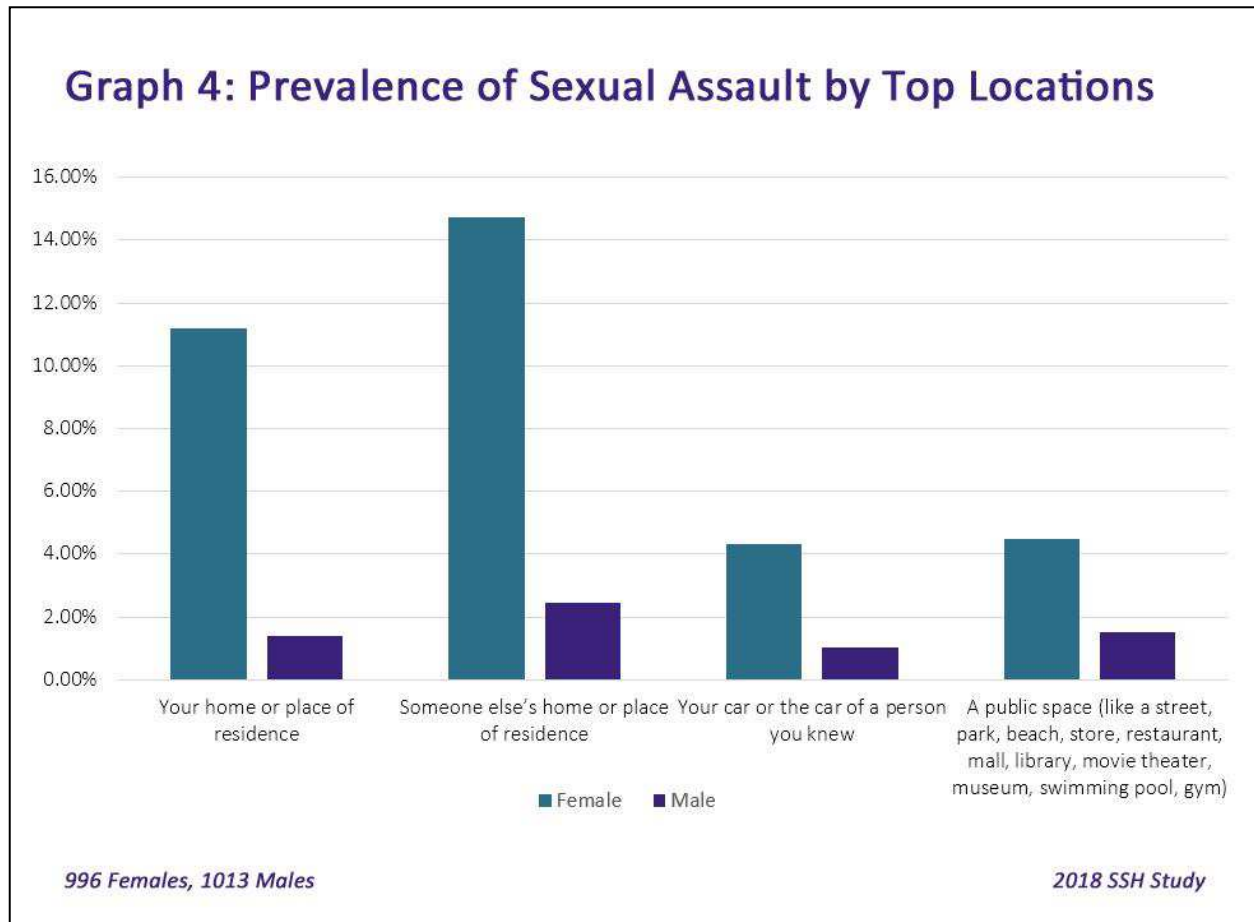
- Women: Most women (66%) reported experiencing sexual harassment in a public space, like on the street or in a store. Around one-third of all women reported experiencing sexual harassment in their workplace (38%), their home/residence (35%), a nightlife venue (33%) and their pre-K to 12th grade school (30%), respectively.
- Men: Among men, 19% reported experiencing sexual harassment in a public space, and 13-14% reported experiencing it at school, their home/residence, their workplace and by text/calls.

	Female	Male	Total
Known Residence/Car	48%	20%	35%
Your home or place of residence	35%	13%	25%
Someone else's home or place of residence	27%	11%	20%
Your car or the car of a person you knew	20%	6%	13%
Public Spaces	69%	26%	48%
A public space (like a street, park, beach, store, restaurant, mall, library, movie theater, museum, swimming pool, gym)	66%	19%	43%
Mass transportation (bus, subway, metro, train or airplane)	26%	8%	17%
Taxi or ride-sharing service driven by someone you didn't know	3%	3%	3%
Nightlife venue (like a concert, bar or club)	33%	12%	23%
Online	37%	18%	27%
Online (such as over e-mail or social media platforms)	25%	11%	19%
By phone (texting or calls)	28%	13%	21%
Participants' Institutions	56%	25%	41%
Your school (pre-school through 12 th grade)	30%	14%	22%
Your university or college or technical training school	16%	6%	11%
Your workplace, including temporary jobs and internships	38%	13%	26%
A health care facility	5%	2%	3%
A religious space or place of worship	4%	2%	3%
A location where you participate in a private hobby or club	6%	3%	5%
Other Location Not Listed	13%	6%	10%



Sexual Assault

Most sexual assaults took place in private homes/residences. Graph 4 lists the top four locations for sexual assault: Someone else’s home/place of residence (15% female, 2% male); The respondent’s home/place of residence (11% female, 1% male), a public space (4% female, 2% male), and the respondents’ car or car of someone they know (4% female, 1% male.)



Number of Locations

When looking at how many places people said they had experienced sexual harassment and assault, most people (88% of women and 86% of men) reported experiencing it in more than one location. Notably, 1 in 4 women (24%) had incidents across 6 to 10 locations, as had 6% of men. Eighteen percent of women said they had experiences in 4 to 5 locations, as had 7% of men. Around 22% of women and 14% of men said they had experienced sexual harassment and assault in 2 to 3 locations.

Locations of Sexual Harassment and Various Demographics

The next sections group the locations listed in Table 4 into four main categories: Public spaces, known residences/vehicles, online harassment and harassment at institutions (like schools, universities and workplaces). Also, the next sections only focus on sexual harassment (verbal, physically aggressive and cyber); sexual assault is *not* included.

Race/Ethnicity

There were no significant differences in locations of sexual harassment by race/ethnicity for women, except in the case of online harassment, which was significantly less likely to occur among White women relative to those of the other racial/ethnic groups (33% vs 41 to 46%).

There were no significant differences in locations of sexual harassment by race/ethnicity for men, except in the case of sexual harassment in public spaces, which was more likely experienced by Hispanic men (38%) and less likely by Black men (17%); 25% of White men and 20% of mixed-race or other race men reported experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces.

Sexual Orientation

Among women, there were no significant differences reported in location of sexual harassment by sexual orientation. However, among men, gay and bisexual men were at greater risk for harassment in public spaces, online and in institutional settings, relative to straight men. More than half of gay men (55%) reported experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces.

Household Income

Among both women and men, there were no significant and meaningful associations between income and sexual harassment by location.

Disability

Among women, sexual harassment in a private residence was significantly more likely among those with disabilities versus those without a disability. Among men, those with disabilities reported facing higher rates of harassment across all locations compared with men without disabilities.

Age

Among women, there were significant differences based on age across all locations of sexual harassment, with women aged 25 to 49 largely reporting the highest rates of sexual harassment across locations, and women aged 65 and older reporting the lowest rates. Notably, women aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 49 reported experiencing more online harassment.

Among men, significant findings were observed in age across all locations, with men aged 25 to 49 largely reporting the highest rates of sexual harassment in public spaces and private residences or vehicles, and men aged 18 to 49 reporting a higher prevalence of sexual harassment online and in institutions (such as schools) relative to older men.

Region

Among women, the most notable finding is that those residing in urban areas were significantly more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces (71% for urban women vs 59% for rural women).

Among men, those in rural areas were more likely than men in urban/suburban areas to report facing harassment in public spaces. Men in the Midwest and West relative to the Northeast and South were significantly more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment in institutional settings.

A public space is where most people first report experiencing sexual harassment and assault.

Among those reporting a history of sexual harassment and assault, the three most frequently selected locations for respondents' first experience of sexual harassment and assault generally mirror the most frequent locations overall: A public space like the street, store, or park (33% women, 26% men); a private home or residence for women (29%) and school for men (22%); and school for women (14%) and a private home or residence for men (17%). See Table 5 for a full list.

Table 5: The Locations of First Experiences*

(n=1263, 817 Female, 446 Male)

	Female	Male	Total
A private home or residence	29%	17%	25%
Public space	37%	29%	34%
Public space (like street, park, store, mall, movie theater, pool, restaurant, club, bar, gym)	33%	26%	31%
Mass transportation (car, bus, train, subway, taxi, airplane)	4%	3%	4%
Online	3%	4%	3%
Institutions	26%	40%	31%
School (pre-school to 12th grade)	14%	22%	17%
College or university or technical training school	3%	3%	3%
Your workplace	8%	13%	10%
A religious space or place of worship	1%	2%	1%
Health care facility (doctor's or dentist's office, hospital, urgent care, counselor's office)	>1%	1%	>1%
Other/Not Specified Location	5%	8%	6%

* The percentages for females and males will appear similar in this question and the subsequent questions, but because the percentages are for respondents who said they experienced sexual harassment or assault, around double the number of women has had these experiences.

Public spaces are where people report experiencing sexual harassment and assault the most often across their lifetime.

When respondents who had experienced some form of sexual harassment and assault were asked to select just one place that they felt was where they had experienced sexual abuse the most across their lifetime, a public space was the most frequently selected (38% women, 27% men). A private home or residence was the second most frequently listed location for women (21%), while for men it was school (17%). Respondents' workplace was the third most frequent lifetime location (13% women, 15% men). See Table 6 for a full list.

Note: Given the higher prevalence of sexual harassment versus assault, these locations may be more indicative of sexual harassment than assault.

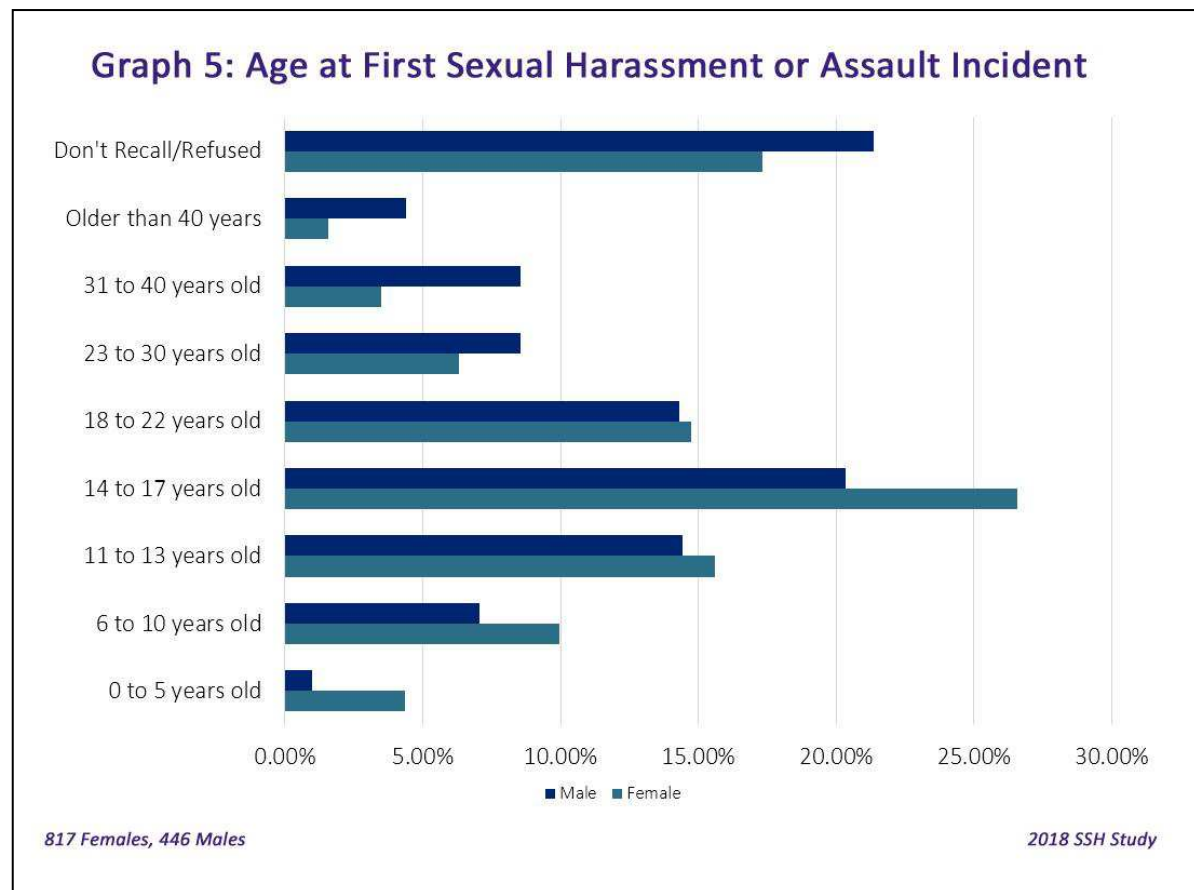
	Female	Male	Total
A private home or residence	21%	14%	19%
Public space (like street, park, store, mall, movie theater, pool, restaurant, club, bar, gym)	38%	27%	35%
Mass transportation (car, bus, train, subway, taxi, airplane)	3%	4%	4%
Online	4%	8%	5%
School (pre-school to 12th grade)	9%	17%	12%
College/university/technical training school	3%	3%	3%
Your workplace	13%	15%	14%
A religious space or place of worship	1%	1%	1%
Health care facility (doctor's or dentist's office, hospital, urgent care, counselor's office)	>1%	1%	1%
Other/Not Specified Location	8%	10%	8%

When People Experience Sexual Harassment and Assault

Most women and some men reported experiencing sexual harassment and assault by age 17.

Approximately half of those with a history of sexual harassment and/or assault reported having their first experience by the time they were 17 years old (57% of women and 42% of men). By the time respondents were 22 years old, this was true for nearly three-fourths of women (71%) and more than half of men (57%).

The most frequently selected time for both women and men to first experience sexual abuse was when they were high school-age, 14 to 17 years old (27% women, 20% men). However, many people experienced it even earlier: 30% of women had experienced some form of sexual harassment and assault by age 13, as had 22% of men. See Graph 5 for more information.



Most participants could not recall their last incident of sexual harassment or assault, but among those who did, around one in eight women and men experienced it in the past six months.

More than half of participants refused or could not recall the timeframe for their most recent sexual harassment or assault experience, but among those who did, 13% of women and 11% of men said the most recent experience occurred in the past six months (with higher percentages for younger persons), and 16% of all respondents said the most recent experience took place in the past five years.

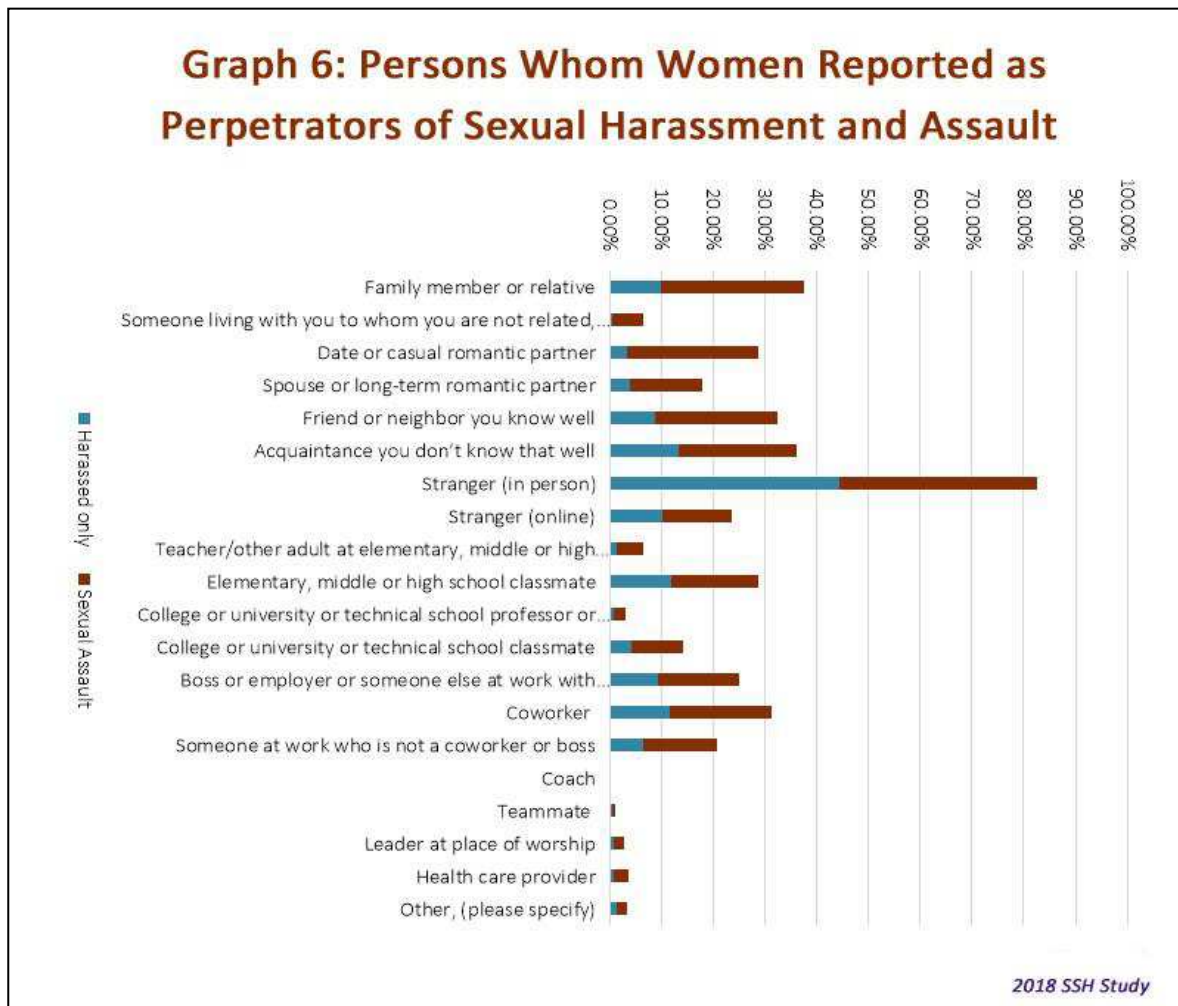
Older participants were less likely to respond to this item, possibly due to a longer gap in time since their last experience. Given the large percent of people reporting first sexual harassment and assault at age 14 to 17, there may have been a higher response rate in a survey that included persons under 18 years old.

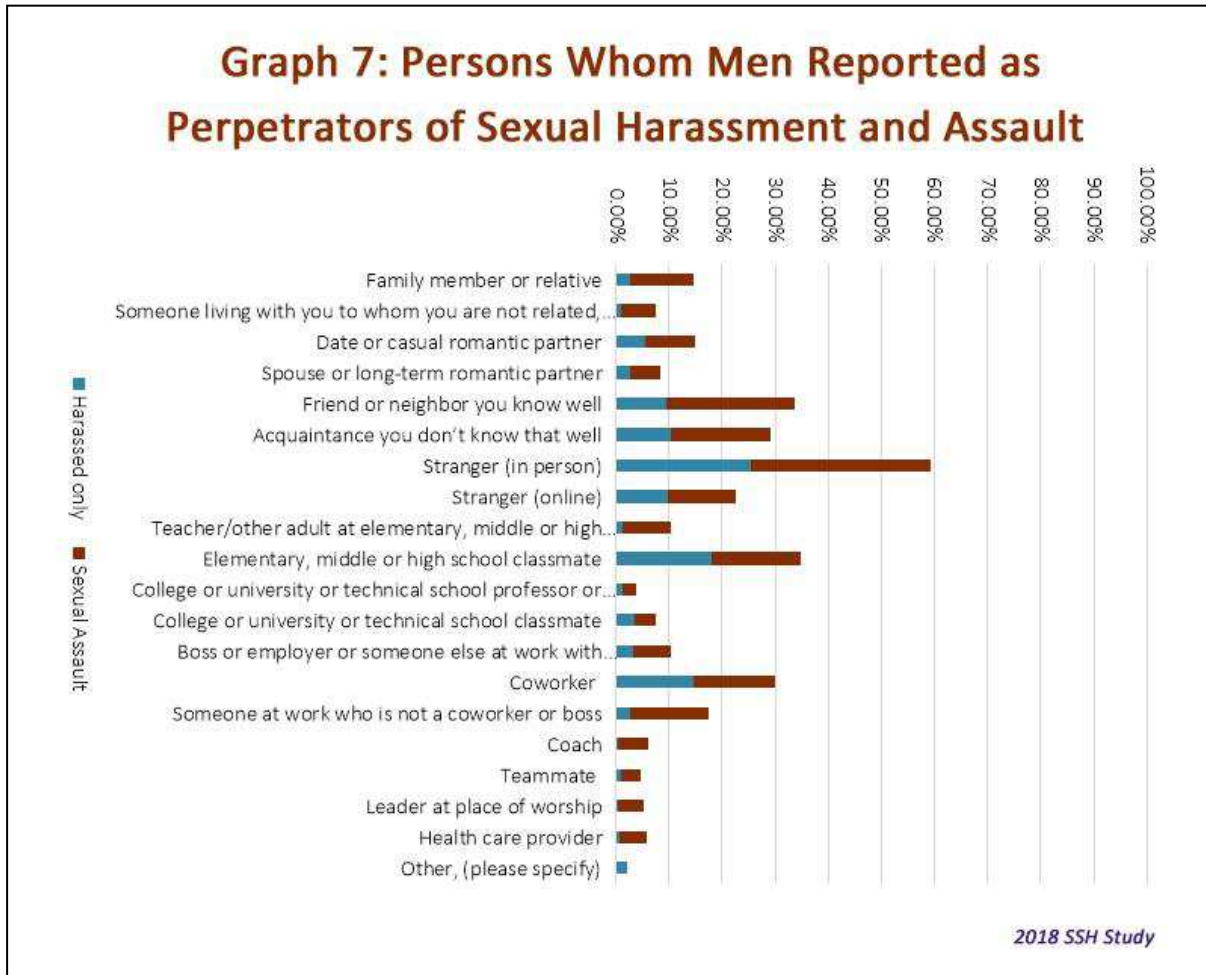
Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment and Assault

The most frequent perpetrators of sexual harassment are strangers, while perpetrators of sexual assault are more likely to be known to the survivor.

Overall, among the respondents who reported experiencing sexual harassment and assault, the most frequently listed perpetrator across their lifetime was a stranger in person (42% of women and 27% of men). Those with a history of sexual assault, particularly women, were significantly more likely to report known perpetrators like family, friends and romantic partners. See Graphs 6 and 7 for more information.

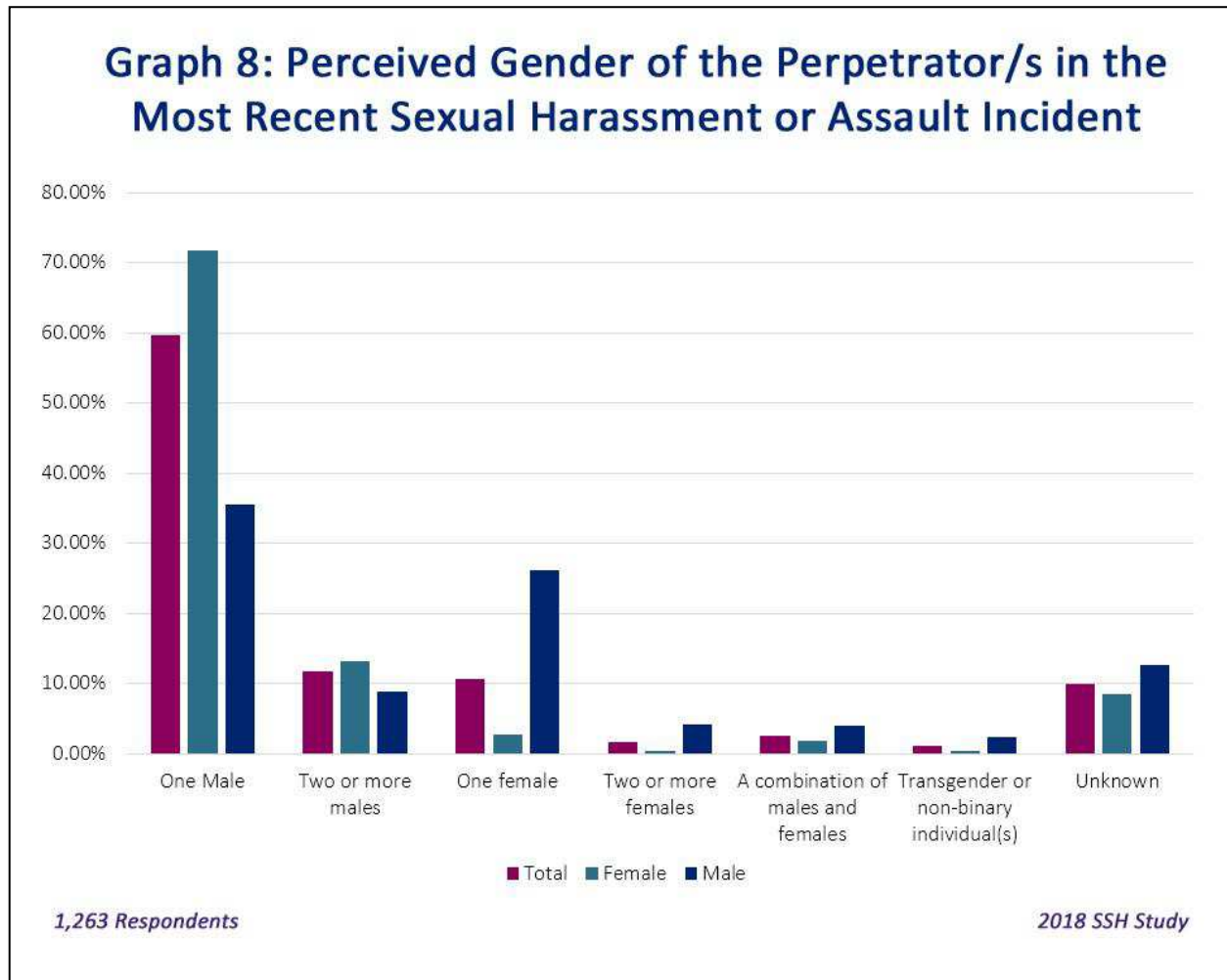
It is notable that among those who reported experiencing sexual harassment and assault, victimization from a boss/work authority figure was more likely to be reported by women than men, while victimization from a teacher or adult at school was more frequently reported by men than women.





One male is the most typical perpetrator of sexual harassment and assault for persons of all genders.

When asked about the perceived gender of the perpetrator/s only in their most recent incident of sexual harassment or assault, respondents identified one male the most often (72% women and 35% men). For male respondents, the second most frequently selected perpetrator was one female (26%), while the second for female respondents was two or more males (13%). See Graph 8 for the full information.



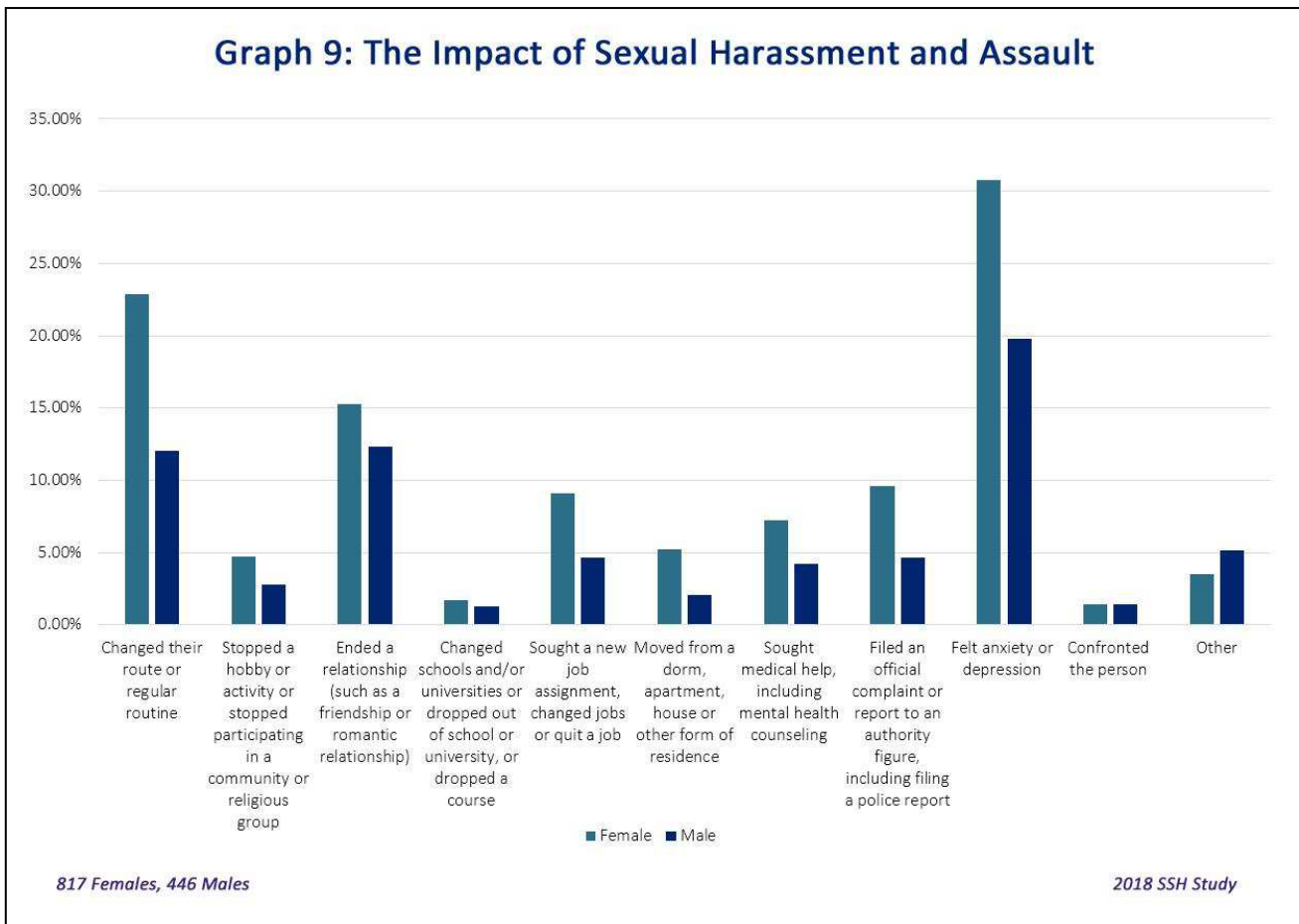
Men were significantly more likely to report a female perpetrator compared with women. Among women, those with disabilities were also significantly more likely to report a female perpetrator than women who did not have a disability.

Among all respondents who experienced sexual harassment and assault, those who were male; lesbian, gay or bisexual; mixed-race or other race; and those with disabilities were significantly more likely than their respective demographic counterparts to report non-gender binary and a combination of males and females as their perpetrators of sexual harassment and assault.

The Impact of Sexual Harassment and Assault

The most frequent response to experiencing sexual harassment and assault was feeling anxiety or depression.

The most frequently selected outcome of respondents' experiences of sexual harassment and assault were the same across gender, though women were significantly more likely than men to report these. The top outcome was feeling anxiety or depression (31% women, 20% men). The next most frequently selected response was to change one's route or regular routine (23% women, 12% men). The third most frequently selected response was to end a relationship due to the abuse (15% of women, 12% of men). A full list is found in Graph 9.



Notably, only 1 in 10 women filed an official complaint or report to an authority figure, including filing a police report. The figure was even lower for men: 1 in 20. Also, nearly 1 in 10 women sought a new job assignment, changed jobs or quit a job due to the abuse, as did 1 in 20 men.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual persons were more likely than straight people to report feeling depressed or anxious and make changes to their lives, as were persons with disabilities compared to persons without disabilities. No differences in response were seen by racial/ethnic group, income or region.

Conclusion

The United States will never be “the land of the free” if 81% of women and 43% of men face sexual violations that cause them pain and prompt many to alter their lives in significant ways.

In conducting this study, it is our hope that the information moves the #MeToo conversation forward in new and broader ways and that findings in various sections can be useful to specific groups of advocates, lawmakers, policymakers, educators, community and national leaders, and more. In particular, with the study’s new information about where sexual harassment and assault occurs by location, hopefully there can be tailored responses and efforts across each space.

Most importantly, these findings underscore the need to work more with boys and men, to teach them to be respectful, to ask for consent and to accept “no,” and to hold them accountable when they act inappropriately. The reality is sexual harassment and assault are not inevitable. Not only is it necessary to acknowledge the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse, but action is required to change the culture to prevent all forms of sexual violence. Individuals, communities, and institutions must take action to promote safety, respect, and accountability.

If we truly want to see a cultural shift where sexual harassment and assault, particularly of women and other marginalized groups, is no longer the norm – now is the time for action. Visit organizations like National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), PreventConnect, RAINN, 1 in 6, CDC and others to find resources and ideas for what you can do.

As one example, NSVRC released a bystander intervention tips and strategies factsheet to coincide with the release of this report, and it is available here: <https://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/bystander-intervention-tips-and-strategies>.

Appendix A – Donors

Organizations

Center on Gender Equity and Health, University of California, San Diego
 Feminist Public Works
 PinPoint Foundation
 Raliance

Individuals who donated to Stop Street Harassment

Vincente Abril
 Sumit A Bafna
 Robin B Bedilion
 Suzanne Biggs
 Andre M. Bravo
 Katherine Broendel & Sean Crosbie
 Stephane Budel
 Sylvie Burns
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 Richard Chew
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 Donna Seymour
 Dinitia Smith
 Daljit & Anuj Soni
 Joanne N. Smith
 Julia Strange
 Kate Sweeney
 Lauren Taylor
 Nancy Unger
 Elizabeth Vandenburg
 Kerry Weinheimer

Appendix B – Other Studies

These are examples of resources and studies on sexual harassment and assault that can supplement the findings of this report regarding specific demographics or locations.

Overall Resources:

1 in 6 Statistics: <https://1in6.org/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Sexual Violence: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/>.

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>

Love is Respect: Dating Abuse Statistics: <http://www.loveisrespect.org/resources/dating-violence-statistics/>.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center Resource Library: <http://www.nsvrclibrary.org/>.

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network Statistics: <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/scope-problem>.

“Reporting on Rape and Sexual Violence: A Media Toolkit for Local and National Journalists to Better Media Coverage.” Chicago Taskforce on Violence Against Girls & Young Women Media <http://www.chitaskforce.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Chicago-Taskforce-Media-Toolkit.pdf>

“Reporting on Sexual Violence: Tips for Journalists.” National Sexual Violence Resource Center. 2017. <https://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/reporting-sexual-violence-tips-journalists>

“STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2016. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/technical-packages.html>

Talking Points: American Journal of Preventive Medicine Releases Lifetime Economic Burden of Rape Among U.S. Adults. National Sexual Violence Resource Center. 2017. <https://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications/talking-points-american-journal-preventive-medicine-releases>

LGBTQQIA

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Disabilities

Disability Justice, “Sexual Abuse.” <http://disabilityjustice.org/sexual-abuse/>.

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Shapiro, Joseph. “The Sexual Assault Epidemic No One Talks About.” NPR. 8 January 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/08/570224090/the-sexual-assault-epidemic-no-one-talks-about>.

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Shapiro, Joseph. “In Their Words, Adults with Intellectual Disabilities Tell Their Sexual Assault Stories.” NPR. 18 January 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/18/578956859/in-their-words-adults-with-intellectual-disabilities-tell-their-sexual-assault-s>.

Race/Ethnicity

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence: <https://www.api-gbv.org/>.

Indian Law Resource Center: “Ending Violence Against Native Women.” <http://indianlaw.org/issue/ending-violence-against-native-women>.

“Key Findings from Sexual Violence Victimization and Associations with Health in a Community Sample of African American Women”. National Sexual Violence Resource Center. 2016. <https://www.nsvrc.org/publications/key-findings-sexual-violence-victimization-and-health-community-sample-african-american-women>

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Perpetrators

“Eight Things Everyone Should Know About Sexual Abuse & Sexual Offending.” ATSA. 2014. <http://www.atsa.com/pdfs/Policy/8ThingsEveryoneShouldKnow.pdf>.

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Domestic Relationships/Intimate Partner Relationships

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K-12 Schools

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"Sexual Harassment & Bullying of Youth: Sexual Violence & Individuals Who Identify as LGBTQ." National Sexual Violence Resource Center and Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape. 2012. http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Guides_Sexual-Harassment-Bullying-Youth.pdf

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