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PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

81% of Women and 43% of Men Experience Sexual Harassment and Assault in the United States

Landmark National Study Reveals the Extent of Sexual Abuse in the Country

RESTON, VA — Millions of people have shared #MeToo stories about sexual harassment and assault. Now, the facts behind the movement are available in a landmark study released today by the nonprofit organization Stop Street Harassment (SSH). The study was conducted in partnership with Raliance, a national collaborative committed to ending sexual violence in one generation, and the UC San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health. GfK conducted the 2,000-person nationally representative survey in January 2018.

While verbal comments are the most frequently experienced form of sexual harassment, an alarmingly number of people also have faced more severe forms. Among all female respondents, 51% had been purposely sexually touched (or groped), 34% had been followed, and 30% had been flashed. On the most extreme end, 27% of women (1 in 4) had survived sexual assault, as had 7% of men (1 in 14).

Persons in several demographical groups reported more incidents of sexual harassment and assault. For instance, among women, those with disabilities were more likely to report experiences of sexual assault compared with women without disabilities. Among men, male Hispanic respondents reported overall higher rates of sexual harassment and assault than men in other racial/ethnic groups.

Among those reporting sexual harassment and assault, 31% of women and 20% of men said it caused them to feel anxiety or depression, while 23% of women and 12% of men changed their route or routine.

“The US will never be ‘the land of the free’ as long as millions of people experience sexual violations that cause them pain and prompt many to alter their lives in significant ways,” said Holly Kearl, executive director of SSH and author of three books. “I hope the findings move the #MeToo conversation forward in new and broader ways and help create a cultural shift where sexual abuse is no longer the norm.”

“Sexual violence is preventable, and everyone has a role to play in being an active bystander and responding to sexual violence wherever it occurs,” said Karen Baker, Managing Partner at Raliance. “By reexamining our own actions and establishing behaviors of respect, safety, equality, we can create the positive change that will end sexual violence in one generation.”

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Among those who experienced sexual harassment or assault, 57% of women and 42% of men said their first experience occurred by age 17. Thirty percent of women and 22% of men said it occurred by age 13.

“The ubiquitousness of sexual harassment in the US is staggering, and the young age it begins is alarming,” said Dr. Anita Raj, Professor and Director of the University of California, San Diego, Center on Gender Equity and Health, which provided pro bono data analysis for the study. “Most girls’ first experiences of harassment occur before they even graduate high school. That is simply unacceptable.”

While sexual harassment and assault take place across a range of locations, respondents most often selected a public space as the site for their first experience of sexual harassment and where it occurred the most across their lifetime. For sexual assault, the first experience and most frequent location across respondents’ lifetime was usually a private home/residence.

A stranger was the most frequently selected perpetrator for sexual harassment, while someone close to the respondent (like a family member or friend) was the most frequently selected perpetrator of sexual assault. Most respondents identified one male as the perpetrator in their most recent incident.

The full report and a two-page executive summary are available for download on the [SSH website](#).

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Stop Street Harassment is a nonprofit organization dedicated to documenting and ending gender-based street harassment worldwide through public education and community mobilization. Among its programs, SSH organizes [International Anti-Street Harassment Week](#) annually and funds the [National Street Harassment Hotline](#).

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 multimillion dollar seed investment by the National Football League. We are making prevention possible by awarding grants, advancing research, policymaking and more. Join the movement at [Raliance.org](#).

The [UC San Diego 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>.