

PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT (PRSH) - SUCCESSFUL TRAINING RECIPE



To Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment

Workstream 4: Capacity-building, Training, and Skills-enhancement

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to equip facilitators/trainers/practitioners with **key tips on how to prepare, deliver, and follow up on a sexual harassment training**. It provides a brief but comprehensive guide for capacity-building, training, and skills enhancement. The recipe includes essential pointers, practical steps, and resources to facilitate effective learning experiences and foster a safe and respectful workplace.

Successful learning experiences about preventing sexual harassment contain **three essential ingredients: learning, community, and follow-up action**. While expert-led interactive sessions, open discussion, and peer support lay the foundation, it is learners' participation that truly brings the learning to life.

Moreover, facilitators/trainers/practitioners must be adequately prepared to respond appropriately to sensitive disclosures within the limits of their role and refer participants to appropriate support services. They should be equipped with a clear understanding of what falls within their responsibility and what does not, always adopting a survivor-centered approach throughout their facilitation activities.

Preventing sexual harassment requires more than just training; it involves creating informed, engaged communities where bystanders feel empowered to act, and victims feel supported. Emphasizing responsibility, respectful behavior, and accountability is crucial. Managers and leaders play a key role in fostering a safe environment where harmful conduct is neither practiced nor tolerated. **Building a culture of safety and support is essential for effective prevention.**

Working across UN entities will help solidify the common goals set by the CEB/UN to prevent and respond to sexual harassment. Facilitators with experience across different UN entities can help build shared understanding, while multi-entity sessions can strengthen cross-organizational communities of practice and promote consistency in prevention efforts.

People with diverse experiences across multiple sectors will take the work forward in a country, report back to HQ, share best practices, and continue learning.

While email addresses and reporting lines may vary, the core of the work is the same: prevent misconduct, support victims quickly, simplify reporting, and ensure every staff member understands their role in creating a respectful and safe workplace.

This recipe contains the **following sections**, containing checklists and tips:

1. Mise-en-place
2. Preparation
3. Delivery
4. Post-Training & Follow-up
5. Tips & Tricks
6. Resources

Objective:

Supporting bystanders to speak up and empowering victims to report.

Training is not just about learning - it's about engaging people, ensuring they feel heard, and reinforcing individual and collective accountability.

1. MISE-EN-PLACE (2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE)

- If relevant, **meet with the local** PSEAH task force, Focal Points (FPs) or the Management / Operations Team.
- **Identify key office issues** through **safe and aggregated sources** (e.g., EG survey results, internal surveys, media, interviews), avoiding access to individual case data to protect confidentiality and prevent risks to victims.
- **Define** learning objectives, format, methodology, training scope and audience.
- **Learning format:** Townhalls, interactive training, management engagement, partner collaboration, or integrating SH conversations into regular team meetings for ongoing reinforcement.
- **Audience:** Consider separating training into groups: **management, head of projects, all staff, and focal points**. For management, align with UN system-wide efforts to train gender-responsive leaders under the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).
- **Delivery mode:** Generally recommended are onsite sessions for trust-building; use online/hybrid only when necessary, with secure platforms, small groups, and confidentiality safeguards.
- **Secure participation** of HR and/or Ethics focal points if relevant, as well as any available socialized support functions for SH or staff council/union representation.
- **Plan a communication and outreach** strategy to announce the training.
- **Management and focal points must set the tone** (e.g., visible commitment, zero-tolerance messaging, open dialogue).
- **Selection of trainers/facilitators should be intentional**, prioritizing those with experience in SH facilitation, cultural competence, and familiarity with UN policies. For volunteer facilitators, ensure they receive an adequate briefing.

- **Save-the-date email** sent to all personnel - if possible, the invite should be sent from the most senior person in the office.
- Trainers/Facilitators & speakers **identified** (backup trainers as well).
- Townhall and training **logistics** confirmed.
- Pre-book **training rooms** (for onsite or hybrid).
- Draft **materials** ready.

2. PREPARATION (1 MONTH IN ADVANCE)

- **Adapt content** to the audience with regional/local realities and the specific work context in collaboration with the defined FPs.
- **Avoid** text-heavy slides; keep them engaging i.e. video clips, questions to audience, short scenarios, etc.
- **Ensure** gender-balanced facilitators.
- **Outreach campaign:** make attendance mandatory and well-timed, invites always sent by management (clear tone-from-top).
- **Venue & IT Setup:** Secure UN meeting rooms to maximize learning, or an online platform, considering a 'dry run'.
- **Training Materials ready:** Policies, reporting flowcharts – make sure to check material on the [UN Women Knowledge Hub!](#)
- Online **registration form** ready and shared.
- **Facilitators and Experts** are trained and prepared to handle disclosures, with a clear understanding of relevant policies and referral pathways (see the Training for Trainers Manual.)
- **Adapt** language and terminology to the local and cultural context while remaining faithful to UN standards and Code of Conduct (e.g., rules on sexual conduct for humanitarian workers).
- **Pre-session briefing** with facilitators and FPs to align on who does what, and how.
- **Pre-check for accessibility:** captions, screen reader compatibility, and physical access to the venue.

- **Translation** services, if needed.
- Participation **certificates** prepared.
- **Evaluation** pre- and post-training ready, including assessment of immediate learning impact and open-ended questions for feedback.
- A **keynote speaker** confirmed, and protocol prepared.
- If chosen, ensure the task force and senior management **confirm presence**.

3. DELIVERY

- **Enable** a confidential, trust-based, and safe learning environment.
- **Set ground rules with participants**, including no individual cases and confidentiality.
- Consider offering anonymous **feedback channels** during the session (note cards, online forms, etc.).
- **Have support personnel available** for follow-up conversations and emotional first aid (FPs, staff, stress counsellors or socialized support functions).
- **Be clear and open** when training management about their responsibility to act, as well as their responsibility to ensure their teams are aware of reporting channels and have access to information and support mechanisms.
- **Engaging:** Facilitators should create a trusting and engaging learning environment, using body language and interaction to maintain attention and avoid lecture-style delivery.
- **Flexibility & Time:** Prioritize natural discussions while managing time to cover key content and equal participation.
- **Interaction:** Keep at least 75% of the content with interactive learning (polls, case studies, role plays, etc.).
- **Challenge and Intervene:** If a participant makes problematic comments (i.e., blaming a victim because of his/her clothing), use this as an opportunity to open the dialogue within the group to challenge social norms and stereotypes. Remind participants that we have agreed to a code of conduct when we chose to work for the UN.
- **Ensure disclaimers** at the beginning and ample time for follow-up; these training sessions always lead to more discussion.

- **Ensure everyone in the team** knows where to be when training starts.
- **Test devices:** Test mics, computers, and live links in advance.
- **When discussion barriers occur:** Let other participants interfere, so learning comes from within.
- **Every person feels seen:** Stay as long as needed to answer questions.

4. POST-TRAINING & FOLLOW-UP

- **Connect** post-training surveys with certificates.
- **Create a PSEAH Champions network** with clear roles (awareness, peer advocacy, input to action plans) with regular check-ins for long-term engagement.
- **Organize** refresher courses and follow-up sessions.
- Be **prepared for post-training disclosures** and have referral options ready.
- **Assess open feedback** from evaluation and update training materials accordingly.

- **Share** training materials immediately.
- **Structured debrief with management and stakeholders (HR, PSEAH Focal Points):** To reinforce key messages in team settings and assess organizational maturity.
- **Follow up with PSEAH focal points:** To keep the momentum and reinforce commitment in their corresponding action plan that includes SH.

5. TIPS & TRICKS

- **Avoid** endless meetings and planning sessions.
- **Large budgets:** Most expertise can be volunteered; most spaces can be given for free. However, quality must be assured even when using volunteers.
- **Unforeseen situations:** Always find a way to make things work.
- **Perfection:** Improve as you go, content is always on the move.
- **Don't reinvent the wheel:** Excellent training packages on PSEAH already exist from UN agencies and partners, such as IASC, OVRA, Ombudsman, etc.
- **Don't** bring specialized offices to 'give' lessons, and focus on enabling safe environments for discussion.
- **Intranet:** Create an online space where personnel can go anytime for help, information and support on SH.

6. RESOURCES

- **Policy:** Secretary-General's Bulletin [ST/SGB/2019/8](#)
- **Guidance:** [A victim-centred approach to Sexual Harassment for the United Nations, CEB](#)
- **Guidance:** [Guide for Managers – Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment in the Workplace](#)
- **Knowledge Hub UN Women:** UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment
- **Learning:** [United to Respect Toolkit](#)
- **E-Learning Course:** [United to Respect: Preventing Sexual Harassment and Other Prohibited Conduct](#) (via Inspira)
- **Stakeholder Communication:** [Roadmap on Stakeholder Communication and Engagement to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment](#)

United Nations
Executive
Group

• To Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment

