

YOUTH CONNECT CALL DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE AFTER-KIT



YouthBuild USA invites you to use this after-kit with participants.

This after-kit will help define discrimination, link you to the laws around discrimination, and activities focused on dealing and coping with harassment and discrimination.

We encourage you to ensure your own program has procedures in place for participants to be able to report discrimination while they are in YouthBuild.

THE BASICS OF DISCRIMINATION



(click on underlined words for web resources)

Definition of Discrimination

What is Employment Discrimination? (US EEOC)

To treat someone differently, or less favorably, for some reason. Laws protect from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation) national origin, disability, age 40 and older, or genetic (medical) information.

Check -out these videos that talks about general Discrimination and Discrimination in the Workplace

Discrimination Laws

What are the Laws against Discrimination?

There are Federal and State laws to protect individuals against workplace discrimination. The NCSL website allows you to search by state to see local laws.

Federal laws prevent workplace discrimination when it involves:

- Unfair treatment
- Harassment
- Denial of a reasonable workplace change
- Improper questions about or disclosure of medical information
- Retaliation

Harassment in the Workplace

Spectrum of Disrespect (by hollaback!)

Hollaback!, a global, people-powered movement to end harassment — in all its forms, describes the ways in which disrespect can escalate in the workplace - As an example:

When speaking over people is acceptable it creates

→ a work culture where shaming/humiliation (often in the forms of jokes) becomes a little more acceptable...this creates

→ a workplace culture where inappropriate comments or verbal abuse are more acceptable.

GROUP ACTIVITY



Use the scenario below to engage YouthBuild participants in a role-play activity. Assign roles, act out the scenario and use the questions below to engage in a discussion

Activity Setup: Read the Scenario aloud

At a construction site three workers, two young adult males (Mike & Chris) and a young adult female (Samantha), are tasked with grabbing wood from a truck.

- Mike makes the comment, "I don't get why girls are here, my sister can't even lift a brick".
- It's obvious that Samantha feels uncomfortable and upset.
- Mike notices and says "It's just a joke, don't be so sensitive".
- Samantha doesn't say anything for fear the guys think she's just being dramatic.
- Roger knows Mike's comments are inappropriate but doesn't want to escalate the situation or become a target himself.

Activity Roleplay: Scenario Discussion Questions

- As the Bystander (Chris) - How do you think the bystander feels about this situation? What different responses could the bystander take During or After this situation? What gets in the way of action?

➔ (Check out hollaback!'s [5-D's of Bystander intervention](#))

- As the Target (Samantha) - How do you think the target feels after this situation? What different responses could the target take During or After this situation? What gets in the way of action?

➔ (Check out hollaback!'s [Responding to Workplace Harassment: Understanding the Options](#))

- As the Participant (Mike) - How do you think the Participant feels after this situation? What motivates the harassment? How can bias/stereotypes contribute to harassment?

➔ (Check out these videos about [bias](#), [microaggressions](#) and the [Pain, Power & Paradox of Bias](#))

HUMAN RESOURCE PROTOCOLS AND TIPS



Employee Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation

- Employers take allegations of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation very seriously.
- All staff is encouraged to go to the Human Resources or a supervisor if they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
- All claims are treated with sensitivity and discretion.
- Each state may have certain guidelines as to how to enforce discrimination and harassment laws.

[Empowerwork.org](https://empowerwork.org)

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Best Practice and Tips for Employees

- Respect cultural, racial, and identity differences in the workplace.
- Be professional in conduct and speech. Avoid identity-based or culturally offensive humor or pranks in the workplace.
- Get familiar with the workplace policies.
- Attend trainings and learn about your legal rights and responsibilities under anti-discrimination.
- Identify and discourage disrespectful behaviors.

THE SPECTRUM OF DISRESPECT

- Not listening; speaking over people
- Intentionally undermining others
- Failing to greet or acknowledge certain people
- Excluding others, either verbally or by positioning the body to exclude others
- Inability to try new/different ideas
- Favoritism

- Shaming/humiliation, often in the form of "jokes"
- Refusal to acknowledge the contributions of others
- Failure to support a co-worker
- Making faces/rolling eyes

- Inappropriate comments/sexual innuendos
- Hostile notes/emails
- Verbal abuse
- Inappropriate touching
- Requesting sexual favors
- Sexual assault

DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION

The experience of discrimination can lead to an increase in stress - chronic stress impacts physical and mental well-being.

The American Psychology Association recommends finding healthy ways to deal with discrimination:



Focus on your strengths.

Lean into your core value, beliefs, and strengths for motivation to succeed and remain resilient. Experiences can help better prepare you to face future challenges.

Reach out, talk to people you trust.

Internalizing the negative beliefs and stereotypes can be detrimental to your mental health. Reach out to family and friends who can remind you of your strengths, provide a reality check about faulty self-worth beliefs, and provide the support to counter the impact of microaggressions.

Seek help.

If you are experiencing consistent discrimination, document every incident! Report these incidents to your human resources department or supervisor.

Experiencing discrimination is stressful and can impact your health. If you experience symptoms of depression or other impacts on your health, find a professional to help you cope and manage your stress and anxiety.

Help yourself think clearly.

Being the target of discrimination can bring up strong emotional reactions which can often trigger physical responses like increased heart rate or blood pressure, or trouble sleeping and thinking clearly.

Take a moment to monitor your body before reacting. Try relaxation or intentional breathing techniques to calm your body's stress response. This can help you to think more clearly about how best to respond.

Don't Dwell.

"Shaking off" the experience of aggression or assault caused by discrimination can be hard. Getting "stuck" in the replaying or reliving the experience in your mind can cause additional stress and anxiety.

Reach out and get help and support from others. Talk to others about what to do or how to cope the next time you have a similar experience.