

SESSION MINUTES

Name of Session: Sexual Harassment as an Equity Concern

Scribe Name: Elizabeth Riley

Description of the Session: You may use the description in the program book

This session will provide an overview of sexual harassment; definitions and examples of policy, best practices, settlements and decisions relative to employment and housing in Tennessee and at the federal level.

1. What are the key issues did the speaker address that relate to the status of women in

Tennessee or current policies effecting women: (reference the TN Report Card in the conference program book)

Research and focus-sexual harassment in the workplace. 56% of women in Chattanooga experienced sexual harassment in the workplace; 26% of women surveyed stated that they didn't know their options. Minimal programs to assist women locally. Impact on women: negative effects on mental and physical effect; reduced opportunities for on the job training and career advancement.

2. What suggested strategies for addressing this topic / issue did the speaker offer:

City of Chattanooga: 0 tolerance policy for any sexual harassment in the workplace; encourage all employers to have an anti-harassment policy; educational push led by the City of Chattanooga to raise awareness and educational opportunities for employees, particularly smaller businesses. TNHRC (Tennessee Human Rights Commission): independent state agency created in 1963. Mission: To safeguard individuals from discrimination through education and enforcement.

3. Highlight feedback from attendees or questions asked regarding this topic / issue:

How do we empower women who have been assaulted who might not have legal support?

You don't need legal support to go to human resources or make a complaint with TN Human Rights Commission. Title 9 Coordinators.

*National Women's Law Center: Time's Up legal defense team. Lawyers agreed to screen sexual harassment/discrimination reports. Fund that will pay lawyers to take on cases who might not always be funded.

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Is the disable community active in dealing with the issues of sexual harassment? two populations not connecting the dots: disability population and women over 40 due to discrimination. We need to do better at education and help everyone understand what it is.

LGBT Community: struggle there also. TNHRC does not take LGBT cases but refers them to EEOC who does.

4. What tips did the speaker offer for local/state/national engagement:

Organizations can have leaders in place who have values, are authentic, aware, and have accountability standards for other leaders and managers. Ongoing effective training for leaders, managers, and employees. Ongoing evaluation of policies, training, and workplace climate using a variety of means. Demonstrate harassment is not permitted; help everyone know how to take action. Talk to youth about consent and appropriate behavior. Consent Education in schools is imperative. Education Prevention; get involved at your college campus or workplace.

5. Other important details that should be noted:

TN Human Rights Committee statistics:

FY 2019-22, 675 total charges; 7514 sexual harassment charges (9.7%)

Girls have been taught to be nice and not to buck the system; young men don't understand the cues and are not properly educated about consent.

Sexual assault/harassment is not limited to women but happens to men as well.

Do not confuse assault with sexual harassment. One is not as serious but there are repercussions to both.

Hostile environment: you still have standing to file a complaint regardless if you are a victim of it. Bullying/Hazing: both can be sexual harassment