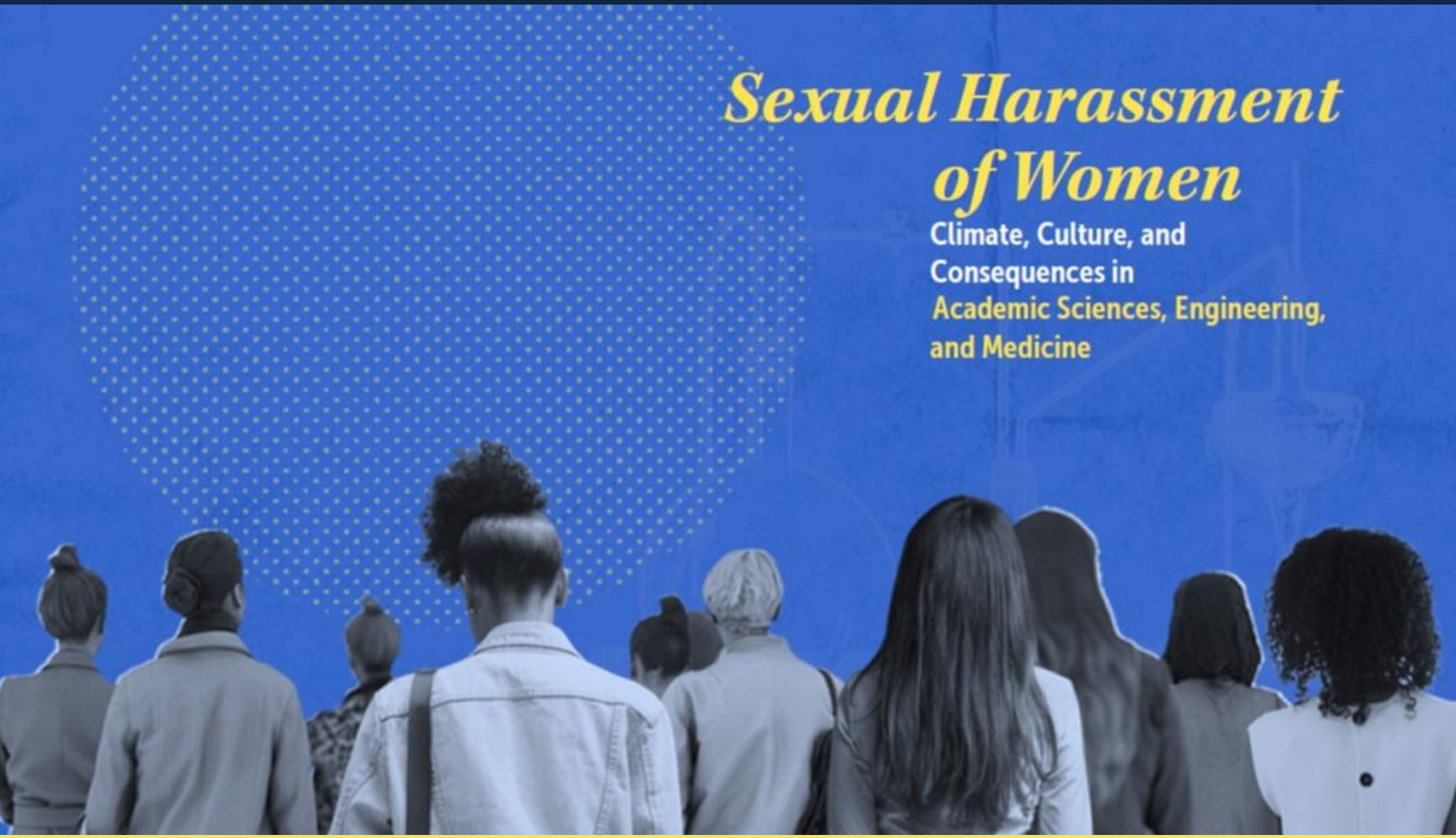
CONSENSUS STUDY REPORT



#ScienceToo
www.nationalacademies.org/sexualharassment

The National Academies of SCIENCES ENGINEERING MEDICINE

Study Statement of Task

The Committee will undertake a study of the influence of sexual harassment in academia on the career advancement of women in the scientific, technical, and medical workforce, which will include the following:

- Review of the research on the extent to which women in the fields of science, engineering, and medicine are victimized by sexual harassment on college and university campuses, in research labs and field sites, at hospitals/medical centers, and in other academic environments;
- Examination of existing information on the extent to which sexual harassment in academia negatively impacts the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women pursuing scientific, engineering, technical, and medical careers, with comparative evidence drawn from other sectors such as the military, government, and the private sector;
- Identification and analysis of policies, strategies, and practices that have been the most successful in preventing and addressing sexual harassment in these settings.

Study Committee Members

Co-Chair: **Paula Johnson**[1], Wellesley College
Co-Chair: **Sheila Widnall**[2], Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Sponsors

Key findings

- There is extensive sexual harassment
- Gender harassment is the most common form of sexual harassment
- Sexual harassment undermines research integrity, reduces talent pool, and harms targets and bystanders
- Legal compliance is necessary but not sufficient to reduce harassment
- Changing climate and culture can prevent and effectively address sexual harassment

SEXUAL COERCION
using professional threats or rewards to get sexual favors
UNWANTED SEXUAL ATTENTION
sexual assault
rape
unwanted groping or stroking
PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS
GENDER HARASSMENT
relentless pressure for sex or dates
nude images posted at work
unwanted sexual discussions
sexually humiliating acts
sexual insults, gender slurs, and vulgar name calling
e.g. "whore," "pu**y," "slut," "bitch"
offensive sexual teasing or remarks about bodies
sexist insults
e.g. women don't belong in science
sabotage of women's equipment
obscene gestures

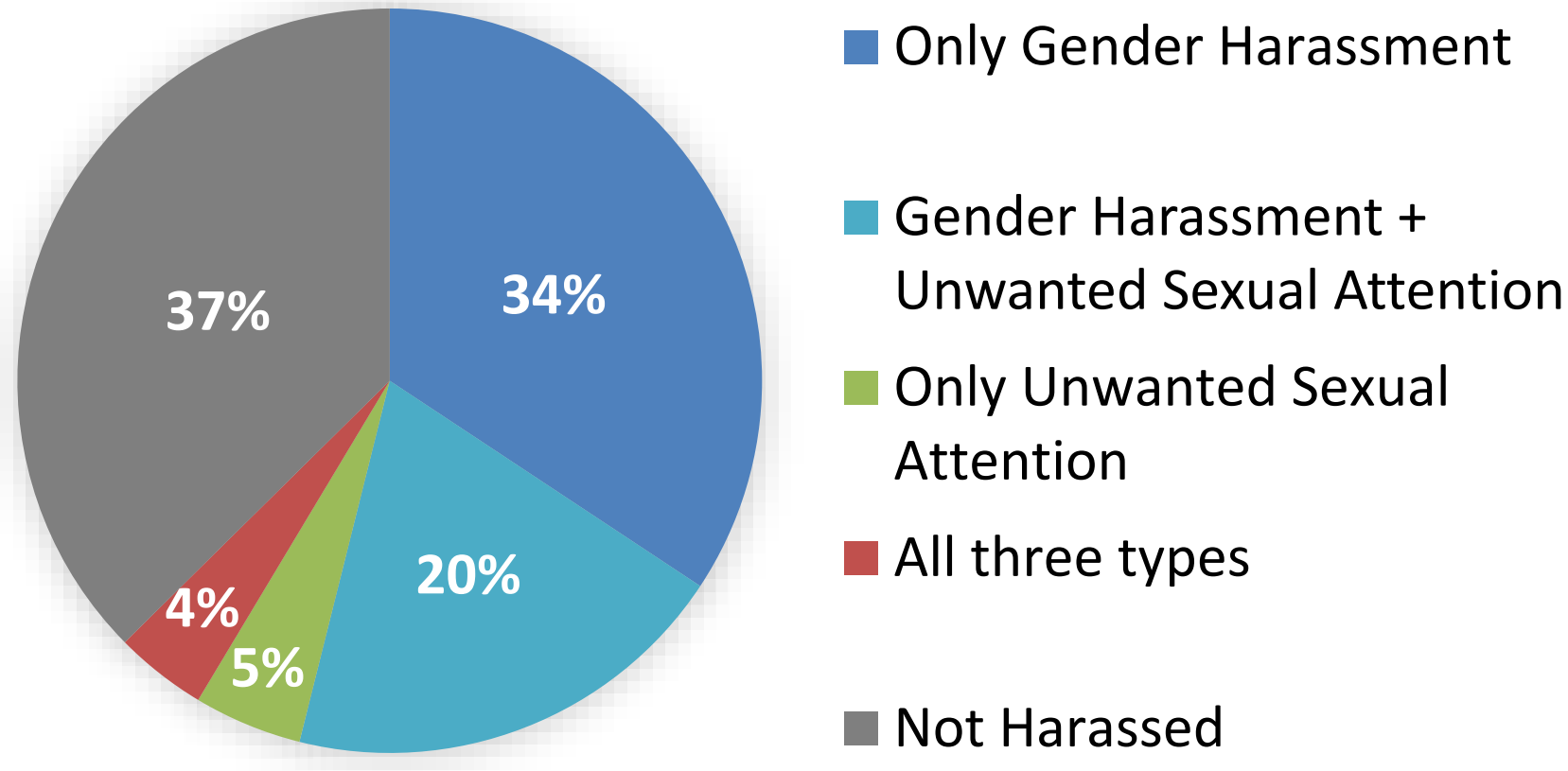
Finding: Prevalence of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is common in academic science, engineering, and medicine.

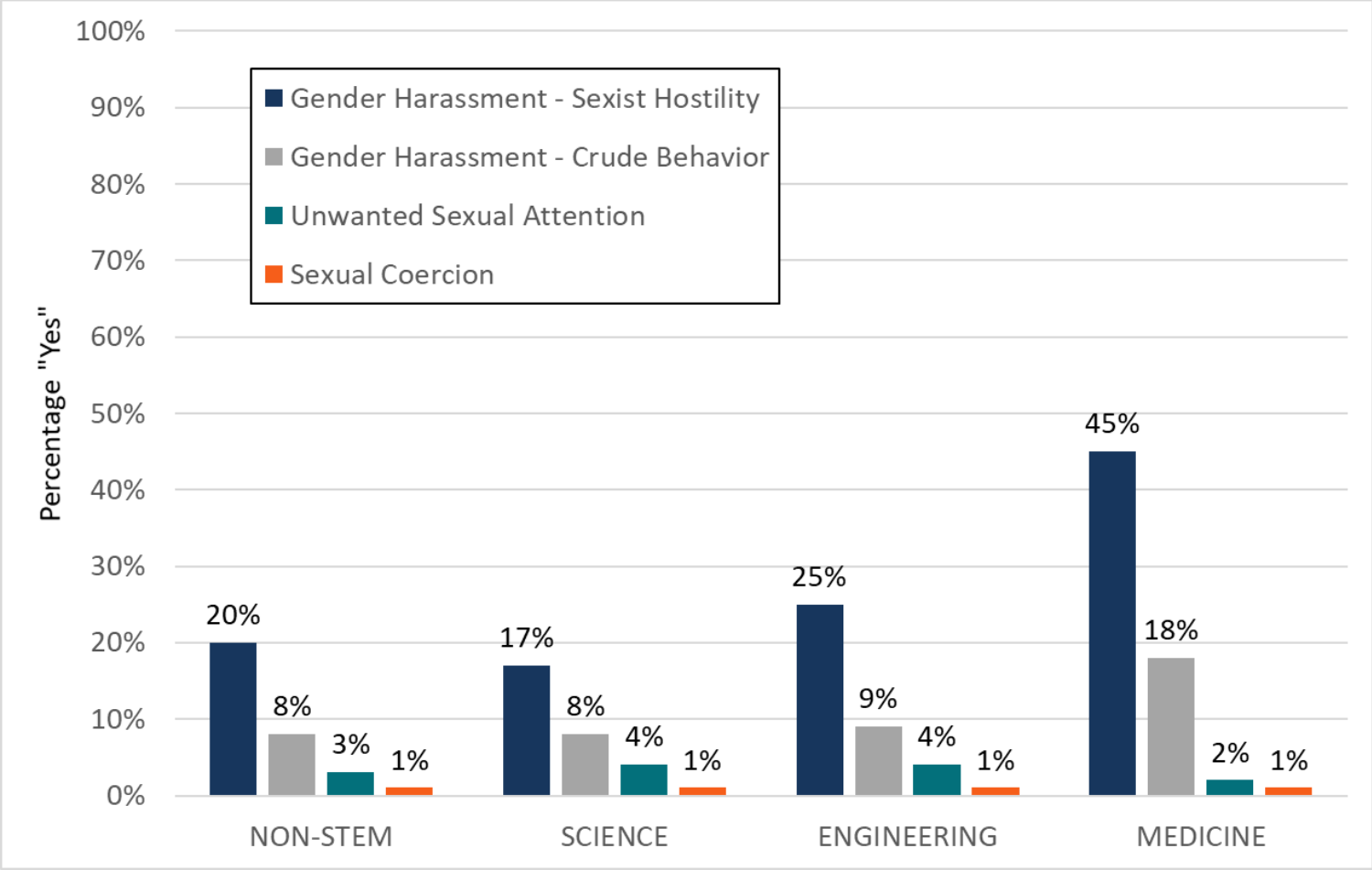
- Best available analysis to date shows that 50 percent of women faculty and staff in academia experience sexual harassment.
- Student surveys at a couple universities shows that between 20-50 percent of students in science, engineering, and medicine experience sexual harassment from faculty or staff.

Finding: Sexual harassment is common

Example – Percent of women faculty/staff harassed by coworkers or supervisors at a large public university:



Finding: Sexual harassment is common (cont.)



Findings: Race, Sexuality, and Gender Identity

Women of color experience more harassment (sexual, racial/ethnic, or combination of the two) than white women, white men, and men of color do. Women of color often experience sexual harassment that includes racial harassment.

Sexual- and gender-minority people experience more sexual harassment than heterosexual women do.

Findings: Impact on Targets and Bystanders

Sexual harassment undermines women's professional and educational attainment and mental and physical health.

Sexual harassment has adverse effects that affect not only the targets of harassment but also bystanders, co-workers, workgroups, and entire organizations.

Findings: Impact on the Research Enterprise

Finding: The cumulative effect of sexual harassment is significant damage to research integrity and a costly loss of talent in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine.

Recommendation: Academic institutions should consider sexual harassment equally important as research misconduct in terms of its effect on the integrity of research.

Findings: Reporting

Title IX, Title VII, and case law reflect the inaccurate assumption that a target of sexual harassment will promptly report the harassment without worrying about retaliation.

The least common response for women is to formally report the sexually harassing experience. For many, this is due to an accurate perception that they may experience retaliation or other negative outcomes associated with their personal and professional lives.

Recommendation: Move Beyond Legal Compliance

Recommendation: Move beyond legal compliance to address culture and climate. Academic institutions, research and training sites, and federal agencies should move beyond interventions or policies that represent basic legal compliance and that rely solely on formal reports made by targets.

Findings on organizational climate

Sexual harassment is most likely to take place in environments that are:

- Male-dominated in number, leaders, and culture
- Organizational Tolerance of sexual harassment
  - Reporting is perceived as risky
  - Reports not taken seriously
  - Offenders escape sanction

Organizational climate is, by far, the greatest predictor of the occurrence of sexual harassment.

INTERVENTIONS FOR PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Create Diverse, Inclusive, and Respectful Environments

Hiring and Promotion: Take explicit steps to achieve greater gender and racial equity in hiring and promotions, and improve the representation of women at every level.

- The University of Michigan Committee on Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE) offers Faculty Recruitment Workshops for faculty members with an important role in faculty recruitment.

Civility-Promotion: Combine anti-harassment efforts with programs to promote civility.

- The 2016 EEOC Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace recommends workplace training focused on respect and civility.
- The Civility, Respect, and Engagement at Work (CREW) program is an intensive 6-month intervention geared to enhance employees' interpersonal awareness and communication skills.

Interrupt and Intervene in Inappropriate Behavior: Utilize training approaches that develop skills among participants to interrupt and intervene when inappropriate behavior occurs.

- Bystander intervention training such as Confronting Prejudiced Responses (CPR) and Behavior Modeling Training (BMT) is designed to train participants to recognize and report problematic behavior.

Training that Aims to Change Behavior: Training should focus on changing behavior, not on changing beliefs.

- Programs should clearly communicate behavioral expectations and specify consequences for failing to meet those expectations. Training programs should not be based on the avoidance of legal liability.

Improve Transparency and Accountability

Clear Policies: Develop and share clear, accessible, and consistent policies on sexual harassment and standards of behavior. Make clear that people will be held accountable for violating the policies.

- Include a range of clear disciplinary actions that correspond with the severity of the harassment.
- Engage the academic community in policy and practice reviews. Some institutions have created student advisory boards and forums for students to meet with the Title IX Steering Committee.

Transparency about Handling Reports: Be as transparent as possible about how the institution is handling reports of sexual harassment.

- Yale University publishes a semiannual Report of Complaints of Sexual Misconduct and an annual campus safety report to inform the campus community.

Assess Climate: Utilize climate surveys to further investigate and address systemic sexual harassment.

- The results of climate surveys should be shared publicly to demonstrate to the campus community that the institution takes the issue seriously. The Administrator-Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative (ARC3) survey has been used by more than 150 higher education institutions.

Research Integrity: Consider sexual harassment equally important as research misconduct in terms of its effect on the integrity of research.

- The U.S. Geological Survey and the Department of the Interior have broad scientific integrity policies that apply to employees, appointees, volunteers, grantees, and contractors. Some scientific societies such as the American Geophysical Union have developed new ethics policies that explicitly call out sexual harassment and discrimination.

Diffuse the Hierarchical and Dependent Relationship Between Trainees and Faculty

Mentoring Networks: Adopt mentoring networks or committee-based advising that allows for a diversity of potential pathways for advice, funding, support, and informal reporting of harassment.

Independent Research Funding: Develop ways research funding can be provided to the trainee rather than just the principal investigator.

Provide Support for the Target

Access to Support Services: Provide means for the target of harassment to access support services (social services, health care, legal, career/professional).

Informal Reporting: Provide alternative and less formal means of recording information about the experience and reporting the experience.

- Provide anonymous, confidential reporting systems. Callisto is an online system that allows targets to control the disclosure of information, access supportive services, and share information on alleged perpetrators.
- Provide confidential reporting channels outside of the faculty or usual workplace hierarchy, such as an ombudsperson.
- Explore the use of restorative justice processes. The Campus PRISM (Promoting Restorative Initiatives for Sexual Misconduct) Project calls for accountability through collaboration and prevention through education.

Prevent Retaliation: Develop approaches to prevent the target from experiencing or fearing retaliation in academic settings.

- Be prepared to take action to ensure the target of the harassment is able to continue his/her academic work. This could include using mutual no contact orders between the accused and accuser, changing class schedules, changing the locks at the housing facility or workplace, rescinding building access for the accused, and reassigning advisors, mentees, and supervisors.

Strive for Strong and Diverse Leadership

Make it an Explicit Goal: College and university presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, and program directors must make the reduction and prevention of sexual harassment an explicit goal of their tenure.

Develop Leadership Skills: Support and facilitate leaders at every level (university, school/college, department, lab) in developing skills in leadership, conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, and de-escalation, and ensure a clear understanding of policies and procedures for handling sexual harassment issues.

Move Beyond Legal Liability: Leadership training programs should include training on how to recognize and handle sexual harassment issues, and how to take explicit steps to create a culture and climate to reduce and prevent sexual harassment—and not just protect the institution against liability.

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This brief is based on the findings and recommendations in *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine* (2018). Copies of the Report are available from the National Academies Press, (800) 624-6242; http://www.nap.edu or at www.nationalacademies.org/sexualharassment.

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Key Recommendations

Create diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments

- **Hiring and Promotion**: Take explicit steps to achieve greater gender and racial equity in hiring and promotions, and improve the representation of women at every level.
- **Civility-Promotion**: Combine anti-harassment efforts with programs to promote civility.
- **Interrupt and Intervene in Inappropriate Behavior**: Utilize training approaches that develop skills among participants to interrupt and intervene when inappropriate behavior occurs, such as bystander intervention.
- **Training that Aims to Change Behavior**: Training should focus on changing behavior, not on changing beliefs.

Key Recommendations

Diffuse the hierarchical and dependent relationship between trainees and faculty

- **Mentoring Networks:** Adopt mentoring networks or committee-based advising that allows for a diversity of potential pathways for advice, funding, support, and informal reporting of harassment.
- **Independent Research Funding:** Develop ways research funding can be provided to the trainee rather than just the principal investigator.

Key Recommendations

Provide support for targets

- **Access to Support Services:** Provide means for the target of harassment to access support services (social services, health care, legal, career/professional) without making a formal report.
- **Informal Reporting:** Provide alternative and less formal means of recording information about the experience and reporting the experience.
- **Prevent Retaliation:** Develop approaches to prevent the target from experiencing or fearing retaliation in academic settings.

Key Recommendations

Improve transparency and accountability

- **Clear Policies:** Develop and share clear, accessible, and consistent policies on sexual harassment and standards of behavior. Make clear that people will be held accountable for violating the policies.
- **Transparency about Handling Reports**: Be as transparent as possible about how the institution is handling reports of sexual harassment.
- **Assess Climate**: Utilize climate surveys to further investigate and address systemic sexual harassment.

Recommendations for Federal Agencies

- Increase support for research and evaluation of the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and training on sexual harassment.
- Attend to sexual harassment with at least the same level of attention and resources devoted to research misconduct.
- Reward and incentivize colleges and universities for implementing policies, programs, and strategies that research shows are most likely to and are succeeding in reducing and preventing sexual harassment.

Recommendations for Federal Agencies (cont.)

- Require institutions to report to federal agencies when individuals on grants have been found to have violated sexual harassment policies or have been put on administrative leave related to sexual harassment. Agencies should also hold accountable the perpetrator and the institution by using a range of disciplinary actions that limit the negative effects on other grant personnel who were either the target of the harassing behavior or innocent bystanders.

Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

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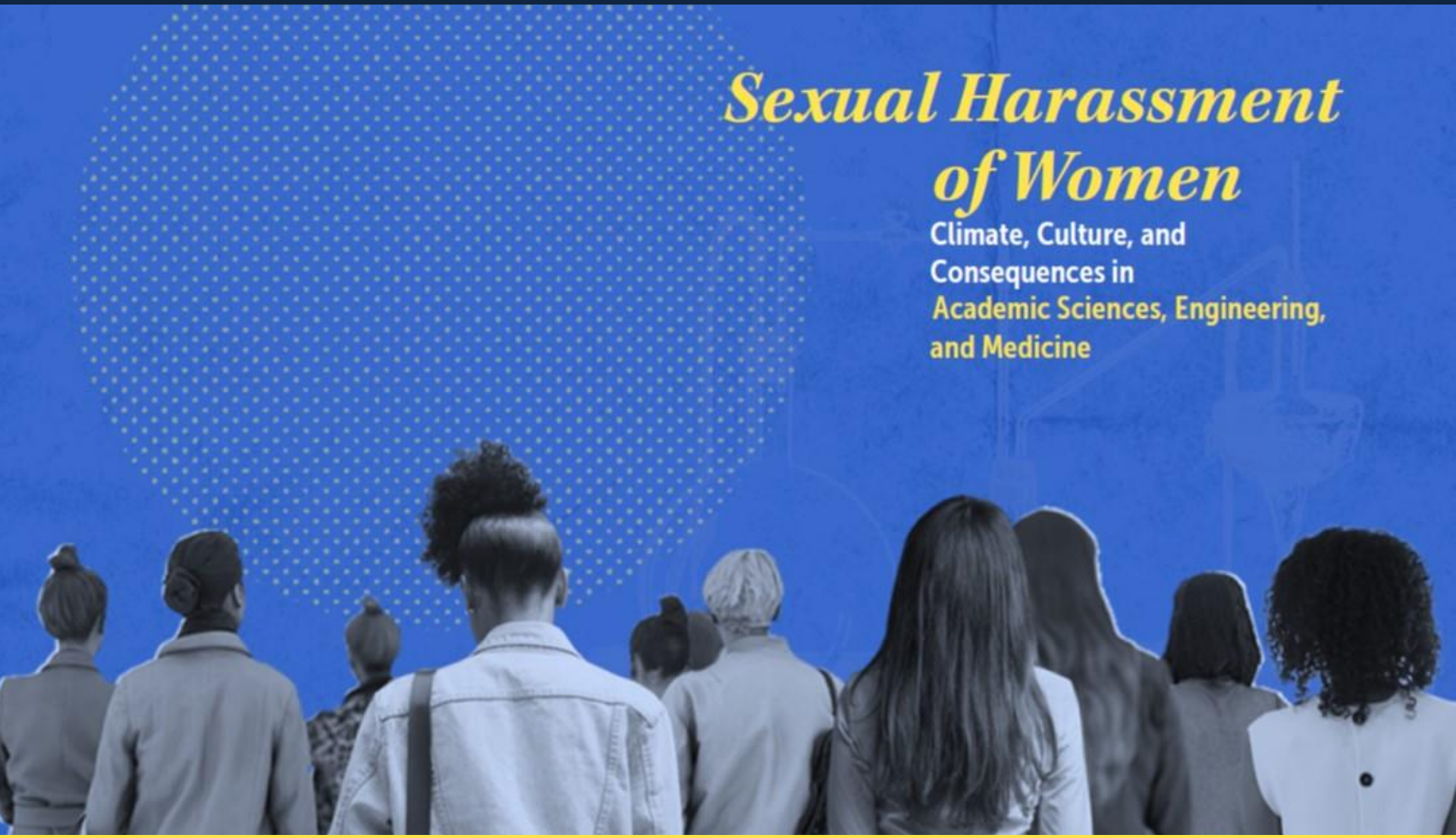

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