



**Let's Talk About  
Sex...(ual) Harassment  
in the Workplace**

TROCA Caribbean is incredibly grateful to the individuals and organisations who gave their time and expertise to provide feedback to help inform this report. These include:

Aaron ‘Tiny’ Richards of ADR Productions

Neil Williams

Kechelle Clarke

Nathan Simon

Leslyn Alexander

Mekar Lewis

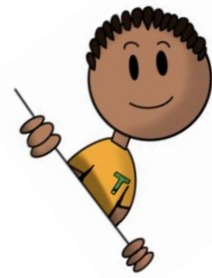
Kemp Mitchell

And of course, every single one of our survey respondents who took time out of their busy lives to invest in our research.

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# FOREWORD NOTE



“The stories and experiences around us were growing in numbers and the impacts wide ranging which made us really question the reality of our statistics and if our workspaces were as safe and respectful as the international data suggested.

At my core, the realisation too that my daughter was not far off from entering the world of work – I was inspired and felt called to do whatever little bit I could to change the narrative on sexual harassment in our region.

HR is my profession and Change management is my passion, so I did not want to just do a survey – I wanted the survey to be that catalyst for all of us to be motivated to change, to create, open, revisit and extend the dialogue on Sexual harassment.

Our first step was identifying the problem – I knew it was an issue, but I didn’t know how much of a problem - so we set out to create our own regional data.

Our regional sample included 300 respondents from a variety of genders and from around the region, Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago to name a few.”

Leila Craig (Owner & Principal Consultant TROCA Caribbean Limited)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment survey explores experiences and perceptions within the Caribbean region, across various industries. It was deliberately designed to be only identifiable by Industry and country to encourage candid participation and protect all respondents from any potential victimisation.

**70% of our survey respondents knew someone who had been sexually harassed in the workplace**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

We got tired of relying on Sexual Harassment data from other regions that have different values and belief systems with laws to protect them and companies that actively reinforce respectful cultural behaviours. It's fair to say throughout our region we have policies but if 65% of our survey respondents have policies in place then why is sexual harassment still such a devastating and widespread issue in the Caribbean region?

**47% of our survey respondents have been sexually harassed in the workplace (and over ¾ did NOT report it (77%))**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

A lack of information regarding organisational policies exists and for organisations that do have policies, a lack of reinforcement or training on the policies could contribute to the lack of reporting.

Yes, we need more laws to protect us however regulation alone is not enough to curb discriminatory behaviours and attitudes towards sexual harassment in the workplace – we need to use more proactive and innovative approaches to challenging and changing any barriers to identifying, reporting, and protecting the victims of sexual harassment.

As a region we are not ignorant to the acceptability of sexual harassment behaviours nor are we uninformed of what constitutes sexual harassment, but it is tolerated, worse, condoned and protected through our culturally reinforced silence.

Sexual harassment affects organisational revenue. Organisations may be losing key talent in the workspace by not creating a culture safe enough to speak up.

**75% of our survey respondents no longer work where they were sexually harassed**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

We passionately believe that organisations do not change – people do, and we will focus on changing every connection to contribute to a healthier and safer working environment starting right here with this report and our research. We must all commit to do more to eliminate all forms of discrimination starting by raising awareness of sexual harassment.

## Summary of Key Findings

An organisation’s value can be impacted when sexual harassment incidents occur (especially if they find their way on social media), this can negatively affect performance, the relationship between current and potential employees as well as customers. The facts are that Sexual Harassment is bad for business - average damage of US\$22,500 per employee in lost productivity and employee turnover due to sexual harassment.<sup>1</sup>

### How Big is our Sexual Harassment Problem?

There are few sexual harassment laws in our region, however despite legislation and national policies our data proves sexual harassment is a serious problem in the Caribbean region.

According to a survey conducted in the UK in

2019, 13 percent of women in the United Kingdom had been exposed to both visual and verbal harassment at work including whistling, rude gestures, or comments<sup>2</sup>. If you think that sexual

**47% of our survey respondents have witnessed (as a bystander) sexual harassment in the workplace and over half did not report it (60%)**  
2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

harassment is not a problem in our region or in your company - our data tells us a different story.

**Over half of our survey respondents were sexually harassed by their superiors**  
2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

### A costly culture of silence

Organisations are not fostering respectful or safe workspaces for employees to speak up to challenge inappropriate behaviours or report sexual harassment. A culture of respect starts

at the top and when an organisation’s leader demonstrates in words (and actions) a commitment to culturally change then it’s not limited to prevention and policy documentation. Sexual harassment policies should include bystander interventions as a required response to predatory sexual behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

Sexual harassment is often about power and the abuse of that power. Our data revealed that 22% of sexual perpetrators are executive managers which could have also impacted the low rate of reporting and fear of victimisation and further harassment. Evren Esen, SHRM’s director of workforce analytics, shares her view that “It appears that employees don’t feel that they have the power to bring allegations forward in a way that won’t harm them,”<sup>4</sup> is one that we echo and share the same challenges across our region.

<sup>1</sup> [The real cost of workplace sexual harassment to businesses \(phys.org\)](https://www.phys.org)

<sup>2</sup> [Types of sexual harassment that women have experienced at work in the UK 2019](https://www.shrm.org)

<sup>3</sup> [The Omissions That Make So Many Sexual Harassment Policies Ineffective \(shrm.org\)](https://www.shrm.org)

<sup>4</sup> [Why Workplace Sexual Harassment Is Under-Reported: SHRM Survey \(insurancejournal.com\)](https://www.insurancejournal.com)

More needs to be done to ensure that employees are safe from sexual harassment and that organisational cultures reinforce a zero tolerance towards it and create respectful workspaces.

Laws, regulations, and policies are important in setting the context, clarifying the process for reporting, and investigating claims of sexual harassment. Some employees do not report sexual harassment because they are not aware that their organisation even has a policy. However just having a policy clearly does not result in the eradication of sexual harassment.

**60% of our survey respondents said their workplaces have a sexual harassment policy**  
2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

**55% of our survey respondents who work in HR have personally experienced sexual harassment in the workplace**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

Our employees need training on how to put these policies to use, they need clear leadership on zero-tolerance, and they need to learn how to treat/deal with perpetrators of sexual harassment.

Our data identified that most of the regional perpetrators use(d) suggestive remarks, "jokes" and 'close proximity' to sexually harass victims.

**55% of our survey respondents said their company provided no sexual harassment training**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

Our training needs to cover the boundaries of 'jokes' and discuss regional contextual scenarios that highlight and reinforce unacceptable and acceptable behaviours. As HR professionals we can write (more) policies and provide in-house training and open up dialogues – encourage a speak up culture and become a catalyst for the change.

### **Creating safe and respectful workplaces**

We should treat all reports of sexual harassment seriously, but fundamentally we need to do more to encourage people to feel safe enough to make the reports and provide support through unbiased investigations and treat them with dignity and respect.

We need to make training on sexual harassment more available. Training employees about expected behaviours and communicating clearly a zero-tolerance approach to violators could help solve the issue at the core. It would also highlight what should be reported and the protection against victimisation for any claimants.

## Implications for the HR Practitioner

HR also has a crucial role to play in helping to build a workplace culture that is inclusive and fosters openness and transparency<sup>5</sup>.

Over a third of our survey respondents (33%) work in HR and through the HR function they can have a significant influence on the working culture and set the cultural tone for expectations around dignity and respect.

We know it's a widespread issue because 83% of HR respondents know someone who has been sexually harassed in the workplace. We are confident that as HR Professionals we can identify sexual harassment because 99% of survey respondents reported so, but still, it's a massive problem among our HR professionals.<sup>6</sup> We know what it is and how to spot it and that it is wrong but still

we have seen it happen and not reported it. The most jarring statistic for the HR professionals is the number of those who have personally experienced sexual harassment. And have not/do not report it.

**74% of our survey respondents who work in HR never reported their experience of being sexually harassed**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

Too many of us don't report it - We have a problem even as HR practitioners reporting it.

HR functions need to lead by example, if the

HR function are not comfortable or confident to report incidents of sexual harassment, then how might the rest of the organisation view this or interpret the silence.

While some organisations have sexual harassment policies and also provide training it is clear that this has not been an effective measure in reduction or eradication and that there is an urgent requirement to overhaul sexual harassment training. The education/experience/training need to be

focused not just on the identification but on the reporting frameworks, the investigation, the bias, the support and dealing with perpetrators. HR can influence this and be the organisational change catalysts to drive the eradication of sexual harassment in our workplaces.

**73% of our survey respondents who work in HR think more can be done by their employer to curb sexual harassment in the workplace**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

We all have a duty to act and remedy/rectify this culture of silence - We must lead by example. Easier said than done of course, especially if over half of the perpetrators are managers or executives. The availability and protection of a whistleblowing policy or Sexual harassment policy that offers protection of

**51% of our survey respondents have witnessed sexual harassment in the workplace (as a bystander) and 53% did NOT report it**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

<sup>5</sup> [Sexual harassment in the workplace | CIPD](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Lifting the lid on sexual harassment and power in the workplace](#)



claimants against victimisation or fear of losing their jobs is of utmost importance. If our employees are too afraid to report instances of sexual harassment, then that makes it infinitely harder to deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Only by gathering data around current perspectives on sexual harassment can we accurately plan for the future and provide insights for our companies as HR professionals guide improvements and ignite a passion for change.

## Key Recommendations

There is now no doubt, that in our region, sexual harassment is a widespread problem and that we need to address it immediately.

Employees can hardly perform their best or excel in organisations when they are under threat of harassment. A workplace environment which values difference, is free from hostility and based on zero-tolerance of sexual harassment will enable people to contribute more effectively and achieve higher levels of job satisfaction<sup>7</sup>

### 1. ACKNOWLEDGE AND ADDRESS OUR SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROBLEM

#### Create strategic action plans to reduce the problem

- Create safe spaces for open dialogue
- LISTEN to our employees
- Set clear zero-tolerance policies
- Provide effective training for all employees

### 2. REVERSE THE CULTURE OF SILENCE

#### Create an open, safe, and respectful organisational culture

- Encourage reporting from everyone in the organisation
- Be transparent on sexual harassment analytics and data
- Effectively deal with perpetrators

### 3. EMBRACE HR AS CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

#### Unlocking HR to drive the solution

- Communicate and reinforce zero-tolerance sexual harassment policy
- Investigate all instances and act swiftly
- Protect against victimisation

**SPEAK UP** - We can all contribute positively to this movement and lead by example and stop tolerating and consenting to it through our silence. In the words of Justice Don Mitchell “as our legislatures are reluctant to debate and to enact laws criminalising sexual harassment, it will continue to be the responsibility both of good corporate citizens and of workers’ representatives to ensure that their institutions’ corporate by-laws, employee handbooks and Board policies contain provisions expressly dedicated to outlawing sexual harassment in the workplace and providing mechanisms for victimised employees to seek redress.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [cipd-submission-to-women-and-equalities-committee-on-sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace\\_tcm18-39286.pdf](#)

<sup>8</sup> [The-Case-of-Sexual-Harassment-by-Justice-Don-Mitchell.pdf \(eccourts.org\)](#)

## Recommendations for HR Practitioners

As HR practitioners we felt that it was important to call out specific recommendations that fellow HR Practitioners could add to their department goals or individual action plans.

1. **Cultivate safe and confidential spaces** that encourage the reporting of sexual harassment in order that we may be able to do something about it before victims leaves and so that perpetrators are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
2. **Communicate with your organisation** on progress, any and every instance of sexual harassment should be investigated and acted on swiftly and a clear message sent that it will not be tolerated.
3. **Develop processes** to deal with sexual harassment complaints fairly and quickly. Processes should be followed consistently and reliably – Investigation templates and adding Sexual harassment reporting in your people analytics reports.
4. **Support and protect** anyone that makes reports, all employees should have access to advice and counselling from either someone in the organisation with appropriate training, or an outside sponsored service.



# INTRODUCTION

The regional laws on sexual harassment are in a state of rapid change. In many countries in our region there is still no law on sexual harassment as a legally distinct and prohibited activity – including in Trinidad and Tobago. Jamaica recently passed the Sexual Harassment (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2021 on 01<sup>st</sup> October 2021 and is awaiting its senate approval. Belize, Bahamas, and Barbados lead as the only Caribbean regions with current legislation on Sexual Harassment. Equal opportunity, labour, tort, and criminal laws may all be applied separately or in combination to deal with this behaviour. The National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment in Trinidad and Tobago<sup>9</sup>, addresses and outlines the procedures to follow for employers and with that regard, take all allegations of sexual harassment seriously.

## Vision

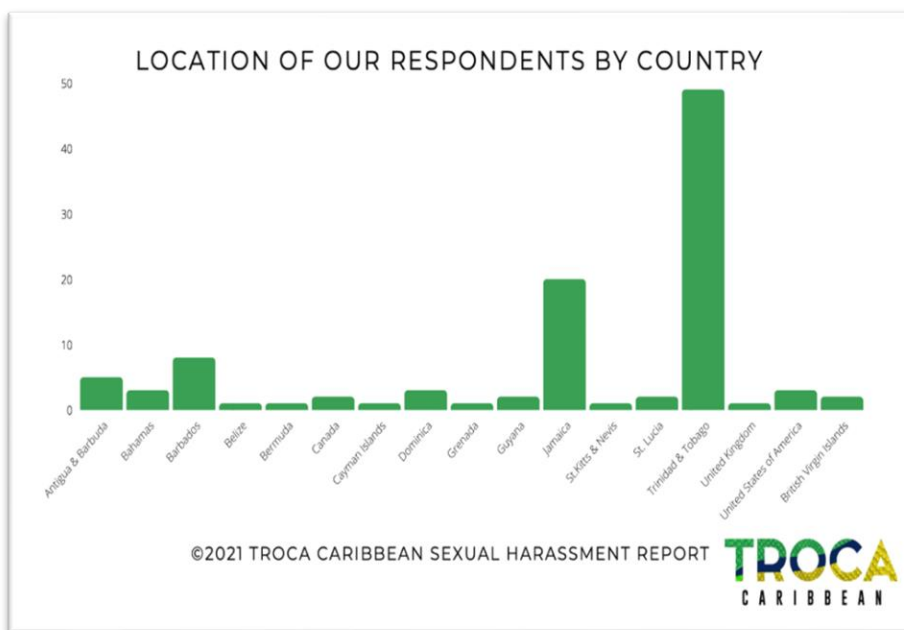


Figure 1: 2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey participants by country

The inaugural 2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey was designed to gain a better understanding of regional perspectives and experiences of people working in the Caribbean in a variety of different industries. We conceptualised, created and distributed our questionnaire on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace using Qualtrics XM and went live in August for two weeks, resulting in 300 respondents.

To accurately plan for the future and provide insights for companies and HR professionals to guide improvements and ignite a passion for change, we had to gather our own data around current perspectives. Our purpose was to provide insight and local data for HR professionals and business professionals to make data-based decisions to drive culture, policy, training, and budget investments. We were able to gather information from various industries through social media distribution, E-mail, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp Messenger. Our vision is to build and sustain respectful workspaces and places that we as a region can be proud of.

<sup>9</sup> National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment ([labour.gov.tt](http://labour.gov.tt))

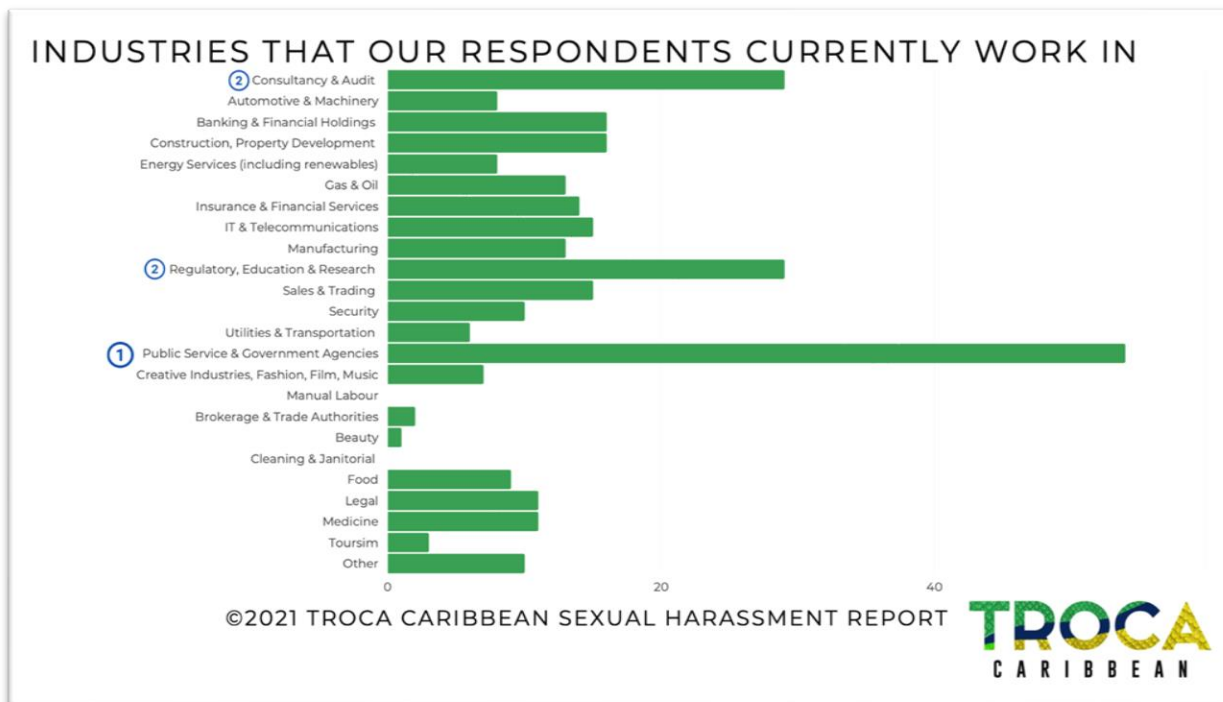


Figure 2: 2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey Respondents by Industry

Blessed with a rich and varied pool of respondents, most respondents worked in the Public Services and Government agencies where 56% of our survey respondents indicated that they had been sexually harassed in the workplace – the same percentage of respondents in the banking and food sectors also experienced sexual harassment.

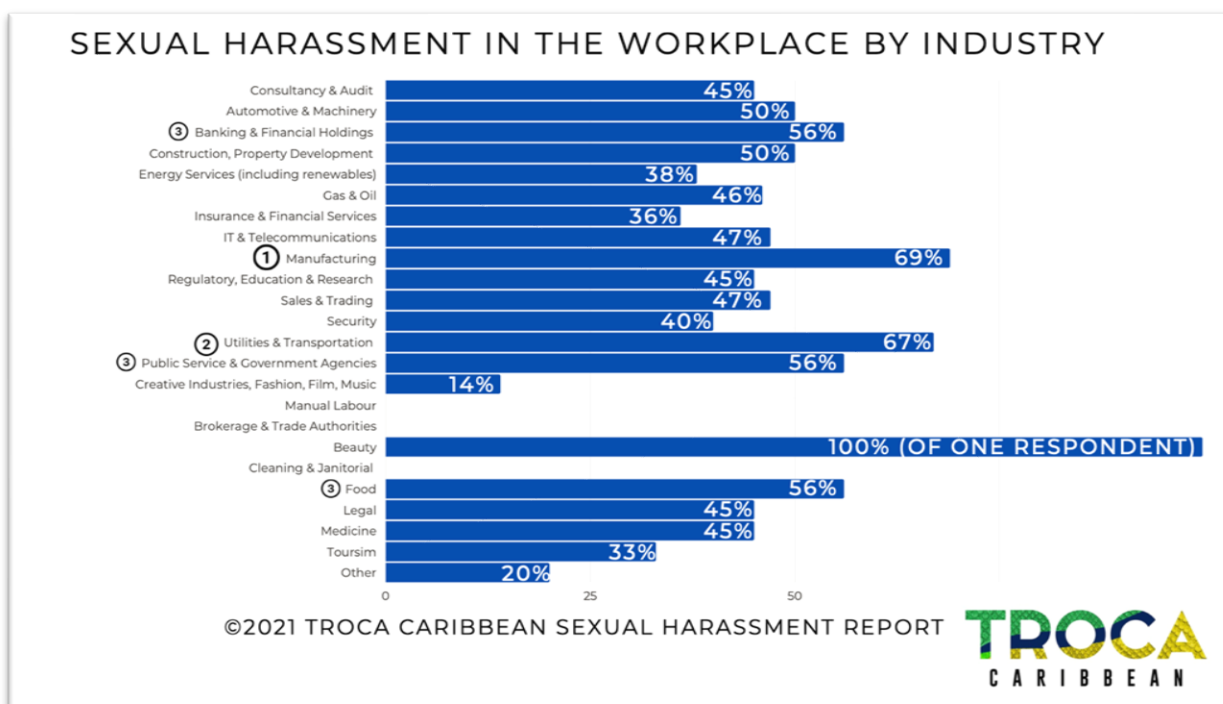


Figure 3: 2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey Respondents who experienced sexual harassment in the workplace – by Industry

Manufacturing respondents had the highest instances of sexual harassment at 69% of survey respondents reporting that they had personally experiences sexual harassment in the workplace, closely followed by 67% in Utilities and transport.

## Sexual Harassment and Victims of Sexual Harassment

Dictionary definition of sexual harassment “uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature especially by a person in authority toward a subordinate (such as an employee or student)”<sup>10</sup>

The Main Forms of Sexual Harassment, as mentioned in the Trinidad and Tobago National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment are<sup>11</sup>;

1. The Quid Pro Quo approach which refers to a demand by a person in authority, such as a supervisor, for favours in order to obtain or maintain a professional benefit – be it recruitment, a wage increase, a promotion or opportunity, a transfer or job security. This type of harassment takes place most often in the form of (sexual) blackmail, i.e., demanding (sexual) favours in exchange for a job benefit.
2. The Hostile approach which refers to verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive, humiliating, abusive or poisoned working environment, and interferes with a person’s performance at work.

In a 2017 National women’s health survey it identified that 13% of women experienced sexual harassment at work <sup>12</sup>. However, our data showed a huge leap at 55 % of women in the Caribbean region have personally experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

Dr. Denise Chevannes-Vogel, has underscored the fact that although the majority of victims are women, sexual harassment is experienced by both women and men and is perpetrated regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>13</sup> Our data also proves that sexual harassment does not only happen to women, 27% of men surveyed also reported experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace.

When it comes to speaking up and reposting instances of sexual harassment, more women than men report it. 77% of the women who reported being sexually harassed did not report it compared to 91% of men and 67% of those who

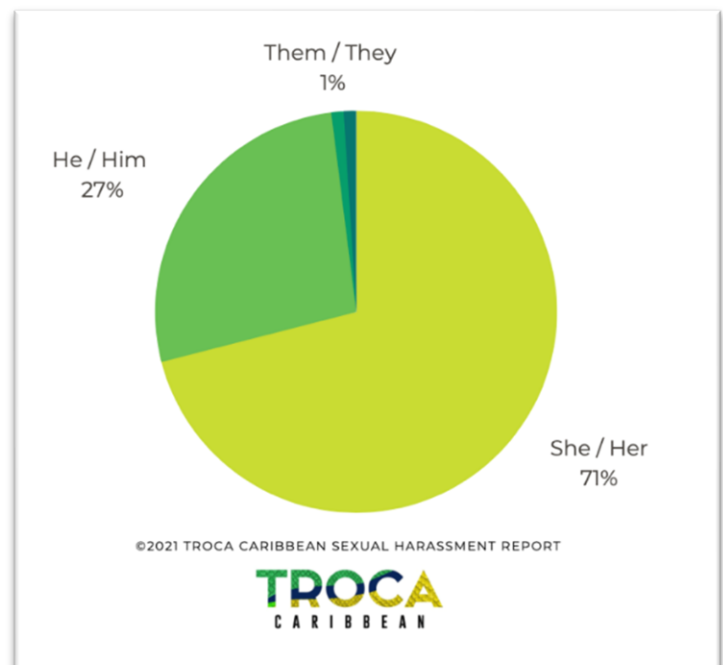


Figure 4: Respondents of the 2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual

<sup>10</sup> [Sexual Harassment | Definition of Sexual Harassment by Merriam-Webster](#)

<sup>11</sup> [A National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment in Trinidad and Tobago \(labour.gov.tt\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [National Women's Health Survey for Trinidad and Tobago: Final Report \(iadb.org\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Sexual Harassment affects both women and men | UN Women – Multi-Country Office – Caribbean](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Sexual Harassment and the Role of Human Resource Administration](#)

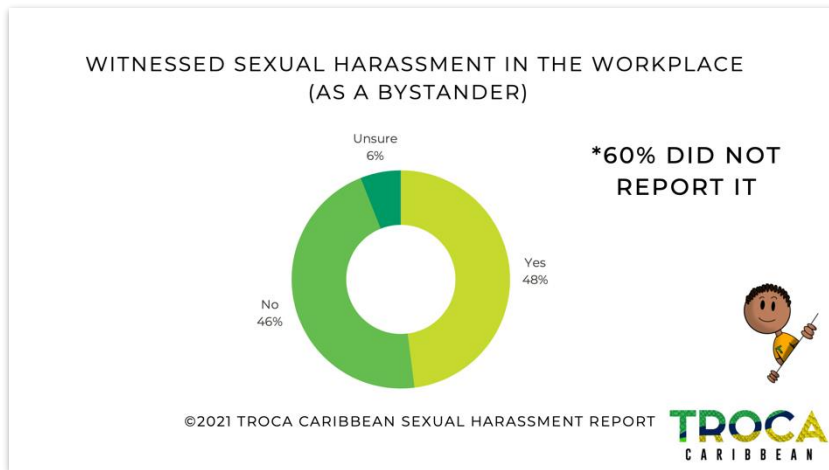


Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who witnessed sexual harassment as a bystander

identified as them/they did not report it. Perhaps less of other genders report it because its seen as ‘something that only happens to women” by society.

All of us as managers, leaders, colleagues, and friends must encourage the reporting and demystification, vilification, and

victimisation of those subjected to sexual discrimination. We need to ensure that sexual harassment is not communicated as a women-only issue so not to deter other genders who experience it from reporting complaints. A broad perspective is required to acknowledge that the alleged perpetrator, and the victim, could be of either sex.

Whilst it may seem like our pronouns determine how likely we are to be sexually harassed; our data proves that women are targeted more than those who identify as any other pronoun.<sup>15</sup>

## Sexual Harassment as a Bystander

Witnessing sexual harassment as a bystander can also have a devastating effect on an organisation’s culture, the quandary of whether or not to report it or when to report it can have a damaging effect on employee wellbeing and mental health.

If we consider that 47% of our survey respondents witnessed sexual harassment as a bystander and 60% didn’t report it, that’s a lot of mental struggles and a significant effect on the organisational culture.

Most policies place responsibility for reporting harassment exclusively on the victim/complainant, which can place them in a vulnerable position. Mandating bystander intervention can relieve the victim/complainant of their sole responsibility for reporting and stopping predatory sexual

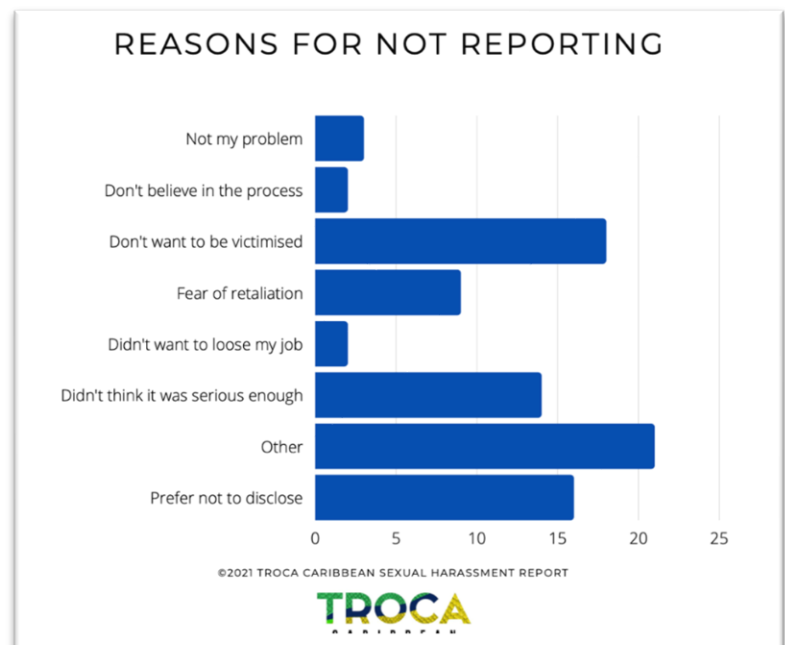


Figure 5: Reasons why survey respondents did not report witnessing instances of sexual harassment as a bystander

<sup>15</sup> [Sexual Harassment in the Workplace - Submission to the Women and Equalities Select Committee](#)



behaviour, and rightly puts the responsibility of creating a healthier organizational culture on all members of the organization.<sup>16</sup>

We asked survey participants to elaborate using their own words on why they did not report witnessing sexual harassment as a bystander and a selection of the responses are featured below:

"No procedure for such reports and confidence in confidentiality by HR"

"Because it was done by the highest level in the Org."

"I didn't see that there was support or desire for change within the dept."

"It was very subtle and the woman handled it"

"Nothing will be done about it"

"It was not my place. It was told to in confidence. And also included the experience of a third person who did not give direct consent to the information. However the nature of the harassment was disturbing. It included the determination of promotion."

"My organization is toxic androcentric cultured. Nothing will be done if sexual harassment is reported."

"I spoke to the person about it"

"Because it would not have been taken seriously at that organisation"

"No one to report it to"

"Because it's the person's duty to report it"

"It was the Boss who was doing it"

"No action would be taken against offender"

"Nothing will be done about it"

"There was no policy in place and the recipient seemed flattered"

"no mechanism in place to deal with it"

"I didn't see it as clearly as I do now as such as fraternizing in this way was the culture of the department"

"I work in HR and my presence triggered the employee to do it herself I guess"

"Because it would not have been taken seriously at that organisation"

"I think we as women have grown so much more accustomed to this being the norm that it feels wrong but not to that extent. Maybe if we did, men would know how tired we are of their unwanted cat calling."

"The offender was an older colleague"

"The victim did not want it reported"

"The victim did not want it reported because of fear of victimization/ negative repercussions"

Figure 7: Additional Reasons why survey respondents did not report witnessing instances of sexual harassment as a bystander

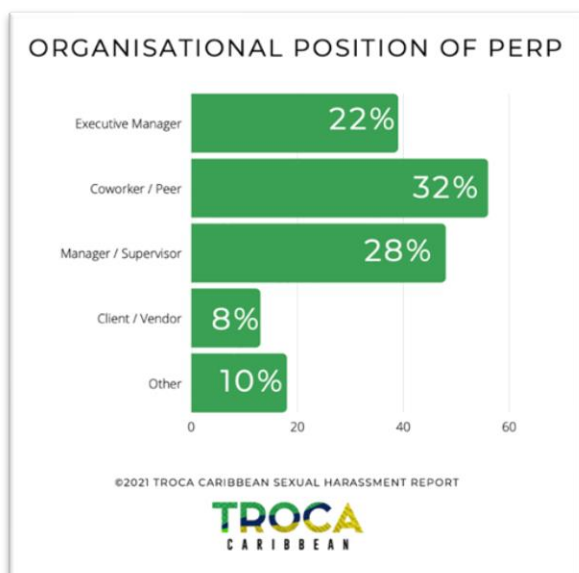


Figure 8: Organisational position of the perpetrator of sexual harassment

### Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in our Region

Half our survey respondents who had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace were victimised by someone senior to them. This may also contribute to why such a high percentage of victims or bystanders did not report it.<sup>17</sup>

Our research revealed a huge 50% of perpetrators are people in supervisory/management positions, 22% of survey respondents were reportedly harassed by a senior executive.<sup>18</sup> CEOs have been found to have a significant influence on the firms they run. That means that their behaviours and views on topics should be of sound standing<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> The Omissions That Make So Many Sexual Harassment Policies Ineffective (shrm.org)

<sup>17</sup> Sexual harassment is a workplace issue, UNISON, UK

<sup>18</sup> Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, TUC

<sup>19</sup> bit.ly/CEOsinfluenceCSR

Leadership of organisations need to set a clear stance on zero tolerance to all forms of sexual harassment and deal with all perpetrators swiftly and effectively. If leaders are found to be abusing their positions it cannot be overlooked or swept under the carpet.

## Experiences of Sexual Harassment

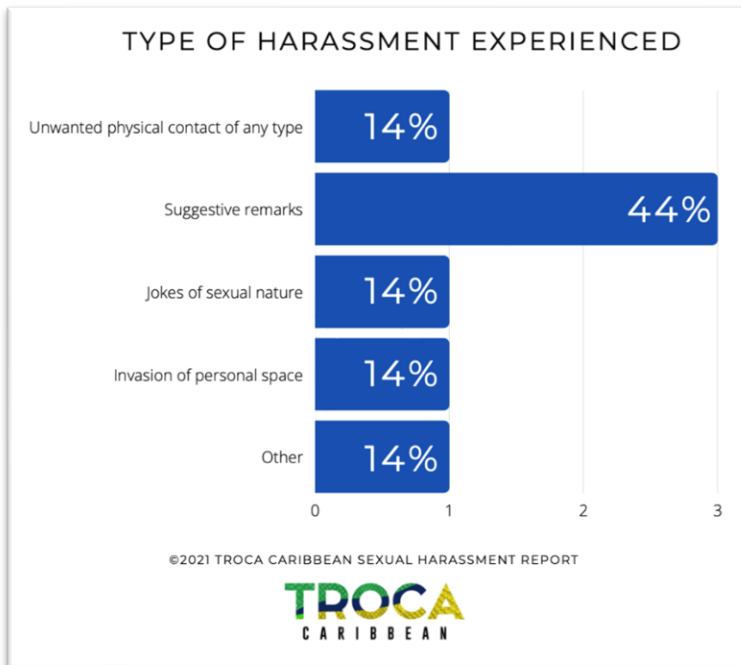


Figure 9: Types of sexual harassment experiences

Typically, most sexual harassment starts off as "just a joke"<sup>20</sup>, 44% of our survey respondents reported the main form of harassment was suggestive remarks, followed by jokes of a sexual nature and invasion of personal space. This can be compared to a UK study done in 2018 in which 27% of women were subjected to sexual suggestive remarks.<sup>21</sup>

We have already established that sexual harassment is not directed to women alone, therefore our policies and training need to focus on every gender, not only on how to deal with these “jokes” but also on how to identify and call out these unacceptable behaviours.

The point is, that whether the remark was intended as just a joke or not, if the impact of the ‘joke’ is offensive to you or any of your co-workers then it can be defined as sexual harassment.

93% of our survey respondents reported that sexual harassment takes place during work hours, which means it’s happening in our offices, our canteens, right in front of us and we need to address it.

While 61.3% of those harassed said it always takes places/took place during working hours and 32% said sometimes, nearly a third said it happened outside of working hours.

Some employees may think that by “joking” or messaging inappropriately after work hours that it is no longer ‘work’ so it would not constitute sexual harassment so the training and education on boundaries and definitions of sexual harassment in the training is key.

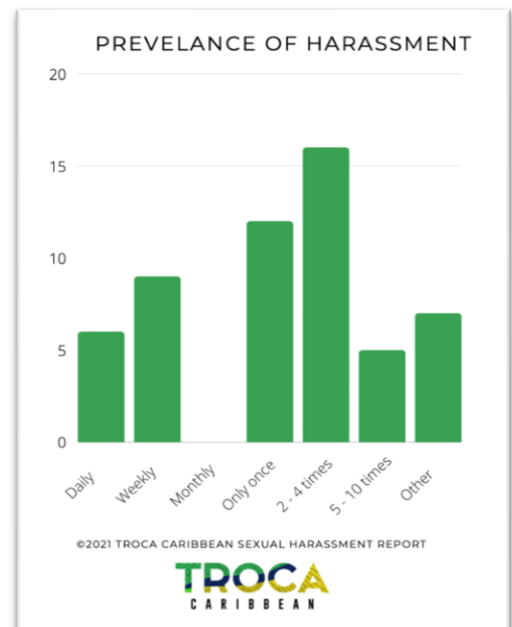


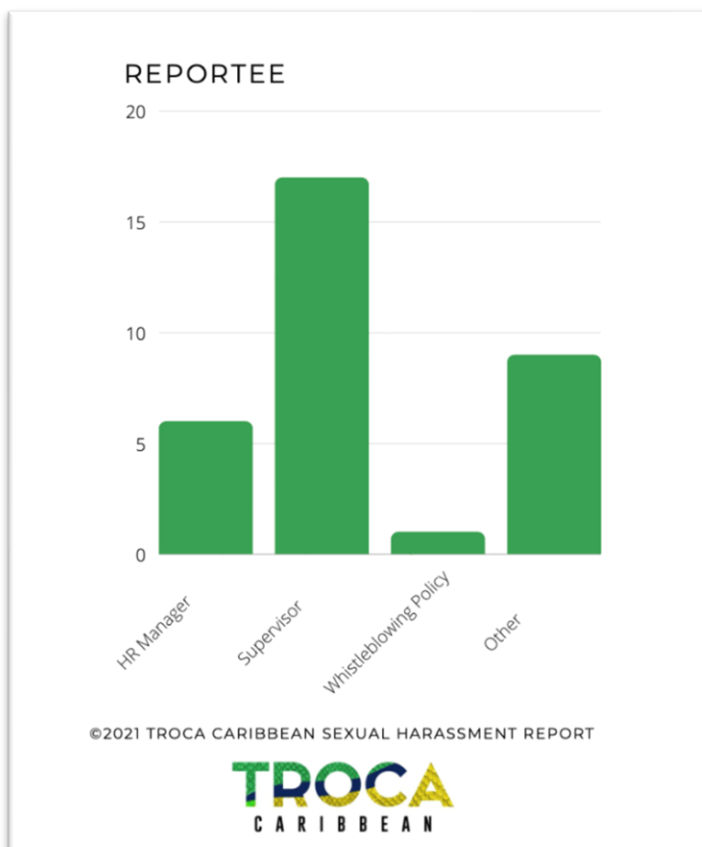
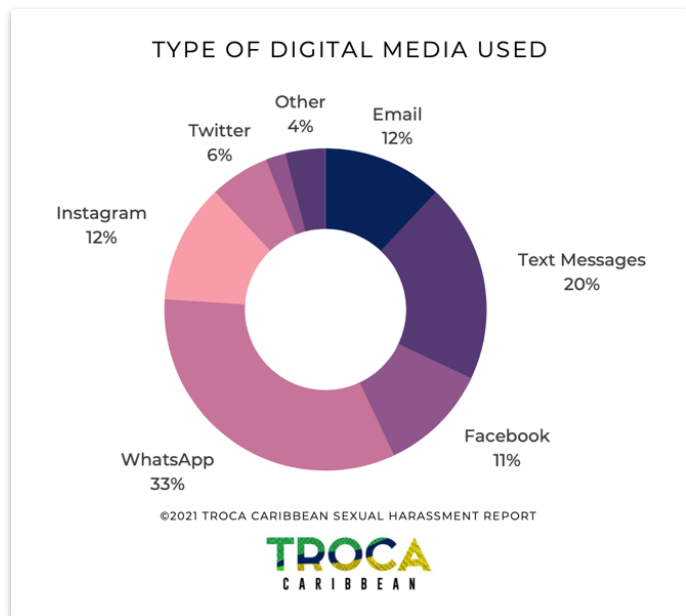
Figure 10: How often the sexual harassment happened

<sup>20</sup> [When a 'Joke' Becomes Sexual Harassment | K2 Employment Law Group](#)

<sup>21</sup> [A third of women say they have faced sexual harassment at work](#)



39% of our survey respondents reported that they have been uncomfortably approached via some form of digital media. WhatsApp (33%) and Text Messages (20%) rank as the highest rated platforms used for sexual harassment in our survey, whether it be during or outside of working hours.



For those who reported instances of being sexually harassed, 52% of them reported the incident to their supervisor. If the majority of reports are being made to supervisors, we need to ensure they are adequately trained to know the process and how to deal effectively with all reports.

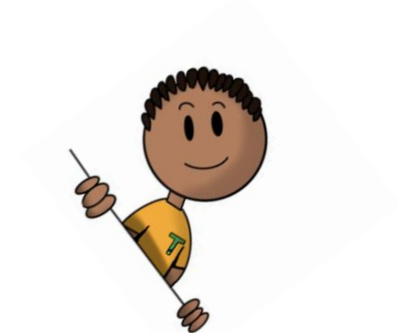


Figure 12: Who our survey respondents reported instances of sexual harassment to in the organisation

For the same group of survey respondents who had experienced sexual harassment personally but did not make a report was to mostly due to a masculine work culture, that they didn't think it was serious enough and that it was their word against the other persons.

It is our duty to provide safe and respectful workspaces for all our staff and protect them from victimisation after making a sexual harassment complaint.

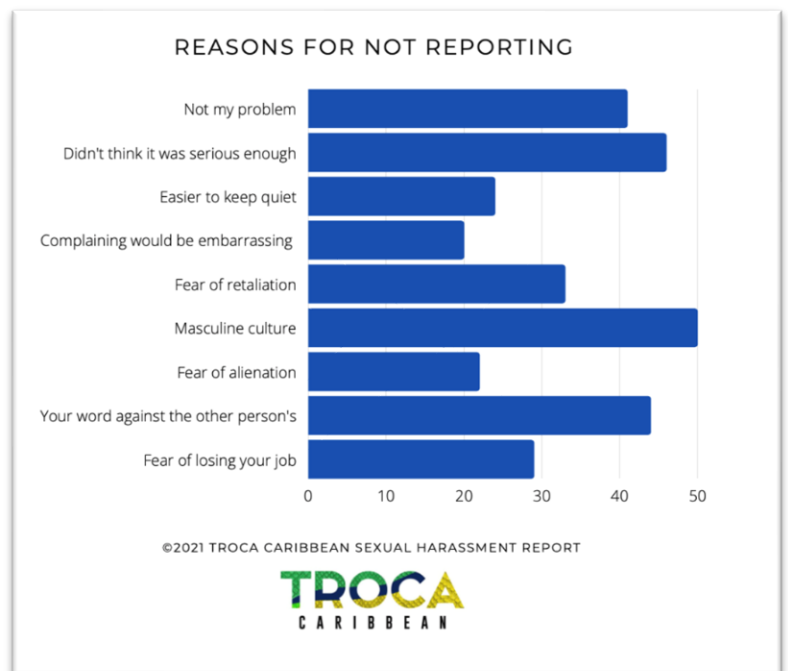


Figure 13: Reasons for not Reporting Personal Sexual Harassment

## Identifying the Impact(s) of Sexual Harassment

The effects of sexual harassment can be felt both personally and throughout the organisation. It can have a profound impact on all parties involved, personally and within the organisation. Our survey respondents shared the impacts of their experiences of sexual harassment candidly and 98% of respondents said they were affected psychologically, whilst 17% of respondents indicated they had been affected both psychologically and physically.

“People who experience harassment are more likely to be depressed and anxious and less satisfied with their work”<sup>22</sup>. It is also reported<sup>23</sup> that sometimes the effects of harassment can be felt for years after the incident and of our survey respondents, 38% of our survey respondents said it affects their current self confidence in the workplace despite 58% reporting that the incident(s) happened 5-10 years ago.

95% of our respondents said they thought sexual harassment had an impact on morale, the truth is that there are devastating negative effects of sexual harassment in the workplace from both a personal and organisational perspective.

<sup>22</sup> [Sexual Harassment | Definition of Sexual Harassment by Merriam-Webster](#)

<sup>23</sup> [CIPD, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, May 2021](#)

## Personal Impacts

26% of our survey respondents said they felt sexual harassment had an impact on mental health, while 38% of our survey respondents reported that it had impacted their ability to concentrate on tasks.

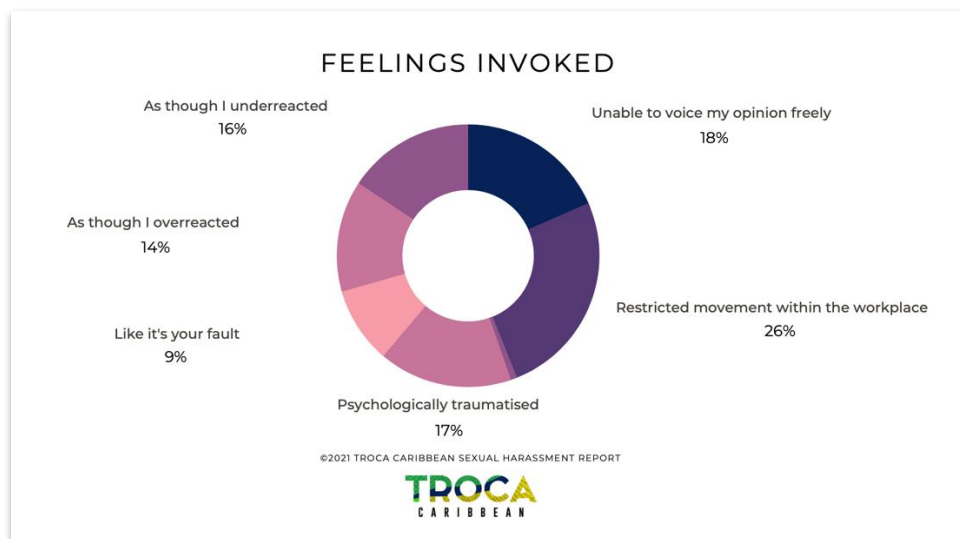


Figure 14: How did the sexual harassment make you feel in the workplace

Expressing or asserting expectations, being more vulnerable, and discussing personal experiences (once comfortable to), with co-workers can also create room for further understanding of each other, we need to create safe spaces in the organisation for these dialogues to happen.

You can't do your best work if you can't be yourself, but you also can't restrict others by making them feel uncomfortable.

Feeling restricted in work can be suffocating. More than a quarter (26%) of our survey respondents told us that they felt restricted in movement after being sexually harassed in their place of work. It must be disheartening waking up every morning dreading going to work to then feel limited to your cubicle and the restroom once you are there.

Some organisations have launched the use of AI<sup>24</sup> to create safe spaces to talk, for example, an anonymous chat room overseen by HR which can have huge benefits. It can allow for employees to freely report cases using usernames and discuss other problems within the office. This type of platform can encourage open discussions and can lead to other avenues of comfortably reporting cases of sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination.

<sup>24</sup> [Tackling Sexual Harassment using AI and Automation](#)

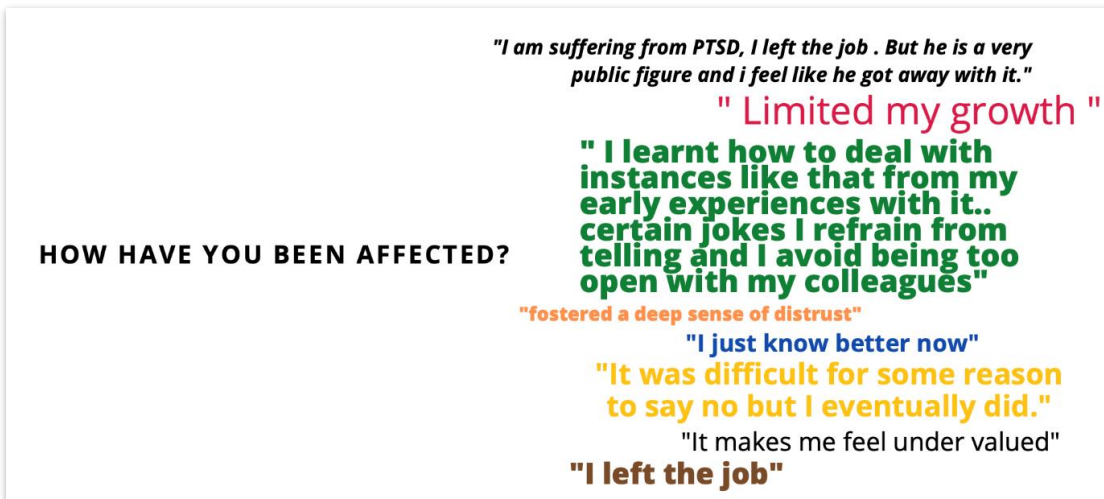


Figure 15: Some responses to the question "How are/were you affected?"

## Organisational Impacts

Organisational impacts of sexual harassment can have a costly impact on productivity, 93% of respondents said they felt sexual harassment had an impact on productivity.

If we are also not reporting sexual harassment, it unfortunately means that the perpetrators are also being permitted to continue and are not being effectively dealt with in organisations.

Sexual harassment impacts company turnover, why would anyone stay in a workplace that didn't encourage a safe and respectful work culture? – it turns out 75% of our survey respondents left after being sexually harassed and 38% said it was a factor

in their leaving. Capturing this data in an exit interview, even if sadly, it may be too late to stop them from leaving, we can protect the organisation and use that data to make informed data driven decisions. The personal impact of sexual harassment on a victim's mental health can affect the organisation due to long term absences which has been proven to be a symptom of mental health issues.

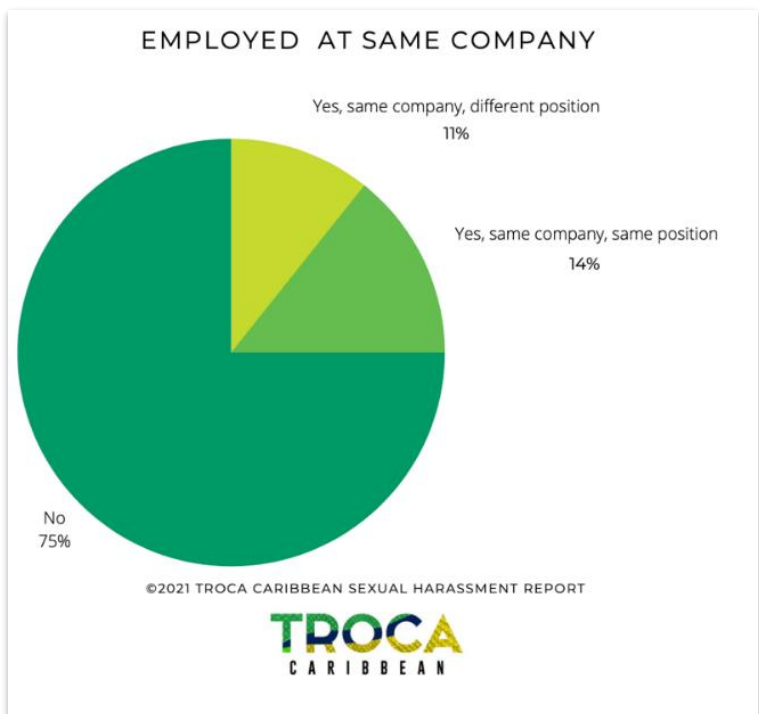


Figure 16: Are survey respondents still employed at same company where they experienced sexual harassment?

## Sexual Harassment Policy & Training

Prevention of sexual harassment is everyone's responsibility, but effective training needs to be broader than prevention. "No policy, no matter how well crafted, will prevent sexual harassment on its own, nor will it change a culture of sexual harassment"<sup>25</sup>. Our research further proves the view that having a sexual harassment policy does not stop sexual harassment from happening by itself - 65% of our respondents said their workplace have a policy - but it's a good place to start or grow from. For those lucky enough to have been exposed to sexual harassment training it hasn't been working as effectively as we hoped if 47% of our survey respondents were sexually harassed and 77% of those did not report it. Effective training should include defining sexual harassment behaviours, how to identify them and how to deal with them effectively without any victimisation and of course any reporting obligations.

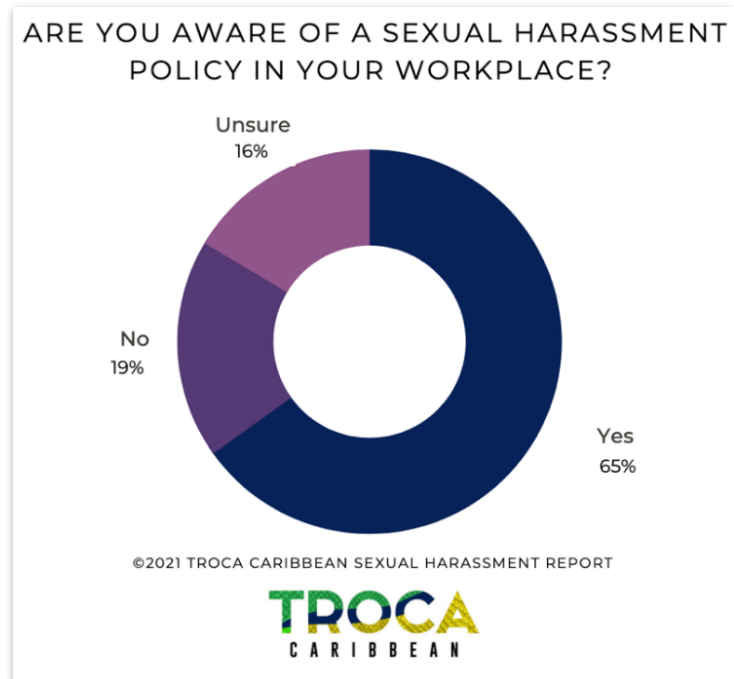


Figure 17: Survey respondents awareness of a sexual harassment policy in their workplace

Inductions for new staff are a good time train on policies set expectations of behaviour from the start. But these messages must be reinforced regularly. Anti-harassment training can also be helpful, but without the right culture in place employees may struggle to practice the right behaviours.<sup>26</sup> We need to make training on sexual harassment more available as some companies only offer training to managers and 55% of our survey respondents said their company provides no sexual harassment training.

We also need to make training more regular, only 24% of our survey respondents whose companies have sexual harassment policies have offered training only once and 10% of our survey respondents are not even aware if training is offered although they are aware of a policy.

66% of those who are aware that their company have a sexual harassment policy feel that their company fosters sexual harassment behaviours. 82% of our survey respondents feel as though their national behaviours foster sexual harassment in the workplace – 52% of those felt it to a great extent. More than half of the respondents agree that how we carry ourselves in and outside of the workplace reflect what we allow around us.

<sup>25</sup> [The Omissions That Make So Many Sexual Harassment Policies Ineffective \(shrm.org\)](https://www.shrm.org)

<sup>26</sup> [CIPD submission to women and equalities committee on sexual harassment in the workplace.pdf](#)

## Exploring and Comparing Workplace Behaviours

Sexual harassment has many forms and often inappropriate behaviour is brushed off or tolerated. We explored some common workplace examples of behaviour that is often linked to sexual harassment complaints.

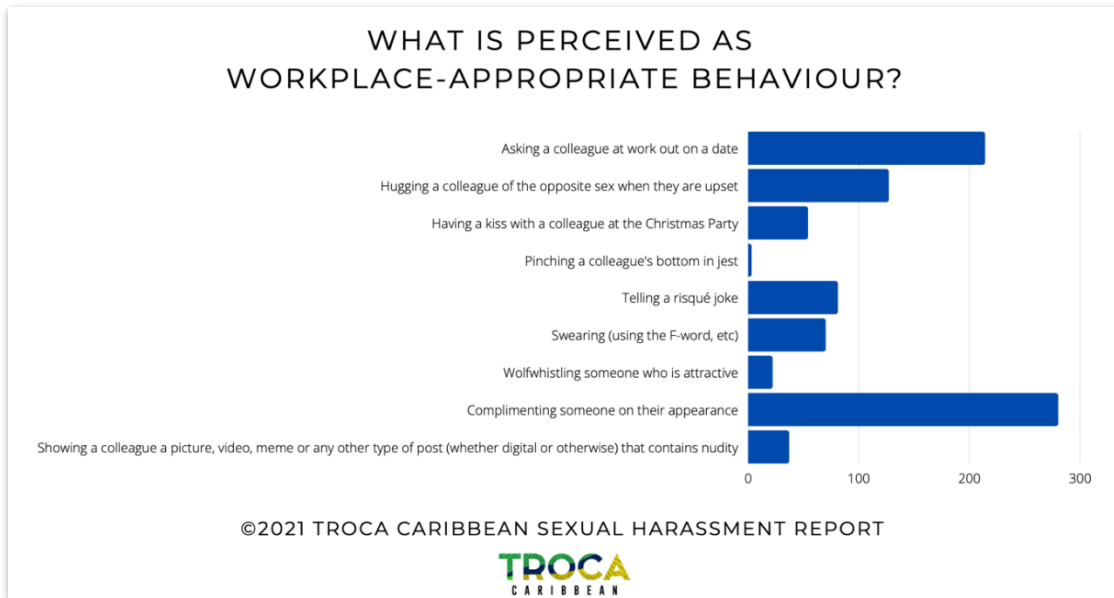


Figure 19: Number of respondents who responded to what was appropriate workplace behaviour

### Regional Comparisons - Caribbean vs. UK

As a region we are well informed of behaviours that we deem unacceptable and compared to our UK counterparts are more pronounced in identifying a clearer unacceptable line for some of these behaviours. We know the behaviour is not acceptable, but we do not report instances of when these behaviours happen to us or others enough.

In the Caribbean region we feel that it is less acceptable to ask a colleague out on a date (72% of respondents) compared to our UK counterparts 87% who feel that it is acceptable.

Caribbean people appear to be reasonably informed of the do's and don'ts of behaviours in the workplace, so why aren't more cases being reported?

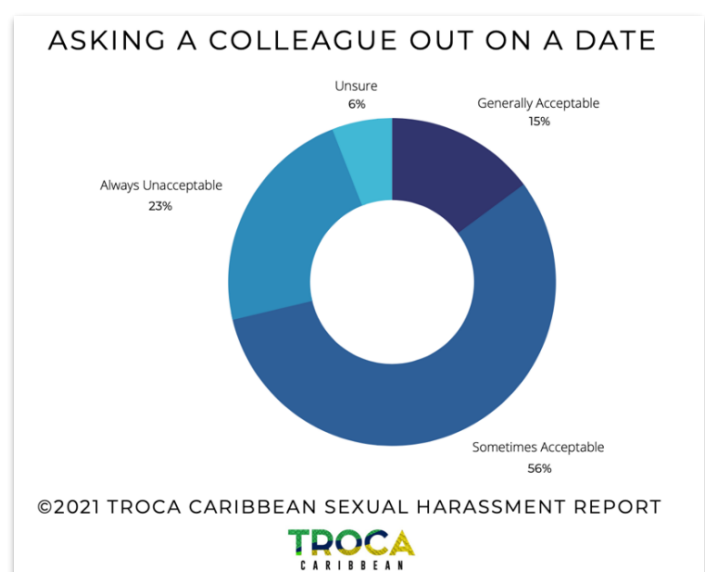
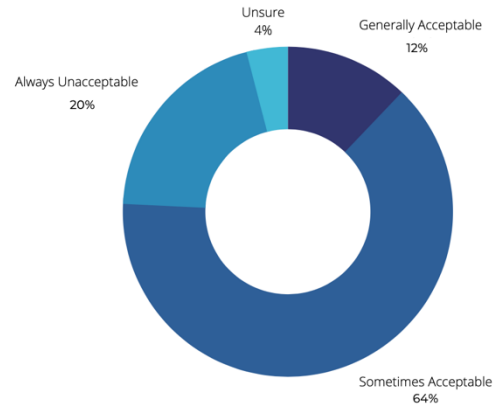


Figure 20: Asking a colleague out on a date

In a UK survey 90% of respondents found it acceptable to hug a colleague when they were upset compared to only 75% of our Caribbean respondents.

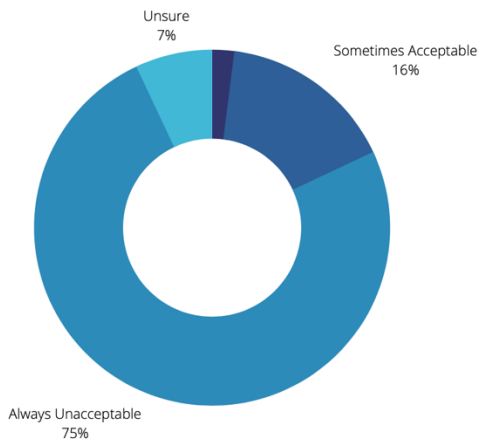
### HUGGING A COLLEAGUE WHEN THEY ARE UPSET



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### HAVING A KISS AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY



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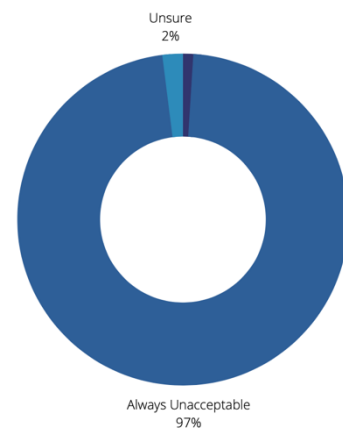
Figure 21: Hugging a colleague when they are upset

In the UK respondents in a survey said having a kiss at the Christmas party is always unacceptable by 22% however 75% of the Caribbean survey respondents found it always unacceptable.

Figure 22: Having a kiss at the Christmas party

97% of the Caribbean respondents found that pinching a colleague's bottom is/was always unacceptable compared to only 77% of UK respondents.

### PINCHING A COLLEAGUES BOTTOM IN JEST



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Figure 23 : Pinching a colleagues bottom in jest

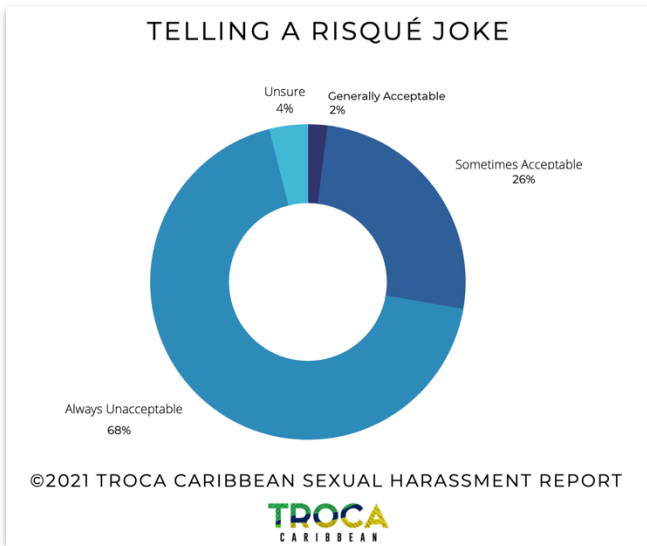


Figure 24: Telling a risqué joke

69% of the Caribbean respondents found that telling a risqué joke always unacceptable compared to only 16% of UK respondents. The ‘funny thing is in our survey the majority of the perpetrators use suggestive remarks, "jokes" and close proximity as intimidating tactics. “The point is, that whether the remark was intended as just a joke or not, if it's offensive to you or your co-workers, it's a red flag and its use is outright discrimination.”

75% of the Caribbean respondents found that using the F-word always unacceptable compared to only 39% of UK respondents. Perhaps unsurprising when it’s an offence to use profanity.

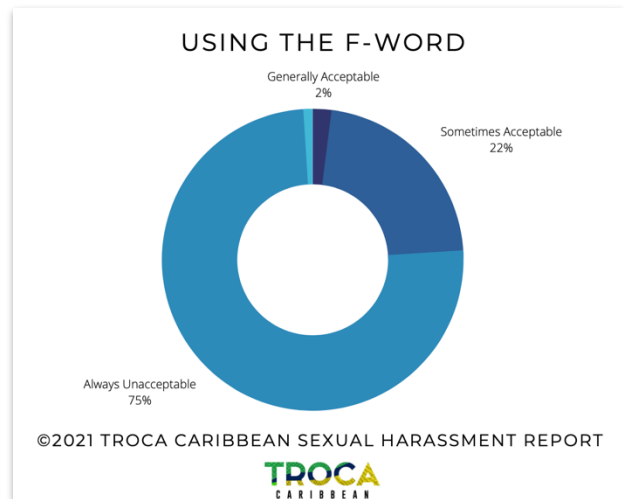


Figure 25: Using the F-word

86% of the Caribbean respondents found sharing a meme containing nudity always unacceptable compared to only 61% of UK respondents.

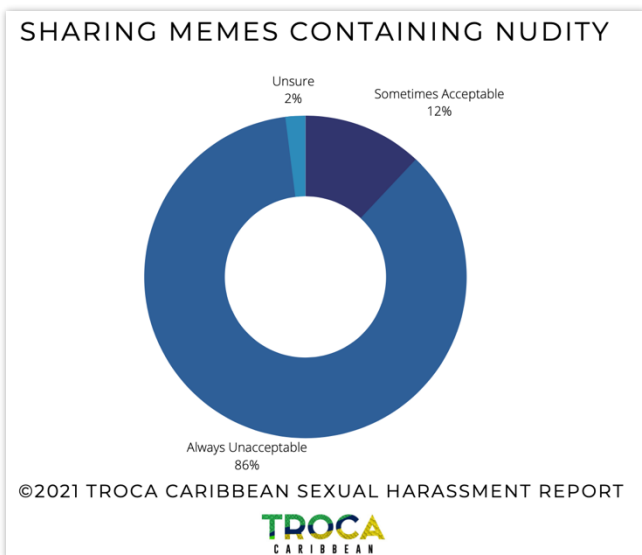
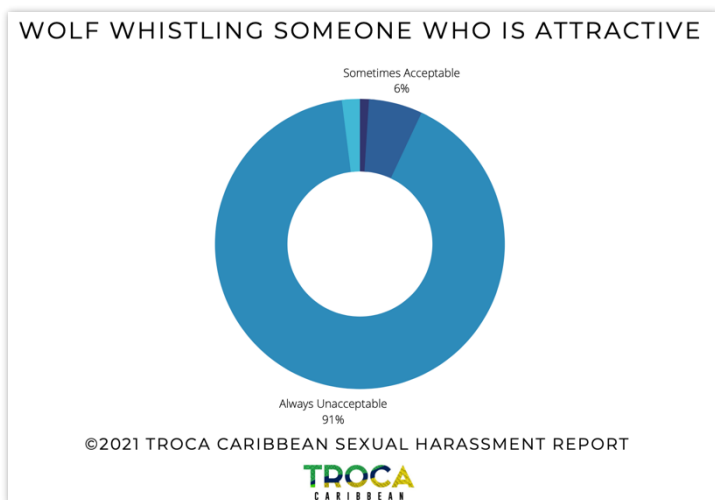


Figure 26: Sharing Meme containing nudity





91% of the Caribbean respondents found wolf whistling someone who is attractive always unacceptable compared to only 50% of UK respondents.

Figure 27: Wolf whistling someone who is attractive

93% of the Caribbean and 91% of the UK respondents found complimenting someone on their appearance acceptable.

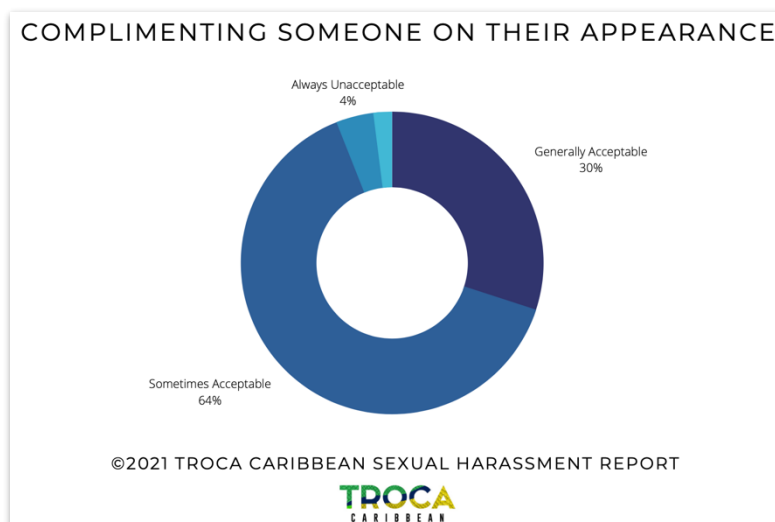


Figure 28: Complimenting someone on their appearance

## Safe and Healthy Working Environments

Creating safe and healthy working environments starts with knowledge and reflection. At the end of the survey, 12% of respondents said they have a better understanding of workplace sexual harassment and how they may have contributed to such.

**82% of respondents feel that their national behaviour fosters sexual harassment (52% to a great extent and 30% moderately)**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

49% of respondents agreed that looking back over their working career, they have been on the receiving end of behaviour which they now think constituted sexual harassment but didn't think so at the time. 33% had relationships with colleagues that went beyond friendships – compared to 6% with clients.

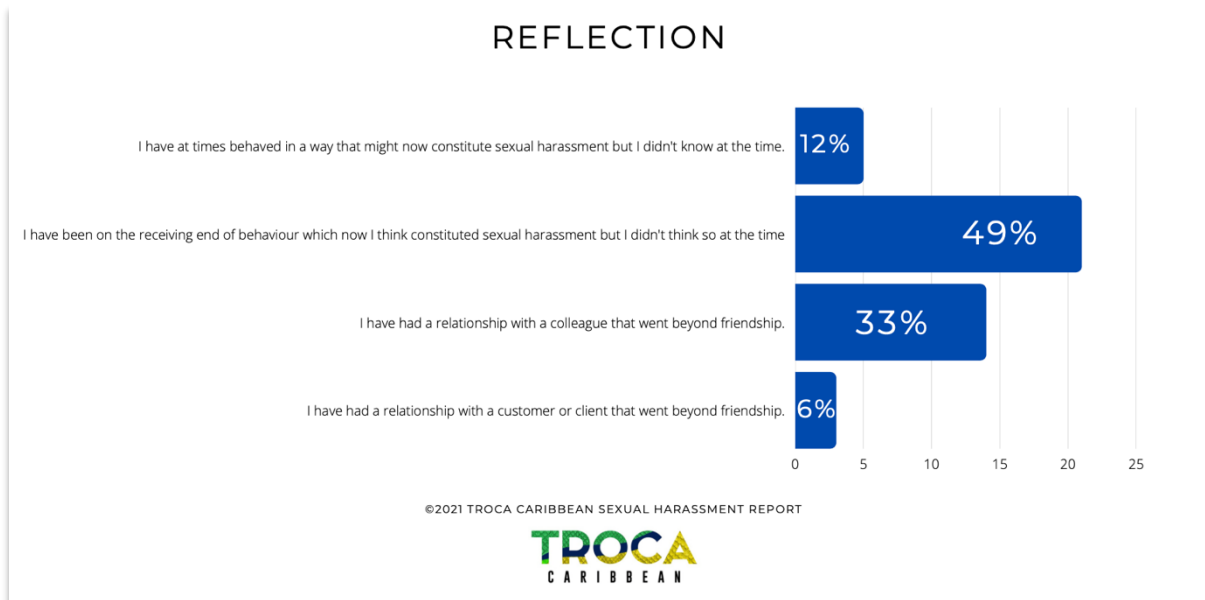


Figure 29: Reflection on behaviours

**63% of respondents do not feel that their corporate culture or behaviours foster sexual harassment**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey

More than half (58%) of our survey respondents said they are happy with how their organisation prevents sexual harassment in the workplace yet 70% feel that more can be done by their employer to curb sexual harassment.

## Building a Healthy Working Environment

We requested additional information / suggestion from respondents on how they think employers can support employees in creating safer work spaces for open dialogue to occur. These were a few responses:



Figure 30: Suggestions from respondents on how they think employers can support employees in creating safer workspaces for open dialogue to occur

**90% of respondents feel that more can be done to educate people on sexual harassment**

2021 TROCA Caribbean Sexual Harassment Survey



# COUNTRY RESULTS: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

## KEY FINDINGS

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Less people report instances of sexual harassment from Trinidad and Tobago (69% compared to the 77% in the region).

More respondents in the region are aware of any workplace harassment policy (65%) compared to only 57% of respondents from Trinidad & Tobago.

62% of Trinidad respondents said their workplaces did not provide sexual harassment training, 7% more than the rest of the region.

65% of respondents are very confident in identifying sexual harassment while 33% are somewhat confident and 2% are not very confident in doing so.

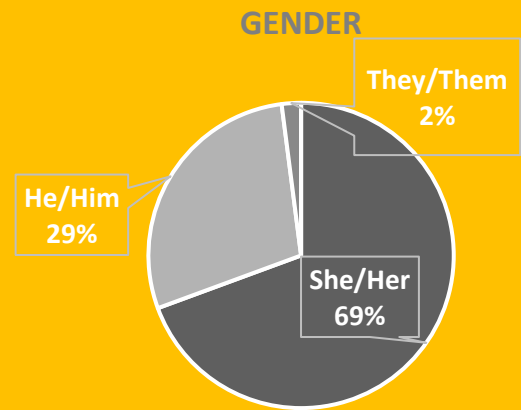
**Almost half of the respondents - 48% have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.**

# TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

## DEMOGRAPHICS:

Sample size

# 50%



## Industry – Top Industries where respondents work



Public Sector and Government Agencies **16%**



Consultancy and Auditing **10%**



Education and Research = **9%**



Construction and Property Development **8%**



Oil and Gas **5%**

HR

# 31%

of Respondents work in HR

# COUNTRY RESULTS: JAMAICA

## KEY FINDINGS

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None of the respondents from Jamaica who had experienced sexual harassment reported it.

More awareness of sexual harassment policies in the workplace (74%) compared to only 65% in the region.

Less availability of sexual harassment training (45%) compared to 55% in the region.

68% of respondents are very confident in identifying sexual harassment while 32% are somewhat confident

More Jamaicans feel that more can be done by the employer to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace (75%) than the regional counterparts (70%).

Every respondent felt that more can be done to educate people on sexual harassment in the workplace.

**41% had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace**

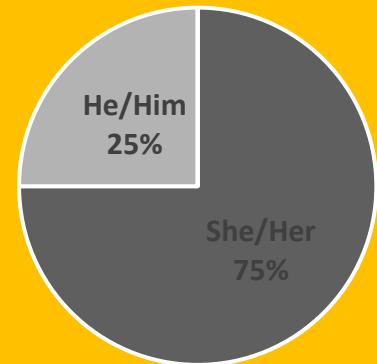
# JAMAICA

## DEMOGRAPHICS:

Sample size

# 20%

GENDER



## Industry – Top Industries where respondents work



Public Sector and Government Agencies **23%**



Consultancy and Auditing **16%**



Education and Research = **11%**



Other **9%**



Manufacturing, Banking, and IT Telecoms all had **7%**

HR

# 57%

of Respondents work in HR

# COUNTRY RESULTS: BARBADOS

## KEY FINDINGS

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Know more people who have been sexually harassed in the workplace (79%) compared to only 70% of others in the region.

All respondents are confident in identifying sexual harassment in the workplace

More respondents in the Barbados (95%) are aware of any workplace harassment policy compared to only 65% of the region.

Less respondents feel more can be done by the employer to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace (53%) than the regional counterparts (70%).

Less availability of sexual harassment training (32%) compared to 55% in the region

82% of respondents who had been sexually harassed did not report it (5% more compared to the region)

**58% had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace**



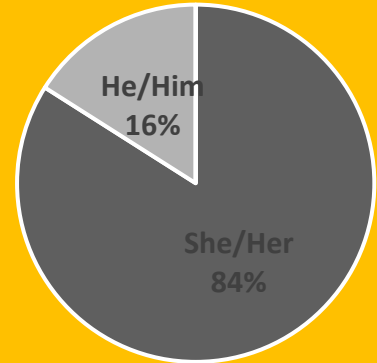
# BARBADOS

## DEMOGRAPHICS:

Sample size

8%

GENDER



## Industry – Top Industries where respondents work



Public Sector and Government Agencies **16%**



Insurance & Financial services **16%**



Sales & Trading **16%**



Consultancy and Auditing, IT & Telecoms and other all had **11%**

HR

47%

of Respondents work in HR

## Final Thoughts

For us to effectively challenge sexual harassment it doesn't need to be protesting for law changes or groups or organisations requiring funding to train or design policies, to us it feels like it's more about untangling the complicated culture of silence or consent and the uncomfortable acceptance that supports the persistence of this behaviour.

Don't get me wrong law changes, organisational funding and policy development is all great... but neither of them will fundamentally change the way we feel or behave.

### Key Recommendations:

- Open dialogue (discussions) and set clear zero tolerance policies
- Provide training for all employees (educate)
- Encourage reporting
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination start by raising awareness of sexual harassment.
- Be transparent on sexual harassment analytics and data
- Investigate all instances and act swiftly
- Protect against victimisation
- Lead by example

### Discussion

In September we participated in a regional human resource forum during which we launched our sexual harassment discussion video; " Let's Talk About Sex(ual) Harassment. In this video we discuss many different discrimination viewpoints and get to visualise the reactions to some of our survey data. To view the video go our website at [2021 Survey Results \(trocaribbean.com\)](https://trocaribbean.com)

## Creating & Maintaining Healthy Working Environments:

A culture of respect starts at the top and when an organisation's leader demonstrates in words (and actions) a commitment to culturally change then it's not limited to prevention and policy documentation.

We passionately believe that organisations do not change – people do, and we will focus on changing every learner to contribute to a healthier working environment through the use of learning journals, creating space to reflect and challenge and providing support to grow.

Where to start... there's so much to do... start anywhere... start somewhere... just start. Plan for how to make changes in your organisation

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN

KEY RECCOMENDATIONS	What could I do? (And how)	What Will I do? (And when)	What did I do?	Reflections
1. How to reduce the problem a) Create safe spaces for open dialogue b) LISTEN to our employees c) Set clear zero tolerance policies d) Provide training for all employees				
2. How to reverse a culture of silence a) Encourage reporting from everyone in the organisation b) Be transparent on sexual harassment analytics and data c) Effectively deal with perpetrators				
3. Unlocking HR to drive the solution a) Communicate and reinforce Zero tolerance policy b) Investigate all instances and act swiftly c) Protect against victimisation				

You can start filling out the table above by using these following questions as a guide:

1. What do you know now that you didn't know before reading this report?
2. How has this research/report made an impact on you?
3. What impact could this have on you, your peers, or your organisation?
4. Do you have any desire to realise those impact(s) or make that change happen?
5. What support or help do you need to need to make that possible?

## About the Authors



Leila Craig is an inspirational coach that loves to develop new perspectives and explore possibilities that unlock business improvement. She is ASSOC CIPD qualified and a PROSCI Certified Change Management Practitioner. Leila graduated with a MSc in Human Resource management (merit) from Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen in 2011. Leila has over 14 years of experience consulting independently on Human Resource Management Strategies, Training and Development and Change management. She has over 10 years experience working both offshore and onshore oil and gas industry in a variety of Change Management, GM, HR, Training, and performance coaching roles.

Samantha Duncan is a mature and driven professional who is continually growing and expanding her expertise. She holds her Qualtrics Platform Essentials Certificate which she attained through TROCA, her CIPD Diploma in Human Resource Practice, together with an MSc. Environmental Science and Management and a BSc. Physics and Environmental and Natural Resource Management. She has a passion for learning and her experience spans a wide range of various sales, teaching and management roles.





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