



Faculty

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Esperanza: The Immigrant
Women's Legal Initiative of the
Southern Poverty Law Center

Objectives

- Understand the problem, employment laws and the administrative process specific to workplace sexual violence
- Understand the role of medical providers for detecting and memorializing information related to workplace sexual harassment, beyond the provision of medical services

Objectives

- Know how to effectively use interpreters
- Understand the unique needs faced by indigenous immigrants
- Understand the national landscape of activism and the changes that can help reduce workplace violence

Part One

What Is Sexual Harassment?

- It is a form of sexual violence
- It is prohibited by Title VII
- It includes
 - Unwelcome sexual advances
 - Requests for sexual favors
 - Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
 - Rape

What Is Sexual Harassment?

- Alters employment conditions
- Creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment
- Can be committed by an owner of the a company, supervisor, co-worker, or third party (like a customer)

Gravity of the Problem

- Is sexual violence a problem for farmworker women?
- 90% of farmworker women say it is a major problem
- 77% of immigrant women interviewed in the South say that it is a major workplace problem

Gravity of the Problem

- Women use clothes to protect themselves from unwanted sexual attention
- Coined agriculture’s dirty little secret
 - See Marie Claire Magazine (April 2008), LA Times (Op-Ed April 2008), and Hispanic Magazine (June-July 2008)

Gravity of the Problem

- Women employed in other industries also face this violence
- Anti-immigrant climate leads to increased sexual exploitation in the workplace

Obstacles Confronting Immigrant Victims

- Access to information about one’s rights
- Access to information about community resources available, including medical care
- Lack of language accessibility
- Status

Obstacles Confronting Immigrant Victims

- Economic reality
- Fear of retaliation
- Migratory lifestyle
- Cultural pressures

Part Two

Steps Taken to Address These Issues

- Planting the seeds
 - FRLS, CRLA, Lideres, EEOC, Farmworker Justice, first academic writings (late 80's and the 90's)

Steps Taken to Address These Issues

- Formation of state-based programs and initiatives
 - Esperanza (2003)
 - OLC (2005)
 - Amparo (2007)
- Creation of Esperanza: The Immigrant Women's Legal Initiative of the Southern Poverty Law Center

Steps Taken to Address These Issues

- Formation of The Esperanza National Initiative to End Workplace Sexual Violence Against Farmworker and Other Low-Wage Immigrant Women ("The Esperanza National Initiative", 2006)
 - Working group, conference, manual and other tools

Steps Taken to Address These Issues

- Efforts to cross train on the local, state, regional, and national level
- Creation of grant by the Department of Justice and launch of the National Initiative to Combat Sexual Violence Against Farmworkers (2008)

Become Part of the Movement

- Join the Esperanza National Working Group
- Sponsor a bandana display at your clinic
- Provide information about workplace rights, including sexual harassment in your waiting rooms

Become Part of the Movement

- Talk about this issue with your peers
- Engage in cross-training with advocates about trauma, avoidance of re-victimization, and health consequences of sexual violence

Information

EEOC Website
www.eeoc.gov

Youth At Work
www.youth.eeoc.gov

Information

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