POWER DYNAMICS & SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN THE WORKPLACE

THE ISSUE

With accusers coming forward against notable figures in recent months, sexual misconduct is more prevalent than ever. There is an apparent issue with power dynamics between the victim and the assaulter, which adds to the difficulty a victim faces to report.

98% of women in the entertainment industry reported some form of experience with sexual misconduct.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Is there a general lack of knowledge on what is considered sexual misconduct?

Is there always a power dynamic involved in cases of sexual misconduct?

Do perpetrators understand the severity of punishment for sexual misconduct?

Which industry leads the way in terms of legislation and policy when combating sexual misconduct?

Could education be a possible resolution to sexual misconduct? When and where should this education take place?

GOAL & DELIVERY

The desired outcome of this inquiry is to educate and bring awareness to the issue of sexual misconduct and power dynamics with the hope of ultimately reducing the number of sexual misconduct cases in the distant future.

Our intended client is the Office of the General Counsel at Ithaca College, who can then implement training within the institution. We hope that our design would change thinking and behaviors that lead to sexual misconduct within Ithaca College, setting a precedent at institutions of higher ed, which eventually extends into corporations and nonprofits.

“[Sexual misconduct is] a range of behavior used to obtain sexual gratification against another’s will or at the expense of another. Sexual Misconduct includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any conduct of a sexual nature that is without consent, or has the effect of threatening or intimidating the person against whom such conduct is directed.” (Sexual Misconduct Law and Legal Definition, 2018).

Collaborators

Our team determined an educational strategy that would be a realistic and impactful contribution. We want to incorporate storytelling and personal testimonies since we believe our most influential, emotional experiences result from meditative training or e-learning. Existing training, specifically Everfi (used by Ithaca College) lacks incentives for dialogue or personal connections.

To combat this, we designed a simulation experience, bringing employees face-to-face with an incident of sexual misconduct in their own workplace. Trainees are encouraged to discuss how it could be prevented.

How it works: Trainings would be labeled as general operations training — anything from l.t. reminders to parking lot instructions could be discussed. During the meeting, something inappropriate would occur, trainees delivering the training. This could be any act that qualifies as non-consensual and undesired, from a discriminatory comment to a lingering touch. If, as is the hope, someone at the meeting confronts or addresses the action, the meeting would be adjourned and a dialogue about preventing sexual misconduct and workplace etiquette would begin. If the action is not addressed, following the completion of the meeting, the play would be revealed and dialogue would ensue.

COLLABORATORS

Jonna Pike, Kristi Taylor

Maggie Weeter, Amber Alpeal

Peter Ouham-Pinnick

Ron Dow, Don Dow

In the background of this poster are names ofwomen who have publicly come forward. This has always been the case, but their stories are what form the foundation of our story. With media exposure, that story would never have happened. We thank them for their courage.

FINDINGS

“Sexual violence is a crime of power.”

-Jana Hamburger, 2018

“Perpetrators of these crimes often do not victimize an individual once, but often with repetitive acts over a period of time. Currently the criminal justice system deals with most crimes as isolated incidents, which establishes a significant burden on the survivor.”

-Johnna Pike, 2018

“Title IX (all universities in the US) and Article 129.8 (NYS) lead the way on investigating cases of sexual misconduct.”

-Sara Francisco, 2018

CAUSATION MODEL

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

POWER DYNAMICS

Almost all instances of sexual misconduct involve some sort of power dynamics.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

The vast majority of perpetrators do not understand the repercussions of sexual misconduct, or they believe their behavior is acceptable.

LACK OF PUNISHMENT

Organizations that should enforce penalties for sexual misconduct often fail to do so.

ALTERNATIVE DESIGNS

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Our team began this inquiry with the assumption that the general public knows sexual misconduct is bad. However, we have found there may be a lack of awareness about the severity of this problem. Those who abuse their power and harm others, especially in sexual ways, may not realize it is wrong to do so. To combat this, an online campaign, through social media and traditional mediums, was designed and could be implemented to create this awareness.

TRAINING FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Through the training, employees will learn what consent is and is not, how to identify appropriate behaviors from inappropriate behaviors, and which forms of consent are unacceptable. The training would be mandatory and employees must complete it. If an employeeaal does not complete the training on time, they would be subject to disciplinary action.

CURRICULUM FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The first preliminary option is to create an educational program to implement in public school systems. The education would be adapted from Maggie Weeter’s “consent curriculum.” It would teach students about consentbeginning in middle school. From our group’s personal experiences, as well interviews, we have found that many public schools do not do an adequate job of teaching sexual education, and rarely discuss consent.