



What We Heard in 2025



Workplace Sexual Harassment
PEI Public Survey Report

Acknowledgements

The survey instrument, promotion, and report were led by the SHIFT Project (Sarah Denman-Wood and Meaghan Blanchard) and the Atlantic Evaluation Group Inc. team. The survey was programmed and administered by Atlantic Evaluation Group Inc. The SHIFT Project led the survey marketing and communications.

Thank you to the SHIFT Project partners who promoted the survey!

Thank you to Prince Edward Island (PEI) workers who completed the survey!

The SHIFT Project is an initiative of the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission (PEIHRC), funded by the Department of Justice Canada.



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada

Suggested citation: SHIFT Project (2026). What we Heard in 2025: Workplace Sexual Harassment - PEI Public Survey Report. Charlottetown, PE: PEI Human Rights Commission.

For more information

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Project background

The Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission received additional funding from Justice Canada to further develop the supports offered by the SHIFT project.

The SHIFT Project aims to address and prevent Workplace Sexual Harassment (WSH) on the Island through awareness, education, and training tailored for employers and workers, including vulnerable worker populations.

Survey methods

Purpose

To offer an anonymous and safe way for adults working in PEI to share their workplace sexual harassment experiences and knowledge and suggest the types of resources they would prefer to access.

Approach

An online survey of a convenience sample of adults who worked in Prince Edward Island in the past two years. It was promoted through social media, emails to employees, etc. from July to November 2025.

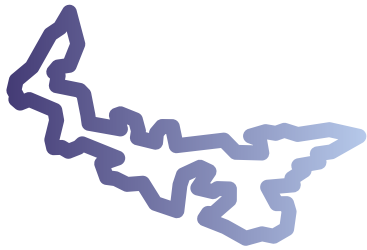


Limitation

These results only apply to the specific people who completed the survey and do not represent all people in the labour force.

Research note: Findings are not generalizable and there is no margin of error as it was a convenience or non-probabilistic sample of easily accessible participants who saw the social media survey invitation.

Who we heard from in 2025



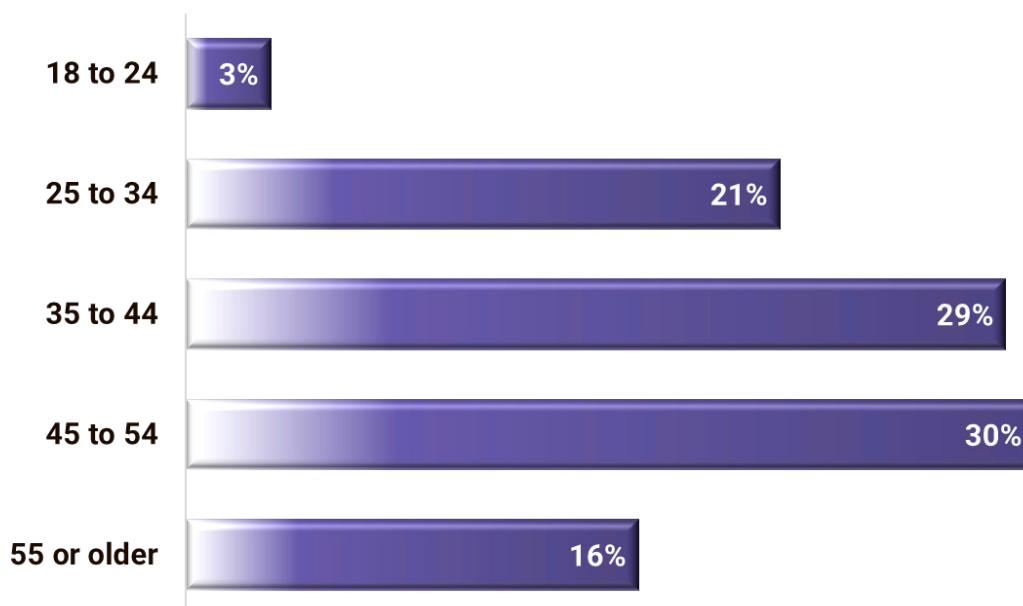
The survey was completed by a convenience sample of 241 adults who had worked in PEI at any time in the past 2 years

Note: Skip to page 4 if you just want to see the results.

All gender identities were included, though the sample had a higher proportion of women than the labour force as a whole

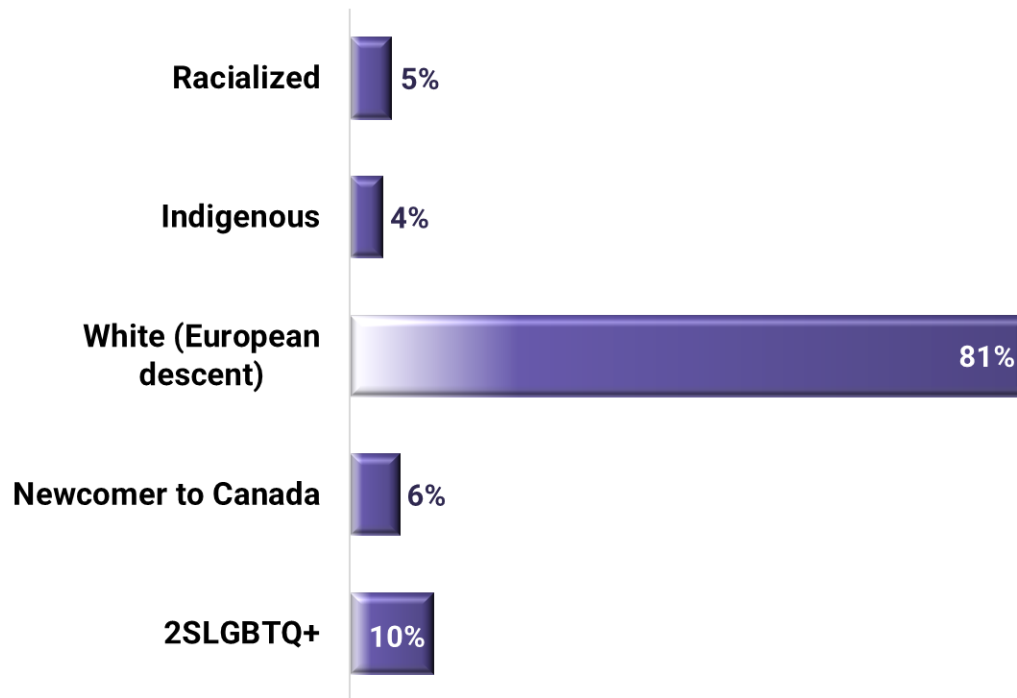


All age ranges were included though there were fewer younger workers than the labour force as a whole



Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding error

Respondents identified themselves as:



Note: The percentages add to greater than 100% as respondents could choose multiple options.

A variety of other worker characteristics were represented in the survey sample



- 72% spoke English only
- 29% spoke two or more languages
- Of those who spoke two or more languages:
 - 22% spoke French
 - Up to 3% spoke each of Spanish, Tagalog, Filipino, Arabic, and Hindi



Represented urban and rural PEI



Respondents had higher education levels than the entire labour force with 95% having completed post-secondary education

Training and policies

Many workers did not have access to Workplace Sexual Harassment (WSH) training and policies



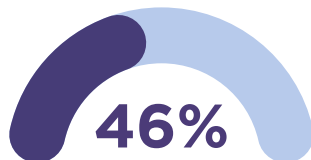
Received **training** in workplace sexual harassment from any employer in the last 2 years



Knew where to find their workplace's sexual harassment **policy**

Workplace experiences

Workplace Sexual Harassment remains too common in this survey sample (noting that the survey results do not represent everyone in the labour force):

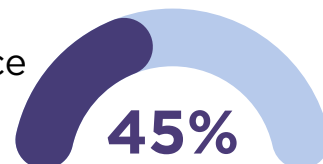


experienced WSH at any time (64% in 2021 SHIFT survey, which was also a convenience sample)



About half of those had **experienced** it recently (past 2 years)

witnessed someone else experience WSH in the last 5 years



Responding to WSH

Many workers were not prepared for how to deal with WSH when it happens



knew what to do when WSH happens



knew how to report WSH to their manager, supervisor, or human resources

Those who had witnessed or experienced WSH informed a variety of people about the harassment



Note: They could have told more than one person, so percentages add to greater than 100%

When employers did not take action



quit their job or took a leave of absence because of the harassment

The 2021 What We Heard Survey Report showed the range of WSH impacts on employees in their own words.



But it did not have to lead to this!

Since 2020, employers have been required by regulations (see <https://wcb.pe.ca/WH>) to have a written policy about workplace sexual harassment, to train their staff on an ongoing basis and to investigate and address all complaints and reports about alleged WSH. But less than one-half of the employers of the surveyed workers took appropriate action.



indicated their **employer did something** about the WSH

The employer response matters

When employers took action:



felt it **stopped** the harassment
or **improved** the situation



felt it helped them feel **safer**
at work

When employers did NOT take action, it led to negative situations. The following quotes provide some examples.



Content Warning

The following quotes may reference experiences of workplace sexual harassment as described by survey respondents. Participants had the opportunity to share anonymously, and it was not necessary to do so to complete the survey. Stories were edited to avoid any identification of persons or organizations.

Respondent quotes (in their own words)

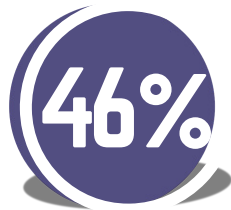
Note: Three dots (...) indicates info was redacted for length or to protect anonymity of the respondent.

I felt like I wouldn't be believed... I did not report for fear of the smear campaign at work. ... I left that job. I remain angry that I was put in that position while the harasser got to stay. Managers need to BELIEVE their staff.

The worst barriers I've seen have been in how management handles complaints. Not taking things seriously, not filing reports correctly, not supporting workers, shutting down co-workers supporting each other. I don't know how to fix that ...

WSH resources are needed

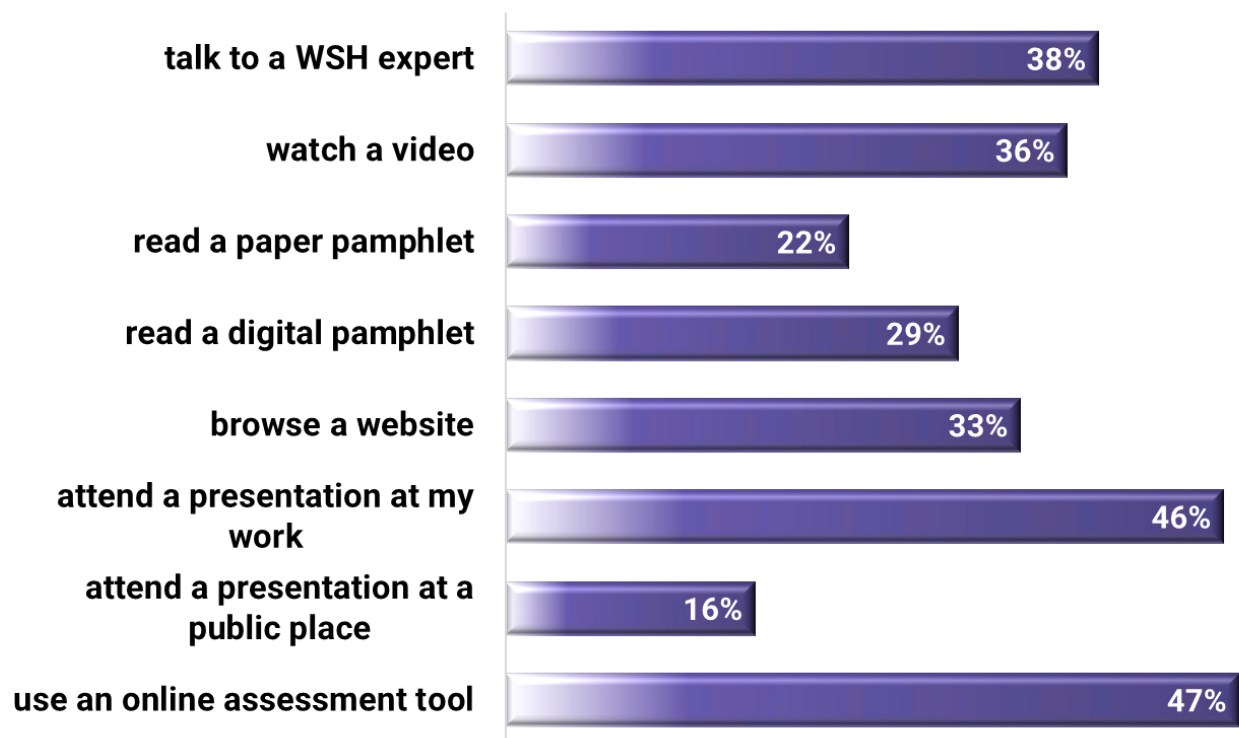
Many workers surveyed needed WSH info and resources



would like to have more access to WSH information or resources



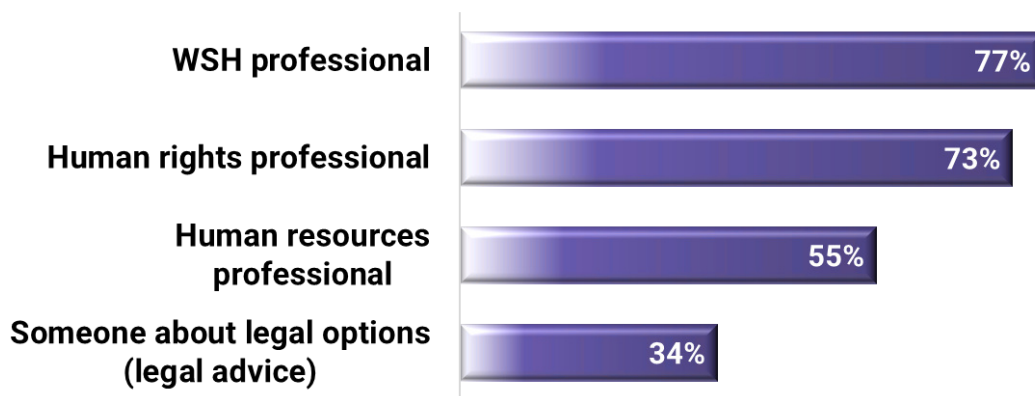
How people would like to access resources about workplace sexual harassment varied



Note: They could have chosen more than one type of expert, so percentages add to more than 100%



A variety of WSH experts were preferred



Note: Small sample

Note: Percentages do not combine to 100% as respondents could select more than one type of WSH expert.

Many employers still need support in addressing WSH, as only a minority of the workers surveyed indicated that their employer took the required actions (*as shown earlier*).

In their own words



Content Warning

The following quotes may refer to experiences of workplace sexual harassment as described by survey respondents. Participants had the opportunity to share personal experiences anonymously if they wanted, but it was not necessary to do so to complete the survey. Stories were only edited to avoid any identification of persons or organizations.

Respondent quotes

Notes: Three dots (...) indicates info was redacted for length or to protect anonymity of the respondent.

Typos were corrected in some quotes.

There is a stigma attached to the issue, which leads [to] many victims [being] unable or unwilling to seek help with any harassment problems. Sometimes workplace groups (HR, Employee Assistance, etc.) are viewed as being internal and monitored. Being able to contact a support group outside of their workplace (for example, not their immediate manager or supervisor due to confidentiality breaches) would be a benefit in my opinion.

Support from institutions (government, policing services, formalized mental health supports, etc.) to enforce these guidelines.

Respondent quotes (cont'd)

Some people are afraid to report because they are not [a] Permanent Resident here [in] Canada; they're afraid to lose their jobs. That's why they cannot complain.

Please ensure that any guidance/supports are open to everyone and that everyone feels equally welcome to participate, report, seek supports. I am a man and have been sexually harassed by a woman in a ... I did not report it, as I felt as a man, it would not be taken seriously. Either we all feel welcome, supported and part of the solution or the solution will not work.

There was no recourse for anyone. My life, career, and family were totally levelled. ... This is why people will not speak out. They see how badly it harmed people like me who did speak out when desperate for help. If you don't support those who need help, others will hide and suffer, and the problem will always perpetuate.

Suggestions

Respondent quotes

Participants were also asked to share their ideas about what kind of resources or supports they would like to see available in PEI about workplace sexual harassment.

Clear policy, posted in common areas. Scent-free workplace policy signs get more visibility than workplace sexual harassment.

(Create a) training video with realistic actual examples of people interacting that identifies sexual harassment and provides actual examples of options on ways to effectively resolve situations

There should be more communication... about what the next steps are when an incident happens and there should be counseling available for co-workers... The shock of it happening not only affects the person it happened to but also to their co-workers. It makes others feel unsafe and can cause panic for others

A helpline would be good.

SHIFT can help!

SHIFT can help workers and employers with:

- **Understanding of what workplace sexual harassment looks like, sounds like, and the impacts it can have on staff, management and the bottom line.**
- **Workplace Sexual Harassment training for all workers, including management and business owners, specific to PEI laws and regulations.**
- **Support for employers with development and updates of their PEI-specific Workplace Sexual Harassment policies, including investigation procedures.**

For training and resources, contact the SHIFT Project
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