Empowering Prevention & Inclusive Communities (EPIC)
Peer-to-peer Prevention of Sexual Harassment Program

Who We Are
Empowering Prevention and Inclusive Communities (EPIC) provides prevention of sexual harassment training for Academic Student Employees (ASEs) and Postdoctoral Scholars at the University of Washington (UW). EPIC is jointly administered by the UW and UAW-4121 and is under the guidance of SafeCampus. EPIC works against cultures of harassment through social norms change, skill development and community-building. It is unique as a peer-to-peer training; it was created by and for academic student employees.

What We Do
EPIC’s cutting-edge program models intersectional, data-driven, trauma-informed primary prevention that is based on evidence-based research. As a training program, we focus on primary prevention, which means preventing harassment before it happens. Our methods are centered in intersectional and trauma-informed practices. The program is attentive to the multiple ways harassment is experienced and focuses on fostering already existing strengths. We work to shift UW culture, analyze the impact of academic power and empower students to prevent and respond to harassment.

What’s In A Training
Our training focuses on an intersectional analysis of sexual harassment at UW. To that end, each training is adapted for every department we deliver it to. We collaborate with stakeholders to map out different power relationships and environments that affect their lives. Once we come to a clearer sense of how power is operating, we practice intervention skills with tailored microaggression and sexual harassment scenarios. Based on this skill-building exercise, we ask attendees to think of the kind of work environment they want to create and how it differs from these environments. The attendees then identify action steps to build supportive and harassment-free academic environments.

Does It Work?
Using real-time anonymous evaluation at the end of training, we ask participants: “Do you feel you have a role to play in preventing and responding to sexual harassment?”
100% of participants respond yes.

Quick Data
In the last year, surveyed ASEs have said...
49% feel they don’t belong at UW
57% have experienced harassment
90% who experienced harassment did not report or seek support
*based on 2018-2019 Equity Survey of 1165 ASEs

Our Goals
Establish healthy communities in UW departments.
Empower graduate students to shape their community norms and take action when they see toxic ones.
Create a sense of shared responsibility to address sexual harassment.
Increase retention of underrepresented groups who are part of UW.
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How We Evaluate

To evaluate our program, we use data-driven approaches that gather information from learners during and after trainings and through longitudinal surveys. At the end of each training we ask participants to compare their knowledge, confidence and behavioral intentions before the training to after completing the training. The questions include measuring someone’s likelihood of engaging in certain pro-social and intervention behaviors. In addition to real-time evaluations, we also conduct quarter follow-up survey and administer the annual Equity Survey. In combination these three evaluation tools help us to understand the impact the program is having on the UW ASE and Postdoc communities. We then use this information to inform the evolution of the program.

Why Prevention Training Matters

If our goal is a more equitable university with a diversity of scholars, prevention training is a key tool for creating that reality. Diverse scholars are more likely to stay part of institutions that are intolerant of harassment and abuse of power. It takes all of us to build a better UW. By moving away from traditional training that focuses primarily on what constitutes bad behavior and instead focusing on building healthy communities, we can change the experience of academic life.

What Participants Say

“I really liked the amount/different types of audience engagement. It was nice to have a mix of forums for discussion. The information was presented in an approachable way.”

“The skills we discussed were positive and relatively simple actions that I feel I’m equipped to take in daily life.”

“I happened to run into three different participants from yesterday’s training for ASEs and all three were gushing about how amazingly good it was!”

Dan Grossman, CSE Deputy Director

What You Can Do

Faculty Member

You can make the training mandatory for graduate students in your department. This shows graduates students that the department will not tolerate harassment and cares about student retention and workplace culture. We can provide recurring orientation trainings to meet this requirement.

ASEs and PostDocs

Bring this to your department by scheduling a session with us! We will meet with you to discuss how to get people to the training, how we can make the training specific to your cohort, and walk through the training logistics.

Administration

Encourage departments to enact mandatory trainings. Doing so is a concrete commitment to equity.

Prevention Practitioner

We are also happy to consult with other preventionists and trainers and discuss how we can further support one another’s work.

We look forward to working with you to bring this to your department or community!

To learn more visit https://www.washington.edu/safecampus/epic-program/

Contact epicprogram@uw.edu to get started!