

and dislikes with respect to various occupational titles.

The final section of the SDS R *Assessment Booklet* is Self-Estimates. It includes the six RIASEC scales, which are rated twice (from 1 to 7) with respect to ability and skill. Users are asked to rate themselves “as you really think you are when compared with other persons your own age.”

### Implications

When the SDS was initially introduced, some critics scoffed at it and called it simplistic. More recent reviews have noted that the use of Holland’s inventories is extensive. The SDS is unique in several ways: (1) it is self-administering, self-scoring, and self-interpreting; (2) it is based on Holland’s theory; and (3) it is supported by extensive research studies numbering more than 500. The SDS is an inventory with well-documented psychometric characteristics that incorporates a person’s history of vocational daydreams or expressed interests, which in comparison to the assessed results can be used to increase predictive validity about the person’s future occupational choices. Because it is self-scored and can be easily interpreted by most users, it encourages a person’s active participation in the resolution of career problems and questions. After completing the SDS, individuals know more about themselves, more about occupations, and more about how to think about occupations in relation to their personal characteristics, thus gaining a framework for immediate career decisions and future occupational exploration.

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*See also* Assessment (v4); Career Education (v4); Career Exploration (v4); Career Planning (v4); Computer-Assisted Career Counseling (v4); Holland, John L. (v4); Holland’s Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments (v4); Person–Environment Fit (v4)

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## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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Sexual harassment remains a common occupational hazard for women. It is estimated that over half of all women will experience some form of sexual harassment during college and/or their working lives. Women in male-dominated workplaces, in blue-collar jobs, or who are marginalized due to their race, sexual orientation, or social class often experience higher rates of sexual harassment than the general population. Although the vast majority of all sexual harassment cases involve men harassing women, there are also cases of men being sexually harassed. These cases usually involve same-sex harassment, where a man is targeted as a form of hazing or for perceived violations of hypermasculine gender role stereotypes.

Sexual harassment is both prevalent and harmful for targets and the organizations within which they work. Once harassed, individuals, whether male or female, report a variety of negative outcomes related to their work, health, and psychological well-being. Across a spectrum of outcome measures, harassed men and women fair more poorly than those without a history of harassment. Specifically, research has documented detriment to the job satisfaction, work productivity, supervisor satisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover rates of harassed employees—the costs of which can reach billions of dollars annually for federal and private institutions. The psychological and health-related costs are equally high, with targets

reporting numerous symptoms, such as depression, posttraumatic stress symptoms, and health problems following harassment. Despite the contributions of individual and sociocultural factors, organizations have many strategies at their disposal to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment within their institutions. These efforts will not only protect employees from the harm of harassment, but also limit employers' legal liability. Ultimately, an equitable work environment that is free of harassment benefits everyone within the institution.

### Definitions

In 1980, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission identified sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination that commonly manifests as either a *hostile work environment* or *quid pro quo*. Hostile work environment refers to an environment where sexual harassment is pervasive, and an employee believes that the general workplace milieu has become hostile and/or the ability to do his or her job has been compromised. Quid pro quo can be a single or a recurrent event(s) where an employee is pressured to engage in sexual behaviors due to job-related threats or benefits.

Social scientists define sexual harassment as any unwanted gender-based behavior that is offensive to the target, threatens the target's well-being, and/or overwhelms his or her coping abilities. Subtypes of sexual harassment have also been identified. *Gender harassment* includes a variety of sexist comments or behaviors that are often nonsexual in nature, such as asserting that all women are incompetent or unable to perform certain occupational duties. *Unwanted sexual attention* includes sexual comments, gestures, or physical contact, such as repeated requests for dates or attempts to kiss or touch the target. *Sexual coercion* is equivalent to the legal definition of quid pro quo and includes any job-related threats or benefits that are used to coerce sexual interaction, such as promises that an employee will be promoted or fired based on sexual compliance. Finally, *contrapower sexual harassment* involves any form of sexual harassment perpetrated by a subordinate and targeting a superior.

### Marginalized Populations

The majority of research on sexual harassment has been conducted with heterosexual, middle-class

White women, with little attention to diversity across these domains. Theorists assert that being both people of color and women places women of color at heightened risk for harassment (also known as double jeopardy). Research supports these theories, finding that compared to White women, women of color report being sexually harassed more often, experience harassment that is more severe and more sexualized (e.g., gender harassment versus unwanted sexual attention), and commonly describe racialized sexual harassment, where their sexual harassment is infused with race-based epithets or stereotypes. Similarly, studies document that lesbian women and economically vulnerable women are also subjected to more frequent and severe harassment than that reported in the general population. Women who are marginalized in multiple domains, such as lesbian women of color, are at even higher risk.

### Effects on Work, Health, and Psychological Well-Being

Sexual harassment is associated with a variety of negative consequences for targets. For example, compared to women who have not been sexually harassed, targets of harassment report increased absenteeism and job turnover and lower job satisfaction, work productivity, supervisor satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Harassed men and women also demonstrate negative changes in almost every domain of physical health, including altered appetite, difficulty sleeping, increased headaches, gastrointestinal distress, and reproductive health concerns. Psychologically, they also report increased depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, and disordered eating symptoms. Similar to reactions to other forms of trauma, a subset of harassed employees engage in pathological coping such as increased binge eating and alcohol and drug use, all of which can exacerbate the consequences of other mental health concerns. Further, the negative effects of harassment in each of these domains may persist for years after the harassment itself has ended.

### Individual, Sociocultural, and Organizational Causes

Sexual harassment is the result of a variety of individual, social, and organizational factors. There is considerable variability across men with some being

more likely to sexually harass than others. Those who sexually harass others, compared to men who do not engage in harassment, frequently score lower on measures of empathy and higher on measures of sex-role stereotyping and rape myth acceptance. However, it is important to note that the development of these traits is not independent from sociocultural factors. In societies where women are devalued, sex-role stereotypes proliferate, gender-roles are imbalanced, and definitions of femininity and masculinity are separate and rigidly held, men are more likely to endorse sex-role stereotypes and rape myths. Concomitantly, the likelihood that sexual harassment will occur increases.

Organizations also differ in the likelihood that their employees will participate in sexual harassment, regardless of their individual predilections. Specifically, the job-gender context of a work group and the organization's climate are powerful predictors of whether or not sexual harassment will occur. The job-gender context is determined by the ratio of men to women in a work group and by the extent to which the job is traditionally classified as a male or female occupation. Organizational climate refers to the general milieu within a workplace. Women in organizations that are tolerant of sexual harassment (e.g., demeaning attitudes toward women are modeled by superiors, harassers are not reprimanded) report much higher rates of sexual harassment than women in organizations that denounce gender inequities and sexual harassment in particular.

### How Organizations Can Stop Sexual Harassment

Independent of the expenses related to litigation, sexual harassment costs organizations millions of dollars every year due to factors such as increased absenteeism, job turnover, and reduced productivity. In response, organizations have initiated several strategies to reduce sexual harassment and limit their legal liability. Having a strong antiharassment policy, requiring sexual harassment training, investigating sexual harassment complaints quickly and efficiently, and enforcing penalties when harassment does occur can limit employers' legal risk by demonstrating that they have exercised reasonable care to prevent, investigate, and remedy sexual harassment. These practices have been shown to reduce harassment within an organization, reduce negative outcomes for harassed

employees, decrease the likelihood of an employee initiating litigation, and reduce the organization's legal liability.

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*See also* Diversity Issues in Career Development (v4); Organizational Diversity (v3); Psychological Well-Being, Dimensions of (v2); Sexism (v3); Sexual Violence and Coercion (v1)

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## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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Sexual orientation describes a person's sexual or affectional attraction to another person specifically identified by gender, either opposite sex (heterosexually oriented), same sex (homosexually oriented), or both sexes (bisexually oriented). This entry focuses on sexual orientation as applied to a same-sex orientation or a bisexual orientation.

### Sexual Orientation and Career Counseling

Only 30 years ago there was little research addressing career counseling with lesbian and gay clients other than literature addressing such clients generally as “deviants.” That is now changing, and for career counseling professionals seeking practical advice on how to provide such counseling services, there is now a growing body of literature.

First, counselors who have lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients must become aware of the client's culture in order to be knowledgeable facilitators of growth and development—aware of the sociopolitical issues, specific knowledge, necessary information, and institutional barriers that confront gay and lesbian clients who seek career counseling, and also aware of the history, language, rituals, traditions, and sense of community that define the gay and lesbian culture. Finally, counselors must take a personal inventory of the ways that their often subtle or unconscious biases may influence the career counseling process.

Discrimination issues permeate all approaches to career counseling with sexual minorities because such discrimination colors the social and personal lives of all sexual, racial, and ethnic minorities. The special needs of this cultural minority arise from the historic discrimination that has helped define the gay and lesbian community and includes lack of civil rights; secret or semisecret lives; oppression,

rejection, or ostracism by family of origin; societal censure; lowered self-esteem due to internalized homophobia; fear and reality of physical violence; and campaigns of hatred and vilification by right-wing political groups and fundamentalist religious groups.

Career counseling with gay or lesbian individuals requires cultural counseling competence. Three seminal documents inform such competence: the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (American Counseling Association and Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development); the Association for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues in Counseling Competencies for Counseling Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Clients; and the American Psychological Association's Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients.

Living in communities that routinely discriminate against gay men and lesbian women makes it virtually impossible for counselors to avoid internalizing negative stereotypes or attitudes about this sexual minority culture. Such misunderstanding will quickly be evident to sexual minority clients and may cause them to seek help elsewhere or not to get help at all. Counselors, however, must be familiar with gay and lesbian culture so that they are credible and congruent in their attitudes. Attending workshops, reading the literature, participating in lesbian and gay culture, and talking with former lesbian or gay clients or friends are effective ways to acquire knowledge about gay men and lesbian women and their culture.

Counselors need explicit awareness of their own religious and spiritual nature and beliefs. Counselors never impose their own belief system on their clients, but many lesbian and gay clients have been hurt by religious organizations.

Finally, counselors must confront their own individual prejudice and bias toward lesbian and gay clients and culture. The ethics codes of all the major mental health professional associations offer guidance for individuals who work with clients around issues related to their sexual orientation.

### Coming Out

A central issue for gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons' career development is coming out, the process of identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual and recognizing themselves as part of a stigmatized and semi-hidden minority. This identity development is a long