Combating Incivility, Harassment, and Sexual Assault in Environmental Fields and Fieldwork

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020
12:00 PM-1:00 PM ET
Webinar Logistics

Everyone should be connected via Audio Broadcast upon entering the webinar. You do not need to call in & you are automatically muted.

The presentation will be recorded and posted to the Antioch CCPCR website within one week.

Please submit any questions you have for the presenter in the Q&A section.

If you are having trouble with any aspect of the broadcast, use the Chat section to message the Host directly.
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Institutional and Professional Responsibility for Ensuring Safety and Changing Culture

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Defining Our Terms

● **Incivility**: low-intensity deviant behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm (experienced, witnessed, and instigated) (Schilpzand, Da Petar, and Erez 2016)

● **Harassment** includes offensive verbal comments, related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention. (https://science.mozilla.org/code-of-conduct)
Defining Our Terms

Sexual harassment (a form of discrimination) is composed of **three categories of behavior**:

1) **gender harassment** - verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey hostility, objectification, exclusion, or second-class status about members of one gender

2) **unwanted sexual attention** - verbal or physical unwelcome sexual advances, which can include assault

3) **sexual coercion** - when favorable professional or educational treatment is conditioned on sexual activity.

Harassing behavior can be either direct (targeted at an individual) or ambient (a general level of sexual harassment in an environment).

**These behaviors are illegal when they are “severe or pervasive” in a manner that alters the condition of employment, interfere with work performance or impede education**

Most common form of sexual harassment is gender harassment which “has at least as great, if not greater, impact on professional and personal health compared to unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion.”

(National Academies Press, 2018)
Culture of Harassment

5 factors that create conditions for sexual harassment

1) Perceived tolerance for sexual harassment
2) Male dominated work environment
3) Power structures (strong dependency on higher levels or geographic isolation)
4) Symbolic compliance (focus on policies and procedures for liability concerns)
5) Uninformed leadership that lacks intentionality and focus
Harassment as a Safety Concern in Fieldwork

- Researchers can face threats from research subjects, research assistants, other researchers, or members of the communities with which they work.

- Issues of violence, harassment, and sexual assault are all health- and safety-related concerns yet rarely appear in fieldwork trainings or safety manuals.

- A gender-neutral discussion of fieldwork that assumes the experience of men as the norm cannot help differently positioned researchers to prepare for fieldwork.

Rinkus, et al. 2018
Treating field work as a workplace would force us to "...understand the risks involved on both sides, consider the balance of responsibilities, and act or intervene to protect employees and their clients" (Craig, Corden, and Thornton 2000).

**Code of Practice:**
- Advises individuals on managing personal safety
- Outlines protocols, procedures, and protections for researchers
- Informed consent outlining risks to be agreed upon by research team
- Fieldwork agreement outlining responsibilities by all parties
Institutional Responsibility

- Factor into research design, proposal, and budget
  - conduct a risk assessment!

- Training and curriculum
  - need to consider the multiple, intersecting identities that researchers hold (based on gender, race, sexual orientation, abilities, etc.) and the distinct forms of support that may be required

- Legal responsibility and protections
  - researchers are both regulated and protected by Title IX while engaged in fieldwork on or off campus

Rinkus, et al. 2018
Professional Community Responsibility

Code of ethics
- not just for conferences! (and now need to consider virtual environments as well)

Training
- bystander intervention as professional development
- creating a culture of inclusion
Changing Culture & Climate

- Acknowledge
- Enforce transparency and accountability
- Listen, support, and act!
- Provide training
- Conduct research

National Academies Press
https://www.nap.edu/visualizations/sexual-harassment-of-women/
ADVANCEGeo Partnership: Transforming workplace climate through behavioral and institutional change

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ADVANCEGeo
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

2 executives depart Nature Conservancy after harassment probe

By ZACK COLMAN | 05/29/2019 08:49 PM EDT | Updated 05/29/2019 09:26 PM EDT

Calls for change in handling abuse allegations at top conservation group

Conservation International (CI) is one of the largest conservation non-profits in the world, with more than 1,000 employees globally and nearly three decades of history.

GENEVIEVE BELMAKER ON 2 APRIL 2018

Mongabay Series: Endangered Environmental Global News
Hostile climates and disproportionate impact

62% of higher-ed employees witnessed or experienced bullying in past 18 mo.

>50% of women and 30-40% of men in higher-ed are sexually harassed

40% of women of color (27% white women) feel unsafe due to gender; 28% of WOC felt unsafe due to race; 18% of WOC (12% WW) skipped professional events

LGBT+ cisgender women and gender-nonconforming scientists experience 2-3x more exclusionary behaviors than male LGBT+

21% of LGBTQPAN women & gender non conforming (9% cisgender straight women) experience physical harassment

Exclusionary behaviors

(implicit and explicit) bias, discrimination, micro(and macro)aggressions, disrespect, denigration, bullying, mobbing, intimidation, incivility, harassment

violate workplace norms for mutual respect
(are often unlawful)

- yet do not have to be illegal to cause harm-

and create hostile workplace climates.
Change the culture at all levels
Role of professional societies

• Regulate professional conduct through education and policy
• Codes of conduct - beyond meetings!
• American Geophysical Union defines discrimination, harassment, and bullying as **scientific misconduct**.
• New: Free legal advice to early-career members.

ADVANCEGeo Partnership

Empowering geoscientists to transform workplace climate

1. Develop and deliver bystander intervention and workplace climate training with discipline-specific scenarios and that incorporate intersectionality.

2. Collect data.

3. Develop teaching modules that identify harassment as research misconduct.

4. Develop a sustainable model that can be transferred to other disciplines in partnership with professional societies.

Website:
serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo

ADVANCEGeo
Community Resources

Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination | Codes of Conduct | In the Field | Training | Responding to Hostile Behaviors | Creating Inclusive Climates | A Primer on Diversity | Legal Context | Recognizing Bias | Reporting | Data

Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination

Every individual has the right to learning and working environments free of discrimination, harassment and bullying. This resource provides definitions of these types of behaviors and offers information and resources to deal with them.

Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct are guidelines adopted by an organization to address expected and appropriate behaviors, and are one of the important tools an organization can use to create a welcoming and inclusive workplace.

In the Field

Field training and research experiences can be defining moments in people's careers, especially in the earth and environmental sciences. This resource offers information on how to conduct research in a safe and respectful manner.

Training

In addition to the ADVANCEGeo bystander intervention workshops, this resource provides a list of common workshops and training to address workplace harassment and discrimination.
Field environments are not safe, inclusive or accessible for many.

"The head of the site would systematically prey on women ... I was in my bed one time and he was with a married master's student and she was basically just crying and she had to leave the site because he was seducing her and she couldn't say no ... I had to serve as a kind of a bodyguard for some of these women and some of them would sleep on the floor at night because they were afraid he was gonna come into the room at night."

- Anonymous survey respondent in Nelson et al. 2017

"As a woman, I'm often fearful about doing certain things alone and I take as many precautions as I can. However, as a black woman I have yet another set of circumstances to consider. I have to reconcile that as much as I love being in nature and seeing the world, there are those who whole heartedly believe someone like me has no right to be there — simply because I am black."

- Lauren C., Camping While Black

Website: serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html
Safe and productive field experiences require work

- Leadership engaged in modeling appropriate behavior
- Open discussion of rules and codes of conduct
- Clearly defined rules
- Established protocols for reporting violations
- Defined consequences for misconduct

What makes for an effective code of conduct?

- Identifies and defines appropriate and inappropriate behaviors
- Goes beyond ethical treatment of data to include the treatment of people
- Clearly specifies reporting and investigative procedures
- Outlines disciplinary action for conduct violations
- Includes protection against retaliation
- Has built in mechanism for continued re-evaluation of its effectiveness and for its revision

https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html
https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/codes_conduct.html
Field Codes of Conduct should also include

• **Protection for targets**: protect their safety, allow them to continue their fieldwork with minimal disruption, protect privacy as much as possible.

• **Always have an "out"**: all field workers must have access to transportation and communication devices whenever possible, with no gatekeepers.

• **Always have multiple resources/avenues to contact help available** for all involved and witnesses

• **Encourage bystander intervention** and reporting

https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html

https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/codes_conduct.html
Discussion:

What additional considerations are needed for environmental and field work during and post the #COVID-19 pandemic?
Field safety in the time of #COVID-19

• What restrictions are in place? (at the institutional, city/county, state/province/municipality, country)

• What resources are available at the field location?

• Where and when will I and my students, staff, employees feel safe? (and how do power dynamics affect these decisions?)

• Consider all risks to individual and collective safety

• How are risks to groups with different identities heightened in a time of fear and nationalism?

• How do we build flexibility and adaptability into our work and safety plans?
Questions?

Thank you for your participation and engagement.

For more resources: serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo
Questions?
Diversity and the Environment Webinar Series

Diversity in Higher Education: Creating Equity in Evaluation of Faculty

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6th 12:00 – 1:00 PM EDT
https://conta.cc/34vwpp8

Presenter: Valerie Banschbach
President-Elect
Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences
Associate Provost and Dean of Sciences and Education
Gustavus Adolphus College