

PREPARED FOR

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

POSH Act Awareness Programme

Prevention of Sexual Harassment – Training Guide

Presented by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

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Programme Overview

This programme explores the vital connection between psychological safety and legal compliance, focusing on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act). Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of their rights and responsibilities, fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and secure.

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Understand the legal framework of the POSH Act and identify what constitutes sexual harassment in various forms. This knowledge is crucial for ensuring a compliant and safe workplace for all.
- ✓ Explore the underlying psychological dynamics of power and influence in workplace interactions. Recognizing these dynamics helps in preventing misconduct and promoting equitable relationships.
- ✓ Clarify the specific roles and responsibilities of the Internal Committee (IC) in addressing complaints effectively and impartially. Empowering the IC ensures a robust grievance redressal mechanism.
- ✓ Learn practical strategies for bystander intervention, enabling individuals to safely and effectively respond to inappropriate behaviour. This promotes a collective responsibility for maintaining a respectful environment.
- ✓ Develop an understanding of how to cultivate a workplace culture rooted in dignity, respect, and inclusivity. This proactive approach is key to preventing harassment and enhancing overall employee well-being.
- ✓ Acquire skills to create and maintain a psychologically safe environment where employees feel comfortable raising concerns without fear of reprisal. This directly contributes to trust and productivity within the organization.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This programme is designed for all employees, members of the Internal Committee, HR professionals, and managers who are committed to fostering a secure and respectful work environment.

Programme Content

1. Understanding Sexual Harassment: Legal Definitions and Manifestations

This section delves into the legal definitions and various forms of sexual harassment as outlined by the POSH Act. We will explore what constitutes unwelcome conduct, including verbal, non-verbal, and physical behaviour, and examine how these actions can create a hostile work environment. Understanding these nuances is the first step towards prevention and ensuring that all employees are aware of prohibited conduct and their rights under the law. We will discuss real-world scenarios to illustrate these concepts, making the legal framework accessible and actionable.

 **Activity:** Group discussion on identifying potential scenarios of sexual harassment in the workplace.

2. The Psychology of Power and Workplace Dynamics

This segment examines the intricate interplay of power dynamics within professional settings and how they can contribute to or exacerbate issues of harassment. We will explore how imbalances of power can influence behaviour and create vulnerabilities, and discuss strategies for fostering more equitable relationships. Understanding these psychological underpinnings is essential for recognizing subtle forms of coercion or intimidation. By addressing these dynamics, we can work towards creating a more balanced and respectful organizational culture.

 **Activity:** Interactive exercise on recognizing and discussing power dynamics in teams.

3. Role and Responsibilities of the Internal Committee

This section provides a detailed overview of the constitution, functions, and responsibilities of the Internal Committee (IC) as mandated by the POSH Act. Participants will learn about the IC's crucial role in receiving complaints, conducting inquiries, recommending actions, and ensuring confidentiality and fairness throughout the process. Understanding the IC's mandate empowers both committee members and employees to engage with the redressal mechanism effectively. We will cover best practices for conducting impartial inquiries and maintaining a supportive process for complainants.

 **Activity:** Role-playing exercise simulating an initial IC meeting.

4. Bystander Intervention: Empowering Safe and Effective Action

This segment focuses on the critical role of bystanders in preventing and addressing sexual harassment. We will explore various strategies for intervening safely and effectively when witnessing inappropriate behaviour, from direct confrontation to indirect support and reporting. Learning these skills empowers every individual to become an active participant in creating a respectful workplace. Developing bystander intervention capabilities fosters a culture of shared responsibility and mutual support, making the workplace safer for everyone.

 **Activity: Brainstorming session on safe bystander intervention techniques.**

5. Building a Culture of Dignity and Respect

This section outlines practical steps and organizational strategies for cultivating a workplace culture where dignity and respect are paramount. We will discuss the importance of clear communication, inclusive policies, and leadership commitment in shaping an environment that actively discourages harassment. Fostering such a culture not only ensures legal compliance but also enhances employee morale, engagement, and overall organizational performance. Creating this positive atmosphere requires continuous effort and commitment from all levels of the organization.

 **Activity: Group activity designing a workplace charter for respect and dignity.**

6. Grievance Redressal and Support Mechanisms

This final section focuses on the practical aspects of grievance redressal under the POSH Act, including reporting procedures and available support systems for those who have experienced harassment. We will clarify the process for filing complaints, the timeline for resolution, and the types of actions that can be recommended. Understanding these mechanisms ensures that employees know where to turn for help and that the organization provides a robust and supportive response to all concerns, reinforcing trust and psychological safety.

 **Activity: Q&A session addressing specific queries on grievance reporting and support.**

Action Plan

Concrete steps for implementation.

Action	Owner	Timeline	Notes
Conduct a mandatory POSH Act awareness session for all employees.	HR/Manager	Week 1	Ensure session covers definitions, reporting procedures, and the role of the IC.
Review and update the organization's existing POSH policy.	HR	Month 1	Incorporate feedback from recent legal updates and employee consultations.
Provide specialized training for all Internal Committee members.	Manager	Week 2	Focus on inquiry procedures, confidentiality, and impartiality.
Prominently display posters and information regarding POSH Act compliance.	HR	Month 1	Ensure information is visible in common areas and on the company intranet.
Establish a confidential channel for reporting concerns and seeking support.	HR/Manager	Month 2	Clearly communicate the existence and accessibility of this channel to all staff.
Integrate principles of psychological safety and respect into performance reviews.	Leadership	Quarter 1	Develop specific metrics or qualitative feedback related to respectful workplace behaviour.

POSH Act Compliance – Key Points

As per The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) is a landmark legislation in India aimed at creating a safe and secure environment for women at the workplace. It mandates that every organization with ten or more employees must establish an Internal Committee (IC) to address complaints of sexual harassment. The Act defines sexual harassment broadly, encompassing unwelcome conduct that is sexual in nature, or that creates a hostile work environment. It outlines procedures for complaint filing, inquiry, and redressal, and specifies penalties for non-compliance. The Act also emphasizes preventative measures, including awareness programs and policy implementation, to foster a culture of respect and dignity.

About Manas



Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Founder & Consulting Psychologist | Applied, Organizational & Behavioural Psychologist | PhD | 18+ Years

Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma brings 18+ years of applied psychology to corporate wellness. She has worked with SBI, educational institutions, and corporate teams across India. Her evidence-based approach combines CBT, mindfulness, and culturally contextualised psychology for measurable outcomes. She is the creator of the Performance FOMO Index™ and the High-Functioning Distress Framework™.

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A MSME-registered organisation dedicated to evidence-based mental wellness.

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