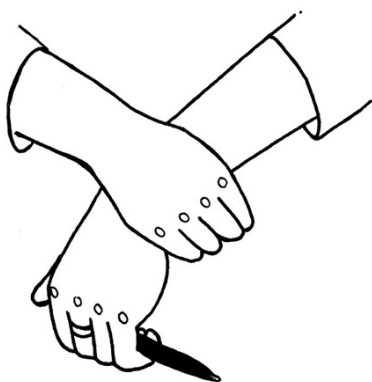


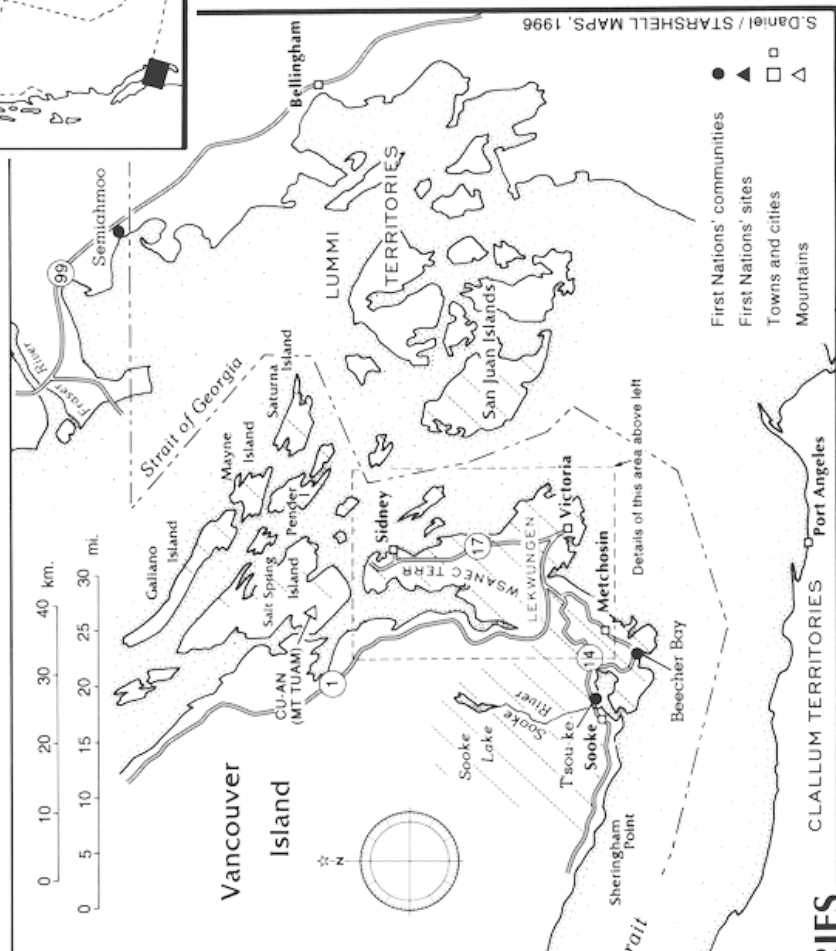
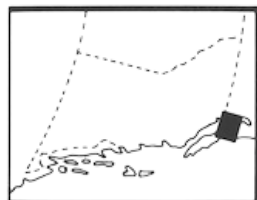
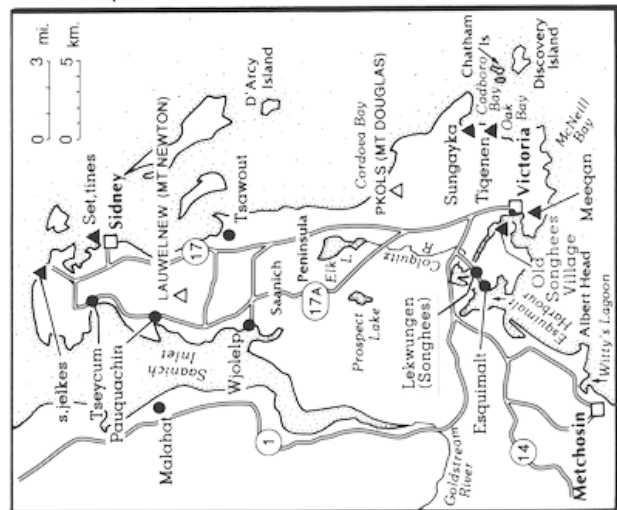
A collaborative project by service industry workers, frontline sexualized violence educators, and workers rights advocates

Art by Niloo Farrahzadeh

Territory Acknowledgement

May I's work takes place on the unceded and unsundered territories of the Lkwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples. We recognize that sexualized and gender-based violence is deeply rooted in ongoing colonial violence against Indigenous peoples and lands, and we aim for our anti-sexualized violence work to interrogate the systemic roots of violence.





STRAITS TERRITORIES

S. Daniel / STARSHELL MAPS, 1996



Background



In our discussions with current and former workers in the restaurant industry to create a workshop curriculum, we gathered lots of knowledge that workers “wished they had known when they started”. The intention of this zine is to validate workers’ experiences while also providing resources for folks in the industry to further conversations about sexualized violence in their workplaces.



We recognize that restaurant work is an important and viable way of getting by under capitalism, and we have no interest in shaming people for a) doing this work, b) doing it on their own terms (i.e. having boundaries that can be flexible if you think you’ll get tipped better) or c) staying in the industry. Instead, we want to pass along tips that may reduce the impacts of bad shifts.



There have always been advocates fighting for safer workplaces and, in recent years, specific momentum has built around sexualized violence prevention. Amplified by these grassroots movements, we want to open up a conversation about sexualized violence prevention and education in the service industry.



Sexualized violence in the workplace is a pervasive issue throughout our communities; in Canada, it is estimated that 31% of employees in federal workplaces experience sexual harassment.



Though Canadian statistics have not deeply interrogated the explicit intersection between sexualized violence and the service industry, between the years 1995-2016 in the US, there were more sexual harassment claims made by restaurant workers than any other industry.

While statistics can never tell a complete story, and often leave out many experiences, they can be an effective tool in illustrating how power imbalances are ingrained into the service industry workplace.

As of 2015, 82% of food and beverage servers in BC are women, while men are more likely to occupy higher paying roles and positions with greater occupational power, such as managers who have the ability to hire and fire. In 2011, at 26.1% sales and service was the most frequently reported occupation for women of colour.

These power dynamics contribute to a culture of normalization and silence regarding sexualized violence in the workplace, and limit the capacity for workers to feel safe enough to address issues or seek support. This violence is compounded for folks who exist at the intersections of different identities experiencing oppression.

If you have feedback or questions about this zine please email industrysvp@gmail.com



Definitions

We recognize the agency of survivors to define their own experiences and to identify the words that feel best for them. Although not exhaustive, we offer these definitions as a starting place for conversation.

Industry: the service industry, jobs in places such as restaurants, bars, cafes and hotels

Consent: a mutual emotional, physical and psychological understanding between people without force of any kind

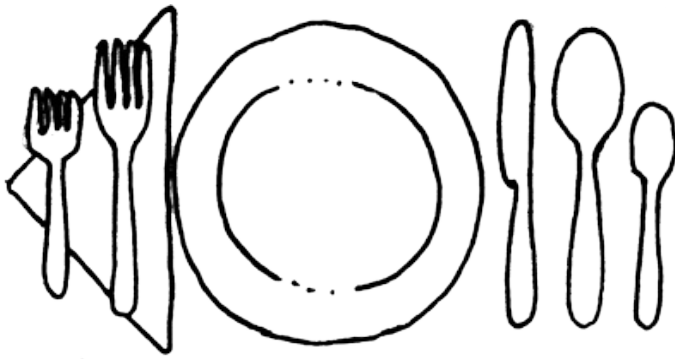
Gender-based violence: any act of violence (physical, sexual, economic, emotional, spiritual, social) based on a person's gender identity, perceived gender identity and/or gender expression

Intersectionality: a concept used to describe the ways in which different kinds of oppression (racism, sexism, homoantagonism, transantagonism, ableism, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.

Sexualized violence: anything that disrespects your being in a sexualized way

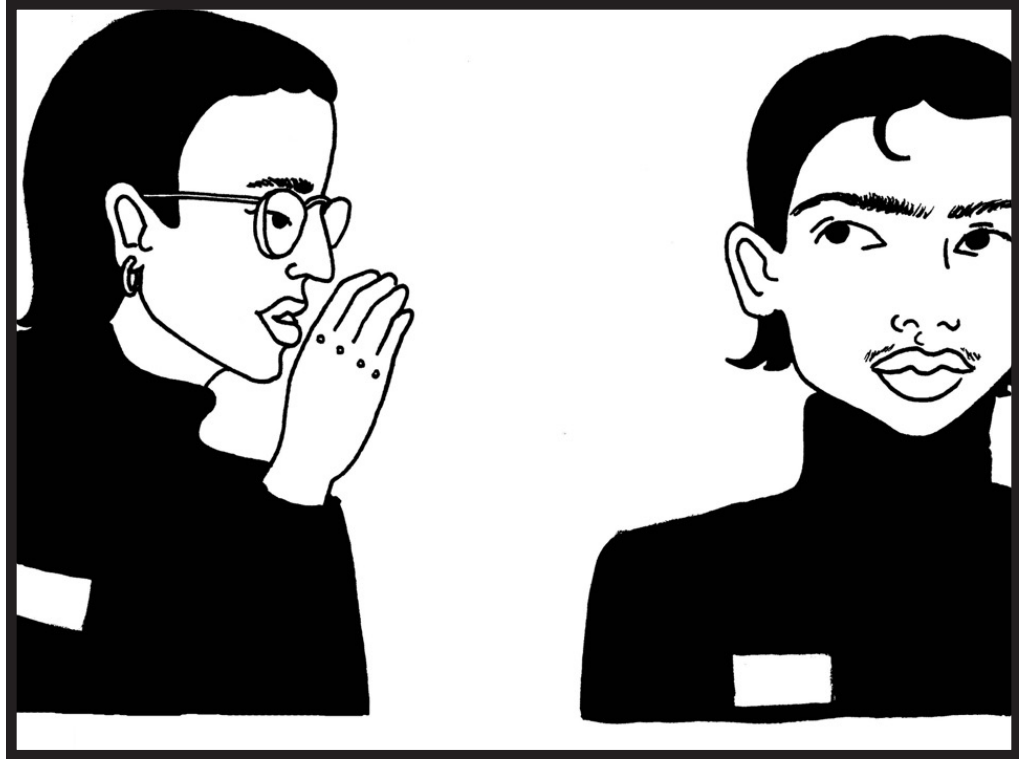
Sexual assault: any unwanted sexualized contact

Sexual harassment: a type of sexualized violence expressed through words or actions that are insulting or offensive to your gender, sex and/or sexuality, which can create an intimidating, humiliating, or hostile environment. Sexual harassment is many things and can include cat calling, sexually suggestive noises or motions, 'jokes' about sex, stalking, spreading rumours, etc. In the industry one example is customers threatening not to tip if a server doesn't smile.



Feel free to add your own definitions to the list! More definitions can be found on the Anti-Violence Project website at www.antiviolenceproject.org/glossary

[illegible]



Myths & Realities

There are many widespread myths about sexualized violence and the service industry. Myths are important to talk about because they impact our co-workers, our work environments and the ways that we try to end this violence.

Some questions to think about:

- *Where do you see this myth perpetuated?*
- *Who benefits from this myth?*
- *If we believe this myth, how might it impact the way we/institutions/the industry respond to sexualized violence?*

Myth:

Filing a bullying and harassment complaint with worksafe BC is really difficult and complicated.

Myth:

Servers cannot refuse service to a customer-- the customer is always right.

Myth:

If you speak out about harassment, you can be fired.

Myth:

Sexual harassment is just a part of the industry.

Myth:

There are no laws governing dress codes in the workplace.

Myth:

There are no laws protecting servers who experience sexual harassment.

Myth:

If you don't report an incident of sexualized violence right away, you can't do it in the future.

Reality

You can file a complaint with Worksafe BC online. You only have to fill out a single form, the questions include some basic information about you, your employer, and an outline of the incident or incidents. The process takes between 20 and 45 minutes depending on how much detail you're going into.

Reality

You have the right to work without facing discrimination from customers, and customers can be refused service based only on their actions. Under the BC Human Rights Code, customers are prohibited from bullying and harassing employees. Illegal activities are a permissible reason to refuse service to a customer

Reality

Under the BC Compensation Act, you have a responsibility to report harassment and bullying if you witness it. It is illegal for an employer to fire you for speaking out against harassment and bullying, and employers could be sued if they take disciplinary action against someone who is speaking out. Additionally, the Human Rights Code protects people from retaliation for being involved in a complaint. It protects people because they: made a complaint or might make a complaint are named in a complaint or might be named in a complaint gave evidence or helped in some other way in a complaint.

Reality

Sexual harassment is a prohibited offense under the Workers Compensation Act and the BC Human Rights Code. Employees have a right to a workplace free from discrimination and employers are required by law to abstain from, prevent, and address sexual harassment

Reality

Dress requirements that accentuate sexuality or have sexual connotations associated with them, are open to human rights complaints.

Reality

Workers are protected by the BC Human Rights Code, which states that you have a right to a workplace free from discrimination. Under the Workers Compensation Act, employees also a right to a workplace free of harassment and bullying. Tlation also mandates that all employers have policies and processes in place to prevent bullying and harassment.

Reality

You can file a complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal within one year from when the incident occurred.

Sexualized Violence & Employment Law

The “realities” in the previous section also include some helpful examples related to your rights. Here is a bit more detailed legal information about your rights at work:

Sexualized violence and the BC Human Rights Code:

Because of a big Supreme Court of Canada case (Janzen v Platy 1989), sexual harassment is now a prohibited form of discrimination under Section 13 of the BC Human Rights Code, which also prohibits discrimination in employment based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. This means that employers are responsible for ensuring a workplace that is free from discrimination (including sexual harassment) and may be found liable for sexual harassment from managers, co-workers, customers or clients.

Worksafe BC:

According to the Workers Compensation Act (administered by WorkSafe BC), bullying and harassment is when someone takes an action that they knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause a worker to be humiliated or intimidated, and should not be tolerated. If a worker witnesses bullying and harassment they must report the incident to a superior. The legislation also mandates that all employers must have procedures and policy in place to address bullying and harassment, and review these procedures annually.

Through WorkSafe BC, investigations into instances of bullying and harassment can occur if an employee has already contacted their supervisor and is unsatisfied with their response. An employee can then contact prevention officers through filling out a Bullying and Harassment Questionnaire. Unfortunately complaints cannot be made anonymously, and are predominantly approached on a case by case basis rather than looking at the systemic nature of violence in the workplace.

Legal Rights:

You have a right to get together with your co-workers for the purpose of improving your working conditions. Unionized workers, as well as workers that are in the process of unionizing, have added protections through the BC Labour code, including protection from being fired for trying to form a union.

Employment Standards complaints must be filed within 12 months of the incident taking place, or within 12 months of you being fired or quitting, and employers cannot refuse to employ a worker who files a complaint, or otherwise discriminate against a person with respect to their employment.

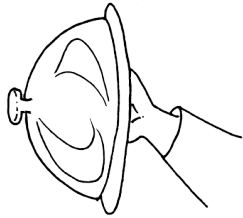
An employer can also be required to pay interest on unpaid wages owed to an employee.

You have the right to work free from discrimination, including discrimination related to:

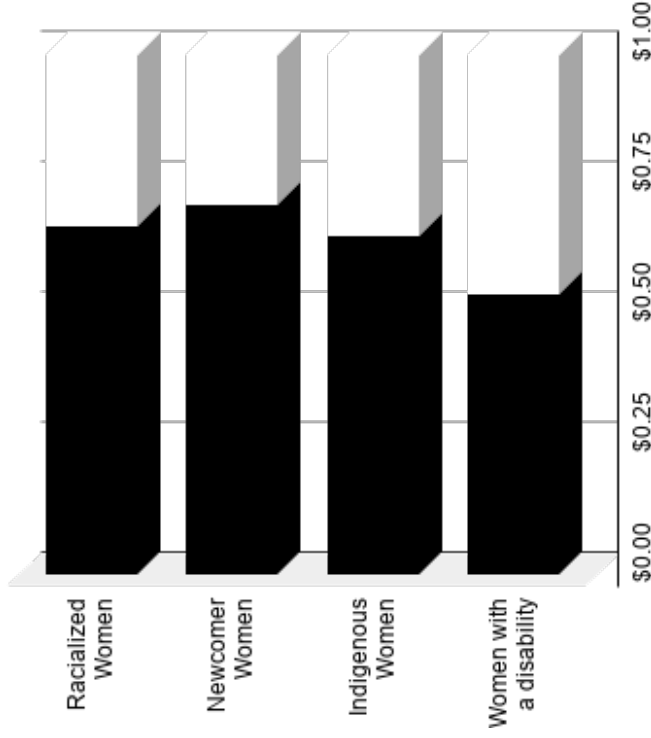
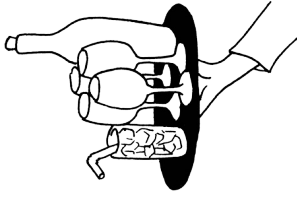
- race
- religious beliefs
- age (over 19)
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender identity or gender expression
- marital status or family status (e.g. if you're married, single, divorced, widowed, common law)
- pregnancy
- sexual harassment
- disability (including mental or physical disability)

To file a complaint with Worksafe, visit www.worksafebc.com

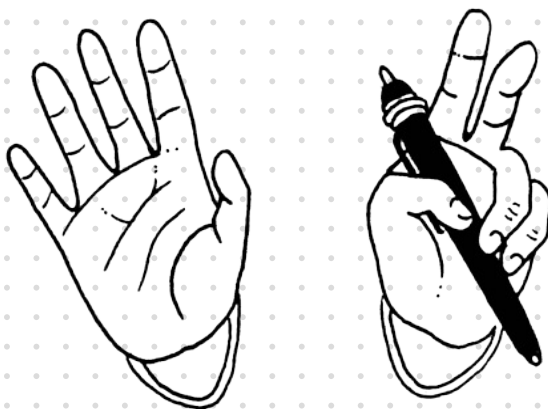
We know that navigating these legal structures is not accessible for everyone, and may not be the structures through which survivors want to seek support. This being said, we think that workers have a right to know all of their options when dealing with sexualized violence in the workplace. We aim to stay grounded in the belief that survivors get to define what justice means to them. For more resources related to our legal rights at work, check out the back of this zine!



The Pay Gap



- Racialized women working full-time, full-year earn an average of 33% less than non-racialized men, earning 67 cents to the dollar (2016).
- Newcomer women working full-time, full year earn an average of 29% less than non-newcomer men, earning 71 cents to the dollar (2016).
- Indigenous women working full-time, full year earn an average of 35% less than non-Indigenous men, earning 65 cents to the dollar (2016).
- According to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability, women with a disability in Canada earn approximately 54 cents to the dollar compared to non-disabled men.



Journal Prompt

This journal activity is an opportunity to reflect on your experiences of comfort and safety, or lack thereof, at work. Practicing self-reflection can help us to understand our own boundaries and the ways that we may have more (or less) capacity to respond to certain situations. This, in turn, better prepares us to support our coworkers and to recognize how they might have different boundaries than us.

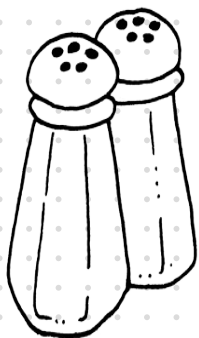
We invite you to explore as cautiously or deeply as you would like. As one of our favourite people (captain snowdon) taught us, it can be useful to approach hard things with the intention of only diving as deep as we can imagine a bungee cord pulling us back up.

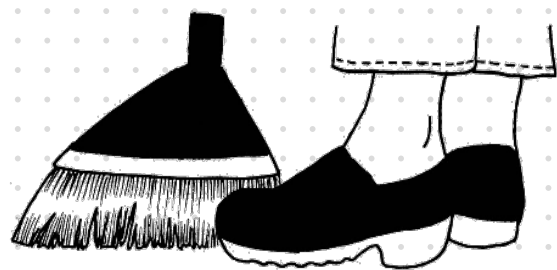
To begin, think about an instance that you felt uncomfortable (like someone bumped up against or crossed your boundaries) at work. For example, an interaction with a coworker or customer. Then consider:

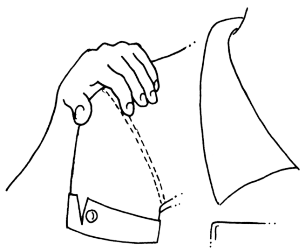
- *What made you feel like you could or couldn't respond in that situation?*
- *In what situations do you feel like you can assert your boundaries at work?*
- *Do you think that how comfortable you are with a particular scenario can vary across days? What about contexts?*
- *People will experience the same situation differently based on their identities, experiences and perspectives. How does this happen in your workplace?*
- *What are some other factors that can impact the comfort level of an individual?*
- *How is power distributed in your workplace? (i.e. who makes decisions, gets respect and whose safety is prioritized at your work?)*
- *How does this power distribution impact your experiences at work?*

Consider Intersectionality. Our identities matter, our experiences matter, and we don't always know all the things that impact how others feel or respond to everyday stuff.









Supporting Your Co-Workers

The Anti-Violence Project's model of support has 4 elements:

Listen	Use your active listening skills to engage with what they are saying to you (try not to rush them or ask too many questions).
Believe	This is the most important step! Hear what they are saying to you and believe that they are going through what they say they're going through.
Refer	If they sounds interested, offer to help them seek out resources. Remember it's their decision what to do next.
Care	Make sure to take some time to care for yourself after doing all of that work to support someone.

While having a model can be helpful, support looks and feels different for everyone so it can be helpful to reflect on your own experiences of support.

With a friend or by yourself think about a time you felt supported at work (this doesn't necessarily have to be in a situation where you experienced violence).

Consider:

- *What were the key elements of this support?*
- *Can you identify how that support made you feel?*
- *How can we use these insights when we are giving support to our co-workers?*
- *What kinds of strategies and tactics can we use to make our co-workers feel supported?*
- *What can we ask for or demand from our employers to make us feel supported?*



Responding to Shitty Situations

Something we have learned from current industry workers, and our own experiences, is that there are so many tools that workers have for navigating tough situations. This section highlights some of the lessons that workers shared with us throughout this process. Maybe some of them will be useful for you, but we also encourage you to think about your own strategies for dealing with shitty customers and add them here

Customers:

- Focus on the impact and feelings, rather than labeling or calling out customers
- It's helpful to link to an overarching policy so the server doesn't have to make it about their values (for example "the owner and staff of this restaurant don't allow that kind of behaviour"). This is particularly useful when having to cut people off, because it depersonalizes the interaction and makes it about upholding the workplace/legal standard.
- Calling out "behaviours" as shitty, rather than naming people as shitty

"I don't think that's funny."

"What do your friends (if they have others at the table) think about what you just said/did"

"I/my workplace has a rule against going out with customers"

"I'm at work right now, so I'm not interested in/available for this conversation"

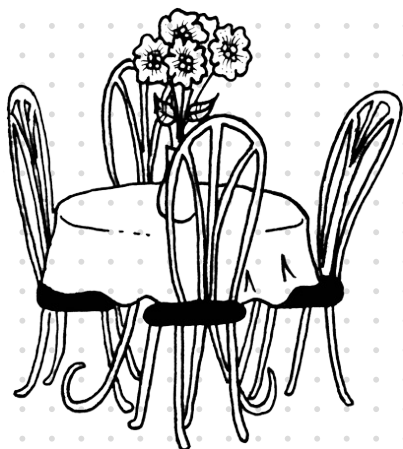
Co-Workers:

Remind co-workers they are at work, and customers might overhear them.

"That's not very professional."

"I don't think that's funny."

"I don't get it." (Keep saying I don't get it until they get to the crux of the joke)



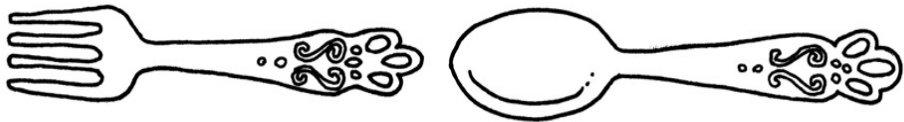
Shifting Service Industry Culture

As we work towards ending sexualized violence, we need both tactics and strategies. Tactics are the things that we all do to change our immediate situations, or to get through them. But we also want to open space for us to think about the long-term strategies that we can use to change the culture that allows for violence to take place. Doing this work helps to make restaurants and bars safer places for everyone, including customers and all those involved in the industry.

(Use these pages to brainstorm)

Here are some ideas/reflections from workers:

- Serving should be treated to other professions, like dentistry, where sexualized violence is considered unacceptable
- One very experienced server pointed out that when servers are touchy with each other, it can set a tone in the space that customers interpret as being an invitation to touch workers. In her experience, workplaces that had a culture of minimal hugging, touching and contact in front of customers, were also the places she encountered the least harassment
- Posters can help communicate a zero tolerance environment for harassment (make these visible to both customers and workers)
- Anti-harassment and sexualized violence training should be part of orientation for new workers (including kitchen staff)
- Come up with collective processes for dealing with problem tables such as having managers take over to revoke their privilege to engage with staff or use a card system to alert co-workers



What is ‘May I?’

The ‘May I?’ project is a coalition of restaurant and bar workers, front-line sexualized violence educators, and workers rights advocates who share a common goal of addressing and preventing sexualized violence in the restaurant and bar industry.

The project has been supported by the Anti-Violence Project, Worker Solidarity Network (formerly known as Retail Action Network), the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre and has received funding from the BCGEU. To address the large number of workplace sexual harassment and assault disclosures that each organization was receiving from folks who work in restaurants and bars, community members started meeting about a potential collaboration in the fall of 2017. Since then, ‘May I?’ has supported conversations with and among workers about the root causes of harassment, strategies for navigating challenging (yet common) situations in the industry and support among coworkers.

Consent is built into many elements of the restaurant and bar industry. We ask “May I?” before doing virtually anything, which was the inspiration for the name of this project. However, in other ways the industry is structured to prevent workers from setting boundaries about their safety and comfort. At May I? we don’t think that anyone should face violence at work, and are seeking to take inspiration from the phrase May I? to expand consent culture practices in the restaurant and bar industry.

Support Resources

This is a list of contact information for various organizations who provide support and resources to workers and folks impacted by sexualized violence.

Projects Like May I?

The Dandelion Initiative
www.dandelioninitiative.ca
FB: @dandelioninitiative
IG: @dandelioninitiative

Order's Up! Ottawa
www.ordersupottawa.com

Good Night Out
www.goodnightoutcampaign.org
FB: @goodnightoutcampaign
IG: @goodnightoutcampaign

Support for Survivors

Anti-Violence Project
www.antiviolenceproject.org
FB: @Anti.Violence.Project
IG: @anti.violence.project

Victoria Sexual Assault Centre
www.vsac.ca
FB: @VSACentre
IG: @victoriasexualassaultcentre

Men's Therapy Centre
www.menstrauma.com
FB: @MensTherapyCentre

Help with Workplace Problems

Worker Solidarity Network
www.workersolidarity.ca
FB: @WorkerSolidarityBC
IG: @workersolidaritybc

Together Against Poverty Society
www.tapsbc.ca

BC Human Rights Clinic
www.bchrc.net

Migrant Workers Centre
www.mwcbc.ca

Worksafe BC
www.worksafebc.com

