

**IT
STOPS
NOW.**

A solid red circle is positioned to the right of the word 'NOW' in the main title.

Toolkit

Ending Sexual Violence
and Harassment in Third-Level
Education



Funded by
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There's really no such thing as the "voiceless". There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.

Arundhati Roy



Section Five

Campaigning for change

Introduction

Campaigning and awareness-raising marks an indispensable part of embedding a culture of zero tolerance towards SVH within HEIs. A successful campaign raises awareness of the prevalence and scope of SVH, and mobilises the HEI community to actively prevent and combat it; its power lies not only in identifying the problem, but helping us to understand our individual roles and responsibilities in shaping the solution. Taking a whole-of-campus approach in a campaign is therefore integral to ensure that both students and staff are engaged and empowered to reframe attitudes, make proactive interventions, and cultivate meaningful culture change.

Managing sexual violence and harassment campaigns sensitively

In order to create cultural change in relation to SVH, it is vital that we can openly and safely discuss it as an issue. The public discourse in relation to SVH has traditionally been problematic: it often ignores or silences the voice of survivors, employs victim-blaming rhetoric, or presents a perpetrator-centred narrative. Within HEIs and broader society, we must become more comfortable in speaking about this issue, examining the underlying factors that cause it, hearing the reality of survivor's experiences, and acknowledging the role we play in enabling SVH to continue.

While it is important to speak publically about SVH, many staff and students within the institute will have been affected directly or indirectly by the issue. There is a duty on the institute to ensure that activities are respectful of the experiences of survivors and to avoid re-traumatisation where possible.

► Messaging

- Ensure survivors of SVH and specialist organisations are involved in the process of campaign development to ensure appropriate messaging. It is important that marginalised groups, such as ethnic minorities, people living with disability, or the LGBTQI+ community, participate in this development to ensure that the campaign has an intersectional perspective and accounts for a range of experiences
- Avoid messaging that disempowers survivors (e.g.: trivialising the experience of those experiencing SVH through 'humour'; portraying survivors as 'helpless victims'; using sexually objectifying imagery; and perpetuating victim-blaming messaging, such as telling survivors to avoid sexual violence by drinking less or being more responsible in relation to their own safety)
- Recognise and accommodate the different accessibility needs of the audience when

communicating policies and support services. Use Plain English guidelines, and choose accessible fonts and generous spacing in materials to make them visually clear. Embed subtitles and captions in video, audio and online visual material

- Avoid 'sanitising' or obscuring the issue (e.g.: behaviours should be named; rape should not be referred to as 'sexual misconduct' in awareness-raising activities).

► Support services

- Publish contact details of support services in campaign material where possible, and, at all stages of the campaign, internal and external services should be signposted.
- Ensure internal and external support services are kept up-to-date with the campaign, in particular when the campaign is launched, as increased visibility of the issue can lead to an increase in survivors seeking support
- Investigate whether supports are available for survivors with particular needs (e.g.: a helpline for people who are hard of hearing) and ensure this information is readily available
- Examine reporting mechanisms and resources within the institute to ensure that those who wish to report have relevant information easily accessible to them.

Developing a sexual violence and harassment campaign

It is important that a campaign is clear in its messaging, objectives, and in setting out who its target audience is. Samples of the 'It Stops Now' campaign material, as well as manuals for campaign development sessions, are included in the Core Resources linked to this Toolkit.

► Identify specific sexual violence and harassment issues

A campaign should embrace evidence-informed approaches when considering what aspects of SVH to address. SVH is a multi-faceted and nuanced issue, and no one campaign can tackle it in its entirety. The following sources may assist in identifying a campaign starting point, which can evolve to focus on other issues over time:

- SVH research conducted within the HEI, nationally or internationally
- Attitudinal or experiential surveys of the HEI community
- Focus groups with staff and students in relation to SVH; this helps to understand your audience, how they engage with the issue, and where their gaps in knowledge might be
- Engaging with specialist SVH orgs to understand prevalent issues and trends in relation to their work
- Survivor testimonies.

► Identifying the target audience

Identifying who makes up the target audience is pivotal in shaping campaign messaging. This will influence the tone, content and design of the campaign.

Examples include:

- Survivors: Campaign messages might raise awareness of issues such as services available to them, could include themes of confidentiality and safety to encourage them to engage, or may highlight the experiences of a particular group.
- Perpetrators: Campaigns could highlight various types of perpetrator behaviour and make them aware that they will be held accountable for such behaviour within the HEI.
- The broader community: Campaigns could make the broader community aware of the role they play in changing the culture and creating a more open environment to discuss SVH.

► Call to action

Ensure your campaign development process and materials highlight proactive, attainable calls to action, and promote healthy behaviours in addition to identifying unhealthy ones. Use the campaign to challenge the myths and norms relating to SVH, demonstrating the roles and responsibilities of HEI community members, and signposting the tools and resources which can empower a safe campus community.

Engaging the community, identifying champions and ensuring sustainability

The ESHTTE focus groups revealed that participants were unaware of HEI-led campaigns or awareness-raising activities in relation to SVH. Campaigns were normally carried out by SUs or NGOs with limited participation from HEI staff. This creates a challenge in terms of embedding sustainability and broader cultural change within the institute. NGOs, as outside actors, may not always address the specific issues relating to the HEI, and SUs have frequent turnover, with priorities often shifting from year to year. The HEI should work in conjunction with SUs and embed awareness-raising activities as part of its overall strategic plan in order to ensure integrated, long-term change.

► Building a community to tackle sexual violence and harassment

- Identify and include a broad range of 'champions' within the HEI who can act as catalysts for cultural change. These can include student activists, societies, SU officers, health services staff, counsellors, researchers, department heads and senior leadership
- Establish a SVH campaigning committee which includes a range of stakeholders within the HEI. Additionally, external organisations, such as local specialist SVH NGOs, could be asked to contribute to the campaign committee and assist in guiding its activities
- Appoint campaign coordinators to lead activities, development, and delivery throughout the campaign. This should be ideally a collaborative role between a staff member and student
- Maximise internal resources and engage the broader HEI community by exploring the skills, expertise, and resources across various schools, faculties and bodies within the campus (e.g.: a student counselling service may have a policy guiding SVH support, which could inform messaging or media students could produce a campaign video).

Rolling out sexual violence and harassment campaigns

- Develop a communications strategy and implementation plan for the campaign.
- Plan a launch for the campaign: issue a press release to local media, hold a photocall, organise an event, and invite HEI stakeholders.
- Appoint a social media officer to manage and monitor the various campaign platforms. Consider establishing dedicated social media channels for the campaign, giving flexibility and visibility to SVH as a single issue campaign. Identify which social media channels your audience is most active on, and focus your resources on these.
- Develop a short social media policy which outlines how your campaign will conduct itself online, briefly setting out brand guidelines, engagement strategies, and response procedures.
- Develop a short, relevant campaign hashtag. Tag your institute, its leaders and societies, relevant political representatives, and other stakeholders in posts and keep them informed of campaign activities.
- Ensure a whole-of-campus approach: provide information on your SVH policies in student orientation packs, make details of procedures and support services available in staff rooms or student halls, or share information at society events and activities.
- Identify key dates within the HEI where campaign activities would be most impactful (e.g.: sexual health and awareness events, Freshers Week, conferences, 16 Days of Activism etc.).

Measuring success

Measuring the effectiveness of campaign activities is important to evaluate the successful elements of the campaign and where further development is required for future initiatives.

- Monitor website traffic as a useful indicator of interest in the campaign; this includes the search terms and referral paths which brought individuals to the campaign website.
- Monitor social reach: use platforms' native analytics tools to understand the demographics of those interacting with the campaign and, if needed, tailor content to appeal to the target audience. In addition to checking the number of followers of the campaign over time, it is important to understand how actively engaged the audience is with the campaign.
- Set objectives for the campaign which can be tracked during and after its implementation. A sample objective could be increasing the number of students who know how to access campus support services for SVH survivors. Quantitative goals in support of this could include directing students to a web page, gaining a certain number of followers on social media, or distributing a specific number of leaflets or posters on campus.
- Develop a survey at the launch of the campaign to create a baseline reference, before repeating it during and on completion of the campaign to understand how awareness levels changed throughout its implementation. Use unbiased questions to gather accurate data, while ensuring the questions address the objectives and goals of the campaign.



DON'T PLAY THE BLAME GAME.

If someone shares their experience of sexual violence or harassment with you, listen, believe and support.

END SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT • WWW.ITSTOPSNOW.ORG

NATIONAL 24-HOUR HELPLINE: 1800 77 8888
 TEXT SERVICE (MON-FRI 8.00AM-6.30PM): 0868238443
 FOR THOSE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING



**IT
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NOW.**



DON'T STAND BY. SPEAK UP!

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**IT
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WHO WANTS YOUR UNSOLICITED DICK PIC?

- YOUR CLASSROOM CRUSH
- YOUR NEW MATCH
- NOBODY

**BEFORE YOU SAY IT, DO IT OR
POST IT, CHECK IF THEY CONSENT.**

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THIS IS NOT A YES.

ALWAYS CHECK CONSENT.

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