

How to Organize a Culture Walk

Prior to conducting a workplace culture walk, a group of coworkers committed to bringing about change should gather and consider a few preliminary considerations.

Are you comfortable coordinating with your workplace's management?

Workplace culture walks have a singular goal: to detect factors that may allow for sexual harassment and violence to occur and persist in the workplace and work together to upend those factors to create a workplace culture of respect, safety, and support. Workplace stakeholders – workers, employers, worker associations, and unions – may opt to coordinate, or workers may feel more comfortable assessing their workplace together as a small group prior to involving management. Workers who are unsure about coordinating with management may want to consider conducting an informal meeting with only coworkers to discuss gaps in workplace safety and respect, and to develop a strategy to bring attention to and address any gaps identified to management, together.

Have you established a group to conduct the culture walk that reflects your workplace?

A worker's lens is influenced by many personal factors, including internal classifications (e.g., duties, longevity, and compensation level), as well as external characteristics (e.g., identities and life experiences). In order to assess the workplace through the lens of as many workers possible, take care to recruit coworkers that represent many identities, viewpoints, and workplace privilege to share in the planning and participation of a culture walk.

Is your workplace committed to non-retaliation?

No participant in planning and executing a culture walk should fear adverse consequences. If workplace leadership is involved, they should assure

participants that no action will be taken because of their involvement or any observation they may express. If workplace leadership is not involved, workers should carefully review workplace policies to become as confident as practicable that they can participate without fear of retaliation.

What will you do with the findings?

Appearing to conceal or ignore the findings of a culture walk may diminish morale and confidence in a workplace's commitment to eliminate sexual harassment and violence. Prior to conducting a culture walk, participants should discuss and seek to reach a consensus as to whether and how the findings will be made available to all workplace stakeholders, as well as next steps to address the identified areas of concern.

There are many ways to conduct a workplace culture walk. It can be a walk-through the physical space of a workplace planned in coordination with workplace leadership, or with coworkers- or a day to reflect to identify gaps in workplace safety and respect while sitting at your desk, or with coworkers in a lunchtime or other meeting.

Scheduling

The day of the week, time of day, and number of people working at any given moment can impact how workers navigate their work space and interactions. Organizers should think about how the workplace looks on various days and times, and organizations with multiple divisions, floors, offices, and other varying work spaces should take care, if conducting a physical walk-through, to walk every type of work area.

Publicity

Organizers should consider whether management and/or the entire staff should be informed of the workplace culture walk. Unannounced culture walks may better assess workplace realities.

Privacy Considerations

Workers should be assured that no specific adverse action will be taken on the basis of information obtained during a culture walk, regardless of

whether it's announced. Any disclosure of findings should not identify or implicate specific parties.

Frequency

One-off approaches are insufficient to address the deep-seated cultural and organizational dynamics that facilitate workplace violence and harassment. As with any comprehensive approach to prevention and response, workplace culture walks should be conducted on a regular and ongoing basis.

Workplaces Respond provides technical assistance to workplace stakeholders seeking to better prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and harassment impacting the workplace. Scan this QR code to access the Resource Center.



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