



WORKPLACE BULLYING IS UBIQUITOUS AND UNCHECKED IN HOLLYWOOD; YOUNG WORKERS AND ASSISTANTS ARE FREQUENT TARGETS

LOS ANGELES, October 14, 2020 -- [The Hollywood Commission](#), chaired by Anita Hill and founded by Kathleen Kennedy and Nina Shaw, today released the third report from the first-of-its kind, industry-wide worker survey. This report focuses on abusive workplace conduct and finds that Hollywood has an entrenched and endemic issue with bullying that is exacerbated by the industry's power imbalances. The national, anonymous survey was conducted online over a three-month period (Nov. 2019 – Feb. 2020). A total of 9,630 people who self-identified that they were currently working, pursuing work, or had previously worked in the entertainment industry responded to the survey. Results and reports on accountability and bias are available [here](#) and another report on progress since #MeToo with sexual harassment and assault will be made available next week.

“In Hollywood, bullying is condoned as part of ‘paying your dues’ on the way up and has been openly displayed in films like 1994’s ‘Swimming with Sharks’ and 2019’s ‘The Assistant,’” said Anita Hill, Chair, The Hollywood Commission. “Bullying may once have been an accepted norm, but in 2020 workers understand the harm that an environment rife with humiliating insults, sarcasm, swearing and throwing objects in anger, causes. And belittling, vulgar and demeaning language and behavior is a gateway to sexual harassment and other abusive conduct. It’s time for Hollywood to commit to treating all workers with basic humanity and dignity.”

Key Findings

- What constitutes workplace bullying?
 - Bullying include intimidating or humiliating behaviors such as insults, sarcasm, gestures, yelling, physically aggressive behavior, swearing in a hostile manner and excessively harsh in criticism of one’s work
- Who gets bullied?
 - Females: Women are twice as likely as males to report experiencing abusive workplace conduct often or very often
 - Younger workers: Workers under 40 years old were far more likely to report every form of bullying often or very often, with the reported rates decreasing steadily with age
 - Assistants: 73% of production executive, writer’s room, personal and composer assistants identified as female and of those females 99% were under the age of 40. Among this population, the reported rates of abuse were stunning at two to three times higher than the overall sample
 - Disabled workers: Individuals with a disability were roughly twice as likely as those without to report all forms of workplace bullying
 - Non-union workers: Non-union workers were twice as likely to report all bullying behaviors

- Majority were male (68%) versus 31% female
- To what degree has progress been made in entertainment since the start of the MeToo movement in promoting respect?
 - The majority of respondents (65%) saw moderate to a lot of progress
 - Females saw less progress (59%) compared with a strong majority (74%) of men
 - The view of progress varied based on age and gender identity, with a positive view of progress increasing with age. Females under the age of 39 had the least positive view of progress (55%) while nearly 80% of males aged 65 and older believed moderate to a lot of progress shas been made in promoting respect (79%)
 - Those working in talent representation saw the least amount of progress (53%) while those working in theater saw the most (72%)
 - Less than half of those working in positions with little power believed moderate to a lot of progress had been made in promoting respect. For example, only 43% of executive assistants saw progress, with 45% seeing only minimal progress

Recommendations

In both production and corporate settings, workplace bullying is one of the most-reported types of misconduct. But it also remains one of the least understood behaviors – what it is, what it isn’t, and how to manage it. These challenges – and the need to address them authentically and comprehensively – are particularly magnified due to the stressors unique to the production context. Like harassment and bias, the keys to ending bullying are accountability and awareness.

Bystander Intervention

When abusive conduct occurred, bystanders were present 69% of the time. The Hollywood Commission is conducting bystander training to address harassment and bullying with 450 entertainment workers. The training will include a virtual reality training, a web-based training, and six workshops tailored to the entertainment industry -- two for television supervisors (directors, producers, and showrunners), two for film (directors, producers, UPMs) one for casting directors, and one for production workers. Bystander intervention training teaches employees how to identify bullying or aggressive behaviors. Employees learn both direct and indirect intervention strategies to support a victim of bullying and are empowered to intervene when appropriate. Equipping employees with the tools to intervene creates a sense of shared responsibility to keep negative conduct in the workplace from being normalized.

Workshops

The Hollywood Commission is also conducting interactive workshops to address and manage bullying. The workshops will (1) review industry-specific issues concerning supervisor-subordinate and peer-to-peer bullying behaviors, (2) provide answers on how to identify bullying, and (3) how to respond to this type of destructive conduct.

Accountability

Because abusive conduct is not illegal, many companies and productions do not prohibit it in their codes

- Strengthen statements on bullying in codes of conduct: Define bullying in clear terms that does not require the employer to demonstrate the intent of the abuser – but is instead based on objectively observable behaviors
- Establish policy and processes to address bullying complaints: If bullying does occur, recognize the behavior and act on it early – in other words, don't wait to address problematic conduct until it has been repeated or has occurred over a prolonged period of time. Ensure the grievance process is fair and timely.
- Adopt HC Bystander training or establish their own.

About the Hollywood Commission

[The Hollywood Commission](#) is a nonprofit that brings together influential entertainment companies, unions and guilds with cutting edge thought leadership and expertise to develop and implement cross-industry systems and processes to eradicate harassment, discrimination and power abuse and create lasting cultural change in Hollywood.

IG: @hollywoodcommission

Twitter: @HWDCcommission

Facebook: Facebook.com/hollywoodcommission

Press Contact:

Carrie Davis

310-770-7696

Carrie@cdconsultingco.com