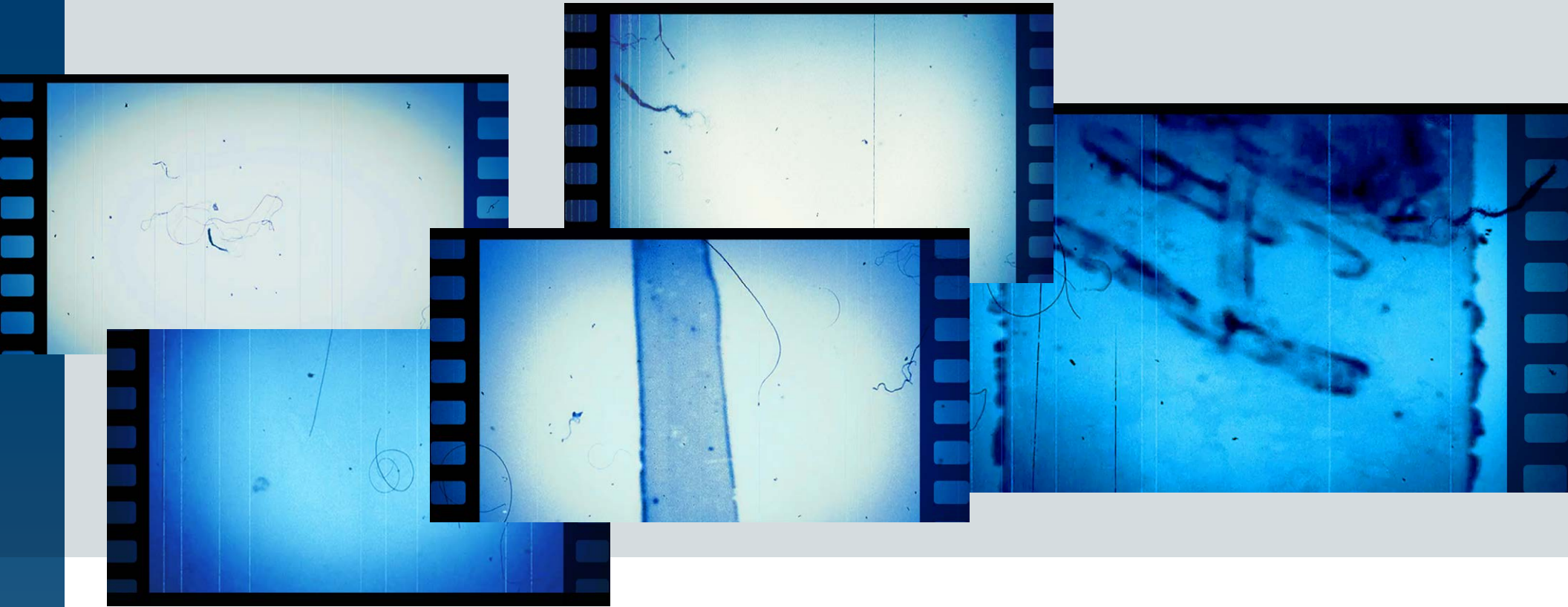


## The Hollywood Survey Report #3: **Abusive Conduct**





### 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.

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Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, Department of Defense
- **Dr. NiCole Buchanan**  
Associate Professor of Psychology,  
Michigan State University
- **Dr. Hannah Valentine**  
Chief Diversity Officer, National Institute of Health

## ABOUT THE HOLLYWOOD SURVEY

In November 2019, the [Hollywood Commission](#) launched the largest, first-of-its kind climate survey about discrimination, harassment, and bullying in the entertainment industry. Our goals were three-fold:

1. Establish an industry-wide baseline regarding the climate for accountability, respect, and equity
2. Identify the populations that are particularly vulnerable to harassment and discrimination
3. Identify ongoing gaps in preventing discrimination and harassment in the entertainment industry.

With valuable contributions from 9,630 entertainment workers in television and film, commercials, live theater, music, broadcast news, talent representation, public relations, and corporate settings, this survey is key in our collective, relentless drive to create a safe and equitable future in the entertainment industry.

### Reports

We will share our key findings through four summary reports, capped off by a comprehensive report and recommendations:

1. Accountability
2. Bias
3. #MeToo: Progress, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Assault
4. Bullying
5. The Hollywood Survey: Report & Recommendations.

### Survey Areas

- Values and perceptions of the entertainment industry
- Perceptions of accountability across the entertainment industry
- How often are workers in entertainment experiencing unwanted conduct, such as bias, bullying, gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, or sexual assault
- Where, when, and to whom were unwanted experiences most likely to occur
- Why aren't workers reporting and what types of retaliation are they experiencing
- What resources would be useful to workers

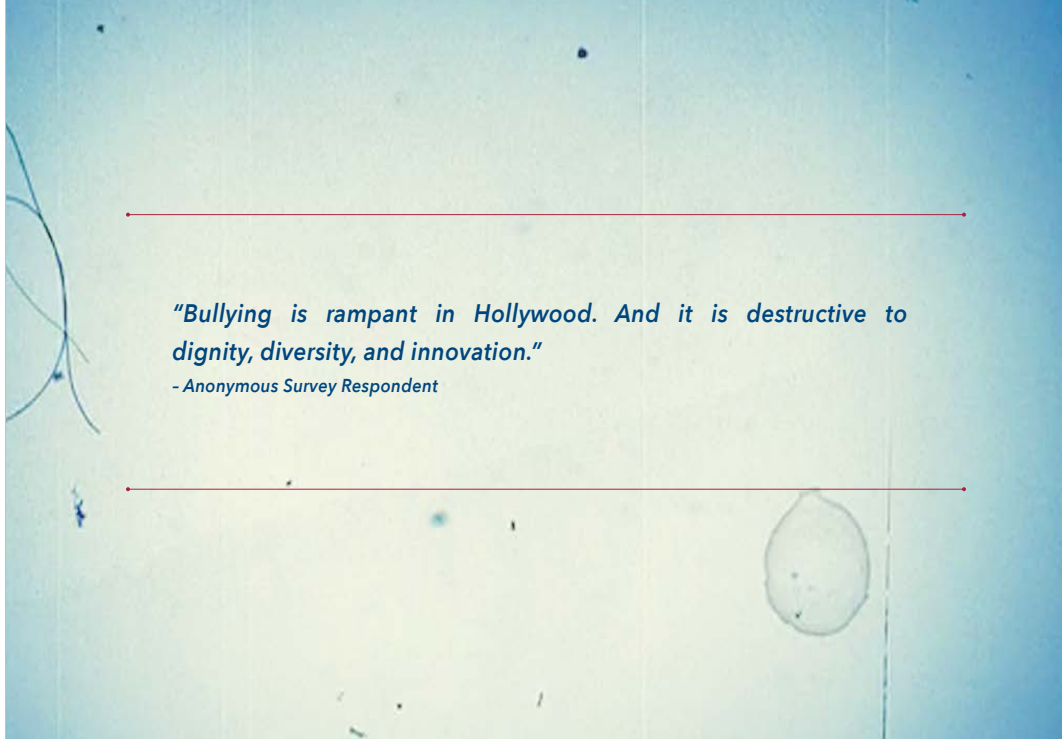
## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The survey confirms common knowledge: that rather than being anecdotal, isolated incidents, abusive conduct is endemic in Hollywood.**

Respondents saw moderate to a lot of progress (65%) in promoting respect since October 2017. This view is somewhat less positive than as to welcoming and valuing diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives (68%) or preventing harassment (69%) since October 2017. There was also a substantial difference related to the age and gender identity of respondents, with females under the age of 39 reporting the least positive view of progress (55%), compared to nearly 80% of males 65 and older.

Younger workers (those who were aged 40 or younger), females, and individuals with a disability were more likely to indicate they experienced abusive conduct. Females were twice as likely as males to report bullying and individuals with a disability were twice as likely as those without a disability to report bullying.

Workers who were bullied were somewhat more likely to share the experience with management personnel than what was documented in other reports. However, the views on progress suggest that this increase in reporting has not necessarily led to a substantial reduction in bullying behavior.



***"Bullying is rampant in Hollywood. And it is destructive to dignity, diversity, and innovation."***

*- Anonymous Survey Respondent*

## INTRODUCTION

The entertainment industry is replete with stories of abusive and toxic work environments - created by powerful bullies barking, swearing and calling people 'idiots' without regard for the humiliation or embarrassment of it happening in front of peers.

The entertainment industry is, unfortunately, a breeding ground for bullies who are typically highly ambitious, opportunistic, combative, powerful and competitive. Long excused as "just the way things are," bullies often occupy leadership positions and set the tone for everyone else.

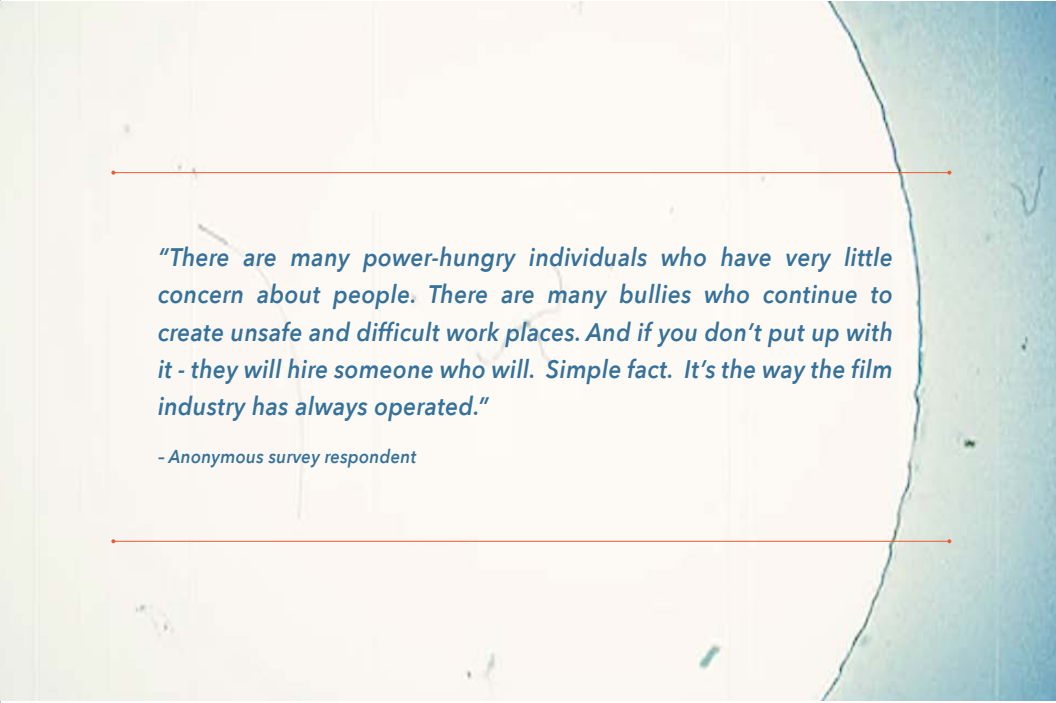
But there are good reasons to stop treating abusive workplace conduct as a condition of ongoing employment. Workplace bullying has a devastating influence on the emotional well-being of the victim or target. Employers also pay a price for bullying in the form of lost productivity, increased absenteeism, rising health insurance costs and higher employee turnover.

Establishing a culture of respect is also a key component to preventing sexual harassment. Sexual harassment often takes place against a backdrop of incivility - in other words, in an environment of generalized disrespect. This is especially true for gender harassment, because when it occurs, it is virtually always in environments with high rates of uncivil conduct.<sup>1</sup>

Bullying is generally defined as unwelcome behavior that occurs over a period of time and is often directed at someone who is powerless to respond. A single act usually isn't abusive, unless it is especially severe or egregious. Any person can suffer abusive conduct regardless of whether or not they belong to a protected class. On the other hand, abusive conduct based on a protected characteristic - such as gender, age, or race - often constitutes harassment or discrimination in legal terms.

We asked respondents about:

1. Progress in promoting respect
2. Abuse in the workplace.



*"There are many power-hungry individuals who have very little concern about people. There are many bullies who continue to create unsafe and difficult work places. And if you don't put up with it - they will hire someone who will. Simple fact. It's the way the film industry has always operated."*

*- Anonymous survey respondent*

## PROGRESS: PROMOTING RESPECT

We asked respondents what degree of progress has been made in the entertainment industry since the start of the #MeToo movement in promoting respect. The majority of respondents - 65% - saw moderate to a lot of progress. But females saw less progress (59%), compared with a strong majority of 74% of males. Those working in talent representation saw the least amount of progress (53%), while those working in theater saw the most (72%).

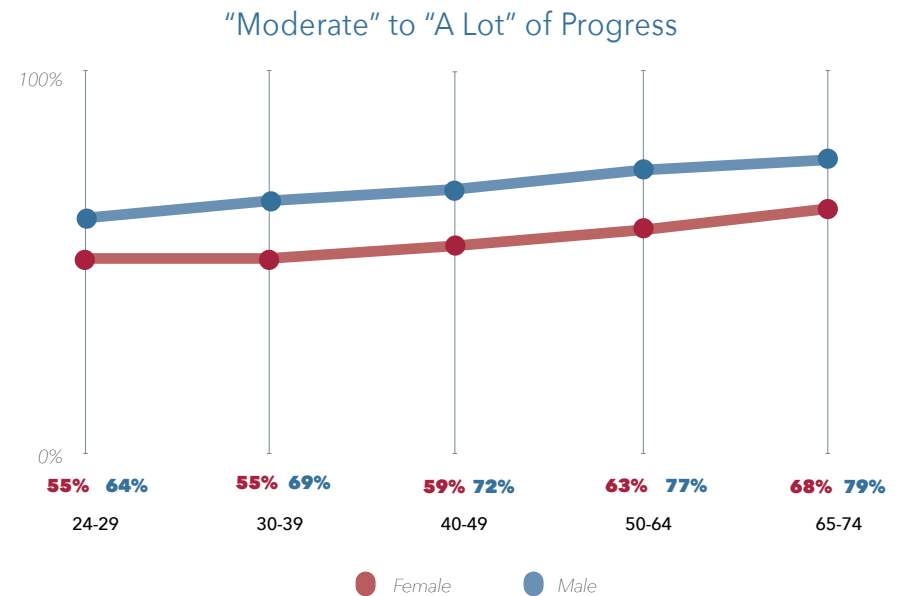
Union and guild members saw more progress than non-union members. Male union or guild members had a strongly positive view of the progress made in promoting respect (75%), compared with 62% of female union or guild members. Among non-union members, 66% of males saw moderate or a lot of progress, compared to just over half of non-union females (51%).

*"I'm tired of working for assholes, and assholes covering for other assholes, and assholes enabling assholes. I just wanted to work in this industry to tell stories and collaborate with other creative people."*

- Anonymous Survey Respondent

## Promoting Respect By Age and Gender

The view of progress made in promoting respect also 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 (55%), while nearly 80% of males 65 and older believed moderate to a lot of progress has been made in promoting respect (79%).



## Power and Progress

Those employees who have the least power saw the least amount of progress. 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 minimal progress.

## ABUSIVE CONDUCT

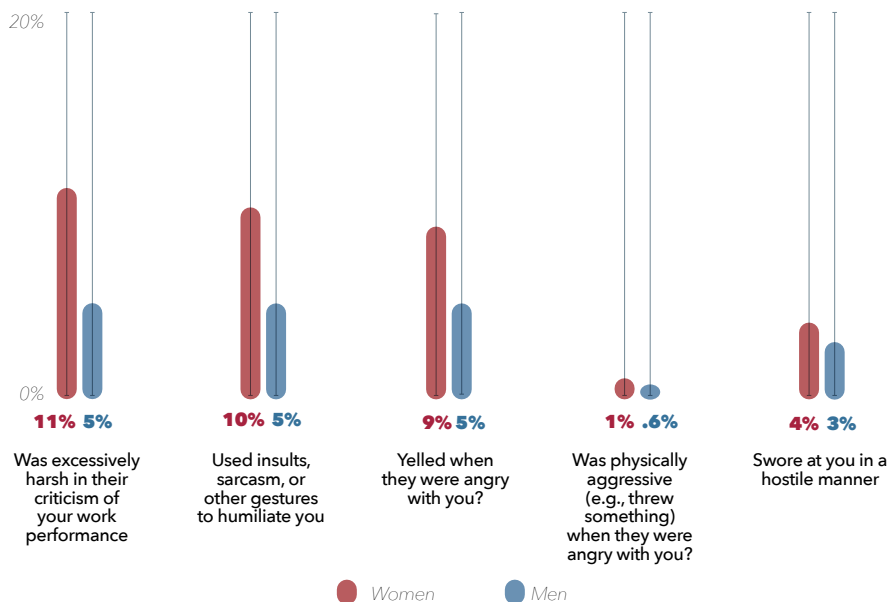
We asked survey respondents, "During the past 12 months how often have you been in a situation where someone from work or related to work [never to very often]:"

1. Was excessively harsh in their criticism of your work performance?
2. Used insults, sarcasm, or other gestures to humiliate you?
3. Yelled when they were angry with you?
4. Was physically aggressive (e.g., threw something) when they were angry with you?
5. Swore at you in a hostile manner?"

### Gender identity

Females were twice as likely as males to report experiencing abusive workplace conduct often or very often.

Often or Very Often By Gender Identity



*"Bullying tactics are often used by men on set and once you try to stand up for yourself or tell them their behavior is unprofessional, they completely lose it."*

- Anonymous Survey Respondent

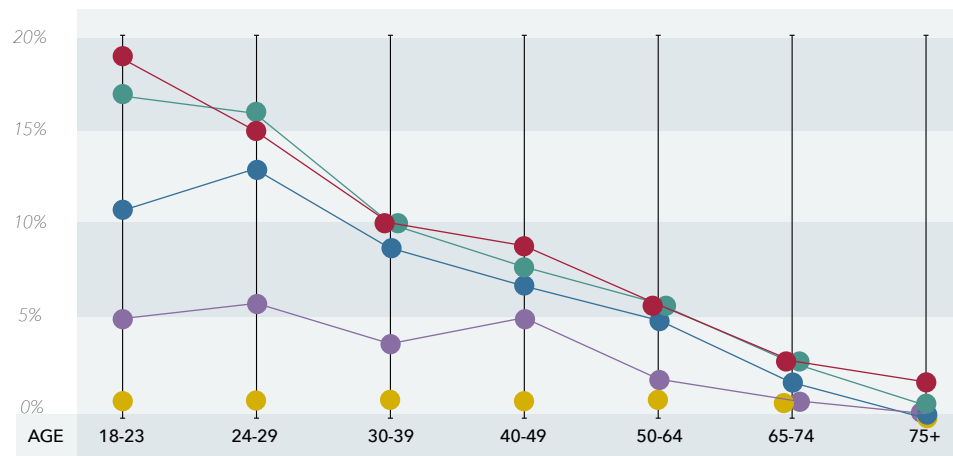
### Sexual orientation

There was little difference reported based on sexual orientation.

### Age

Younger workers were also far more likely to report every form of bullying often or very often, with the reported rates decreasing steadily with age.

Often + Very Often By Age



## Individuals with a Disability

Individuals with a disability were roughly twice as likely as individuals without a disability to report all forms abusive workplace.

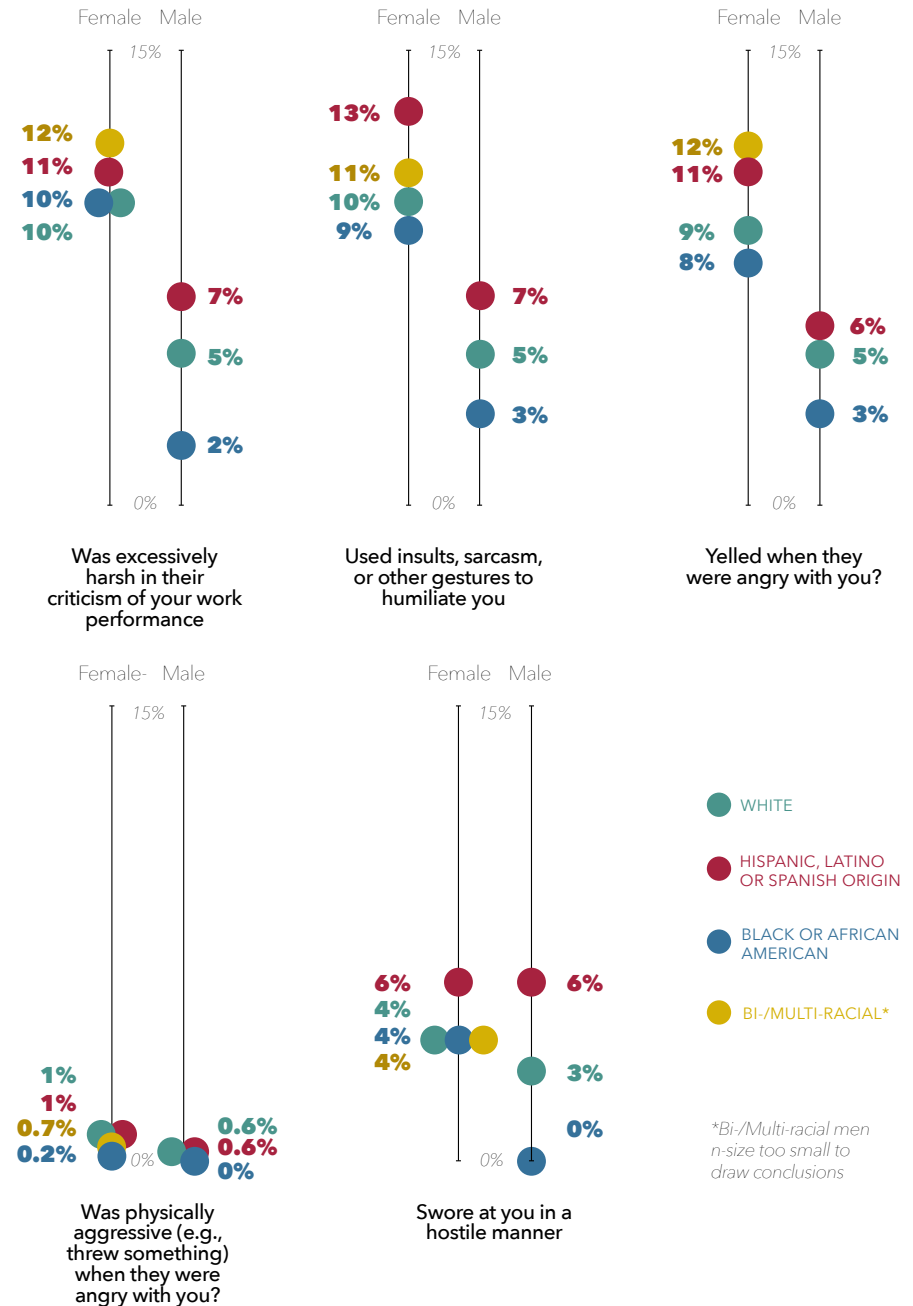
*"I was told that 'it's not illegal to be an asshole.' Thereby giving people in charge get out of jail free cards to yell as much as they want, curse as much as they want, and call you names as much as they want."*

- Anonymous Survey Respondent

## Race/ethnicity and gender

There was little reported difference across race/ethnicity and gender.

### Often + Very Often

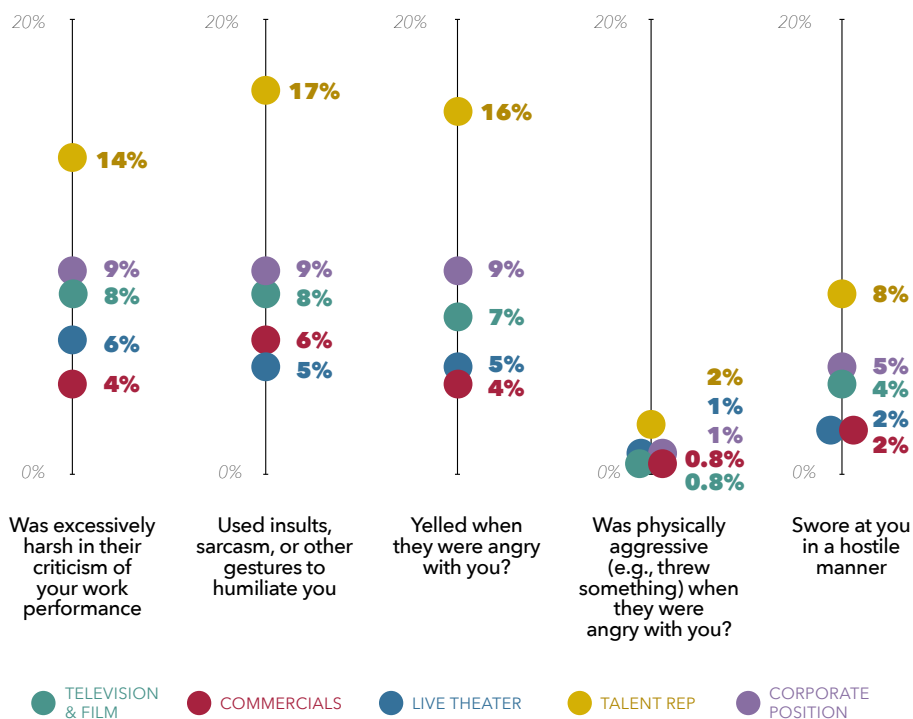




## Primary areas of work

In our sample, talent representation and corporate had higher proportions of females and younger workers respond. This data corresponds closely with reports of higher rates of bullying by the age and gender identity of the worker and may not reflect a substantial difference in workplace culture.

### Often + Very Often



## Union

Non-union members were twice as likely to report all bullying behaviors.

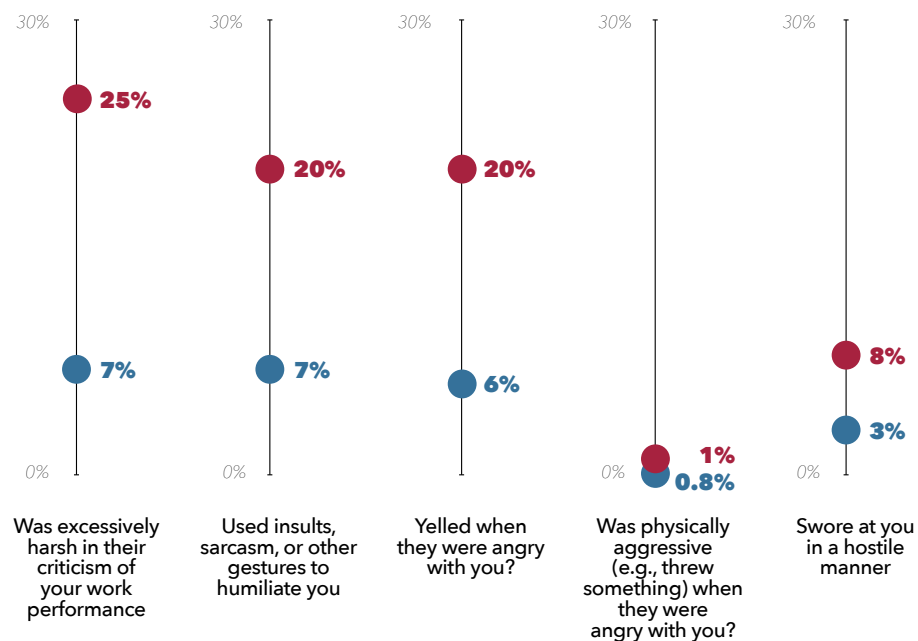
*"I know so many assistants who are in therapy and have diagnosed PTSD and anxiety disorders because of the abuse they endure on a daily basis. The power dynamics are horrible, and it is accepted 'Hollywood' behavior to manipulate and abuse assistants."*

- Anonymous Survey Respondent

## Assistants

That bullying frequently involves an abuse of power was quite evident in the treatment of assistants (production, executive, writer's room, personal and composer's assistants). In our sample, the strong majority of assistants identified as female (73%) and of those females, 99% were under the age of 40. Among this population, the reported rates of abuse were staggeringly high: roughly two to three times higher than the overall sample.

### Often + Very Often



● ASSISTANTS ● ALL OTHERS

## Perpetrators

While aggressors can be at any level of an organization, they are most often in a supervisory position.

Among those who reported bullying as the most serious or worst experience, workers reported the aggressors were someone who could influence their ability to get a job (55%), ability to keep a job (68%), or reputation in the industry (64%).

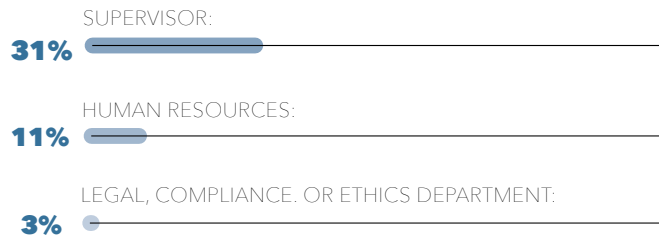
Notably, these percentages jumped for assistants: 77% could influence their ability to get a job, 81% could influence the ability to keep a job, and 78% could influence reputation in the industry.

## Reporting

As we noted in our Report #1: Accountability, when people see that a grievance system isn't warding off bad behavior, they may become less likely to speak up.

Among those who said bullying conduct was the worst experience:

### REPORTING TO COMPANY



*"Workplace bullying is extremely common in the entertainment industry. Females are the most vicious, but I have been bullied most often by males, including inferiors, peers and superiors."*

- Anonymous Survey Respondent

## RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### New Resources

When asked which of the following resources would be somewhat or very useful, workers who reported bullying as their worst or most serious experience identified the following: (1) Resources to help individuals understand reporting options (94%), (2) Technology for victims to create a time-stamped record of what happened (93%), (3) Helpline/hotline for crisis intervention (93%), (4) Standardized definitions for prohibited behaviors (91%) and (5) Education and training on bystander intervention (91%).

### Responses and 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.

## HOLLYWOOD COMMISSION RESOURCES

### 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.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

### Insist on accountability for bullying

Because abusive conduct is not illegal, many companies and productions do not prohibit it in their codes of conduct or policies - making it more difficult to hold bullies accountable for their conduct - even though California now requires certain employers to deliver training on the prevention of abusive conduct. **In addition to complying with the law, the Hollywood Commission recommends that industry companies:**

- **Strengthen statements on bullying in codes of conduct**  
Define bullying in clear terms that do not require the employer to demonstrate the intent of the abuser - but are 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 Hollywood Commission Bystander training or establish their own.**

## METHODOLOGY

The national climate survey was conducted online via an anonymous link over a three-month period (Nov. 20, 2019 – Feb. 24, 2020) and included 9,630 survey respondents (5,399 women, 4,026 men, 52 non-binary/third gender, and 41 who preferred to self-describe) over the age of 18 within the entertainment industry.

The 110-question survey was conducted by the Hollywood Commission under the auspices of the [Ethics & Compliance Initiative \(ECI\)](#), an independent nonprofit organization. ECI, in collaboration with the Hollywood Commission, developed the survey instrument. Data for the survey were collected by ECI using Qualtrics, a third-party entity survey software platform. Only ECI had access to the anonymous individual quantitative survey responses. Qualitative data was also reviewed by ECI researchers to ensure no identifying information was provided to the Hollywood Commission.

To reach as many workers in the entertainment industry as possible, the survey was publicized primarily through media outlets and social media campaigns on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, partner organizations, and direct outreach to independent production companies, visual effects companies, and entertainment industry associations and nonprofits.

## The Sample

The demographic profile of our sample was:

- **Gender identity:** Male (42%); Female (57%); Non-binary/third gender (0.5%); Prefer to self-describe (0.4%)
- **Race, ethnicity, and origin:** White (82%); Black (7%); American Indian or Alaska Native (1%); South/East Asian/Pacific Islander (5%); Bi- or Multi-Racial (2%); MENA (2%); Unknown (1%)
- **Latin, Hispanic, or Spanish origin:** (9%)
- **LGBTQIA+ identified:** Yes (16%); No (84%)
- **Transgender identified:** Yes (1%); No (99%)
- **Individuals with disability:** Yes (4%); No (96%)
- **Age:** 18-23 (1%); 24-29 (10%); 30-39 (23%); 40-49 (24%); 50-64 (31%); 64-74 (9%); 75 or older (2%)
- **Primary area of work:** Television & film (78%); Corporate (6%); Commercials (4%); Live theater (4%); Talent representation (manager, agent, lawyer) (3%); Broadcast/news (1%); Public relations (1%); Music (1%); Other (3%)

Results may not add up to 100% due to the rounding within individual demographic groups.

Some groups - like transgender or gender non-conforming, Native Americans and Asian Americans - were too small in number to allow for conclusions specific to these populations. The following included cohorts with less than 150 respondents:

#### **Race/ethnicity**

- Native Hawaiian
- Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian Indian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Filipino
- Vietnamese
- Chinese
- Other Asian

#### **Gender identity**

- Non-binary/third gender
- Prefer to self-describe
- Identify as transgender

#### **Broadcast news**

#### **Music, including music videos**

#### **Public relations**

Thus, while these groups were counted in the overall findings, we do not reach conclusions specific to these populations.

**Age:** Due to the added challenge of gaining parental consent for topics related to sexual harassment and assault, the sample is limited to those 18 and older.

## **References**

- 1 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018. *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- 2 "Hollywood Diversity Report 2018: Five Years of Progress and Missed Opportunities," UCLA College (2018).
- 3 WGAW Inclusion Report Card 2017-19 TV Staffing Season; "Inclusion in the Director's Chair: Gender, Race & Age of Directors Across 1,200 Top Films from 2007 to 2019," Dr. Stacy L. Smith, Marc Choueiti, Angel Choi & Dr. Katherine Pieper (Annenberg Foundation and USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (Jan. 2019)); "Inclusion in the Director's Chair: Analysis of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity Across 1,300 Top Films from 2007 to 2019," Dr. Stacy L. Smith, Marc Choueiti, Kevin Yao, Hannah Clark & Dr. Katherine Pieper (Annenberg Foundation & USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (January 2020)); The Visibility Report, Asian American Performers Action Coalition (2017-18); Actors' Equity Fund Study (2017); WGAW 2020 Inclusion Report.
- 4 "Diversity Matters," Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, & Sara Prince (McKinsey & Company (Feb. 2, 2015))
- 5 Hidden bias differs from discrimination in that in the majority of cases, discrimination must involve the conscious action of excluding or restricting members of one group from opportunities based on demographic characteristics of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, among others. In legal discrimination cases, with limited exception, intent to engage in a discriminatory act must be proven. "The Tilted Playing Field: Hidden Bias in Information Technology Workplaces," Level Playing Field Institute (Sept. 2011)



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