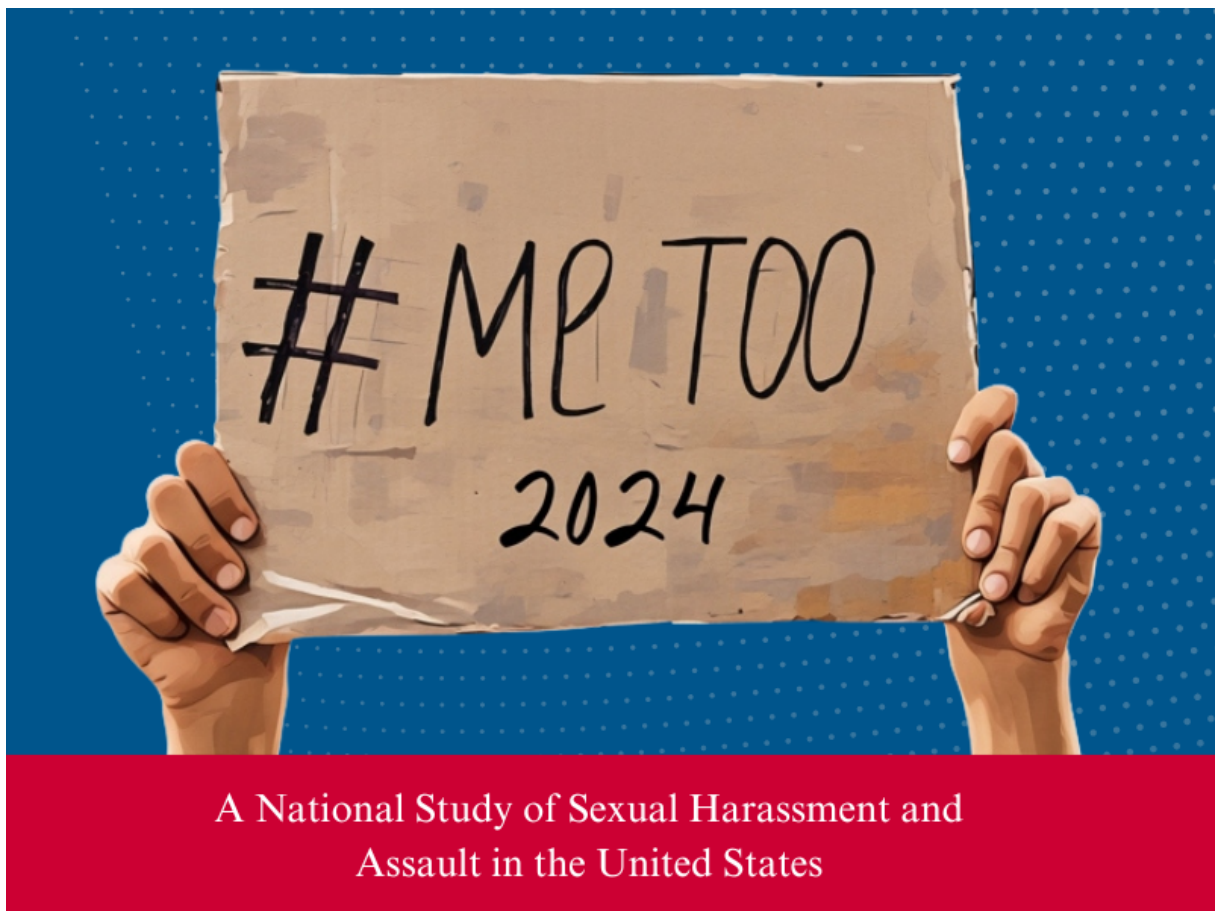


#MeToo 2024 Report Reveals Rates of Sexual Harassment and Assault Still High After #MeToo Movement

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In a follow-up study to the #MeToo 2018 report, Newcomb Institute found prevalent high rates of sexual harassment and assault, despite heightened awareness and prevention efforts from the #MeToo movement. The Me Too movement was founded by Tarana Burke in 2006 to support survivors of sexual violence, particularly young

women of color from low-wealth communities, and to help them find pathways to healing. In October 2017, the movement went global when the #MeToo hashtag went viral, and survivors across the world came forward about their own experiences with sexual assault. Furthermore, many of these incidents are happening in public spaces across the United States. The results of the #MeToo 2024 report — based on a national survey — underscore the persistent challenge of combating sexual misconduct beyond the workplace. “I’m sorry to say that we see no change in prevalence since what we saw six years ago in 2018. We still see that four in five women have experienced sexual assault or harassment in their lifetime and that 37% have experienced this in the workplace,” said Dr. Anita Raj, lead researcher and executive director of Newcomb Institute.

For the survey, sexual harassment included unwelcomed behavior ranging from “cat-calling” to stalking and unwanted touching in a sexual way. It also assessed sexual assault, which the researchers defined as a forced or coerced sex act.

The #MeToo 2024 report surveyed more than 3,300 U.S. adults over the age of 18 this year and found that most women (82%) and nearly half of all men (42%) have experienced sexual harassment or assault in their lifetime. Roughly 1 in 4 U.S. adults (26%), or more than 68 million people, experienced sexual harassment or assault in the past year alone, with significantly higher rates for women (32%) compared to men (15%).

These abuses often occur as sexual harassment in public spaces, with 73% of women and 24% of men reporting harassment in locations like streets, parks, beaches, gyms, stores, buses or subways. The perpetrators of verbal, cyber, and physically aggressive sexual harassment are usually strangers. Meanwhile, sexual assault usually occurs in private spaces (like residences and cars) and is most frequently perpetrated by partners, family members, and acquaintances.

“In recent times we tend to hear more about sexual harassment in the workplace, but the vast majority of people still have had experience of sexual harassment in public spaces. I know I have and we tend to ignore it or push past it sometimes, depending on whatever situation we were in at the time,” Dr. Raj said.

For many, these incidents begin at a young age, with more than half of women (56%) and 18% of men first experiencing sexual harassment or assault before age 18.

“The important thing to know about this is not just how pervasive it is, but how early in life it starts. About one in five women say that their first experience with sexual harassment, most commonly on the streets, is happening before they’re even 13 and usually goes unreported,” Dr. Raj said.

The #MeToo report also revealed high lifetime prevalence rates of sexual harassment and assault among nonbinary, gender nonconforming and transgender individuals. The survey results indicated that 79% of nonbinary and gender nonconforming people and 87% of transgender people have experienced sexual harassment or assault in their lifetime.

The report results emphasized that there is a higher risk for mental health and substance use concerns among those who have experienced these types of sexual abuses.

“Because of the social and health impacts on victims, there is a clear need for urgent action to combat sexual harassment and assault and to create a safer environment for all — at work, at school, at home and in public spaces,” said Dr. Raj. “We don’t have to keep accepting this because this does affect our education, our employment and our mental health.”

Dr. Raj believes greater awareness and legal protections are necessary to lessen the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault and increase support for victims.

“Since the start of the #MeToo movement, we have seen important bipartisan legislation from the federal and state governments in the United States to ensure that we have better awareness and accountability for sexual harassment in the workplace. But what we haven’t done is expand those efforts to ensure that we have those protections in our public spaces and in our schools. And that’s something we can change. But the first step is to realize we have a problem,” Dr. Raj said.