



Sexual Harassment and Assault in Texas:  
Findings from the #MeToo 2024 Survey



## Sexual Harassment and Assault in Texas: Findings from the #MeToo 2024 Survey

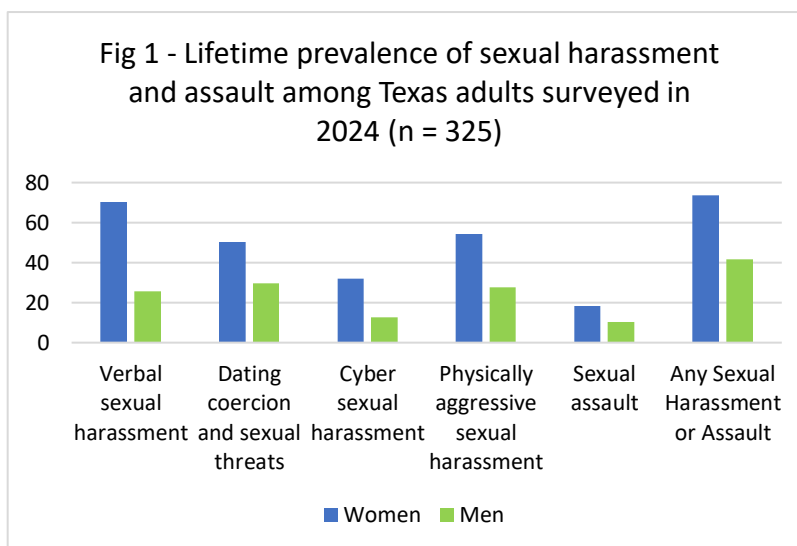
**Objective:** To assess the scope and scale of sexual harassment and assault among adults in Texas.

We conducted the #MeToo 2024 survey on sexual harassment and assault using NORC at the University of Chicago's online panels of U.S. adults with an oversample of participants from California, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas to allow for state level reports on #MeToo 2024. The cross-sectional survey was conducted from April to May 2024 and provides nationally representative estimates, as well as state represented estimates for our four states of focus, using weights created by NORC. Please see [our #MeToo Survey website](#) for national report findings and methods details. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation; this study was approved by the institutional review boards of NORC at the University of Chicago and Tulane University. The study is unique in capturing a broad range of sexual harassment and assault behaviors in public and private spaces (see Appendix Table 1) for Texas adults aged 18+ (N = 325).

### How prevalent is sexual harassment and assault in Texas

Almost three in four women (74%) and 42% of men in Texas – or over 5.6 million women and over 3 million men<sup>1</sup> – have experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault in their lifetime.

As shown in Figure 1, while this most often occurs as a form of sexual harassment, some of these forms of sexual harassment are quite severe and include verbal sexual harassment and physical aggression. Women are more likely than men to experience all forms of sexual harassment as well as assault. Almost one in five women (18%) has experienced sexual assault – defined as forced sex in this study – in her lifetime.



We also examined sexual harassment and assault experiences in the past year and found that 39% of women and 14% of men in Texas – or approximately 2.9 million women and 10 million men<sup>1</sup> – reported these types of experiences in just the past year.

### Sexual harassment and assault in public spaces

Almost two in three women (62%) and one in four men (24%) have experienced sexual harassment in public spaces (See Table 1). One in five women (19%) have been sexually harassed on public transport, and two in five (42%) have been sexually harassed in a bar or nightclub, compared with 7% and 11% of men who reported experiences in these types of spaces, respectively. Verbal harassment is the most common form of harassment in public spaces, reported by 60% of women and 18% of men. Almost two in five women (38%) reported physically aggressive

<sup>1</sup> [State population estimates by age and gender](#) indicate that there are -- women aged 18+ and -- men aged 18+ in the state of Texas. We used these estimates to determine the number of women and men affected by sexual harassment and assault, ever and in the past year.

sexual harassment in public spaces, with one in eight (12%) reporting having experienced this in a bar or nightclub. Almost one in thirty women (3%) and <1% men reported sexual assault in public spaces. Few women and men (<1%) reported sexual assault in any of these types of spaces.

**Table 1. Sexual harassment in public spaces ever among Texas adults.**

	Verbal Sexual Harassment		Dating Coercion and Sexual Threats		Physically Aggressive Sexual Harassment		Sexual Assault		Any form of Sexual Harassment or Assault	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
A public space (like a street, park, beach, store, restaurant, mall, library, movie theater, museum, swimming pool, gym)	60%	18%	21%	6%	38%	15%	3%	<1%	62%	24%
Mass transportation systems (bus, subway, metro, train, or airplane)	19%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	<1%	<1%	19%	7%
Nightlife or entertainment venue (like a concert, bar, or club)	38%	8%	13%	4%	12%	6%	<1%	<1%	40%	11%

**Sexual harassment and assault at work and at school**

More than one in three women (36%) and one in ten men (11%) have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace (see Table 2). Further, almost three in ten women (28%) and one in seven men (14%) have experienced sexual harassment in school or college. Notably, verbal harassment is the most common form of harassment in these spaces. Almost one in six women (17%) reported dating coercion and physically aggressive sexual harassment in the workplace, while the same percentage (17%) reported dating coercion in school or college. We found that approximately 1% of participants reported sexual assault in these spaces.

**Table 2. Lifetime prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace or at school/college among Texas adults.**

	Verbal Sexual Harassment		Dating Coercion and Sexual Threats		Physically Aggressive Sexual Harassment		Sexual Assault		Any form of Sexual Harassment or Assault	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
At your workplace, including temporary jobs and internships	25%	9%	17%	9%	16%	3%	<1%	1%	36%	11%
At school or college	24%	12%	17%	8%	10%	3%	<1%	1%	28%	14%

### Sexual harassment and assault in private spaces

Among women, three in ten reported sexual harassment or assault experiences in their home (30%), one in four in the home of someone they knew (26%), and 23% experienced these types of abuse in a car, either their own or that of someone known to them (See Table 3). Importantly, residences were the spaces that also saw the highest rates of sexual assault for women. Almost one in ten (9%) and almost one in fifteen (7%) had been sexually assaulted in their home or in the home of someone they knew respectively, and approximately 1% been sexually assaulted in their car or the car of someone they knew.

Among men, 9% had experienced sexual harassment or assault in their home, 13% in the home of someone they knew, and 3% reported these types of experiences in a car. Sexual assault was less likely to be reported by men compared with women in these spaces, but when it did occur, it was more often in someone’s residence.

**Table 3. Sexual harassment in private spaces ever among Texas adults.**

	Verbal Sexual Harassment		Dating Coercion and Sexual Threats		Physically Aggressive Sexual Harassment		Sexual Assault		Any form of Sexual Harassment or Assault	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Your home or place of residence	20%	5%	23%	12%	12%	2%	9%	5%	30%	9%
Someone else’s home or place of residence	14%	8%	12%	5%	13%	5%	7%	6%	26%	13%
Your car or the car of a person you knew	21%	2%	5%	1%	3%	2%	1%	<1%	23%	3%

### Who is causing sexual harm in Texas?

We asked participants who reported each of the different types of sexual harassment and assault who did this to them. (See Table 4). The major groups that engaged in these abusive behaviors included the following:

Strangers. The most commonly reported perpetrator of sexual harassment were strangers, with three in five of all women (60%) and almost one in four of all men (26%) reporting this. Most sexual harassment, particularly verbal sexual harassment, occurs from a stranger. More than half of the women reported verbal sexual harassment from a stranger (52%), compared with 17% of men. Two in five women (42%) reported physically aggressive sexual harassment from a stranger. Almost one in twenty-five women and men (4%) reported sexual assault from a stranger in Texas.

Friends, Acquaintances, and Peers. Among women, 28% reported sexual harassment or assault from a friend – which we define as an unrelated person they know well, and sexual harassment or assault from an acquaintance was even higher at 45%. Among men, 12% reported sexual harassment or assault from a friend and acquaintance respectively. For men and women, we see that verbal sexual harassment, dating coercion, and physically aggressive harassment are among the most common forms of sexual harassment reported from a friend or acquaintance. However, 2% and 4% of women reported sexual assault from a friend or acquaintance, where 2% and 5% of men, respectively, reported this.

We also assessed sexual harassment or assault from teachers, professors, or other authorities at school, and this was reported by the minority of women and men (4% and 2%, respectively), mostly in the form of cyber sexual harassment. Low prevalence of these types of abuses from a teacher or administrator, taken with consideration of above noted data on the prevalence of sexual harassment at school, suggests that peer sexual harassment in schools may be more likely than that of teachers or administrators.

Bosses and Co-Workers. One in eight women (13%) and 4% of men have been sexually harassed or assaulted by a boss, employer, supervisor, or manager. While this was mostly in the form of sexual harassment, it is notable that sexual harassment from co-workers was even more common, reported by 23% of women and 10% of men; sexual assault from boss, employer, supervisor, or manager and co-workers was not commonly reported by women or men.

Family Members: Almost one in six women (16%) and one in twenty men (5%) have been sexually harassed by a family member or relative. While verbal sexual harassment was the most common, reported by one in eight women (12%) and 6% of men, 1% of women and men reported sexual assault from a family member.

Intimate Partners. One in six women (17%) and 6% of men reported a history of sexual harassment or assault from a current or former spouse or romantic or sexual partner. For women, this most commonly occurs in the forms of verbal sexual harassment (14%) and dating coercion and sexual threats (14%); 7% of women reported that they had been sexually assaulted by a partner in their lifetime.

**Table 4. Relationship to Perpetrator**

	Verbal Sexual Harassment		Dating Coercion and Sexual Threats		Cyber Sexual Harassment		Physically Aggressive Sexual Harassment		Sexual Assault		Any form of Sexual Harassment or Assault	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Stranger</b>	58%	17%	25%	13%	30%	11%	42%	17%	4%	4%	60%	26%
<b>Acquaintance</b>	35%	8%	24%	9%	13%	7%	19%	5%	4%	5%	45%	12%
<b>Friend</b>	21%	6%	14%	5%	8%	4%	10%	6%	2%	2%	28%	12%
<b>Teacher</b>	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	4%	2%
<b>Boss</b>	9%	3%	1%	1%	1%	0%	5%	2%	<1%	<1%	13%	4%
<b>Co-worker</b>	19%	6%	9%	5%	5%	1%	8%	4%	<1%	1%	23%	10%
<b>Family Member</b>	12%	2%	7%	1%	3%	1%	9%	1%	1%	1%	16%	5%
<b>Partner</b>	14%	3%	14%	8%	2%	3%	5%	2%	7%	2%	17%	6%

**Potential Behavioral and Mental Health Effects of Sexual Harassment**

We asked participants about their current mental health (depression and anxiety), recent substance use (past 30-day binge alcohol use and illicit drug use), and suicidality (thoughts of suicide) in the past year. We then analyzed the prevalence of these by whether or not they experienced sexual harassment or assault in the past year. Past year experiences were largely in the form of sexual harassment. Findings show that past year sexual harassment was significantly associated with behavioral and mental health concerns (See. Fig 2 and Fig 3).

Fig-2: Mental Health and Substance Use for those Who Did and Did Not Experience Past Year Sexual Harassment or Assault, U.S. Adult **Women** in Texas (wt%) (n=162)

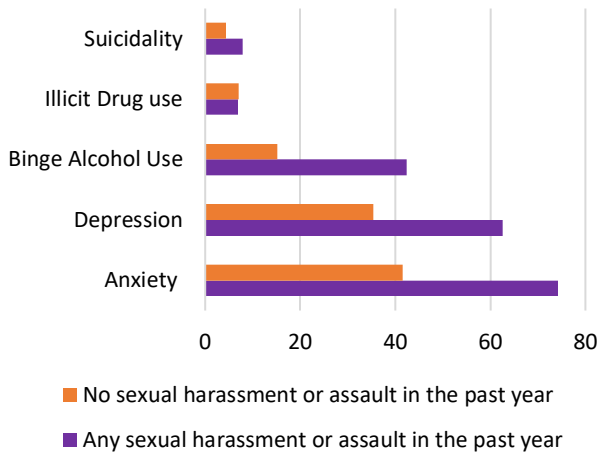
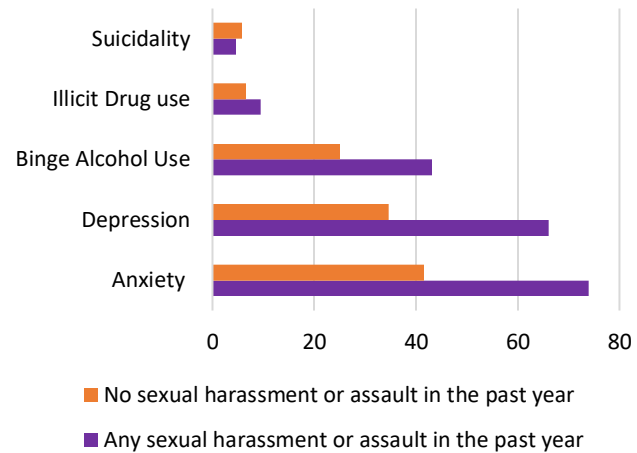


Fig-3: Mental Health and Substance Use for those Who Did and Did Not Experience Past Year Sexual Harassment or Assault, U.S. Adult **Men** in Texas (wt%) (n=153)



## Conclusions

**Sexual violence is pervasive for women and men, especially in the form of sexual harassment.** Almost three in four women (74%) and 42% of men in Texas – or approximately 5.6 million women and over 3 million men – have experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault in their lifetime. 39% of women and 14% of men in Texas – 2.9 million women and 10 million men – reported these types of experiences in just the past year.

**Sexual harassment most often occurs in public spaces, most often from strangers** and secondarily from acquaintances. While verbal sexual harassment is most common, sexual threats and physically aggressive sexual harassment are not uncommon, and these too often occur in public spaces.

**Sexual harassment also occurs in our workplaces and schools.** While this appears to be more at the hands of peers than those in an authority position, regardless of who is engaging in these abuses, they are likely compromising academic and employee productivity.

**Sexual assault largely occurs in private places and is perpetrated by someone known to the person who has experienced the assault.** Women are more likely than men to have experienced a sexual assault. Among women who have experienced sexual assault, an acquaintance or partner was the most common abuser, and the assault most often occurred in their own residence. Men who reported sexual assault are most likely to say it occurred at the hands of friends and stranger, at school/college or someone else’s residence.

**Sexual harassment is associated with higher risk for depression and anxiety, substance misuse, and suicidality.** Too often, sexual harassment is viewed as benign or even funny, but it is harming people’s health and lives.

**We can change this situation.** We have to encourage people to recognize what behaviors constitute sexual harassment and that these kinds of abuses are harmful, making it difficult for people to feel safe in public spaces, at work, and at school. We also need accountability structures for those committing these harms.

*If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment or assault and would like help, you can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656. HOPE (4673) or chat online at [online.rainn.org](https://online.rainn.org).*



**Appendix Table 1. Sexual Harassment and Assault Items and Variables**

<p><b>VERBAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone whistling, honking, making kissy noises, “Pssst” sounds, or leering/staring aggressively at you.</li> <li>Someone saying things like, “Hey Baby,” “Mmmm Sexy,” “Yo Shorty,” “Mami/Mamacita,” “Give me a smile,” or similar comments in a way that is disrespectful and/or unwanted and/or made you feel unsafe.</li> <li>Someone calling you a sexist slur, like “Bitch,” “Slut,” “Cunt,” or “Whore”.</li> <li>Someone purposefully misgendering you or calling you a homophobic or transphobic slur, like “Fag,” “Dyke,” or “Tranny.”</li> <li>Someone talking about your body parts inappropriately or offensively (such as your legs, crotch, butt, or breasts), saying sexually explicit comments (“I want to do BLANK to you”) or asking inappropriate sexual questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>CYBER SEXUAL HARASSMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone sending you sexual content without your permission, sexualizing you inappropriately, or threatening you with sex acts, in <i>private online spaces</i>, such as over e-mail or text.</li> <li>Someone sending you sexual content without your permission, sexualizing you inappropriately, or threatening you with sex acts, in <i>public online spaces</i>, such as on social media.</li> <li>Someone taking and/or sharing sexual pictures or videos of you without your permission.</li> </ul>	<p><b>DATING COERCION OR SEXUAL THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone making threats to harm you, to harm someone you know, or to share personal information you don’t want shared (examples could include your sexual orientation or drug use history or immigration status).</li> <li>Someone saying you must date them or do a sexual act for them in exchange for something (such as a good grade, a promotion, a job, drugs, food, or something similar) or instead of something (like paying rent or a citation, etc).</li> <li>Someone repeatedly texting or calling you in a harassing way.</li> <li>Someone repeatedly asking you for a date or your phone number when you’ve said no or ignored them.</li> </ul> <p><b>PHYSICALLY AGGRESSIVE SEXUAL HARASSMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone flashing or exposing their genitals to you without your permission.</li> <li>Someone physically following you without your permission.</li> <li>Someone purposely touching you or brushing up against you in an unwelcome, sexual way.</li> </ul> <p><b>SEXUAL ASSAULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone forcing you to do a sexual act without your permission or one that you didn’t want to do (including while you were under the influence of alcohol or drugs).</li> </ul>
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