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Toolkit

Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Third-Level Education

Funded by the European Union
There’s really no such thing as the “voiceless”. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.

Arundhati Roy
Section Three

Supporting staff to change the culture: training
Focus group findings

A lack of training to support HEI staff was identified as a gap in each institute. Only one of twelve participating HEIs had dedicated staff training in relation to SVH. Trained staff at this HEI were able to give detailed information on measures to support students, including safety measures, arrangements of academic extensions, mitigating circumstances procedures, and provisions to ensure confidential information is only shared as far as necessary.

Unfortunately, for the vast majority of staff, SVH disclosures were a source of anxiety and they felt a lack of confidence in how to appropriately handle them.

Training modules

The ESHTE Toolkit contains six training modules. These were developed in response to the training gaps identified in staff and student focus groups and with a view to developing a ‘whole campus’ culture change.

The six training modules cover:

- **Modules 1-3 | SVH and Disclosure**
- **Module 4 | Institutional Policies and Procedures**
- **Module 5 | Campus Campaigns**
- **Module 6 | Transformational Leadership**

Pilot Training

Eight pilot training sessions took place with HEI staff and students in Ireland, Scotland, Lithuania and Cyprus. Modules 1, 2 and 3 were delivered in these sessions, as they were the most relevant to the needs of the participating institutes. It is recommended that one of these modules is completed before undertaking the subsequent modules. All training modules are intended to be adapted to local contexts and the particular training needs of each HEI.

Modules 1, 2 and 3 | Sexual Harassment and Violence and Disclosure

Staff and students identified the following priorities for SVH training:

- Respecting confidentiality
- Knowing internal processes and what services are available
- Sensitivity and non-judgemental communications skills
- Specialist guidance and training for working with someone who has or may have perpetrated sexual violence and/or harassment.

Modules 1, 2 and 3 are a graduated training module programme.
Transformative culture change requires all HEI staff to have an awareness of SVH, its manifestations, impacts, and seriousness. However, not all staff require the same in-depth knowledge in relation to how to take disclosures or how to be a designated support person.

It is recommended that these modules be delivered by an appropriate HEI staff member in conjunction with a specialised sexual violence service, a local rape crisis centre, or GBV group for example.

Module 1 is a two-hour training module suitable for all HEI staff. This can be developed into an online training; however, face-to-face training is always preferable.

Module 2 is a seven-hour training, suitable for HEI staff and students who are likely to receive a disclosure, but are not designated SVH support personnel (e.g. academic advisors, student welfare officers, lecturers, general health services providers).

Module 3 is a two-day training, suitable for designated SVH disclosure and support personnel. These persons are clearly identified and advertised within the institute as part of a disclosure and support process.

In Ireland, Module 2 was delivered twice, with the first session including those in staff and student support roles in four different institutes. This was beneficial in that a broader range of approaches were shared by counterparts in different institutes, giving assurance that this is not an issue for just any one institute. This session did not, however, enable the facilitator to explore the specific policies or procedures within the institute. The second session was delivered to staff from one institute, which enabled staff identify other champions of this issue and reflect on institutional culture and practices.

Module 4 is a five-hour module that should be completed by HEI staff in a HR, SVH investigative, or policy role. The module integrates a trauma-informed approach. Participants should also have completed Modules 1, 2 or 3 as appropriate.

Module 5 | Campaigning for Change
This module is a five-hour training intended for SUs, student societies, and HEI staff with communication and awareness-raising functions. The training explores SVH messaging, how to be mindful of issues such as victim-blaming, avoiding re-traumatisation of survivors, and working in collaboration with the student body to deliver effective, targeted cultural change.

Module 6 | Leadership and Transformative Change
Module 6 is a five-hour training that gives HEI and student leaders the opportunity to reflect on the issue of SVH and what practical measures can be implemented to create a cultural shift within the HEI. This can be delivered as a standalone module.
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