



## Harassment – MeToo vs YouToo?



My consulting and training projects interestingly come in waves and this appears to be harassment month. I've given several presentations on the topic and thought I'd share parts of my message and pose some of the same questions to you.

When I conduct respect / harassment training for companies, I focus on the policies, laws, employee rights, management's responsibilities, and understanding our workplace culture. This month's sessions have been public sessions speaking to managers and employees across varied companies and industries. The focus is to candidly analyze what's really going on in our companies.

In most circumstances where harassment is occurring, multiple people are aware of it – and some of those people are in managerial or supervisory roles. So to personalize this issue, we must ask ourselves:

- (1) Am I aware of harassing, bullying or discriminatory behaviors in my organization and, if yes,
- (2) Am I actively ignoring it, or
- (3) Am I actively ensuring that the behavior is stopped?

Unfortunately, too many people fall into the category where they know it's occurring and they choose to ignore it. That's how "metoo" becomes "youtoo." If you don't take appropriate swift action, our employees quickly learn that there's no use in coming forward because they won't be supported. This is compounded by employee fear of retaliation after reporting harassment. In one national study, over 74% of reporters stated that they were retaliated against for coming forward.

What's happening in your organization?

If our objective is to create a positive work culture, what is the impact of our silence? As leaders our perception of culture is already skewed – we typically think it's better than it is, because we're the leaders. We're not affected by our behavior but our employees are. They know whether it's safe to come forward, whether you're authentically receptive to their concerns, and whether you'll take appropriate action to create a safe work environment for all.

We're hearing more and more about the physical and mental effects of being subjected to harassment and bullying. These are serious and can elevate to diagnosable PTSD. If you've experienced harassment or bullying, you've likely experienced some of the emotional and psychological issues (mood change, anger, fear, depression) and/or some physical issues (headaches, sleep issues, weight changes, stomach issues).

In addition to these serious personal effects there is the corresponding impact on the workplace. Employee performance may decline intentionally or unintentionally, absenteeism increases, there's lost time avoiding the offender, decline in employee commitment and increasing turnover. And it's not just the recipients; it's also the observers – those who are watching how management handles these issues with their coworkers.

Why do employees stay in an organization that doesn't support these most basic organizational values? Many companies lose their good people and fail to achieve their financial objectives because they fail to hold harassers and bullies accountable.

So, as I posed to the participants in my presentations, what are you doing about it?

Seems like a perfect segway into my next training session on Values and Redefining the Culture.

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Our next 2-hour Supervising Smart training session is from 10:00 – 12:00 on Tuesday, June 26th on the topic of:

### Values and Redefining the Culture

- Discover the core components that create a workplace culture
- Identify your company and departmental values
- Learn how to hold employees accountable for a core set of values to achieve your organizational objectives

#### Location:

Hamline University Minneapolis Campus

1600 Utica Ave S., 7th Floor

St. Louis Park, Minnesota 55416

Fee: Each session is \$70 per person

Registration Link: [Click Here for More Information](#)

Here's the schedule for the remainder of the year:

**6/26/18:** Values and Redefining the Culture

**7/24/18:** Everyday Management Do's and Don'ts

**8/28/18:** Assertiveness: Finding the Balance

**9/25/18:** Effective Interviews: From Screening to Hire

**10/23/18:** Collaboration

**11/27/18:** Creativity / Creative Thinking

**12/18/18:** Professionalism and Ethics

Feel free to sign up for one or more sessions to save your spot. You can also mix and match attendees so that the right people receive the right training.

Call [952.996.0975](tel:952.996.0975) [email Arlene](mailto:Arlene) if you have any questions!

## About Arlene Vernon

Arlene has provided HR consulting and management training services to over 500 organizations since starting HRx, Inc. in 1992.

If you're seeking a hands-on, practical HRxpert to assist your organization with employee relations, policy development, strategic HR activities or fun/doable management training, call on Arlene – Your HRxpert.

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