



# FOCAL POINT



IP INCLUSIVE



# Allyship & Preventing Sexual Harassment


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# Your hosts -



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# Today we will...

With the Worker Protection Act set to become law in the UK this year, employers will have an increased legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment at work. What can Allies do to support this?

## Key areas we will cover:

- What does the legislation say?
- Myth busting – what is and isn't sexual harassment
- What may stop us speaking up?
- What is the role of allyship in ensuring people feel listened to and that action will be taken?
- What is the role of allies?
- What can we take away from today?

# Sexual harassment - The Equality Act definition

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

## **Equality Act 2010**

Conduct of a sexual nature is wide and can include

- sexual comments or jokes
- displaying or sharing sexually graphic pictures/posters
- suggestive looks/staring
- propositions and sexual advances
- sexual gestures
- intrusive questions about a person's private/sex life
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging etc

# Sexual harassment - Six key facts

- Banter can be sexual harassment
- Physical contact is only one form of sexual harassment
- A well-meaning motive is not a defence against a sexual harassment allegation
- Sexual harassment can take place out of “office hours” and away from a work site
- Sexual harassment can be committed by anyone towards anyone, it is not dependent on gender
- A person overhearing someone being offensive can claim to have been sexually harassed, even if the behaviour was directed towards someone else



# Worker Protection Act 2023

## The Act amends the Equality Act 2010

- The Equality Act 2010 protects workers against sexual harassment committed by colleagues
- The WPA 2023 places a new duty on employers to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment at work
- Where an employer is found to have breached this duty, Employment Tribunals have the power to uplift sexual harassment compensation by up to 25%

**“moves us from a culture of redress to one of prevention”**

***The Fawcett Society***



# Reasonable steps

We anticipate that they will be

- Have clear and accessible policies - reviewed regularly
- Provide regular training - not just a one-off
- Have effective mechanisms for addressing concerns
- Ensure people feel able to speak up on inappropriate behaviour
- Ensure people believe concerns will be taken seriously and acted on
- Proactively foster a culture of respect and inclusion
- Create a clear message that sexual harassment will not be tolerated – from the top



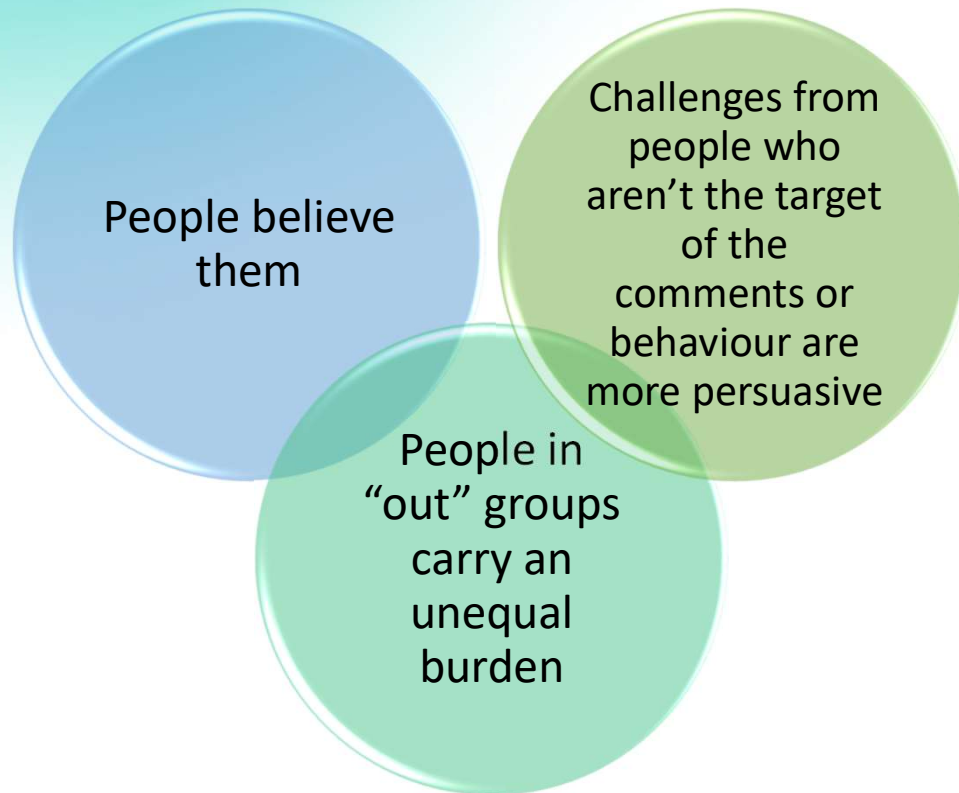


# Allies

- Any person who supports, empowers, or stands up for another person or a group of people
- An ally often uses their advantaged position to support those in less advantaged positions



# Why are allies so important?



A woman challenging a man on sexism is far more likely to

- be dismissed
- met with annoyance or amusement
- accused of overreacting

# What may stop us stepping in as an ally?



Don't want to be seen as the "killjoy"

Fear of upsetting people

Might make it worse

Not sure it is a big enough issue

Lack of time

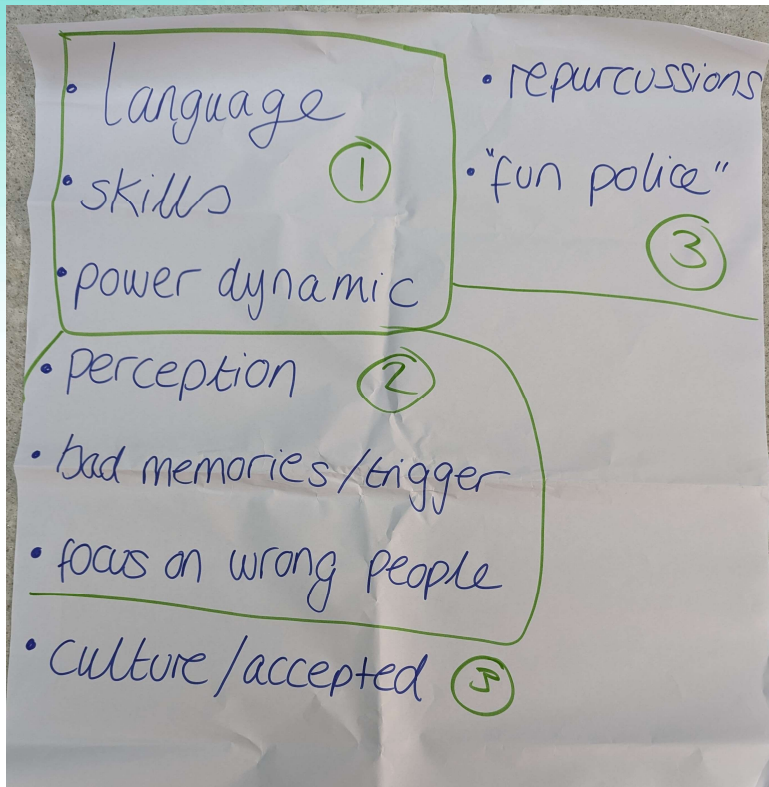
Everyone else seems ok with it

Recognise similar behaviour traits in themselves

Lack of confidence in own skills and knowledge

That's just the way they are...or who they are

# What may stop us stepping in as an ally?

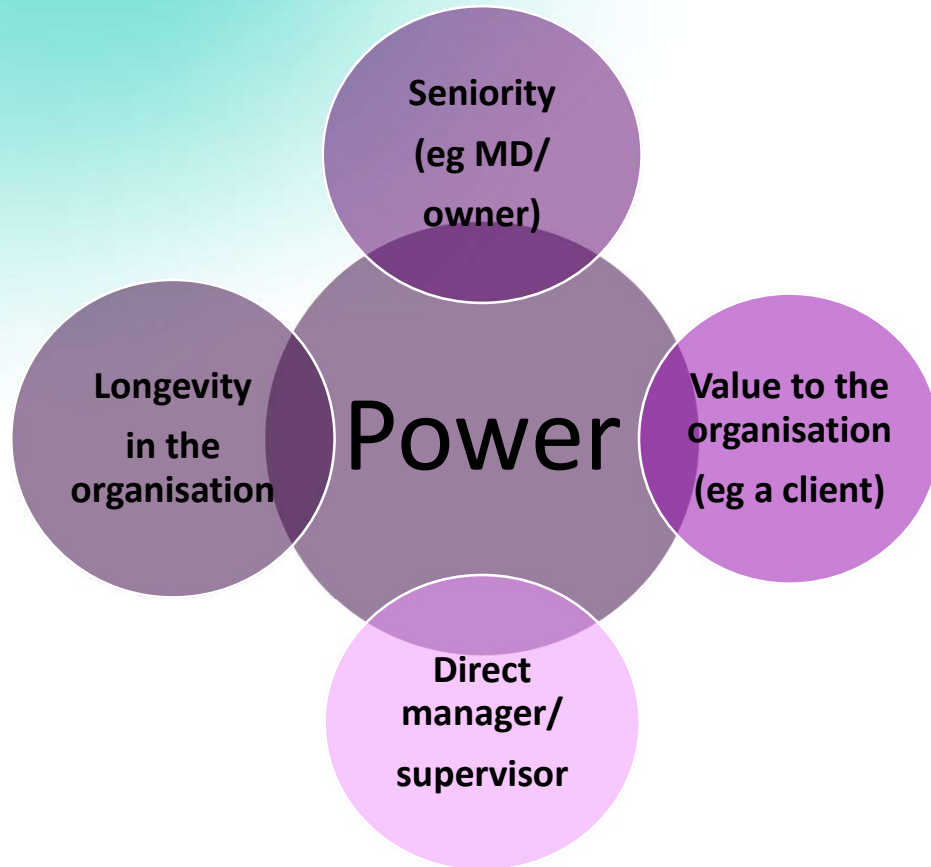


Having discussed the reasons that may stop people stepping in, we all agreed we have the skills to do so. We also can encourage others to overcome the barriers that they may be feeling.

We will remember the two responsibilities Focal Point talks about...

- Being willing to reflect on our own behaviour as an on-going action
- Being willing to raise a concern yourself or through someone else. Never holding back and doing nothing

# Power and sexual harassment



- In workplaces power comes from having authority, control and influence
- At an organisational level gender inequality can drive further power imbalance



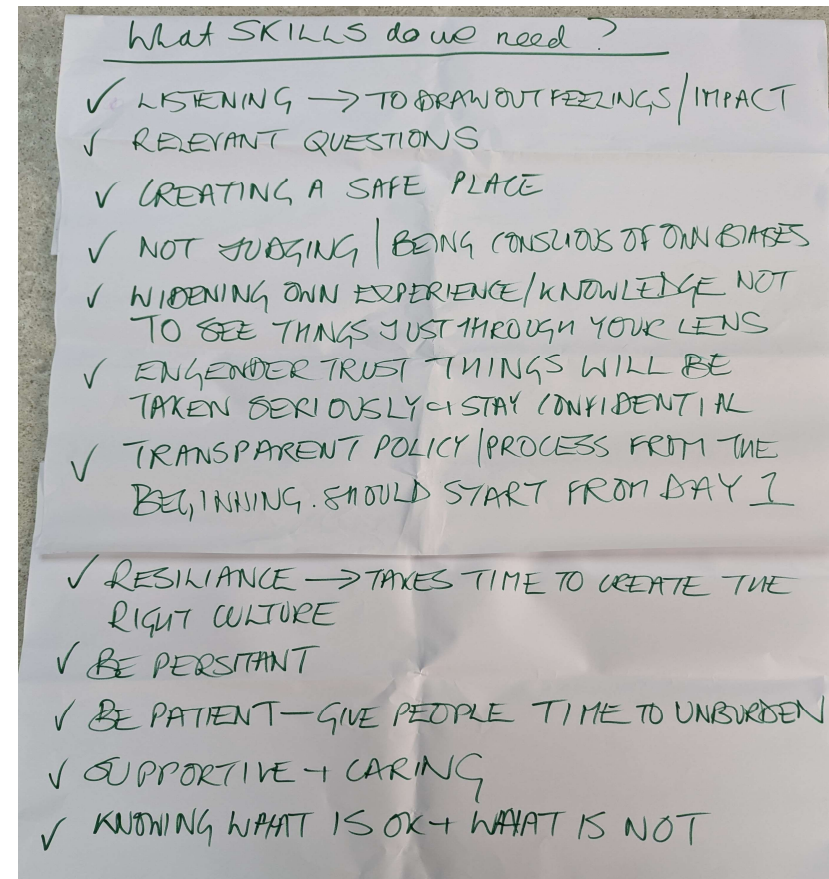
# How do we...

- Ensure people will feel listened to?
- Ensure people are confident action will be taken?
- Create the right culture for this?
- ...do this? What skills do we need to use?
- Action must be led by the top and cascaded throughout the organisation
- We use the skills needed in other aspects of our work – *we do have them!*



# What skills do we need to step in as an ally?

- We use the skills needed in other aspects of our work – *we do have them!*
- We will encourage others to see that they too have the skills and can use them as an Ally
- Stella and Laura urged everyone to never underestimate the value of stepping in when our “antennae has flapped” that a “line has been crossed or is about to be”





# How to be an ally

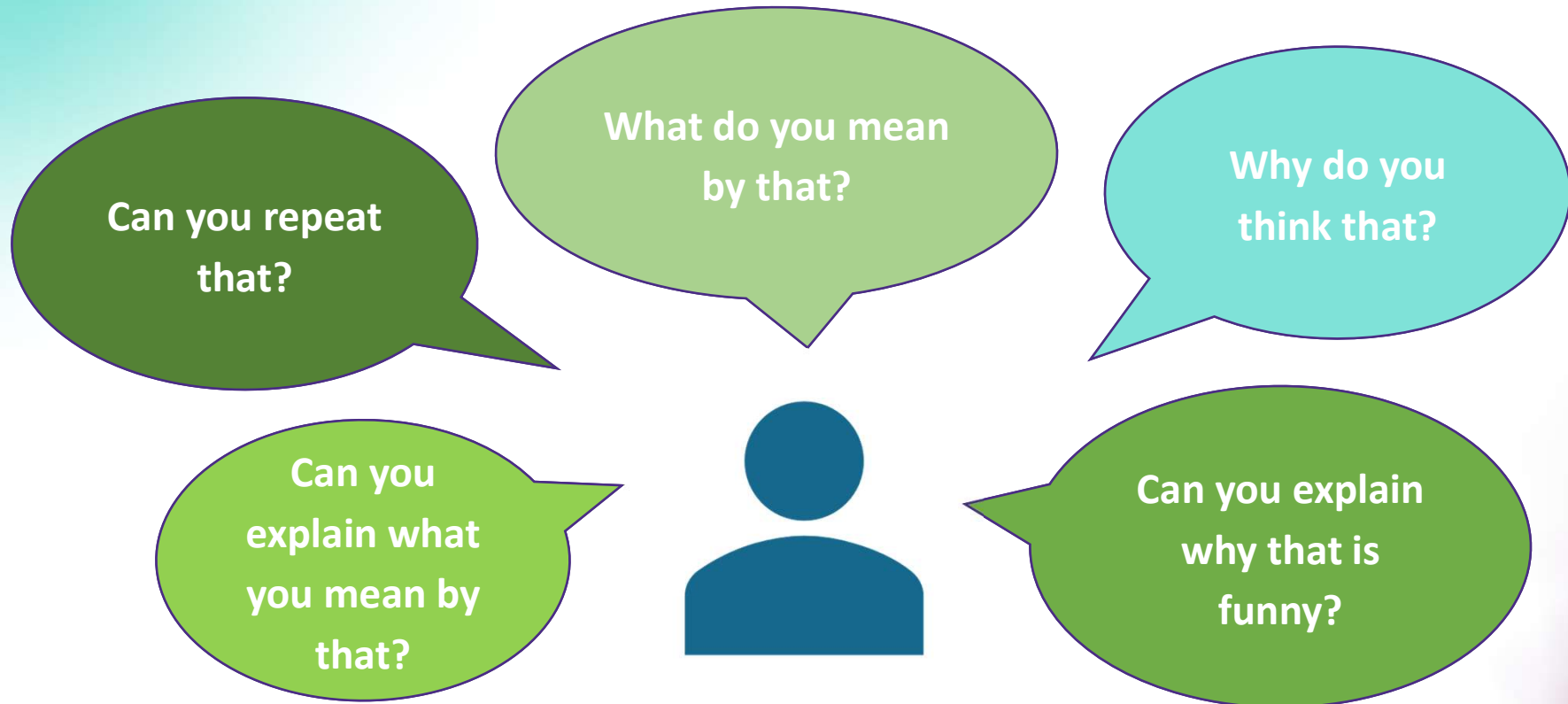


# 3 Ds of bystander intervention

- Distract
- Delegate
- Direct



# Challenging comments and behaviour



# Challenging comments and behaviour



# Stepping in as an ally

- Decide if you feel able to address the behaviour yourself
- Write down what you want to say
- Talk it through with someone else
- Explain how the situation has made you feel
- Use clear and specific examples
- Use “I” to own the feedback



- Use questioning and listening skills
- Draw next steps from them but make suggestions if needed
- Be clear about what you are looking for the outcome to be
- Accept an apology if offered
- Thank the person for listening
- Keep an eye on the situation



# Actions to take forward...

- organise training
- creating ally community
- proactively talk to colleagues
- think of outcome for conversations
- mindful that inappropriate behaviour affects more than person directed to
- allyship as a responsibility → risk assessment
- try to be a better ally
- communications/training
- how to bring allyship into culture
- education/training
- senior leadership buy-in
- safe spaces to address issue
- support



**All of these actions are  
*excellent*  
Good luck!**

# Ally action

Allyship is not a badge earned after one action. Allyship is a practice of using your advantage to increase equity. But practices have to start somewhere. Where can you start?



<https://neuroleadership.com/your-brain-at-work/allyship-in-real-life/>

[Sherilyn George-Clinton](#), [Janet M. Stovall](#)



**thank you**

**If you have any questions or would like any further help or advice, please contact us on:**

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[Focal Point Website](#)

**And to keep up to date with the latest research, opinion and resources in managing behaviour and creating inclusive workplaces, follow us on**

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