



National Science Foundation (NSF)  
Office of Polar Programs (OPP)  
United States Antarctic Program (USAP)

Sexual Assault/Harassment Prevention  
and Response (SAHPR)

FINAL REPORT

June 22, 2022



# Project Overview

## Current Project

In April 2021, NSF OPP entered into an agreement with the Department of the Interior’s Federal Consulting Group (FCG) to oversee services provided by prime contractor Leading and Dynamic Services and Solutions (LDSS), and subcontractors Alteristic, Inc. (Alteristic) and the Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC). The work to be completed by LDSS and its team of experts (Team LDSS) includes conducting a needs assessment of the USAP, developing a Sexual Assault/Harassment Prevention and Response (SAHPR) Program and *Implementation Plan*, and providing supporting resources and training materials. This document serves as the *Needs Assessment Report*. Each deliverable addresses both responding to and preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Team LDSS conducted the needs assessment to better understand the current state of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the USAP. This document, the *Needs Assessment Report*, was used to inform the creation of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan* and *Training Materials*. The *Implementation Plan* is intended to be implemented across OPP/USAP and partner organizations and will support the USAP SAHPR program’s four objectives of Community, Prevention, Response, and Accountability described in *Table 1*.

**Table 1. SAHPR Program Objectives<sup>1</sup>**

Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand the current state of the community.</li><li>• Identify issues and prioritize corrective actions.</li><li>• Monitor the community and evolve corrective actions.</li></ul>
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop training that incorporates USAP situations.</li><li>• Provide practical tools to identify, intervene, and eliminate behavior.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Task 2.3.1 The contractor shall provide assistance in the creation of the Sexual Assault/Harassment Prevention and Response (SAHPR) program for the USAP that supports the four objectives of Community, Prevention, Response, and Accountability. Statement of Work, NSF OPP, Federal Consulting Group Interagency Agreement Number: 12125.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish processes to monitor and continually update training.</li> </ul>
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a reporting framework.</li> <li>• Implement a response system.</li> <li>• Provide appropriate and timely care and response.</li> <li>• Promote a “see something, say something” culture.</li> </ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement program oversight at all levels across organizations.</li> <li>• Maintain privacy and confidentiality.</li> <li>• Implement a process to identify best-practices and lessons learned.</li> </ul>

**Scope**

Upon completion of the *Needs Assessment Report*, the *SAHPR Implementation Plan* is intended to be implemented across the USAP, including NSF-funded partner organizations at three permanent stations on the ice (McMurdo, South Pole, and Palmer Stations), on research vessels, and at field sites. The *SAHPR Implementation Plan* will support the USAP SAHPR program’s four objectives of Community, Prevention, Response, and Accountability described in *Table 1, Volume One*.

**Document Structure**

This comprehensive document includes two volumes. *Volume One: Needs Assessment Report* and *Volume Two: SAHPR Implementation Plan*. Given that the *Needs Assessment Report* directly informs the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*, the two volumes are strongly encouraged to be distributed in tandem, as the *Needs Assessment Report* provides context important for understanding and interpreting the recommendations provided in the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*.

*Volume One: Needs Assessment Report*, is separated into two primary sections. Part one focuses on findings and recommendations related to response and part two focuses on findings related to prevention. The *SAHPR Implementation Plan* provides a sequenced and prioritized set of goals, objectives, and tasks that integrates both response and prevention



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Volume One:  
Needs Assessment

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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

The purpose of the SAHPR needs assessment<sup>2</sup> is to determine the current state of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the USAP community, assess USAP capacity for a comprehensive approach to address those issues, provide recommendations for solutions, and prioritize corrective actions. Key findings and recommendations from this *Needs Assessment Report* will be utilized to determine the most efficient and effective route to better address and prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault in the USAP. Detailed action steps are laid out in *Volume Two: SAHPR Implementation Plan and Training Materials*.

To create a workplace and community that foster climates free from sexual assault and harassment within such a challenging and unique environment requires a comprehensive and tailored approach that effectively responds to and prevents sexual harassment and sexual assault.

## Summary of Methods

Team LDSS launched the needs assessment in April 2021. The objective was to create multiple forums through which members of the USAP community could share information, observations, and their experiences regarding sexual assault and harassment, and associated trainings and policies, within the USAP.

During the needs assessment, USAP community members were invited to share their experiences and perspectives with Team LDSS in four primary ways:

1. Key Stakeholder Interviews (KSIs) with select individuals from NSF, Leidos (lead for Antarctic Support Contract (ASC)), the U.S. Military, and the grantee community
2. Focus groups with key populations across the USAP
3. Online surveys, open to both civilian and military<sup>3</sup> USAP participants who have deployed in the past three years
4. Supplemental materials shared by key stakeholders

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<sup>2</sup> Per requirement 2.4.1.7.

<sup>3</sup> Because the military data collection approval process is separate and extensive, service members were unable to participate in a focus group and did not receive the survey until much later in the data collection process, making their responses unable to be included in this report.

Data was analyzed to assess for the current state of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and prevention and response mechanisms in the USAP.

### **Summary of Key Findings: Response**

Effective response is grounded in trauma-informed, survivor-centered approaches that create individual and systemic responses to sexual misconduct. Effective response systems encourage reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment, hold those who cause sexual harms accountable, respect victim privacy and survivor confidentiality, support survivor access to services, ensure informed decision-making, and promote survivor (and community) healing and recovery.

The complex and unique nature of the multi-jurisdictional conduct policy enforcement mechanisms across USAP creates gaps that hinder current response and prevention efforts. Overall, findings suggest the current response systems to be inadequate and points to a significant mistrust of Human Resources by the ASC contract workforce because of their lack of appropriate response to sexual harassment and sexual assault. The following findings assess the current state of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the USAP and related response systems.

#### **Finding: Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, and Stalking Are Problems in the USAP Community**

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Analysis of needs assessment data showed that many USAP community members believe that sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking are problems in the USAP.

#### **Finding: There Is a Lack in Trust in ASC Human Resources**

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ASC contractors and subcontractors reported they do not trust their human resources (HR) departments when it comes to addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment. Interviewees frequently shared their perceptions that victims were not encouraged to report and were actively discouraged from doing so. Further, a notable number of community members perceive that contractor and subcontractor human resource departments are dismissing, minimizing, shaming, and blaming victims who report sexual harassment and sexual assault. A significant number of community members also believe that contractor and subcontractor human resources departments retaliate against victims and those who support them.

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**Finding: NSF Lacks Adequate Reporting and Response Systems**

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While NSF has taken actions to provide greater clarity of expected behavior and oversight of contractor, subcontractor, and grantee responses to sexual misconduct, NSF does not yet have systems in place to ensure that it is appropriately informed of and responsive to incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment within the USAP community. For a variety of historical, institutional, and structural reasons, NSF is not informed as to the frequency, scope, severity, or outcomes of incidences of sexual assault and harassment that occur within the USAP.

**Finding: Sexual Misconduct Is Not Perceived as a Safety Issue, Leaving Alcohol Misidentified as the Primary Culprit for Sexual Misconduct**

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Workplace safety is viewed as a singular priority and training on safety-related issues is routine. Safety violations are grounds for immediate discipline and re-training. Yet in interviews and focus groups, it was clear that sexual assault and harassment are not viewed as workplace safety issues. Further, key informant interviews made evident that senior administration felt alcohol was the sole or most significant contributing factor to many safety and violence issues on-ice. Because of a lack of awareness of the scope of sexual misconduct, sexual assault and harassment are not framed as safety hazards and therefore do not elicit similar attention or response.

**Summary of Recommendations: Response**

Recommendations for addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment, and improving response mechanisms include opportunities to:

- Increase opportunities for community feedback and engagement.
- Establish a Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT).
- Integrate more robust support mechanisms for victims.
- Establish a communication plan.
- Increase community education efforts.
- Restructure policies, protocols, and oversight mechanisms.

**Summary of Key Findings: Prevention**

The prevention section of the *Needs Assessment Report* identifies four components that are integral to the success of prevention efforts in the USAP: (1) Leadership Support, (2) Infrastructure, (3) Education, and (4) Engagement. The



team analyzed gaps and assets across key indicators of each component. The following are key findings across those core components.

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**Finding: Leadership is Committed to Addressing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment**

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Existing assets that can be leveraged to strengthen leadership buy-in include broad agreement that sexual assault and sexual harassment need to be addressed, illustrated by this response from a key-stakeholder, “I’m very invested in this. This is ultimately the most important thing I can do is develop a system to create a better culture down here. I’ll make time and I want to be more involved.”

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**Finding: Trust of Leadership Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment is Low**

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Lack of trust in leadership is significant. Leadership has not earned the most basic level of trust for more than one fourth of survey respondents who reported not believing or not knowing if the organization for which they work cares if they are safe. The percentage rises considerably for groups that are often marginalized and/or in lower-status positions, including gay and lesbian community members, seasonal employees, younger workers, those who earn less, and women.

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**Finding: There is Low Consensus Among Leadership that Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment are Significant Problems**

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Only 23% of leadership (defined by older, higher salaries, and higher-status positions) agree or strongly agree that sexual assault is a problem and 40% agree that sexual harassment is a problem.

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**Finding: There are Early Indicators of Initial Progress Toward Creating a Healthy Climate**

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Despite significant gaps, there are early indicators of initial progress towards creating a healthy climate. A large majority of those in high-status positions believe prevention is possible and they have a role to play. Further, despite a deep lack of trust in leadership regarding these issues, a large minority (over 40%) still believe positive strides are being made and leadership is doing their best.

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**Finding: Infrastructure Dedicated to Prevention Is Nearly Absent**

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Data collected suggests overall infrastructure dedicated to prevention to be nearly absent. Existing infrastructure, including staffing, funding, policies, and collaboration is almost entirely focused on response rather than prevention.

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**Finding: There is Not Effective Prevention Training and Evaluation is Lacking**

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Input from surveys and focus groups indicate that the content currently provided in training is not useful, the training is poorly timed and inadequately tailored, and the delivery is extremely ineffective, sometimes to the point of alienating participants.

**Finding: Despite Insufficient Opportunities Provided for the USAP Community Members to Engage in Prevention Efforts, there is Significant Motivation to Engage**

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There are negligible (or no) organized opportunities to engage the USAP community in prevention efforts. Further, there are insufficient opportunities for community members to learn the basic skills necessary to engage in prevention activities outside the scope of an organized activity or event. However, there is broad consensus that these issues are important to address, and prevention is possible. These core beliefs are significant assets that can be leveraged to increase engagement.

**Summary of Recommendations: Prevention**

Recommendations for developing and implementing a comprehensive prevention strategy include opportunities to:

- Develop a communication strategy.
- Provide a toolkit of prevention resources for leaders.
- Allocate funding to prevention infrastructure, including prevention staffing.
- Develop prevention policies.
- Establish a prevention collaborative body.
- Increase prevention education opportunities.

Key findings and recommendations from this *Needs Assessment Report* will be utilized to determine the most efficient and effective route to better address and prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault in the USAP. Detailed action steps will be laid out in the forthcoming *SAHPR Implementation Plan and Training Materials*.

# Introduction

## The United States Antarctic Program

The United States Antarctic Program (USAP), a U.S. Government-wide program, manages all scientific research and related logistics in Antarctica. The lead civilian manager of the USAP is the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs (NSF, OPP respectively). The program has established communities at three permanent stations in Antarctica (McMurdo, South Pole, and Palmer), as well as numerous field sites and associated research vessels. USAP participants include members of research teams funded by NSF and other federal agencies, personnel under the Antarctic Support Contract (ASC) hired to support logistics, military personnel, and representatives from a variety of other research institutions. USAP operates within, and is restricted by, several different contractual, legal, and federal requirements. There is some level of collaborative accountability between the various partners through contract terms, Request for Proposal (RFP) guidelines to grantees, and the NSF Code of Conduct Board. However, the complex and unique nature of the multi-jurisdictional conduct policy enforcement mechanisms across USAP creates gaps that hinder current response and prevention efforts.

## Context

In 2018, NSF published new requirements for NSF-funded research teams and contractors to help ensure research environments are free from sexual harassment.<sup>4</sup> Requirements include:

- Scientific grant awardee organizations must report to NSF when Principal Investigators (PI) and Co-PIs working on NSF-funded research are placed on administrative leave, subjected to administrative actions, or when there are findings and determinations by the organizations that PIs and Co-PIs engaged in sexual harassment.
- Two online portals are established: a secure portal for awardee institutions to submit harassment notifications and a separate portal for individual members of grantee teams to file sexual harassment complaints.
- Related policies and procedures are instituted, including the Polar Code of Conduct, currently signed by all USAP participants, and the USAP Executive Management Board's Affirmation of Non-Harassment Policy. The 2018

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<sup>4</sup> 2.2 Background. Statement of Work, NSF OPP, Federal Consulting Group Interagency Agreement Number: 12125

Polar Code of Conduct is an expansion of the 2013 USAP Code of Conduct (AIL-POL-1000.03).

- Communication is increased regarding harassment issues and reporting mechanisms through briefings, trainings, and postings at the stations and on NSF-operated vessels.

## USAP Population and Organizational Structure

To understand the key findings in the *Needs Assessment Report*, it is important to understand USAP's unique context, population, and the organizational structures in Antarctica.

### Population

Contractors, grantees, and personnel from the Department of Defense (DoD) comprise the three primary populations of the USAP community.

1. **Contractors:** Antarctic Support Contractors (ASC) under NSF are the largest group. ASC employs workers from lead contractor Leidos, and subcontractors from Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE)<sup>5</sup>, University of Texas, Medical Branch (UTMB), Six Mile, DAMCO, Gana-A 'Yoo Service Corporation (GSC), and GHG Corporation, among others. Contractors who do not report under Leidos include Air Center Helicopters, Inc. (ACHI) and Kenn Borek Air (KBA).
2. **Grantees:** Scientific research teams, funded by NSF and other federal agencies, are led by Principal Investigators (PIs), and made up of researchers, graduate students, and support personnel from numerous U.S. institutions and international scientific partners.
3. **Department of Defense (DoD):** Military personnel have a visible presence on the ice and are deployed under the command of the Joint Task Force – Support Forces Antarctica. They include the Air National Guard (ANG), Air Force (USAF), and the Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC).
4. **Smaller populations** include NSF leadership and individuals from the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Aviation Services (DOI-OAS), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), DOI United States Geological Survey (DOI-USGS), who deploy in smaller numbers and often for less than an entire season, and the New

<sup>5</sup> In February 2022, PAE was acquired by Amentum. Because data collection took place prior to this date, the authors will refer to PAE as an ASC subcontractor, rather than Amentum.

Zealand Defense Force during certain periods of the year.

### Organizational Structure

There are three permanent U.S. stations on the ice: McMurdo, South Pole, and Palmer Station. From these three permanent stations, USAP participants may travel to other locations. Most frequently, these locations include field sites and research vessels. Field sites are typically populated by grantees who spend short periods (generally two to four weeks) investigating their research, and by contractors who provide support and experience more extended stays (one to six months). Field sites operate during the summer season, often with small teams. Research vessels are operated by the ship's crew, utilized by grantees to investigate remote locations, and supported by contractors. Individuals live and work in very close quarters for a couple of weeks to a few months at a time.

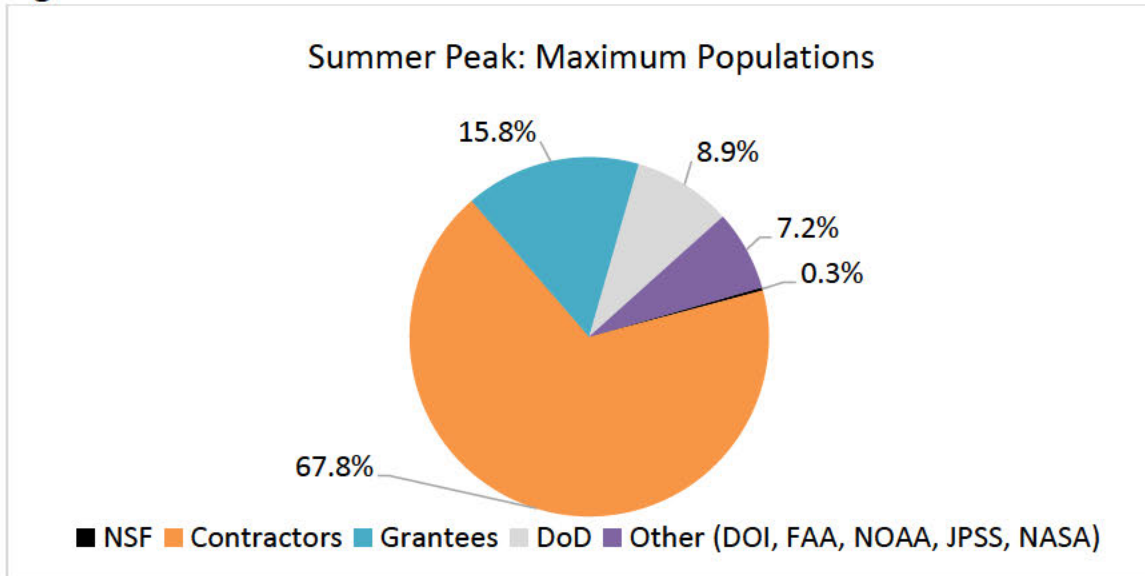
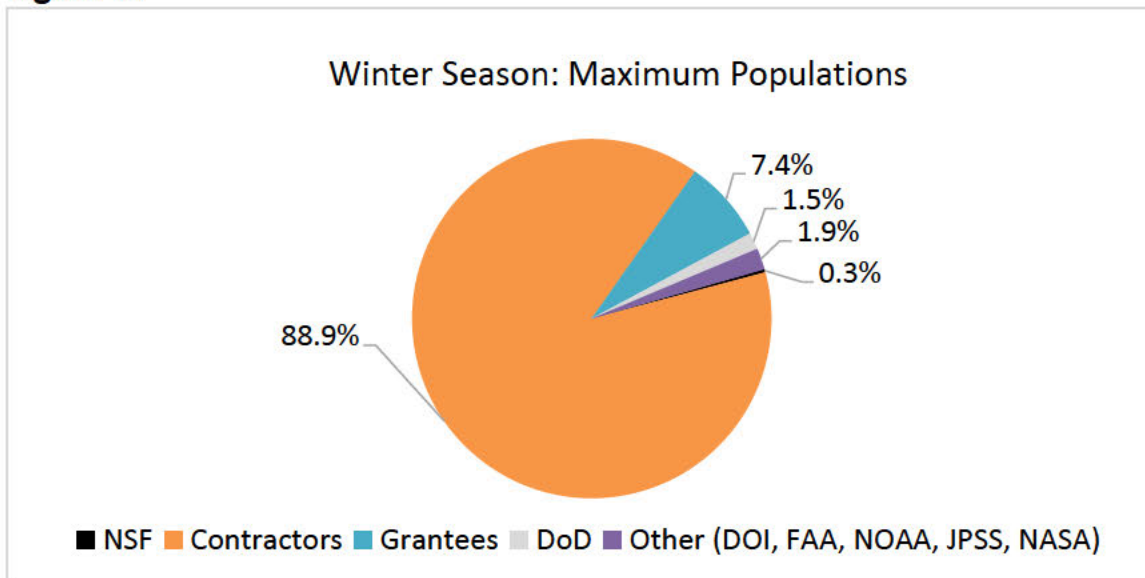
The total population at each location varies significantly between the Summer and Winter seasons. *Table 2* shows maximum populations of USAP participants across the different locations during peak months for a typical year.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 2. Total Maximum Population by Location**

Location	Summer Peak	Winter Peak
McMurdo	1,159	226
South Pole	150	53
Palmer	45	16
Research Vessels	78	78
Field Sites	181	N/A
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,613</b>	<b>373</b>

Representation from the various organizations and institutions also varies during Summer and Winter seasons. *Figures 1* and *2* highlight the maximum percentages of USAP participants across Antarctica during the Summer and Winter peaks.

<sup>6</sup> Populations have been lower during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is when the Needs Assessment was conducted.

**Figure 1.****Figure 2.**

### Unique Challenges

Many workplaces face challenges identifying and implementing solutions to address sexual assault and sexual harassment within their workforce. The USAP, however, faces additional hurdles in identifying solutions that can be effectively implemented given the challenges inherent in the program's current contexts, settings, and organizational structures. For example, research suggests there is an increased risk for sexual harassment in field work and intense, isolated work settings, like military deployments and scientific field research (Burns, Grindlay, Holt, Manski, & Grossman, 2014; LeardMann, Pietrucha, Magruder, Smith, Murdoch, & Jacobson, 2013; Nash, 2021; St. John, Riggs, & Mogk, 2016). In

addition, traditional workplace settings have clear distinctions between life inside and outside the workplace. However, the isolated work settings of the USAP, combined with living in close quarters far from home, creates a complicated dynamic that blurs the boundaries between personal and professional life. This dynamic can make it more difficult to establish clear and appropriate boundaries, intervene as a bystander, hold peers accountable, and/or report unwanted behaviors.

Research also shows that key components to addressing and reducing the issues include both conducting policy enforcement and holding employees who perpetrate sexual harassment and assault accountable (Davis, 2018; O’leary-Kelly et al., 2004). Most traditional workplace settings have an organization-specific set of policies that are created and enforced within the organization. In other words, the entity that pays, hires, and fires employees is also the entity that enforces policies. However, while NSF manages the USAP, the USAP represents a complex multiorganizational operational environment with varied jurisdictions and authorities over USAP participants, depending on the nature of the relationship NSF has with those organizations. For instance, NSF funds institutions to support researchers and their teams (grantees), contracts with a large private employer for logistical support under ASC (who in turn subcontracts with other private entities), and partners with the military and other entities, including foreign governments. The role of personnel management and organizational policy enforcement currently remains with each respective individual organization and institution that employs the USAP participant. As these organizations retain authority over their personnel, NSF has limited ability to conduct comprehensive policy enforcement. While there is some level of collaborative accountability, the complex and unique nature of the multi-jurisdictional conduct policy enforcement across USAP creates gaps that can hinder current response and prevention efforts.

Finally, research indicates there is greater risk for sexual harassment in workplaces that are male-dominated and/or have more individuals who identify as male in high-level positions (Fine, Sojo Monzon, & Lawford-Smith, 2020; Raj, Johns, & Jose, 2020; Street, Gradus, Stafford, & Kelly, 2007). The USAP work environment, like many other industries, has a male-dominated culture, defined by a greater number of male employees, as well as a disproportionate number of men in high-level positions. For other industries that have male-dominated environments, a common and effective strategy for increasing the number of women in the workplace is developing and utilizing intentional recruitment and hiring practices. This strategy is particularly challenging for the USAP in part

because the extreme and isolated conditions result in a more limited candidate pool in general. In addition, many of the positions that need to be filled tend to be pulled from fields that are also male dominated (e.g., construction trades, skilled machine operators, etc.), thus further narrowing available female candidates.

While NSF has taken initial steps to address sexual assault and harassment in the USAP, findings in the *Needs Assessment Report* will help to clarify the current state and provide insight into realistic approaches to address the challenges within the unique USAP environments.

## Response and Prevention

The SAHPR program objectives (*Table 1*) highlight elements relevant to both prevention and response. To create a workplace and community that fosters a climate free from sexual assault and harassment within such a challenging environment requires a comprehensive and tailored approach that effectively responds to and prevents sexual harassment and sexual assault.

### Response

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Response efforts refer to endeavors to redress sexual misconduct. This may include individual and organizational responses such as conduct policies, reporting mechanisms, support and resources for survivors, incident investigation, adjudication, and disciplinary actions. It may also include a community response to events that transpire. Response efforts can include multi-faceted approaches to policy creation, enforcement, and associated training.

### Prevention

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Prevention strategies focus on equipping participants to take actions that contribute to a healthier climate. Prevention-related actions include bystander interventions and proactive behaviors that set positive, respectful community norms. Prevention primarily emphasizes solutions that are implemented before an incident of sexual assault or harassment happens.

### A Comprehensive Approach

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Though response and prevention are distinct concepts, when they are effectively integrated into a comprehensive approach, they can increase safety and well-being for all USAP participants.



## Needs Assessment Report Structure

The *Needs Assessment Report* will be written in two parts: part one focused on response and part two focused on prevention. It will include: (1) methodology, (2) core components of effective response and prevention, and (3) recommendations to address each identified gap.

# Methodology

## Data Collection Overview<sup>7</sup>

Team LDSS launched the needs assessment effort in April 2021. The goal for this component of the SAHPR project was to perform a needs assessment of USAP participants related to sexual assault and sexual harassment, analyze data, document findings, and provide recommendations. The objective was to create multiple forums through which members of the USAP community could share information, observations, and their experiences regarding sexual assault and harassment, and associated trainings and policies, within the USAP. Team LDSS also solicited input on organizational response to the information received regarding incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

During the needs assessment, USAP community members were invited to share their experiences and perspectives with Team LDSS in four primary ways:

1. Key stakeholder interviews (KSIs) with select individuals from NSF, Leidos (lead for ASC), the U.S. Military, and grantees
2. Focus groups<sup>8</sup> with key populations across the USAP
3. Online surveys, open to both civilian and military<sup>9</sup> USAP participants who have deployed in the past three years<sup>10</sup>
4. Supplemental materials shared by key stakeholders

In addition, the team received 11 emails from current and former members of the USAP who wished to privately share their experiences and observations. These emails either supplemented those individuals' participation in a focus group or

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<sup>7</sup> Team LDSS would like to recognize NSF leadership's support for these efforts. Stephanie Short, Margaret (Maggie) Knuth, and Michael Gencarelli, among others, promoted our access to information; they worked diligently to provide relevant documents to Team LDSS and ensured that members of the NSF leadership team were available for multi-hour KSIs.

<sup>8</sup> Team LDSS also interviewed five additional individuals with various current and former members of the USAP. These conversations were initiated by individuals who specifically requested opportunities to share their experiences but (primarily for privacy reasons) did not find it appropriate or were otherwise unable to do so within the focus group context.

<sup>9</sup> Because the military data collection approval process is separate and extensive, service members were unable to participate in a focus group and did not receive the survey until much later in the data collection process, making their responses unable to be included in this report.

<sup>10</sup> While Team LDSS prioritized receiving input from USAP participants who deployed between Summer 2018 and Summer 2021, a small percentage of survey respondents deployed prior to Summer 2018 (3%).

were sent in lieu of participation. These responses were integrated with other qualitative data and analyzed collectively.

### **Key Stakeholder Interviews**

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Preliminary key stakeholder interviews (KSIs) were conducted with five high-level staff members from NSF and Leidos prior to the official start of the needs assessment. The purpose of these interviews was to help Team LDSS better understand the unique organizational and environmental contexts for the USAP and the needs assessment itself, to identify the many entities and jurisdictions present on the ice, and to engage leadership in conversations that would serve as the foundation for this effort. These preliminary KSIs provided the necessary groundwork for the team to determine the most informative individuals and positions to recruit for the subsequent KSIs, key populations across the USAP to concentrate on for focus groups, and the framing of questions for all data collection.

During the needs assessment, Team LDSS completed KSIs with 16 current and former contractors, subcontractors, grantees, NSF staff members, and two members of the military. These included individuals then present on the ice as well as those participating from other locations. On average, each interview was 90-120 minutes long. All interviews were conducted virtually, via the Zoom meeting platform.

Questions for KSIs concentrated on organizational culture and structure in the USAP, conduct policies, response mechanisms, and educational trainings relating to sexual harassment and sexual assault. KSI scripts and questions can be found in Appendices A and B.

### **Focus Groups**

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Focus group sub-populations were selected to reflect the unique experiences of USAP participants based on: (1) location (e.g., South Pole, Palmer or McMurdo, research vessel, near or deep field); (2) job role and status (e.g., supervisor, grantee/principal investigator); and (3) other demographic identifiers (e.g., seasonal only, female-identified only). The team structured the focus groups to reflect and respect that each USAP station has its own unique characteristics and culture. The team was cognizant that conditions on the ice can vary by population, location, season, living quarters, and colleagues' professional status, as well as access to transportation, distance from a research station, degree of physical isolation, internet availability, and access to resources. The team wanted

to create a focus group environment that, to the extent possible, felt like a safe space for participants to disclose their (and their colleagues') experiences in the USAP. Where necessary, screening questions allowed the team to designate USAP participants for specific groups based on organization, deployment type, work schedule, etc. For example, registrants for certain focus groups were asked if they had performed any supervisory duties within the last five years. If they answered "yes," they would be unable to complete the registration process for the non-supervisor McMurdo focus group. The team did not conduct a focus group with members of the military, although they are present at McMurdo, and can have an impact on events within the USAP.<sup>11</sup>

Initially, Team LDSS invited members of the USAP community to attend one of 14 single- or mixed-gender focus groups. Due to registration, timing, and to protect participant privacy, some groups were later combined. Initially, the team worked with key stakeholders to invite specific individuals to participate in the focus groups to increase the likelihood of including an appropriate and diverse cross-section of participants. Potential participants were identified from lists of USAP contractors, subcontractors, and NSF grantees from the past three years. When registration numbers for the focus groups were initially lower than anticipated, the team broadened recruitment invitations to more individuals within each identified focus group audience and NSF supported recruitment.

Ultimately, the team hosted a total of 11 focus groups between November 15, 2021, and December 4, 2021. Focus group participants participated either individually, in pairs, or in small group settings based on location, satellite timing, access to equipment, and Covid-19 social distancing requirements. They participated by phone or by video (via Zoom<sup>12</sup>), based on location and satellite/internet access. The final composition of the USAP community focus groups was as follows: (1) South Pole; (2) Research vessels; (3) Ice Allies<sup>13</sup>; (4) Deep field; (5) Near field; (6) McMurdo full-time workers, no supervisors; (7) McMurdo seasonal workers; (8) McMurdo full-time supervisors (only); (9)

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<sup>11</sup> Team LDSS had planned to host a focus group specifically for members of the military, but the military declined to authorize service members to participate in this initial phase of the project. As noted above, they did ultimately authorize distribution of the OMB-approved survey for service members. Due to the timing and very few responses received, that data is not included in this *Needs Assessment Report*.

<sup>12</sup> Due to technology limitations, the focus group with South Pole Station was hosted via Free Conference Line. All other focus groups were hosted via Zoom platform.

<sup>13</sup> The Ice Allies is a self-appointed working group comprised of USAP community members whose mission is to raise awareness about sexual assault, sexual harassment, and gender bias. While NSF personnel and many community members refer to them by this moniker, they are not an officially recognized entity.

McMurdo grantees; (10) McMurdo seasonal women/female-identified only; and (11) Palmer Station.

Focus group questions were designed to promote understanding of: (1) relationships within the USAP, including daily routines and interactions between individuals en route to and while on-ice (e.g., social and workplace norms, relationships between co-workers, dating, parties, and other activities USAP community members engage in for relaxation, etc.); (2) organizational cultures; and (3) USAP participants' individual and collective experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment and sexual assault, and the systems in place to address or prevent those forms of harm. The team sought to capture a diversity of experiences across gender, sexual orientation, race, professional status, and location. These include, for example, community members' experiences by season (e.g., austral summer, those who winter over), station location, field work sites, employment status, and relationship to NSF. The team also sought to solicit participants' ideas and recommendations regarding how best to improve sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training<sup>14</sup>, prevention, and response. The focus group script and questions, approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), can be found in Appendix C.

### **Online Survey**

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Shortly after it was approved by OMB, the survey was distributed to all individuals who were currently, or within the last three (3) years had been part of, the USAP community. A link to the confidential survey was distributed via email to these 3,846 current or former members of the USAP community; 179 emails bounced or were otherwise confirmed as undeliverable. The survey was open for two weeks between October and November 2021. The team received 880 completed surveys for a 24% response rate (880/3,667 potentially delivered survey links).

Survey questions focused on respondents' perceptions of sexual harassment and sexual assault across the USAP, organizational response, trust in leadership, and prevention-related behaviors. Survey questions can be found in Appendix D. Team LDSS analyzed these survey responses across a variety of demographic factors such as gender, sexual orientation, income, age, race, employment status

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<sup>14</sup> Throughout the *Needs Assessment Report*, any training about sexual harassment and sexual assault will be referred to as sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training. This includes the current training (entitled USAP Harassment and Assault Awareness and Prevention Training) and trainings that have been implemented in years passed.

(e.g., full-time contractor, seasonal contractor, grantee/principal investigator), and level of education, as seen in *Table 3*.

**Table 3. Demographics of Survey Respondents**

	Contractor: Seasonal/ Direct Labor n	Contractor: Full-time Employee n	Grantee: PI n	Grantee; Research Team Member n	Federal Civilian Personnel n
Total Across Positions <sup>15,16</sup>	437	143	56	133	27
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	255	73	31	70	16
Female	137	52	23	55	8
Transgender	3	0	0	3	0
Prefer not to answer	40	16	2	4	2
Other	3	2	0	2	0
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	3	1	0	3	0
25-34	151	14	2	72	1
35-44	123	41	15	21	3
45-54	57	46	20	10	14
55-64	52	24	9	16	7
65+	15	5	7	8	1
Prefer not to answer	31	12	2	2	1
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>					
Straight (not gay, lesbian, bisexual)	315	109	51	112	22
Lesbian or gay	22	3	2	4	0
Bisexual	28	5	1	10	2
Prefer not to answer	60	20	2	5	3
Something else <sup>17</sup>	8	5	0	1	0
<b>Race/Ethnic Background<sup>18</sup></b>					

<sup>15</sup> There was also an “Other (please specify option).” The majority of those respondents identified as military personnel or former contractors.

<sup>16</sup> Not all respondents answered all questions. For example, some answered the question about gender, but not the question about position, therefore some demographic categories do not add up to the total across positions.

<sup>17</sup> “Something else (please specify)” answers included pansexual, asexual, and queer.

<sup>18</sup> For the Race/Ethnic Background questions, respondents were able to check all options that apply to them.

	Contractor: Seasonal/ Direct Labor n	Contractor: Full- time Employee n	Grantee: PI n	Grantee; Research Team Member n	Federal Civilian Personnel n
White	343	118	51	117	22
Black or African American	8	2	0	4	0
Asian	9	2	0	5	0
Pacific Islander	2	1	0	1	0
Native American/American Indian/First Nations/ Indigenous	5	2	0	1	2
Hispanic/Latino/a/x	21	4	3	4	2
Middle Eastern/North African	3	1	0	1	0
Prefer not to answer	56	14	3	6	3
Other <sup>19</sup>	8	3	0	0	1
<b>Highest Level of Education Completed</b>					
Secondary (completed high school)	15	2	0	0	0
Some post- secondary/college/Trade school	71	17	1	2	0
Completed trade school/Associate Degree	59	12	1	1	2
Completed college/Bachelor's Degree	172	56	2	12	4
Some graduate school	20	8	0	19	2
Completed graduate school/Master's Degree/Ph.D. or equivalent	71	38	51	96	17
Prefer not to answer	23	10	1	2	2
<b>Annual Income</b>					
Under \$15,000	9	1	0	1	0
Between \$15,000 and \$29,999	37	3	1	16	0
Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	116	7	0	24	0

<sup>19</sup> The Race/Ethnic Background "other (please specify)" answers included mixed race and Jewish.

	Contractor: Seasonal/Direct Labor n	Contractor: Full-time Employee n	Grantee: PI n	Grantee; Research Team Member n	Federal Civilian Personnel n
Between \$50,000 and \$74,999	78	20	4	28	1
Between \$75,000 and \$99,999	48	31	10	23	2
Between \$100,000 and \$150,000	53	40	23	19	5
Over \$150,000	15	9	8	8	13
Prefer not to answer	74	32	10	13	6

## Definitions

For both the surveys and the focus groups, Team LDSS provided specific definitions of “sexual assault” and “sexual harassment.” Sexual assault was defined as “intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent.” Sexual harassment was defined to include “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or other conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct is made a condition of securing or maintaining employment or when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.”

## Confidentiality

From the outset, Team LDSS recognized that they would be speaking with victims of sexual harassment and assault. Because privacy is a cornerstone of work with survivors, the team wanted to identify the limitations of what they could reasonably offer in this regard and underscore the importance for other participants to respect their colleagues’ privacy needs. To ensure informed consent, at the beginning of each KSI and focus group, the facilitator (a member of Team LDSS) read a prepared statement addressing confidentiality. In addition, focus group participants received information about confidentiality during registration and were required to verbally assent to the confidentiality terms outlined in the OMB approval process.

The team informed participants that neither notes nor any recordings would be made available to their employers or NSF and that statements would not be attributed to a single individual. The team asked all participants to keep the



information shared during the group confidential. Participants were informed that they could skip any questions they did not wish to answer, and they could take a break or quit at any time. They were also advised that, if they had additional information they wanted to share with the team or team members privately, they could contact the team directly. Interviewers' and facilitators' contact information was provided in the Zoom chat and/or verbally during each KSI and focus group for this purpose.

For this same reason (to protect participants' privacy) sources for the quotes cited are often described generically (e.g., as "a grantee," "contractor," or "a USAP community member"). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes in this *Needs Assessment Report* are from the KSIs, focus groups, qualitative survey questions, or from the written correspondence members of the USAP community submitted to the team.

### Supplemental Materials

Finally, Team LDSS reviewed an extensive set of documents provided to the team by NSF, Leidos, and by current and former USAP community members. This included demographic data, USAP Logistics Support surveys and findings, the Polar Code of Conduct, sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training materials, and Health and Safety Audits. The team read background content and reviewed recent research regarding sexual assault or harassment in Antarctica. At the recommendation of NSF, the team also viewed the documentary film *Picture a Scientist*.

## Data Analysis

### Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed from five sources, as seen in *Table 4*. Data was analyzed from 16 KSIs, 71 focus group participants, 11 participant e-mails, and 513 survey respondents (the number of respondents who filled in open-ended questions) from across USAP partner organizations.

**Table 4. Qualitative Data Sources**

Qualitative Data Sources	Organization	Number
Source 1: Key Stakeholder Interviews (KSI)	NSF	9
	ASC	4
	DoD	2
	College or University (Grantee)	1

	<b>Total key stakeholders interviewed:</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Source 2:</b> Focus Groups	ASC	56
	Grantees	15
	<b>Total focus group participants:</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Source 3:</b> Participant E-mails <sup>20</sup>	ASC	11
	<b>Total e-mails:</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Source 4:</b> Supplemental Materials	ASC	6
	NSF	5
	<b>Total documents reviewed:</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Source 5:</b> Qualitative Survey Questions	ASC	363
	Grantees	132
	Federal/Civilian	14
	DoD	4
	<b>Total respondents:<sup>21</sup></b>	<b>513</b>

For the prevention section, qualitative data was analyzed using MAXQDA, a qualitative analysis software. Data was coded into categories based on several key factors including questions that were asked of participants, identified prevention components and indicators, and emerging thematic topics. Coded segments refer to participant comments or segments from supplemental documents. Some participant comments are short, and some are more extensive; for example, the comments may be one word or a full paragraph on a specific topic. One individual participant may have made multiple comments about a topic, resulting in multiple coded segments in the same category for an individual. Therefore, code segments should be thought of as comments, not people.

Appendix E: Major Code Categories provides context as to the total number of coded segments for major code categories, examples of associated sub-codes, and where from the coded segments came. There was a total of 1,964 coded segments across seven major code categories.

In the response section, qualitative data was analyzed by grouping data by questions and major topics, defined by the current state of USAP and categories of response mechanisms. The team looked for emerging themes, as reported, and

<sup>20</sup> Participant e-mails included follow-up e-mails from focus group participants who had more to share or were not comfortable sharing everything during the facilitated focus group, or e-mails from potential focus group participants who were not invited or able to attend but wanted to provide input.

<sup>21</sup> Total survey respondents who answered qualitative/open-ended questions.

utilized needs assessment participant quotes to illustrate themes and major topics. Where percentages are used to describe the number of participants who experienced a certain topic, or agreed to a statement, recordings were scrutinized to count the number of participants as accurately as possible. However, percentages are approximate. Both teams had two or more researchers viewing data and emerging themes to reduce bias.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

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Quantitative data in the survey was analyzed using simple statistical and computational techniques, such as group comparisons and crosstabulations. Findings are reported in descriptive statistics and numerical values.

### **Findings and Language: Leadership**

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**Survey Findings:** Survey findings that reference leadership include data collected using the following terms:

- Leaders
- Leadership
- The organization/institution who employs the respondent

Where leadership is referred to in the survey findings, proxies were utilized to illustrate survey findings based on income level, position, and age. While the proxies may not represent formal leadership, the analysis is based on the following assumptions:

- Employees that make more money are in higher-status positions that are likely to have more seniority and/or authority.
- There is a real or perceived power-differential between full-time employees and seasonal or part-time direct labor, with the former more likely to be in a higher-status position.
- There is a real or perceived power-differential between Grantee Principal Investigators (PIs) and Grantee team members.
- Older employees have worked at the company longer and therefore are likely to have higher status and real or perceived power differences when compared to younger employees.

**Qualitative Findings:** Throughout the report, leadership is denoted by several terms in qualitative findings, including:

- Higher status

- Organization/institution/company who employs USAP participants
- NSF (as the USAP manager)
- People with more power or influence

## Limitations

There are a variety of limitations worth considering in this *Needs Assessment Report*. First, the subject matter experts (SMEs) who conducted this needs assessment have not been to Antarctica; all data collection was conducted via substantial distance. As such, beyond the typical gap possessed by external contractors, there is a further deficit in full comprehension of the USAP and life on the ice. While Team LDSS worked diligently to build a foundational understanding of the USAP culture and contexts, the team understands that without setting foot in the unique environment they were assessing, there remains an inevitable and noteworthy gap in understanding.

Additionally, those who completed the survey, attended a focus group, or wrote to the team were especially motivated to contribute to this project. For some participants, this was because they personally experienced sexual harassment and assault in the USAP, knew about the experiences of friends and colleagues, or wanted to voice concerns about USAP policies or procedures. Others may not have been as motivated to respond.

There were several limitations inherent in the survey portion of the data-collection process. While the team strived to incorporate the observations and experiences of as many USAP community members as possible, the response rate (24%) was relatively low, although within an appropriate range. A survey response rate of 50% or higher would be considered good for a project like this one, however, response rates between 10% and 30% are typical, especially for web-based surveys (Archer, 2008). The 24% response rate may be the result of several factors. The survey was distributed via e-mail with a SurveyMonkey link in the body of the email. Research shows that on average, the response rate for web surveys is 11% lower than other survey modes (e.g., in-person, via telephone, etc.) (Manfreda, Bosnjak, Berzelak, Haas, & Vehovar, 2008).

The link to complete the (civilian-focused) survey was distributed electronically to email addresses that Leidos provided the team. Delivery resulted in approximately 179 (5%) emails returned as undeliverable.<sup>22 23</sup>

There were also limitations to the survey itself. NSF was required to secure approval from the OMB to distribute the survey and – expedited, “emergency” authorization was granted. Each survey question was OMB-approved. However, demographic questions needed to comport with those included in the 2020 U.S. census. For sexual orientation, the only choices were gay or lesbian, straight/heterosexual, or bisexual. For gender, the options were male, female, or transgender. The team was unable to distinguish between the experiences of respondents who identify as male transgender, female transgender, or non-binary. The questions posed in each of the focus groups likewise required prior OMB approval.

There are gaps in military USAP community member representation throughout the data collection process. Two members of military leadership did participate in KSIs. However, the military did not consent to the distribution of the military version of the survey until December 2021. Upon that approval, the surveys were distributed to three military units (two U.S. Air Force units and one U.S. Navy unit) via email sent by each unit Commander. Approximately 1,000 service members received the email containing the survey link. No emails were returned undeliverable. A total of 28 surveys were completed. (In addition, 8 survey respondents identified as members of the military in the larger USAP Participant Survey). No members of the military were made available for the focus groups.

Finally, it is important to note that the survey and focus group questions were not designed to elicit information regarding the prevalence or incidence of sexual assault within USAP. This remains an effort for the future. Instead, the qualitative and quantitative data elicited extensive information regarding individuals’ experiences and perceptions. Team LDSS did not independently investigate or otherwise seek to verify the accuracy of individuals’ reporting. The information as

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<sup>22</sup> The contractor (Leidos) did not have personal email addresses for several former employees. Because former employees’ work email addresses were no longer operational, Team LDSS was unable to distribute the survey to these former employees.

<sup>23</sup> While the team does not have an exact count, other emails were not received because they were labeled as spam. While some USAP community members eventually received the survey email invitations, many of those individuals told the team that they were received too late for the recipient to complete the survey before the survey close date.

relayed during data collection was compiled and analyzed and is reported within this document.

# Introduction to Response

## Core Components of Effective Response

Effective response is grounded in trauma-informed, survivor-centered approaches that create individual and systemic responses to sexual misconduct. Effective response systems encourage reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment, hold those who cause sexual harms accountable, respect victim privacy and survivor confidentiality, support survivor access to services, ensure informed decision-making, and promote survivor (and community) healing and recovery.

## Context

The needs assessment identified a series of institutional and inter-jurisdictional challenges that the NSF and USAP community is facing. Throughout the course of Team LDSS' investigation, it was evident that community members are fiercely loyal and committed to the mission and execution of the USAP. Many participants spoke of their tremendous dedication to living and working in Antarctica.

While USAP participants value the adventure and uniqueness of life on-ice, they are also deeply invested in the scientific work conducted there. Contractors and grantees alike are proud of their roles and contributions to that work. From galley (food service) staff to machine operators, principal investigators, and other grantees, virtually all interviewees expressed pride in their work in the USAP. They are also deeply invested in the communal life of the stations.<sup>24</sup> Many USAP community members have been in the program for years (and some for decades). They have met their partners/spouses on the ice, established and advanced their careers there, and realized personal goals. Their commitment to life and work in the USAP is uniquely unparalleled.

It is for this very reason that many of the community members we spoke with feel deeply betrayed by what they experience as a failure to hold offenders accountable and anemic efforts to prevent or appropriately respond to sexual assault and harassment. Most of the focus group interviewees<sup>25</sup> and other

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<sup>24</sup> As one interviewee explained, “[For me,] the culture here is amazing. It’s like home. It *is* home. For a lot of us who live somewhere else nomadically, it’s the place you return to. The culture is respect. It’s family.”

<sup>25</sup> Approximately 40% of all focus group participants discussed a personal negative experience with sexual assault or sexual harassment including personally experiencing sexual assault/sexual harassment, personally witnessing sexual assault/sexual harassment, personally involved in the reporting process.

members of the USAP expressed profound dismay, frustration, anger, and hurt over these perceived shortcomings. They believe NSF fails to hold contractors, grantees, and members of the military accountable for their sexual misconduct. As one interviewee opined, “I love this place. There is nowhere else on earth like it. It's really quite wonderful and extraordinary and if you asked me what the best thing about this place was, I'd tell you the people. However, if you asked me what the worst thing about this place was, I'd also say the people. . . . I can't in good conscience encourage more women to come down here as it is right now.”<sup>26</sup>

Still, community members remain hopeful that change is possible. They want to contribute to creating an improved environment where sexual assault and harassment are not tolerated. Many expressed their fervent hope that Team LDSS' efforts on this project can lead to positive change. As one interviewee explained, “We've kind of been screaming for change for a long time, and this . . . felt like a real way that things could actually change because all of us really love that community, and it kind of feels like a lot of times ‘if you don't like it just don't work here’ but it's our community and it's our livelihood and it means so much to us that I would like to see it change.”

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Over 80% of all focus group participants discussed someone else they know experiencing sexual assault or sexual harassment.

<sup>26</sup> Throughout the report, Team LDSS ascribes quotations variously to “Community members,” “Grantees,” “Contractors,” etc. Where the distinctions are important for context, the team identifies which sector of the community the speaker represents if this did not compromise privacy or otherwise risk disclosing personally identifying information. Where the individuals were from multiple sectors (or to protect privacy), the team refers more generally to USAP community members.



## Response Findings – Key Issues

### Finding #1: Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, and Stalking Are Problems in the USAP Community

Analysis of needs assessment data showed that many USAP community members believe that sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking are problems in the USAP.

#### Illustrative Quotes – Problems in the USAP Community

“Every woman I knew down there had an assault or harassment experience that had occurred on ice,” explained one interviewee. This was a sentiment or experience echoed by many of the members of the USAP community we spoke to. Survey responses, focus group comments, KSIs, and email correspondence with community members evidenced near-universal agreement that sexual assault and harassment “are important issues to address in the USAP community,”<sup>27</sup> and significant percentages agree that they are problems.<sup>28</sup>

In virtually every focus group, participants shared their own and their colleagues’ experiences of sexual harassment or assault within the USAP. They elaborated on the sexual assault and harassment they personally experienced and recounted incidents related to them by other community members. Those incidents — whether ones they experienced, observed, or heard about from colleagues — continue to inform participants’ feelings regarding safety on the ice as well as their beliefs and perceptions that NSF’s commitment to eradicating sexual victimization in the Antarctic is insufficient, inconsistent, and at times insincere.

#### Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment by Gender

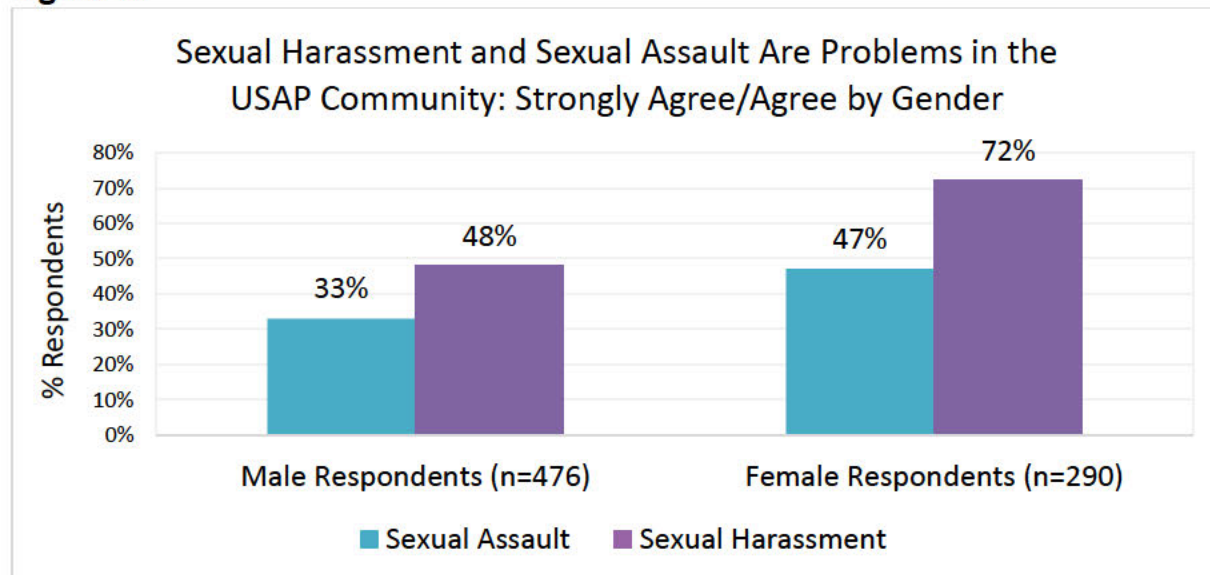
The majority of the focus group participants who presented as women described experiencing discriminatory, sexually harassing, stalking, and sexually abusive and

<sup>27</sup> Ninety percent of all survey respondents agree with the preceding statement.

<sup>28</sup> Nearly three-fourths of female respondents (72%) and almost half of all male respondents (48%) believe that sexual harassment is a problem within the USAP community. Smaller, but still significant, percentages of female respondents (47%) and male respondents (33%) identified sexual assault as USAP problems.

violent incidents at their workplace, in their rooms, and in public spaces.<sup>29</sup> As one survivor told researchers, “I know none of this is news to you, it’s just a known fact around station. It’s so self-evident that [it’s] barely worth speaking out loud. [Sexual assault and sexual harassment] are a fact of life [here], just like the fact that Antarctica is cold and the wind blows.” Repeatedly in focus groups, KSIs, and via email correspondence, interviewees recounted a wide range of female victims’ experiences that included men sitting in a group (with female colleagues in attendance) discussing “what brothels they prefer” and why; relentless questions at work about their dating status, sexual preferences, and even “what sexual positions [they] enjoyed;” a male supervisor attempting to break into women’s bedrooms using his master keys; and a sexual assault on station during which the assailant slammed the victim’s head into a metal cabinet and then attacked her sexually. A male interviewee also reported incidences of being groped by male and female colleagues; other males described hearing about female supervisors sexually harassing their male subordinates. (Team LDSS received far fewer reports of male victims; reports of harassment of female workers and grantee researchers were much more frequent and severe.)

**Figure 3.**



<sup>29</sup> Of all focus group participants who presented as women, 59% had a negative experience with sexual assault or sexual harassment and 95% knew of someone who had experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment within USAP.

Across genders, project participants described how women are “hunted” and viewed as “prey” by older men. One female interviewee recalled:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment by Gender**

“I have been told by many people . . . that I should never go to the South Pole without a partner because I’ll be repeatedly harassed because everyone is just looking to hook up with someone for the season. That’s also been my experience here: as soon as you are single, if you go to the bar . . . even [when you’re] not at the bar, you’re considered fair game. [You’re] prey.”

Another recalled an occasion out with friends and “a very young woman, (b) (6) [who] had never been on the ice before. Somehow, she slipped away from us and went out to the bar . . . and I was like ‘Oh my god, did we forget to tell her she was prey?’” One survey respondent wrote, “I was told [of] certain guys, by name, to stay clear of and there were several guys who harassed me. Hell, my very first day at McMurdo I was told to stay clear of Building [X] unless I wanted to be raped.”

#### **Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment by Location**

While sexual harassment and assault was identified at each station, in the field, and on the research vessels, the specific culture at each location contributed to the tone, nature, and sometimes the associated hazards. McMurdo, with the greatest number of occupants and bars, is the center of support and the launch area for expeditions to near and deep field. It was described as “the worst” for such experiences by many participants. One older, male interviewee remarked how, “in debriefings I did with female participants, their greatest concerns were what happened at McMurdo. They were targets and were hit on day after day. It was really discouraging for them.” Others echoed this sentiment, remarking that “McMurdo is the training ground for bad behavior” and “McMurdo sets the tone. The most egregious instances have been there.” A survivor of sexual assault and harassment at McMurdo recounted the following:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Location**

“I’ve had so many men make inappropriate comments, try to convince me to cheat on my then-partner, pick me up or touch me without consent . . . I

have had so many men make inappropriate comments to me while I was on-shift and unable to get away that I now refuse to take [certain] contracts. . . I have had a drunk Air Force personnel member follow me through a building while I was [working], trying to get me to go out with him. I have had another man drunkenly block the only exit to the [room where I was working] and try to get me to go out with him. Both of these were . . . when I was working by myself. I've had many other incidents where men [said] . . . inappropriate things to me. I left because [I was] sexually assaulted. I didn't report it because, based on everything I'd seen so far, I assumed my company would fire me if I did. . . When I hit the point I couldn't deal with it anymore, I quit... This list is not exhaustive. It's just exhausting."

But McMurdo is not the only location to generate such reports. Many of the contractors and grantees who participated, who work at South Pole, Palmer, in near and deep field, and on research vessels, also described experiences of repeated and sometimes terrifying harassment or abuse. As one victim recounted:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Location**

"I met this guy at a party Christmas Eve. He introduced himself and he was creepy, so I left the party and went to sleep. He went through the phone book at 2:30 am and called every [woman with my first name] on station. When I told him off for calling me at that hour, he made physical threats and used homophobic slurs. The next day he was hanging outside in the hallway and banging on the door [where I worked] and hanging there so that [we] couldn't leave."

She recounted how she was told by human resources he was then banned from a certain part of her building, and she was assured that "if he didn't follow that instruction he would be terminated. Two weeks later he resumed drinking and hanging out [there]. He was never sanctioned, and he wasn't terminated."<sup>30</sup> "My

<sup>30</sup> Some female interviewees noted that the current phone system concerns them because, when a phone is answered, it displays the room number called. This in turn confirms the occupant's location to the caller.

voice is still shaking to talk about it,” one victim explained as she recounted her experience:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Location**

“There was a [contractor responsible for my safety] I was working with one-on-one, and he would ask very personal questions. [He would] ask about my sex life and my partners and he would tell me all about his. I wanted nothing to do with it, but he kept going. Here is this person who is responsible for my safety, and I felt very unsafe around him. (b) (6) I felt emotionally and physically unsafe – and he’s responsible for my safety! That person is still in the community. . . I [warn] the grad students who are going down there . . . not to be alone with him.

At the South Pole, interviewees recounted incidents involving a male worker who had been reported to human resources four times in one weekend by four different women for four separate incidents of sexual misconduct. They were aghast – and still angry – that, as far as they were aware, no action was ever taken against that individual. They also described a worker feeling trapped by a job she could not leave, while a colleague repeatedly asked her out, and various other incidences involving supervisors who engaged in repeated sexual harassment.

Several interviewees also described an incident involving a male colleague “hunting down” women who were viewed as too drunk to resist this worker’s sexual advances. They felt grateful insofar as their male colleagues positioned themselves in the hallways to monitor this individual’s behavior and to prevent him from following and sexually assaulting vulnerable women.

### **Stalking**

Victims’ experiences were not limited to sexual assault and harassment alone. Interviewees cited numerous incidents of stalking, too. These included men following women back to their dorm after their sexual advances were rejected, women feeling compelled to hide in other rooms so that the person stalking them would not know where they lived, and men gaining access to female galley workers’ shift schedules to track them down at shift change or to follow them home from work.

One male interviewee recalled how he felt compelled to organize others to form a ring around a woman dancing at a bar just to keep men from touching her. Another described how women at McMurdo sometimes carry tools or other items to use as weapons because they are not confident anyone else will ensure their safety. “There was a woman” at McMurdo, one interviewee recounted, “who told me she carried a hammer around with her. And she is constantly changing rooms because she is so freaked out. HR told her to walk around with a radio if she felt uncomfortable . . . but they can’t do anything . . . because it’s still under investigation.” Another interviewee shared:

**Illustrative Quote: Stalking**

“We all pass through McMurdo on the way to South Pole. I was thoroughly warned before ever spending time in McMurdo. I just make sure I never ever go to a party or bar unless I’m with a group of people I trust.”

**Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Across Demographics**

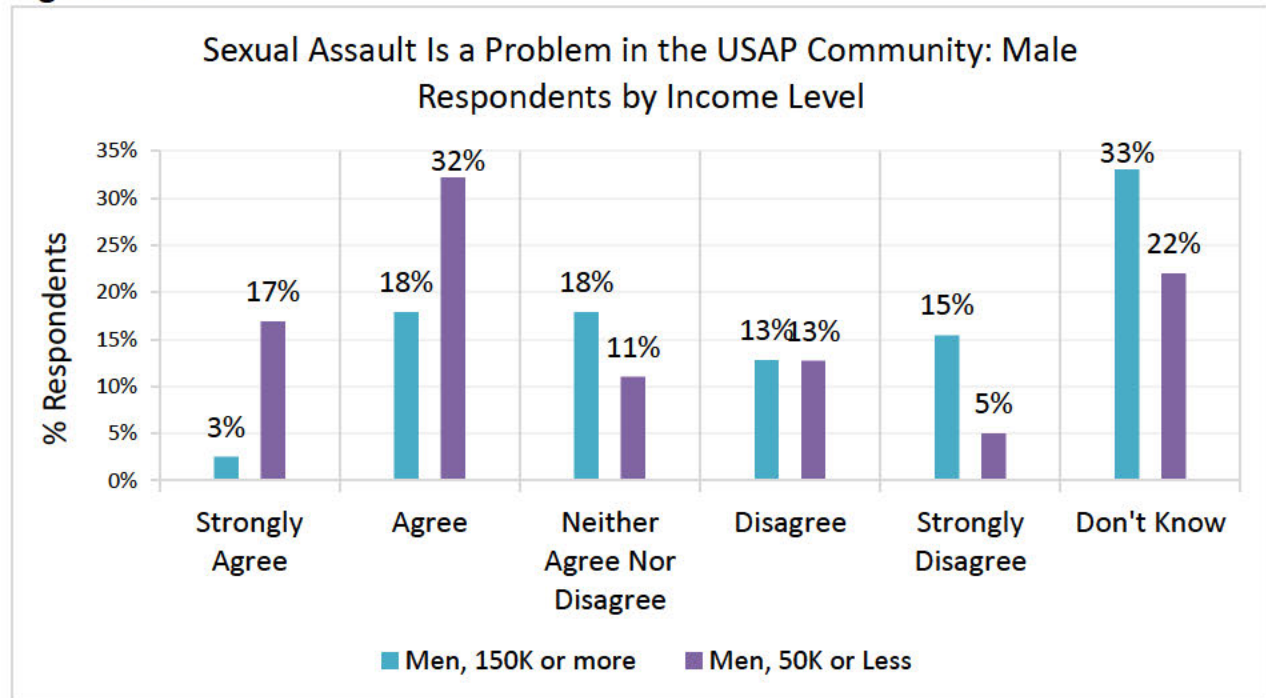
Quantitative data confirms the experiences recounted by these interviewees. It also provides a more nuanced view of how different segments of the population experience and perceive these problems.

Not surprisingly (considering who, statistically, we know is targeted for sexual victimization and who commits such harms), the extent to which sexual assault or harassment are viewed as problems within USAP differs greatly depending on the respondent’s gender, income, age, and sexual orientation. Respondents who are most vulnerable (e.g., those who are female, lesbian, gay or bisexual, younger, and lower income) were all far more likely to view sexual assault as a problem than their male, heterosexual, older, and higher-income counterparts.

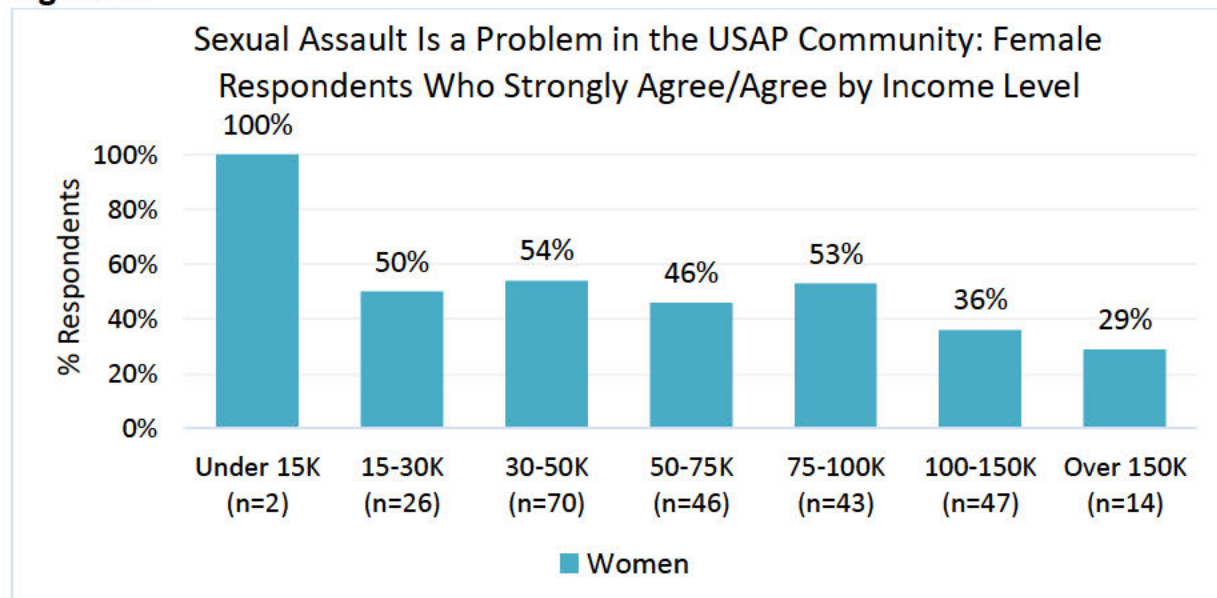
In combination, gender and income is a significant determinant of whether survey respondents believe that “sexual assault is a problem in the USAP community.” Among male survey respondents, more than a third of men earning more than \$150,000 reported they “do not know” if sexual assault is a problem; only 20% of the group believe sexual assault is, in fact, a problem. Those perceptions are flipped with men who earn less than \$50,000, with 50% of them believing sexual assault is a problem and only 22% saying they do not know. This lack of awareness or recognition of the problem of sexual assault was reflected among older, male

focus groups interviewees, too. In several of the groups, male participants were visibly moved by what they heard from their younger and female colleagues.

**Figure 4.**



**Figure 5.**

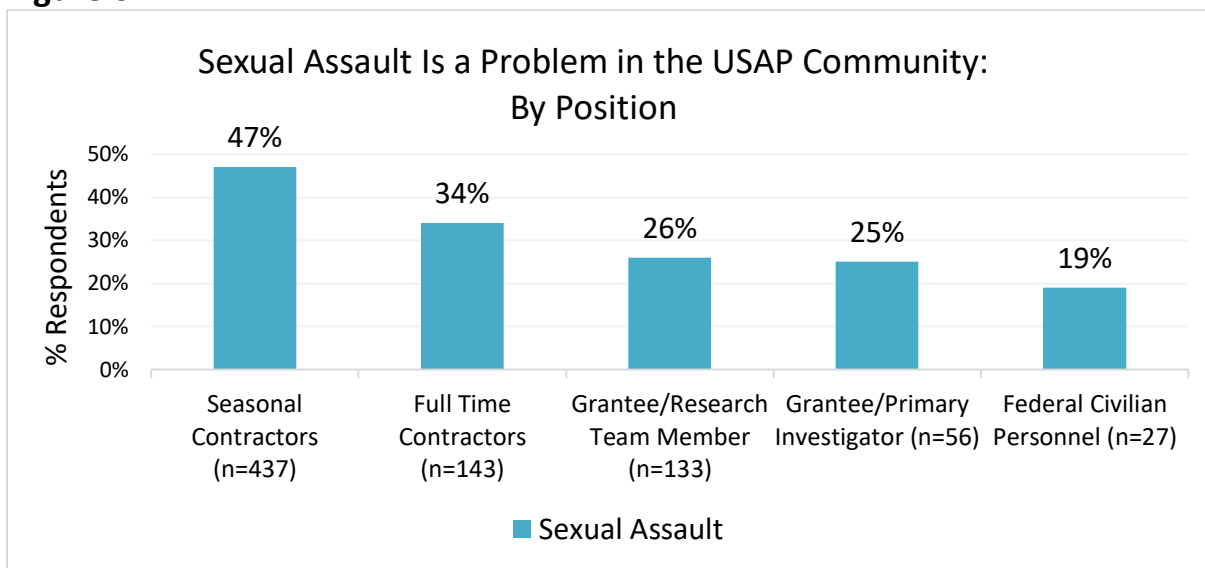


Significantly more female than male survey respondents believe that sexual assault is a problem in the USAP community. This remains true across all income categories, although higher-salaried women are less likely than their lower-wage

counterparts to perceive it as a problem.<sup>31</sup> Overall, 47% of female respondents and 33% of male respondents agree that sexual assault is a problem within the USAP community.

Individuals who hold positions of considerable power or prestige within the USAP community also appear to be unaware of the victimization experienced by the younger, less powerful, and lower paid members of their respective teams. For example, more than 47% of seasonal contractors agree that sexual assault is a problem within USAP compared to only 26% of grantees who agree with this statement. This divide was reflected in the focus groups, as well.

**Figure 6.**



Sobered by what he was hearing from his female colleagues regarding abuse and harassment, a USAP community member with extensive experience on the ice noted that he was “amazed by these stories, I didn’t know this happened.” An experienced male researcher in a different focus group echoed that he was learning things he never knew about the extent and severity of sexual harassment and assault in Antarctica. “I’m pretty amazed at these stories,” he noted. “I guess because I’m a male. . . . It strikes me that maybe the females in our group are aware of this kind of stuff.” Another participant explained, “I feel like I don’t have anything to bring to the table regarding where I think the community issues are. I’m a white male in a community dominated by white males. There’s a lot that I have not seen, I have not heard of.”

<sup>31</sup> More than half (53%) of female survey respondents earning less than \$50,000 per year report that sexual assault is a problem. Fewer than 30% of female respondents earning more than \$150,000 also agree with this statement.



That men within the community do not share the same experiences as women was underscored by an email the team received from a male contractor unable to attend a focus group. He wanted to provide his perspective on these issues:

### Illustrative Quote: Demographics

“My two seasons at McMurdo was great. I think USAP has done everything they could to make the people who work there as comfortable as possible. I think USAP is very successful in providing a positive work environment for the men and women who work there.

One would think that when there are opposite genders living in an isolated community for a long period of time, there are going to be issues regarding the relationship between the two. However, I didn't see or experience anything worthy of note. I think all in all, everyone behaved respectfully towards each other. I worked in . . . historically a male dominated work environment so I wasn't in close contact with women on a daily basis. . . . Most of the McMurdo work force are in their 20's and 30's so still very sexually active. I seen [sic] the pattern of how people meet when they get to the Ice then become mutually exclusive and that's ok. I never seen any overt sexual overtones displayed by anyone.”

A younger male focus group participant concurred that some older men, especially, remain unaware of what women in USAP experience. “Even for people who do have the privilege of being in a position to step in [such as] older men who [could] see these things happening and who aren't doing gross things to women – they don't notice.” Indeed, some community members feel that certain people with higher status deliberately choose not to notice, or they see what goes on and choose to remain silent. As an interviewee explained, some “don't want to be the one person who is calling people out.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> One senior researcher explained, “I have approached students informally and told [these] new students, ‘Hey, this guy gets a girl every year’.” Asked if she had ever considered raising this issue directly with her male colleague who was preying on these young research students the participant replied, “It's just a sex thing, I don't think it's our business to stop people from doing what they want to do.”

## Finding #2: ASC Contractors and Subcontractors Report a Lack of Trust in Their Human Resources

As detailed above, numerous community members expressed anguish and fear regarding their, and their friends' and colleagues', physical and emotional safety within the USAP. They gave many examples of community members who were victimized. Contractors described how, despite repeated efforts to report abuse and to hold perpetrators accountable there, were rarely serious consequences for offenders who engaged in sexual harassment and assault, in their experience.

Interviewees frequently shared their perceptions that victims were not only not encouraged to report but were actively discouraged from doing so. These individuals reported how they and their colleagues feel undermined and not supported. They view their respective human resources (HR) departments as barriers to their pursuit of safety and justice. Perhaps one focus group participant best captured the sentiment when she stated, "Nine times out of ten the victim is more punished or is worse off. As a woman, there is no sense of justice when something happens. Even if there was something in place, the trust is so broken."<sup>33</sup> Another community member explained the following:

### Illustrative Quote: Lack of Trust

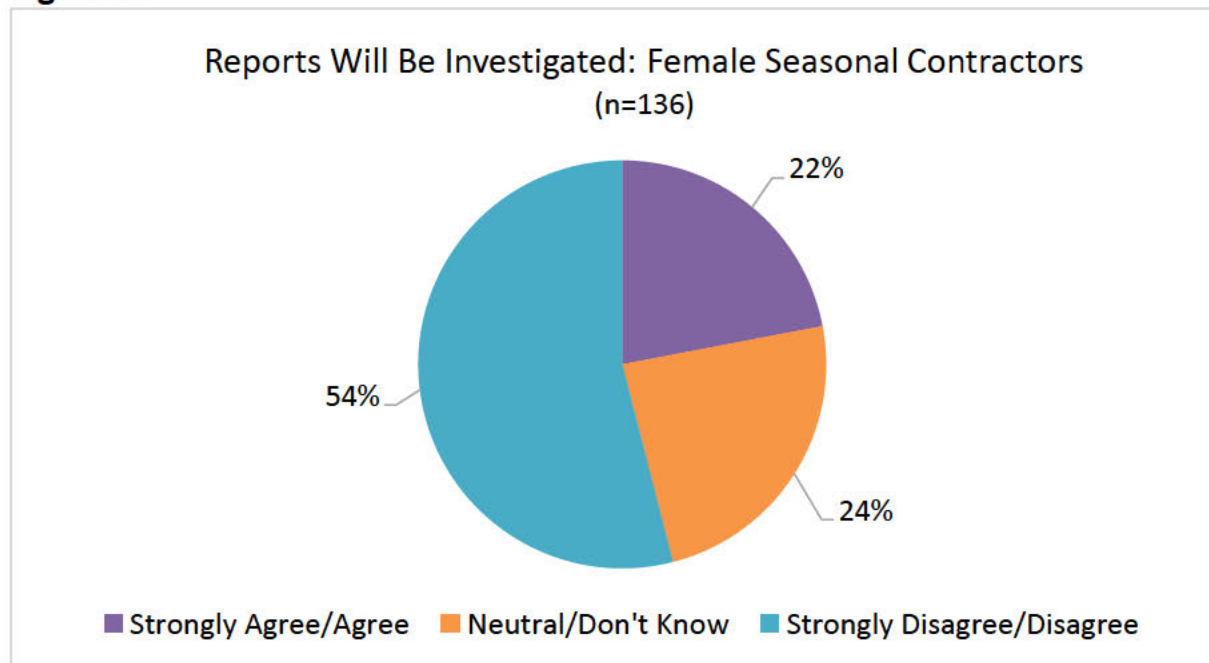
"There's a huge issue on station with the contractors not trusting their companies to look out for them and not trusting their HR staff to properly do their jobs. I've seen numerous instances where HR has gotten a report and the person behaving inappropriately has received seemingly no repercussions, or at least nothing worth changing their behavior over, and I've heard of times where HR just verbally warns the person the report is about without making a note in their employee file (usually under the reasoning that actually recording it will be damaging to their future contracts). This damages the belief that HR will actually do anything, and in the second case actively works against the companies because it erases any chance of establishing a behavior pattern in these people that should prohibit them from getting contracts in the future."

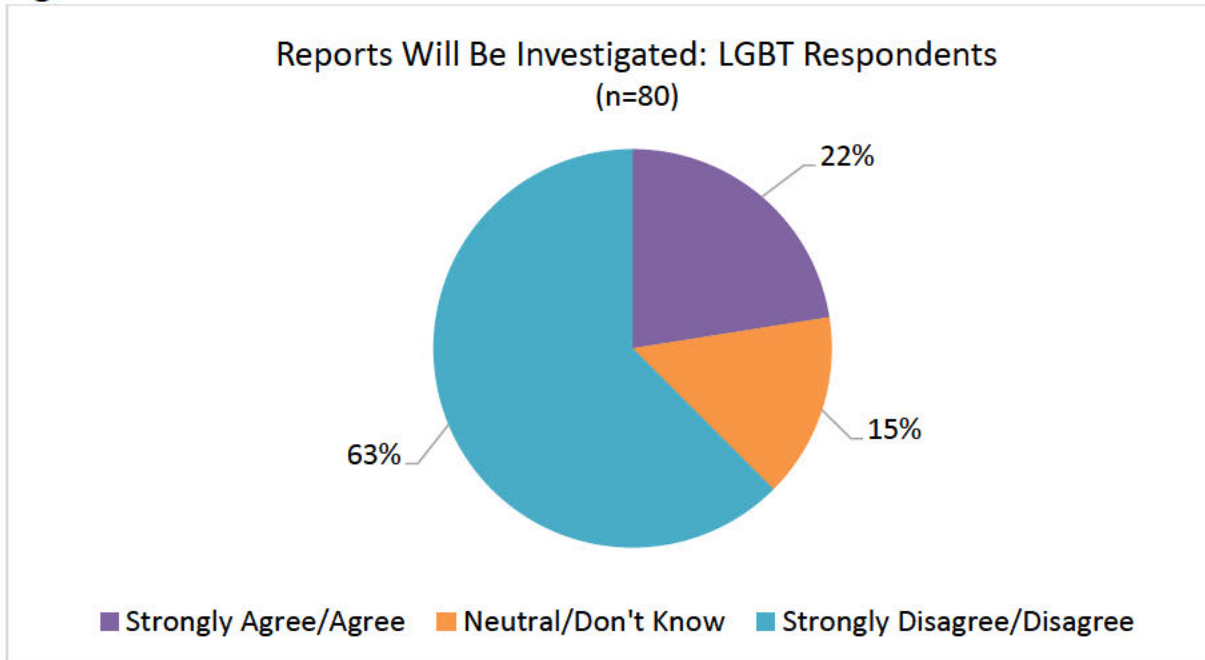
<sup>33</sup> Others report that they find it unlikely that human resource personnel will respond appropriately, even if they wish to report an incident, because there is no department representative on the ice or because they have never met their representative. This suggests that community members feel safest in reporting sexual assault or harassment when there is a preexisting relationship with the human resources representative.

## Respondents' Perceptions of Institutional Response by Gender and Sexuality

Survey results underscored these interviewees' sentiments and experiences. Overall, just under 50% of those surveyed felt their organization or institution would thoroughly investigate a report of sexual assault or harassment. However, respondents who were male, older, more highly educated, and earned an annual income level of \$100,000 or more were much more likely within their demographic to agree with this statement. Those most likely to disagree that a complaint of sexual harassment or sexual assault would be thoroughly investigated were women, LGBT, younger people, and those earning \$50,000 a year or less. Fewer than 1 in 4 respondents (i.e., less than 25%) who identified as female; seasonal contractors; or lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender believed their employer would conduct a thorough investigation.

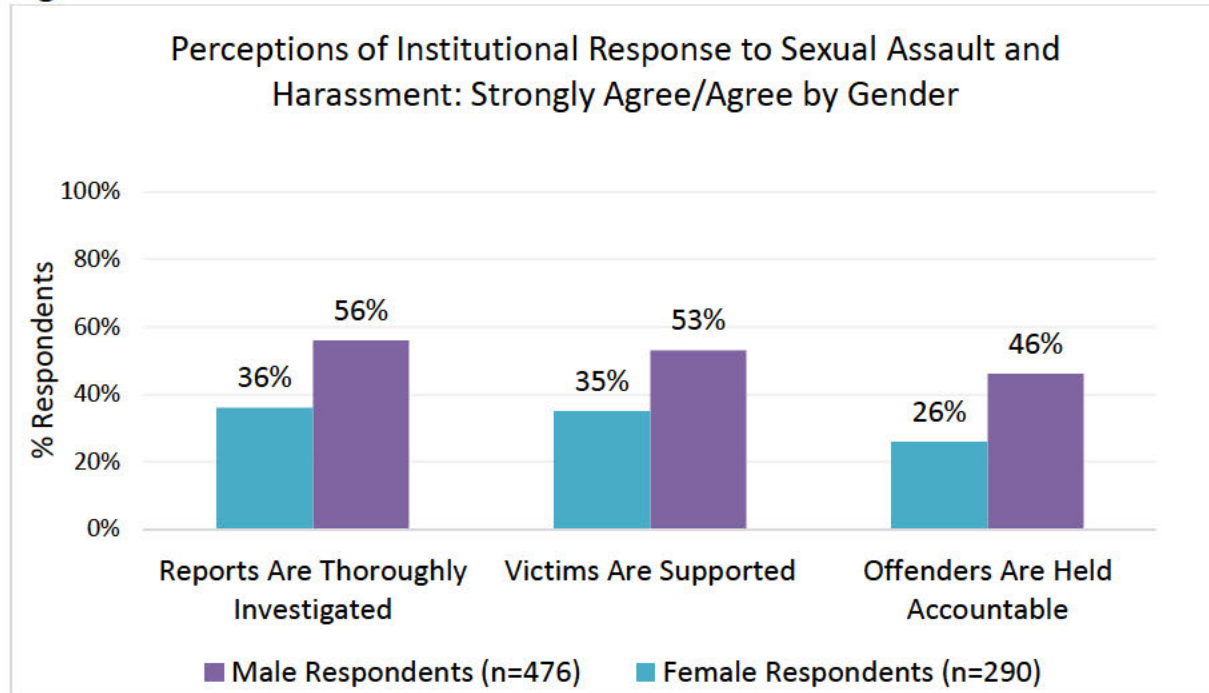
**Figure 7.**



**Figure 8.**

Even fewer respondents “believe that the organization or institution [they] work for holds people who cause harm (like sexual assault and harassment) accountable.” On average, 38% of respondents agree with this statement. As with many other of the other inquiries, however, men were much more likely than women to regard their employer as responsive and committed to holding offenders accountable. (Men were also much more likely than women to believe that the organization they work for thoroughly investigate incidents of sexual misconduct and supports victims of sexual harassment and assault.)

However, even then, less than half (46%) of male respondents reported they believed that people who caused harms such as sexual assault or harassment would be held accountable. Far fewer (approximately one-fourth (26%)) female respondents concurred.

**Figure 9.**

The reasons why some contractors' employees do not trust their respective human resources departments vary between the stations, by contractor, by individual human resources representatives, and other factors. Several considerations are addressed below.

### **ASC Human Resources**

A notable number of community members perceive that contractor and subcontractor human resource departments as dismissing, minimizing, shaming, and blaming victims who report sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Numerous community members who work for ASC contractors expressed great distrust of both their own and other contractors' human resources departments. These conclusions were based on their own experiences as well as reports by other community members. (Many victims of sexual misconduct the team spoke to, also reported that they do not feel comfortable informing their superiors when incidents of sexual assault or harassment occur, either because of who those supervisors are or because of how human resources will respond if the supervisor makes a report.<sup>34</sup>)

<sup>34</sup> This discussion focuses on human resources because it was identified as one of the most critically deficient links in the reporting process, but community members also expressed concerns with other aspects of the reporting structure, including the responses of supervisors and others with authority. One

Qualitative data confirms what the quantitative data indirectly demonstrates, i.e., that female victims do not feel supported, that incidents are not thoroughly investigated, and that individuals who cause such harms are not held accountable. One female contractor in the USAP community described how, for example, when she reported an incident, human resources' response was to dismiss or minimize her experience and the seriousness of the complaint:

**Illustrative Quote: ASC Human Resources**

“When I got into [the HR] office, it felt so unwelcoming to have a heart-to-heart conversation about [the sexual harassment I experienced]. The HR lady was making me feel like I did something wrong. After everything was all said and done, I felt like she had already made up a decision. What happened to the sexual harassment policy and the code of conduct [my company] had us sign . . .?”

Community members described to the team what is known in the field as institutional betrayal. As Dr. Jennifer Freyd explained in her extensive research on the institutions' post-sexual assault response to victims, “The term institutional betrayal refers to wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution upon individuals dependent on that institution, including failure to prevent or respond supportively to wrongdoings by individuals (e.g., sexual assault) committed within the context of the institution” (Freyd, 2018). For example:

Sexual assault occurring in a context where an important institution acts in a way that betrays its member's trust will be especially damaging . . . In fact, betrayals occurring in events leading up to sexual assault such as creating an environment that is conducive to sexual assault were more commonly reported than insufficient responses to assault in this sample. This perception may be more

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female contractor with (b) (6) experience working in male-dominated environments disclosed, “The only time I've felt I've been discriminated against because I'm a woman is [here] on the Ice. I did a winter at McMurdo and felt totally disrespected by the guys I worked with. I went to my foreman. He totally blew it off.” Another interviewee spoke of a sexual assault survivor who was unwilling to make a report to the individual responsible for taking action at their station because the survivor believed that person to be “uninformed, dismissive, inaccessible, and likely to minimize their experience.” Team LDSS also was informed of a victim being “crushed when told they had to report to [this person] because [the person] is so unapproachable.”

damaging to members because it creates a sense that the institution could have done something to prevent the experience from occurring (Smith & Freyd, 2013).

In contrast, explains Dr. Freyd, there is also the opportunity for what she describes as institutional courage. Such courage is defined as:

An institution's commitment to seek the truth and engage in moral action, despite unpleasantness, risk, and short-term cost. It is a pledge to protect and care for those who depend on the institution. It is a compass oriented to the common good of individuals, the institution, and the world. It is a force that transforms institutions into more accountable, equitable, healthy places for everyone (Freyd, 2018).

NSF OPP stands at the crossroads of institutional betrayal and institutional courage. It is Team LDSS' hope that this *Needs Assessment Report*, and the SAHPR project, represent a turning fixed toward courage and change.

In addition to incidents recounted to Team LDSS directly, in (b) (6) 2020, Leidos was presented with more than one dozen "testimonials" from individuals impacted by sexual assault and harassment in the USAP. The summaries cited numerous examples of victims feeling shamed, minimized, dismissed, or otherwise not taken seriously by human resources. (While the team reviewed those summaries, they are not cited here for privacy reasons, as they were not shared with Team LDSS directly.) To the best of Team LDSS' knowledge, that information has remained with Leidos and has not (yet) been shared with NSF.

Focus group participants (and others) reported that they believe HR does not respond to complaints in a timely manner. This perceived lack of urgency further underscores their beliefs and experiences that human resources does not appropriately protect victims, nor do they value (or act upon) reports of sexual misconduct. Recounting an incident that occurred on station, a community member described being part of "a situation where we wanted to cut somebody off from the bar as we waited for an [investigation] outcome. But our hands were initially tied because we're waiting for an HR ok on that. [Meanwhile], the individual was still causing problems nightly; we were waiting days for a response from HR." Another community member — who described numerous incidents of

sexual assault and harassment in their correspondence with Team LDSS — shared the following:

#### **Illustrative Quote: ASC Human Resources**

“A friend once had a guy choke her while his penis was in his hand, threatening her to call me to have a threesome with them (I had turned the guy down several times over the previous weeks) or he wouldn’t stop. She told me but [she] refused to report it. I reported it anyway, but they just kept the guy around for a couple months while figuring out what to do. I avoided public places and took random routes to my dorm so he couldn’t follow me.”<sup>35</sup>

#### **ASC Human Resources and Acts of Retaliation**

A significant number of community members believe that contractor and subcontractor human resources departments retaliate against victims and those who support them. Throughout the data collection process, community members reported that when they or their colleagues reported sexual misconduct to human resources, they felt they were punished for doing so. As one survey respondent wrote:

#### **Illustrative Quote: ASC Human Resources and Acts of Retaliation**

“People on station fear, and rightfully so, that if they are harassed or assaulted and report it, they will be the ones who will be going home. When things happened on ice, the number one thing I heard was ‘don’t report it or you will go home and be blacklisted from the program’ . . . I saw this happen, people who stood up and reported that something had occurred and then they were fired and sent off ice . . . .”

It creates a harmful and enduring ripple effect when a victim or witness reports an assault or harassment and then experiences what they or others believe are negative consequences. This perceived retaliation, and the numerous examples community members cite (which are, in turn, shared through word of mouth and

<sup>35</sup> According to the community member, to “remedy” the situation the employer “ended up sending him to the South Pole for the rest of the season as a solution.”



correspondence as victims seek support), seriously undermine contract workers' confidence in human resources. This is true for victims and other community members alike. Even those workers who have not personally had disappointing experiences with the department begin to mistrust the human resources personnel they are expected to rely on for assistance. For example, in three different focus groups, multiple individuals shared a similar account of a woman who was sexually assaulted and reported it. As it was related to Team LDSS, (b) (6) the perpetrator was asked to resign, and the perpetrator refused to do so. The individuals we spoke with reported that the victim's boss began giving the victim poor performance reviews, which had never happened until the victim reported the assault. Interviewees relayed that the woman was "fired [by HR] for (b) (6) two weeks later." This example was cited repeatedly as the apocryphal tale of what happens when women on the ice report a rape or other sexual assault.

Although the details relayed to the team varied across the groups, what is clear is that the precise details of this incident are less important than the enduring message. Numerous USAP community members shared their belief that, if you report that you were raped, you could be fired. The story serves as both a warning and a confirmation of what many feared to be true: female workers are viewed as dispensable. In the words of one survey respondent, "Women in easily replaced service roles . . . they don't speak up because they are afraid of losing their position. It is made clear that the community comes first." And as a survey respondent cautioned, if changes are not implemented, victims "will continue to be further hurt by the USAP program treating them as expendable and punishing those who do speak up."

Several participants in the supervisors' focus group shared this concern. They noted that any person who speaks up as a victim or as supportive of victims will be labeled a troublemaker by human resources and endanger their contract renewal. As a survey respondent noted, "Often young women want to grow their career within the USAP so will not report incidents . . . And when they do, they are often retaliated against or won't be invited back."

Retaliatory experiences and anecdotes were widely discussed. In several different focus groups, participants cited the termination of an individual who they viewed as an outspoken supporter of the Ice Allies as an example of retaliation. Another explained that "a lead person for McMurdo station" (b) (6) she was let go this year and it has not been communicated why." Another

interviewee stated that an individual was terminated after she “pushed within her organization to have an assault reviewed at the Leidos level.” Another contractor concurred and shared their own concerns regarding being outspoken on these issues:

**Illustrative Quote: Resources and Acts of Retaliation**

“I know two women who were told they would never get contracts from PAE again, despite always having really good end of season evaluations and multiple departments wanting to hire them. The common denominators are they are people who speak out, they are people who bother HR, saying ‘why isn’t this sexual assault/harassment not being taken care of?’ That’s honestly why I’m ok being really out loud right now, because I am pretty sure I will not have a contract next year because I am one of those people who’s been moderately loud.”

Almost all community members the team spoke with who were active in the effort to raise awareness of sexual assault and harassment within USAP cited a litany of examples of what they perceive to be retaliation specifically due to their activism on these issues. One such individual wrote that they were informed they are on a contractor’s “‘do not re-hire’ blacklist.” “I have not seen the ‘blacklist,” this individual wrote, “[but another worker has] and . . . 4 of us on the list were actively involved in anti-harassment initiatives. . . .” The person went on to explain:

**Illustrative Quote: Resources and Acts of Retaliation**

“[W]hile all employers have a written non-retaliation policy, they get around this by simply letting an individual’s short-term contract run out, and then choose not to re-hire the individual for subsequent seasons. There is generally no explanation or feedback given to the employee, just silence following applications for follow-on contracts. . . . Of the 4 of us who have been blacklisted presumably for employee advocacy activities, all of us had excellent performance reviews and positive reputations in the community. And some were specifically requested for rehire by their team’s hiring managers.”

Another wrote that, in a meeting with human resources, the HR representative, “kept insisting that we were being combative against HR and said [they] had no reason to believe that sexual harassment is an issue in Antarctica.”

There is a widely shared perception among community members interviewed that, while victims are punished, individuals who commit harassment or assault are allowed to remain employed on the ice – sometimes, even with receiving promotions. One interviewee described a circumstance in which a woman “was literally chased around the station by this man. Not only were there no consequences, but he was hired as a year-round [employee]. When a bystander confronted him, he threatened to run him over with a bulldozer. . . . This bad person was rewarded with a full-time position.” Another observed that, “nothing happens. People who engage in these behaviors are not only not sanctioned but they are rewarded!” Yet another community member wrote:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Resources and Acts of Retaliation**

“I was reprimanded by both [the harasser’s] supervisor and mine for ‘improperly reporting’ the harassment. I don’t think I should have been harassed in the first place, but I am more upset that my requests for help were ignored, that my harasser was rehired after multiple complaints, and that I was retaliated against by my supervisors for seeking help.”

#### **Perceptions of ASC Human Resources Handling of Reports**

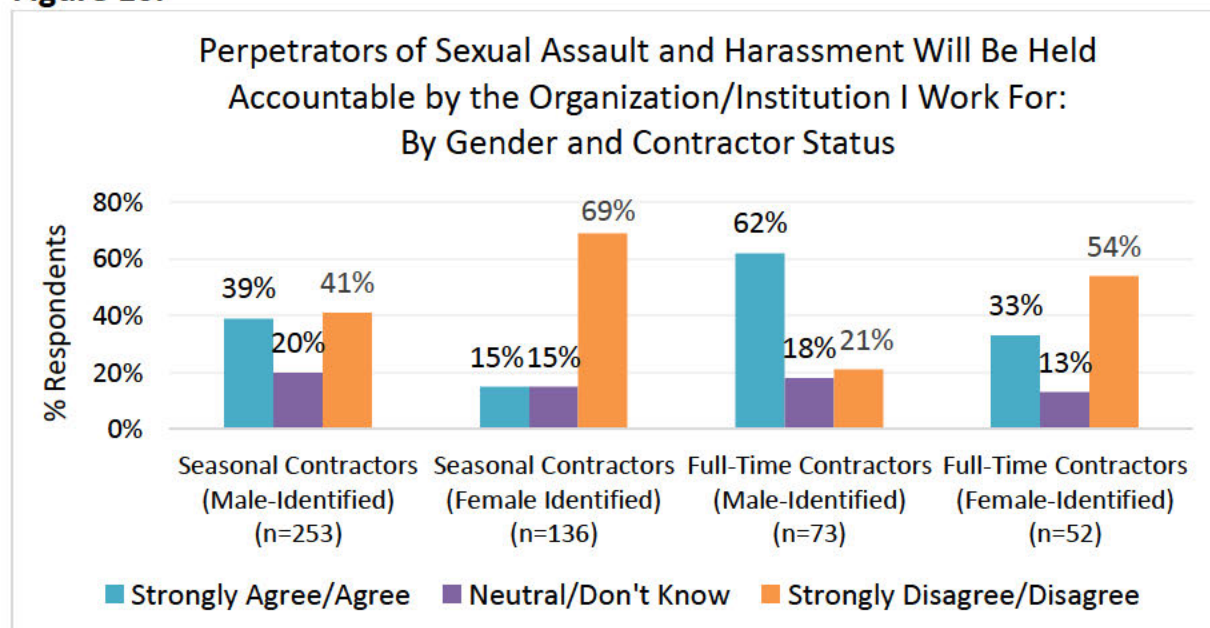
Community members believe human resources departments do not handle reports of misconduct objectively and fairly.

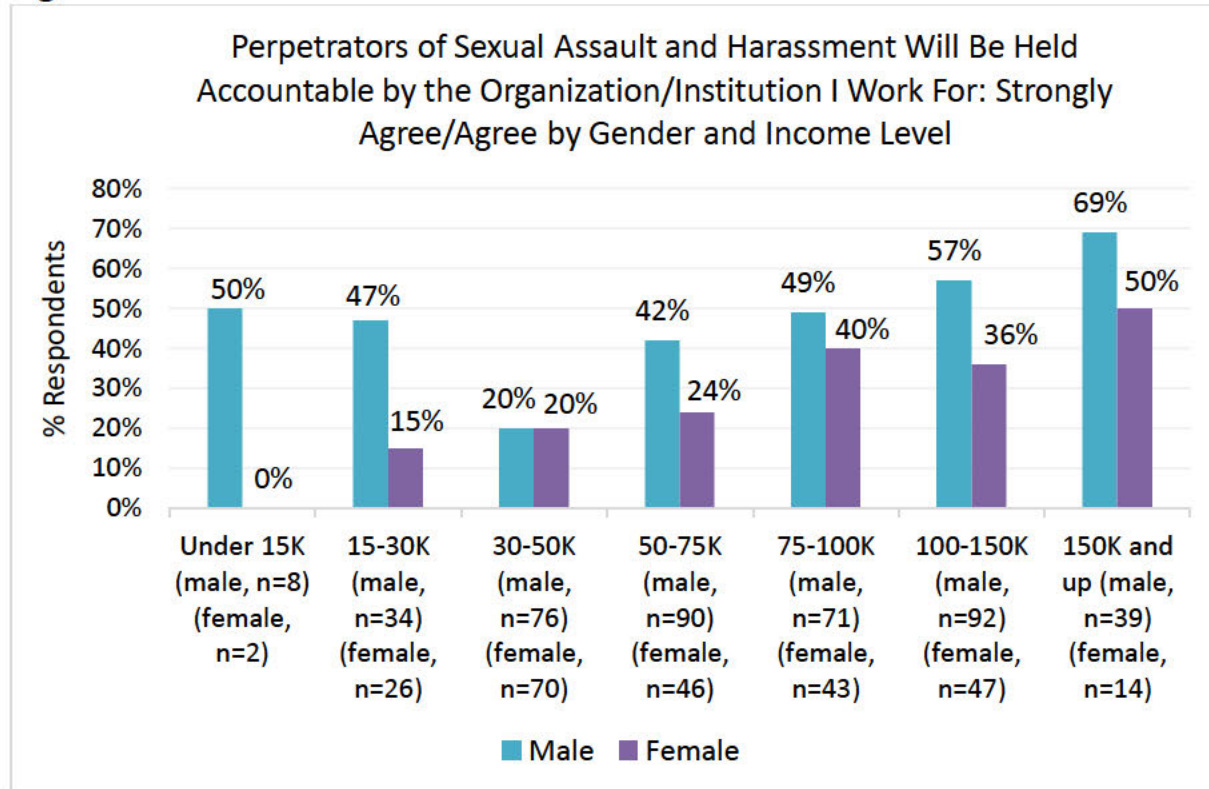
Contractors and researchers, among others, told the team that they believe human resources does not hold all members of the community equally accountable. One commonly held perception is that individuals with power, authority, or social status and individuals in hard-to-fill positions, as well as members of the military, are not held responsible for acts of sexual assault or harassment they commit. While there was not a specific line of inquiry in the focus groups regarding this topic, numerous participants raised this issue. One survey respondent wrote, “[m]en who occupy essential and hard to replace roles can rape someone and be hired back. USAP will treat women who have been assaulted and raped and targeted by these men with suspicion and try to blame the fact they were assaulted on their own behavior.” Another reported that “the

very few men who have actually been reprimanded for any sort of sexual assault or harassment are always in jobs where they are dispensable.”

Several participants raised the issue of personal relationships between those who engage in sexual misconduct and human resources employees and how this contributes to the perception that not all reports will be investigated or appropriately addressed. One interviewee reported how, during the on-boarding and quarantine process in Christchurch, they experienced sexual harassment at least three consecutive nights. The victim reported the problem to human resources but, according to the victim, “because [HR] didn’t handle it the first night or put him on restrictions, it kept escalating. . . . Allegedly he was friendly with HR at the time and so (b) (6) helped cover it up.” This issue of personal friendships between human resources personnel and individuals who engage in sexual misconduct was raised in focus groups as well. In one group, a participant reported that a human resources representative was in a romantic relationship with someone alleged to be committing abuse. While we do not know if this report is accurate, the shared *perception* that human resources cover up or does not hold individuals accountable because of personal relationships undermines workers’ confidence. Workers believe that they cannot successfully seek and obtain prompt and appropriate responses from human resources when sexual misconduct occurs.

**Figure 10.**



**Figure 11.**

Finally, Human Resources is perceived as protecting its own interests, and those of NSF, over victims' needs. A recurring comment from community members was like one made by this interviewee:

**Illustrative Quote: Perceptions of ASC Human Resources Handling of Reports**

"I have. . .been involved in sexual assault and harassment cases and I don't trust HR because of that. I feel like HR is trying to protect NSF and USAP. I do wish there was a person who was [an outside] third party. I wish we had a confidential third party or an anonymous way to report."

Another community member echoed this sentiment, noting,

**Illustrative Quote: Perceptions of ASC Human Resources Handling of Reports**

"There is not a great deal of trust and respect for our current leadership, and it doesn't feel like we have a supportive place to . . . get help."

## Community Members Report They Do Not Trust Their Human Resources

Community members do not trust human resources departments because they perceive them as withholding information and failing to communicate outcomes to victims or other community members.

Victims, supervisors, and other complainants reported feeling frustrated and angry that they are encouraged to report incidents to human resources but, once the report is received, the victim and other community members are never told whether an investigation was conducted or the outcome of that inquiry. They felt even more confused and uncertain when individuals accused of misconduct were removed from the ice for that season and the explanations proffered for their departure were “family or medical needs” rather than for disciplinary reasons. This left victims unsure of the outcome of their complaints and suspicious of whether they were appropriately handled. As one survivor explained:

### Illustrative Quote: No Trust in Their Human Resources

“Even when proceeding forward with a report, HR has a communication issue. [W]hen I reported someone for being drunk and disorderly . . . HR did deal with it but other than giving my statement I was left in the dark about proceedings until [eventually] I found out that person was no longer on-base.”

Some of the contractor supervisors told the team they feel the current human resources reporting structure leaves them in a no-win situation: If they escalate the complaint to their companies’ human resources department, they will have limited insight into how (if at all) the investigation will proceed. It is unlikely human resources will provide them with helpful information, or with information they are permitted to share with the complainant. This in turn undermines workers’ confidence in their supervisors, further eroding the trust the supervisor worked hard to achieve.

It was evident from the focus groups and interviews that contractors’ human resources and other personnel must find a way to navigate this dilemma. They are obliged to protect employees’ privacy and handle personnel matters in confidence, but because there is so much mistrust that has accumulated over the years, claims of employee privacy (or just plain silence) are viewed as excuses or a cover-up. A variety of community members, including supervisors, noted that

when employees complain of harassment or abuse are left “in the dark” it “leads to paranoia.” The lack of information combined with employees’ limited understanding of the complaint process and personnel procedures also create expectations that cannot be met. As one senior leader opined, “Where things go awry [is that] we are hamstrung by our inability to talk about what is going on with folks outside of the investigation. The general population expects things to happen in a day or less . . .” Moreover, when USAP members believe an investigation or outcome is poorly handled, the news ricochets throughout the community, fueled by the “small town rumor mill.” Soon enough, the facts themselves are not as important as what workers believe to be true and the corresponding failures. For many community members the team spoke with, there is no longer sufficient goodwill remaining to have confidence in how these matters are handled. As one community member explained, “the trust is broken.” Therefore, when Human Resources does not share personnel-related information with victims, supervisors, and other community members, it is viewed as a purposeful silence; the lack of transparency reinforces the perception that human resources cannot be trusted or relied upon.<sup>36</sup>

### **ASC Companies’ Investigations**

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Community members report that Human Resources fails to investigate reports of sexual assault or harassment by other contractors’ employees, grantees, or members of the military.

Interviewees discussed that, in their experience, Human Resources is even more likely to be ineffective in handling a report if the individual who engaged in the misconduct is affiliated with a different employer or educational institution than the victim. Indeed, one of the greatest areas of confusion was how to make a cross-complaint, i.e., a report against an employee for a different contractor or someone who is a grantee or member of the military. The siloed nature of the contractors’ and other institutions’ reporting structures essentially creates a loophole that many members believe perpetrators can exploit. One contractor recalled how they were “shocked to find out that the highest level of management for ASC does not get notified if there is an assault – because it is some other employers’ problem.” Another contractor observed, “[it’s] hard to

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<sup>36</sup> In conducting our research for this needs assessment, we gleaned additional insight into how delays and silence fuel a sense of community mistrust. An interviewee related those workers had submitted a document to human resources that summarized community members’ experiences of sexual assault and harassment within USAP. Team LDSS requested the summary multiple times; NSF also instructed the contractor to provide it. After the third request, documents (with minimal detail) were provided. Team LDSS continued to pursue the matter and eventually the summary was submitted to the team.

speak out against [other employers]. We don't have a venue or channel to speak through. You could talk to HR but how would that get to the military, and which HR do you even speak to? [It] gets to be a complicated web." Grantees echoed these concerns. As one grantee queried, "What do you do if you have a harassment case that doesn't come from your own institution? NSF needs to develop a mechanism that addresses those situations. NSF is trying to wash their hands with dealing with that."

The lack of this type of reporting structure is confusing and, as with other incidents described above, has an enduring and widespread impact on the community. As one USAP member recounted: "There was once a guy who harassed a friend of mine and there were five witnesses (myself included) plus her who all went to HR. But because he was a skilled worker and worked for 'a different company' nothing even happened, and she had to live on station with him while experiencing panic attacks to the point she couldn't go to work some days."

### **Finding #3: Grantees' Reported They Do Not Have a Reliable Way to Ensure Their Safety or Accountability**

Team LDSS spoke with a limited number of grantees, and they included a cross-section of several graduate students, principal investigators (PIs), and other researchers. Several graduate students as well as their PI mentors reported that, in their experience, they do not have a reliable way to ensure their safety or promote offender accountability while on the ice.

### **Grantee Experiences with and Perceptions of Reporting Mechanisms**

In theory, students and others affiliated with a university have the option to file a report or formal complaint with their academic institution. Several grantees shared, however, that the nature of this process necessarily precludes any kind of timely intervention. The individuals they are supposed to report to at their respective institutions possess, at best, a limited understanding of the cultural challenges these younger graduate or post-graduate researchers confront. They are also so far away that they're perceived as having limited usefulness in protecting the students and employees. One victim scoffed at the notion that their institution could assist them when an incident occurs, noting that the person they were supposed to report to "was 14,000 miles away" and there was no way to reach them. (Grantee researchers relayed that they felt there was often no way to access confidential or timely help when they needed it most. Their access to satellite phones is limited. Phone calls must be made close to or at base camp,



where there is little privacy, because of limited phone reception, established procedures for accessing the phones, and other considerations. Sometimes, the very person who harmed them is close at hand.) Several interviewees disclosed that, due to incidents of sexual misconduct they had experienced in the field, they bought personal satellite phones and now pay for their own In-Reach satellite communication service so they can summon help directly. Several researchers mentioned the expense associated with such phones and satellite services was considerable and an expense that women bore disproportionately for their safety.

Even when they can access help, numerous researchers in the field shared they routinely have no one on-site to turn to for support. Generally, their principal investigator (PI) is supposed to be their first point of contact. But not all victims work alongside their PI. Even if the PI is on site, the PI may not be supportive or responsive. A PI has considerable discretion whether to elevate or dismiss a subordinate's complaint, and on occasion, the PI is also the person committing or excusing the sexual misconduct. Several community members told the team that in addition to PIs other senior researchers may also have direct access to an NSF representative, but these individuals believe that NSF is – or is viewed as - not accessible to younger, and usually more vulnerable, researchers and grantees.

As with other community members, another obstacle to reporting for grantees is that “there is a perception that if a report is filed, the harassed will be removed, rather than the harasser.” That decision can be potentially career- or project-ending for grantees, further contributing to their silence. One grantee discussed how, in their experience, “People let things go more than they ought to because the consequences are so dire – both for the person involved and for the rest of the team. If a team of 6 [loses] 1 person, that’s important.” Another explained:

**Illustrative Quote: No Trust in Their Human Resources**

“Even thinking about reporting can damage your career long term. Most people keep it inside, complain about it to people they trust. There isn’t a safe way to report that would be equitable to your career. I don’t know that I would know who to trust enough to call. . . . Throughout my entire career, any of the situations I’ve been in . . . Even if I think about the times I might have considered reporting, I wouldn’t. [As a woman, you’re] already fighting to get the respect to be out there. Already trying to gain respect from this community.”

Most grantees are affiliated with an institution of higher education, and these individuals also have the option to report incidents of sexual misconduct through their college or university's Title IX office. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.<sup>37</sup> Sexual assault and sexual harassment can constitute a form of sex discrimination. Title IX applies to schools, local and state educational agencies, and other institutions that receive federal financial assistance from the Department of Education. As noted above, however, community members who conduct their research at remote locations discussed how it does not feel like a viable or effective option to report sexual misconduct on the ice to someone thousands of miles away who has limited understanding of the USAP community and environment.

To provide another entry point for receiving complaints, NSF created a portal where grantees who feel they have been discriminated against can submit a complaint directly to NSF under Title IX. However, we do not know whether or to what extent this portal is being used. None of the grantees who responded to the survey and none of the grantee focus group participants referenced the possibility of reporting on the NSF Portal; the only options they identified were a direct report to their PI or human resources at the institution. Additionally, given the perception that reporting could have career-ending possibilities, even if the grantees had known of the portal's existence, it is likely their privacy concerns and fears of retaliation or other career-related consequences would continue to limit its effectiveness. This is not necessarily a reason to discontinue its use; it remains important for survivors to have many different options for how to report harassment or abuse.

#### **Finding #4: Victims Believe Military Personnel Are Not Held Accountable for Sexual Misconduct**

Members of the military are viewed as engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior and there is little awareness of how to hold members accountable for their misconduct.

#### **Community Experiences with and Perceptions of Military Personnel**

Numerous community members – especially those in lower-level positions – felt members of the military commit sexual harassment with impunity at McMurdo

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<sup>37</sup> Title IX states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." See 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.

and other sites and stations. Numerous interviewees described multiple incidents of service members engaging in disrespectful inappropriate behavior toward female workers and supervisors failing repeatedly to address the problem. One example discussed by several participants in focus groups involves the women responsible for cleaning the bathrooms in the two buildings where male members of the military are housed. Victims recounted that male service members routinely enter the bathrooms and use the urinals while the bathrooms are being cleaned by female staff. The service members deliberately ignore the “closed for cleaning” signs, the female contractors reported, and despite repeated requests refused to wait (or to use the stalls) until the female cleaners had finished. Another interviewee (in a different focus group) elaborated. She explained:

**Illustrative Quote: Perceptions of Military Personnel**

“The military live in two buildings. The pilot and captains live in one and the lower ranking military personnel in the other. The janitors have to clean their bathrooms. It’s intimidating to go in there; they are all there, and it’s a common place where harassment occurs. . . . Going in to [clean] the men’s bathrooms – I have to stand up to people that don’t like to be told what to do. [They’re] stepping over signs that say ‘do not enter.’ [I’ve] reported this and have had no response from their captains. I don’t know who to go to when it comes to the military.”<sup>38</sup>

One survey respondent observed:

**Illustrative Quote: Perceptions of Military Personnel**

“Parsons [Corporation] and Air Force had the most outrageous conduct that I witnessed. Their management was separate from ours . . . I think they felt,

<sup>38</sup> Military and other community members’ treatment of female janitors struck a chord with several individuals. “As a janitor I had to clean the military dorm 210 at night. The military flight crews were always partying in there and men would come into the closed bathroom while I was cleaning it to hit on me. Elsewhere on station, it was a daily occurrence for men to come in to closed bathrooms to pee while I was cleaning. I know that doesn’t sound that aggressive, but I saw SO MANY PENISES that way, against my will, while doing my job, and it was ONLY MEN who did it, women never came in to closed bathrooms.”

and kind of were, untouchable. And that made them do things I thought only happened in movies. It was kind of insane to witness.”

One employee who identifies as “a queer person” was told, by a service member, “You haven’t tried the right dick.”

Victims shared that they report this mistreatment, but supervisors and HR consistently decline to intervene. For example, one contractor employee reported that, when they complained to their supervisor about the service members’ conduct, the supervisor responded by shrugging it off saying, something to the effect of, “I can take you off that assignment and put some other woman on it instead of you. Your choice.”

As one worker explained, “[We’re] conditioned that the guard gets whatever they want.” Another best summarized what community members described: “nothing will happen” with any report regarding the military.

#### **Finding #5: NSF Lacks Adequate Reporting and Response Systems**

NSF does not have systems in place to ensure that it is appropriately informed of and responsive to incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment within the USAP community.

#### **Communication to NSF**

For a variety of historical, institutional, legal, and structural reasons, NSF is not informed as to the frequency, scope, severity, or outcomes of incidences of sexual assault and harassment that occur within the USAP. Even when it is informed, NSF does not reliably respond to allegations or redress the situation even when able. Structural and philosophical challenges appear to be primary impediments to implementing meaningful change.

NSF is uninformed as to the scope or severity of incidents that occur. In part, NSF is unaware of incidents of sexual assault and harassment because there is attrition at every juncture: victim reporting, supervisor response, investigation, and offender sanctions. However, even when complaints of sexual harassment or assault manage to wend their way through the formal reporting process, it appears that NSF does not receive full, accurate, or timely information from its contractors and grantees. In part this is because NSF does not require contractors and subcontractors to provide full and accurate reports. As a result, NSF is

insulated from the information that would enable it to recognize and respond to what many believe are widespread and urgent problems within the USAP.

NSF is also uninformed because it does not have policies or procedures in place to address cross-jurisdiction incidents. NSF sits at the apex of the many entities and jurisdictions (e.g., academic institutions, military, contractors, etc.) that comprise the USAP. When cross-jurisdictional incidents of sexual harassment or assault occur (e.g., where the victim and the offender are affiliated with different contractors, academic institutions, and/or military branches) community members have nowhere else to look other than NSF for guidance on reporting. Team LDSS has not seen that this protocol exists. As a result, community members do not know what procedures govern these circumstances. They do not know to whom or how a report should be made when a multi-jurisdiction incident occurs. Victims do not know who, if anyone, is available to support them, which entity is responsible for the investigation, who may hold the offender accountable, and whether or how the outcome will be communicated to the victim.

Among some grantees and contractors, there is a sentiment that NSF does not know about or address these issues because it passively, and sometimes proactively, insulates itself from responsibility. There is a perception that NSF accomplishes this by shifting responsibility to the contractors, the military, and the academic institutions it funds, and disclaims knowledge or responsibility. In this multi-jurisdictional environment, NSF has attempted to create systems for greater oversight (see discussion of the Polar Code of Conduct and Review Board below), but the systems in place remain inadequate. Some community members also perceive NSF as primarily interested in maintaining the status quo and deliberately declining to leverage its funding and contractual authority to promote a safer, more just workplace. They view NSF's asserted lack of authority as an abdication of its leadership responsibility and undermining any meaningful effort to effect change.

### **NSF Efforts to Address Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment**

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As discussed below, NSF has taken actions to provide greater clarity of expected behavior and oversight of contractor, subcontractor, and grantee responses to sexual misconduct. However, the systems in place are still perceived as inadequate.

*The Polar Code of Conduct.* Prior to 2017, NSF was, in the words of one employee, “comfortable that the sexual assault, sexual harassment, physical fights, etc. would be handled by the relevant agency.” NSF was:

**Illustrative Quote: Efforts to Address Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment**

“Comfortable with military taking care of military, the university with their folks, etc. We only jumped in when it was cross-program, such as military against civilian. It was manageable and the standard was understood by the contractors. The military had the Uniform Code of Military Justice, contractors had the contract, etc. It was convenient to think that the university had an obligation to protect everyone bundled under the grant.”

In 2013 NSF established a Polar Code of Conduct (the “Code” or “Code of Conduct”)<sup>39</sup> which applies to all people working or visiting the USAP, or who are financially supported by NSF in the Antarctic. The Code applies to all persons working at or visiting a USAP or an NSF-managed Arctic station, field camp, other facility, ship, or aircraft, and this includes researchers, students, contractors, official visitors, federal civilian and military personnel, and others. Further, persons who are financially supported by NSF, through grant, contract, or otherwise, are also expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct while deployed to other field locations in the Arctic and Antarctic. The Code includes “examples of conduct that violate [its] fundamental principles and objectives,” such as “physical or verbal abuse of any person, including, but not limited to, harassment, stalking, bullying, or hazing of any kind, whether the behavior is carried out verbally, physically, electronically, or in written form” and “[c]onduct that is offensive, indecent, obscene, or disorderly.” (See Appendix F, National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs Polar Code of Conduct, Effective July 2018.) The Code provides several potential consequences for a violation, including “removal from a USAP or Arctic station, field camp, other facility, ship, or aircraft; termination of employment (by the employer), or other administrative, civil, or criminal enforcement actions, as appropriate.” Given that the employer would determine termination, and administrative, civil, or criminal enforcement would include law enforcement or private litigation, the risk of removal from the ice is the only

<sup>39</sup> The 2018 Polar Code of Conduct expanded the 2013 USAP Code of Conduct (AIL-POL-1000.03) to the entire OPP.

practical sanction within NSF's authority. This was confirmed in the key informant interviews.

In January 2017, NSF issued an Affirmation of Non-Harassment Policy Statement, which is updated annually.<sup>40</sup> The Affirmation complements the Code. NSF also revised its incident review structure. The new policies and the revised structure, however, remain insufficient to provide adequate oversight.

*The revised Code of Conduct Review Board.* To identify patterns of sexual misconduct on-ice and provide some response oversight, NSF bifurcated its Code of Conduct Review Board. Under the new format, one board reviews safety issues generally and the newly created second board reviews complaints of sexual assault and harassment submitted by each contractor and subcontractor. This new board is responsible for reviewing each incident and evaluating the propriety of the employer's response. The board can offer recommendations or directions to the employer if further action is needed.<sup>41</sup> According to the NSF, however, the Code of Conduct "doesn't give [NSF] authority to tell a private company to discipline an employee in a particular way or fire them; that's something that they need to deal with." Further, "the Board does not have enforcement authority. Its purpose is to see trends, develop strategies, etc."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The Code does not explicitly address sexual assault or harassment. In July 2020, NSF released an Affirmation of Non-Harassment Policy Statement which defined Harassment and Sexual Harassment. The Sexual Harassment definition "includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct is made as a condition of employment and when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment." The statement reiterates that all USAP participants are subject to the Polar Code of Conduct and any employee is subject to their own employer's policies. Military personnel are specifically subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Unlike the Code, members are advised to report issues to "their supervisor, principal investigator, department chair, commanding officer, or human resources, ethics or legal representatives." Complainants are also welcomed to reach out to NSF directly if they "feel external review is warranted."

<sup>41</sup> According to the 2021 Process for Reporting Code of Conduct Violations, the Code of Conduct Board is charged with acting "as an information sharing and management tool to ensure that all organizations are informed about significant participant misconduct." In February 2021, the NSF updated its "Process for Reporting Polar Code of Conduct Violations" to provide ASC employers with information about NSF's expectations of what "significant incidents" would be reported annually. "What is deemed to be 'significant' may be different for each employer according to the risks inherent in their operation and the impact of the action on the respective Polar Program. There is no tolerance for conduct that results, or has the potential to result, in injury to self or others, or to loss or damage to government property. Certainly, whether conduct was intentional should also be considered."

<sup>42</sup> One NSF employee opined that, with respect to the issues of sexual harassment and assault in the USAP, "NSF cannot become the one-stop solution for these situations." Not because of authority or jurisdiction, however, but rather because it does "not have the manpower."

## NSF Management of the USAP

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NSF relies on ASC contractors (e.g., Leidos, PAE, UTMB, GSC, Six Mile, etc.) to summarize reported violations and present to the Code of Conduct Review Board any formal complaints of sexual assault and harassment in the USAP. As part of the data analysis, the review of what appear to be several years of reports to the Code of Conduct Board confirmed what was shared anecdotally: the reports the contractors submit to NSF contain scant (if any) references to sexual misconduct. When reports do manage to make it all the way to the Board, the facts presented are not reliably sufficient to convey a full and accurate rendition of what occurred. Further, it is evident that neither the employers nor NSF are necessarily aware of the outcomes, or even the alleged offender's employment status. In the draft report for April 2020 to March 2021, for example, the outcomes were uncertain for more than 40% of the 22 incidents listed.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, according to the draft report, NSF found "[t]he reporting from the supporting contractors is acceptable and their responses to incidents are reasonable." Thus, even when incidents do make it through the repeated winnowing process and are reported to NSF, the Board's annual review appears to be superficial and not well-informed. Further, because the reviews are conducted long after incidents occurred, any recommendations for improvement or redress are too late to benefit the victims directly or to ensure they receive the support or response they deserve. In sum, under the current structure, there are too few checks and balances to ensure all cases are reported to the NSF Code of Conduct Review Board, that the information provided is sufficient to conduct an adequate review, and that those conducting the oversight and review are adequately informed as to the incidents occurring, the nature of those incidents and the harms that result.

Even when NSF is aware and informed of incidents, NSF interviewees told us they had to weigh what accountability options were possible and the impact on other community members. For example, one NSF interviewee explained his reluctance to enforce certain grant provisions in response to sexual misconduct because "students, and other people on this award whose careers are at stake, are going to suffer because you killed the grant in thinking you're getting back at the school

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<sup>43</sup> In the report, the actions taken were described as "none" for 2 incidents. For another 2 incidents they were listed as "Unclear. No action visible to NSF Station Manager." For an additional 4 incidents the report stated that "termination or resignation [was] unclear." (For a 9<sup>th</sup> incident, the participants were required to write letters of apology but, according to the document, the individual submitting the report "[s]uspect[s] there was no other action taken.") Regarding investigations undertaken by the responsible contractors, whether one was conducted or by whom was listed as "unclear" or "unknown" for 3 incidents and "minimal" for a fourth.



or at him [the principal investigator], or whatever.” We also were told that “primarily NSF has the authority to remove people from the ice. It doesn’t give us authority to tell a private company or an institution to discipline or fire anyone. It doesn’t give us any authority over military personnel.”

Others disagree. They believe there are many steps NSF can take to require contractors to respond more appropriately and effectively to incidents of sexual harassment and assault and ensure compliance. As a senior interviewee recounted tearfully:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Efforts to Address Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment**

“[I believe] NSF needs to change its policy. We are setting in motion where we have predatory behavior being encouraged because NSF cannot say, ‘We are not going to allow this.’ . . . It is this push-pull between NSF saying we really want to make sure we have a strong sexual harassment policy because we manage the Antarctic program and yet they will not take the steps. . . . As a federal bureaucracy it’s super easy for us to pass the buck. . . .”

One community member stated, “NSF is complicit in creating and sustaining an unhealthy culture when it comes to sexual harassment in the Antarctic community.” That sentiment was echoed by other community members. From lower-wage workers to supervisors and grantees, community members view NSF as intentionally avoiding responsibility for sexual misconduct in the USAP. Another community member with many years of experience in the program recounted how a female principal investigator was so troubled by her experience in the field that she brought her concerns directly to NSF. He described the outcome as follows: “After she came back from the field [where] she was harassed, she went to the NSF Program Director, and he blew her off. He told her it was a problem for her and not anyone else’s problem. She came back in tears.”

In another focus group, a participant shared about a male principal investigator who was reported to have had a large inflatable female doll in the camp. (It was understood that the doll was for sexual entertainment.) According to this interviewee, a complaint was made to NSF regarding the blow-up doll and, as the story goes, NSF instructed him to remove it but reportedly “apologized” that they were forced to make this request.

These types of accounts can take on a life of their own in the USAP community. They further undermine confidence in NSF’s commitment to promote a safer and more just environment on the ice. As one senior community member explained, “I am scared.” Because NSF does not meaningfully track offenders’ behavior, we “cannot keep people safe on the ice.”

### **Finding #6: Community Members Do Not Believe Current Training Is Adequate or Effective**

USAP community members believe the current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training is inadequate and ineffective.

#### **Current Training**

Many focus group participants reported that the current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training is inadequate given the pervasiveness and severity of the conduct. They believe that the training is not effective and that some trainers do not take the issues seriously enough. For example, several individuals recounted an anecdote about a trainer who quipped during the training that they were not allowed to express their viewpoint that there is nothing offensive about asking women to smile more. While some mentioned they were grateful for the recent revamp of the previous training from years ago, many interviewees believe there is significant room for improvement in the current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training timing, relevance, frequency, and content. A former McMurdo contractor wrote:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Current Training**

“Unfortunately, I must say that the way USAP, NSF, and PAE (plus other contractors that I haven't worked for directly) have handled this issue has been appallingly bad. I have been in the work force for 40 years now and . . . [I]literally the worst trainings on sexual harassment that I have ever had the misfortune to have to sit thru have been there. People at McMurdo were laughing and ridiculing this training for the rest of the season, for how bad and inappropriate it was. I believe it's time to bring in outside, specifically trained moderators and trainers to lead these trainings now as the Program and contractors have proven unable, or incapable, of doing them properly. I personally know women who did work there but don't want to return because of this issue.”

Multiple interviewees recommended that the sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training be held multiple times throughout the season. “Going through the same training every year is only so helpful, having additional training is necessary.” One supervisor noted, “We could have 50% returnees one season and [the other 50%] are starting from scratch.”

Several community members stated they believe the trainings should be provided before and again (repeatedly) after individuals were on the ice, rather than only during the onboarding process in Christchurch. Having only one training session a year, and offering it sandwiched between hours and hours of other trainings before deployment made it “unmemorable and too distant to try and to figure out how to use it in daily life,” as one noted. “[The training] needs to be repeated, often, throughout the season to set the expectation and hold people to it,” observed another. One community member expressed dismay that, due to technical difficulties, on occasion the trainings were overlooked entirely.

Community members also related that the trainings need to be specifically directed to life in the Antarctic. As one participant explained, “[t]here is no comparison with other contexts – [USAP] is a unique environment.” As a result, the current corporate-like, formulaic sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training is simply inapplicable to life in the Antarctic. In contrast to most other workplace settings, we heard, the traditional lines between where and with whom individuals live, work, and socialize often do not exist in the USAP. “Your whole life is happening there so the lines between your work life and your personal life are blurred,” an interviewee explained. “It’s where I sleep, work. Everything that happens is with the people you’re down there with.” Another interviewee concurred: “Regarding sexual harassment in the workplace it’s blurry here since you live with the people you work with. This tends to be a part where the trainings in the past have been lacking. Trainings need application to both work and personal life.”

We also heard that the training uses examples of sexual harassment that are inadequate, over-used and out-of-date. There were several references to the fact that neither the trainers nor the audience took the sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training seriously. This “we-are-required-to-do-this” attitude undermined the effectiveness of any training content. Worse, it messaged to the USAP community that preventing sexual assault and harassment were not a high priority.

Many had concrete suggestions for how to improve these trainings, with more (and more appropriate) scenarios, real-life examples, small group break-out sessions, etc. Individuals also observed that role-play exercises helped prepare supervisors and other community members to be equipped to intervene or respond appropriately when an incident occurred. Finally, one participant questioned the practicality and enforceability of the zero-tolerance policy presented in the sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training:

**Illustrative Quote: Current Training**

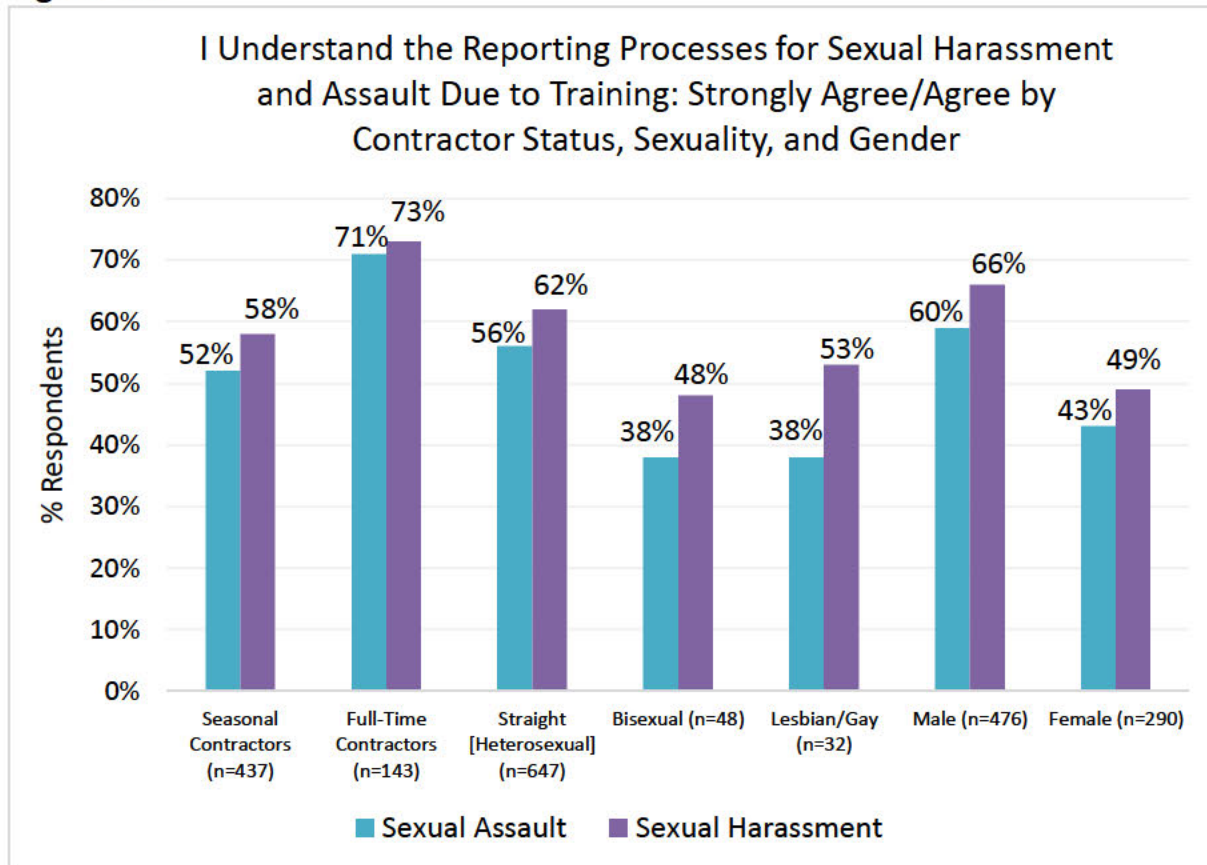
“We can’t really have a zero-tolerance policy on assault and harassment because for 8.5 months there are no planes unless there is a really serious emergency. And I don’t think the program will ever fly planes in to get people out who have assaulted or harassed people. The issues with it are far too many. So, since we can’t have a zero-tolerance policy . . . I think we need some sort of system in place to have an educational or correctional program when these incidents occur to actually teach people why what they are doing is wrong . . . Give them something to relate to so they understand the effects of what they are doing.”

Survey results echoed what we heard anecdotally regarding the effectiveness and usefulness of the current awareness training in imparting information regarding reporting sexual assault and harassment. Overall, just over half of the survey respondents (52%) stated that they understand the reporting process for sexual assault because of employer-provided training. Approximately 3 in 5 (61%) respondents understand the sexual harassment reporting process because of employer-provided training. Less than half of all respondents (48%) find employer-provided information about sexual assault and harassment valuable.

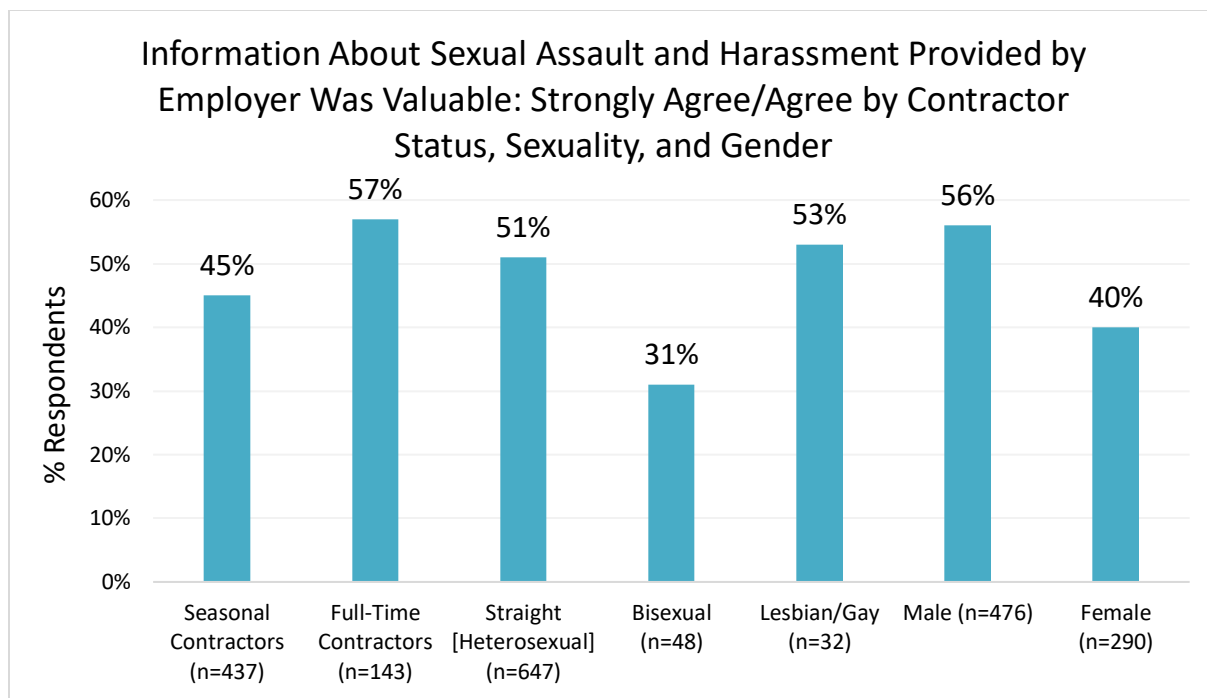
Men – who are statistically less likely to be sexually assaulted or harassed - were more likely than women to understand the processes for reporting sexual assault and sexual harassment. Less than half of all female respondents understand how to report sexual assault or sexual harassment. Individuals who identify as heterosexual were more likely than lesbian, gay, or bisexual respondents to understand the process. Finally, substantially higher percentages of full-time contractors understand the reporting processes because of employer-provided training than did the seasonal contractors. The data makes clear that there is significant room for improvement in employer training on how to report

harassment and assault, and that these trainings need to be revised to reach all sectors of the community.

**Figure 12.**



**Figure 13.**



### **Finding #7: Sexual Misconduct Is Not Perceived as a Safety Issue; Alcohol Is Misidentified as the Primary Culprit for Sexual Misconduct**

Because of a lack of awareness of the scope of sexual misconduct, and NSF's and contractors' failure to recognize that sexual assault and harassment are safety issues, alcohol is often misidentified as the primary or sole culprit of problems on the ice.

#### **Alcohol and Sexual Misconduct**

Alcohol contributes to sexual misconduct, but it is not the sole source of the bad behavior. Alcohol has always been allowed by the USAP program and is deeply ingrained in the on-ice culture. Many participants relayed stories of earlier Antarctic expeditions and how alcohol was integrally intertwined with the experiences of those early teams. Principal investigators and other interviewees explained that it is common for supply planes to deliver cases of beer or wine to researchers in the field so that research teams can share drinks each night as a matter of routine. Cocktail hour every evening continues to be a tradition in the field for some. Drinking at the bars and "pre-drinking in the rooms" are staples of community life at McMurdo.

Yet many participants expressed frustration and resentment regarding what they perceive to be misplaced responsibility for incidents of sexual assault and harassment. These community members perceive alcohol use or abuse as an easy mark for those who do not want to fully understand or acknowledge the

pervasiveness of sexual misconduct. As one participant stated, echoing the theme, “A lot of people will focus on the alcohol problem. The harassment starts long before going to the bar. It will start in the work center, dorms, travel to the ice, Christchurch. It's a systemic problem that is tied to behavior, not alcohol.”

Another interviewee noted that, in their experience, “a lot of people, I think they would be jerks about [sexual assault or harassment] whether they are drunk or sober. It has a lot to do with the men-children that work down here.” Yet another interviewee recalled:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Alcohol and Sexual Misconduct**

“I was doing some research on another topic – research for workplace violence – and I found a study by the Department of Justice. The study listed a number of workplace environmental factors that facilitate problematic behavior: understaffing, frustration, downsizing, labor disputes, management style, inconsistent discipline, frequent grievances, etc. We have all of that [on-ice]. I see this as . . . when we blame alcohol, we don't acknowledge the real problem and it becomes the scapegoat that allows us to ignore the real contributing factors.”

#### **Senior Administration and Perceptions of Alcohol**

Pre- and early key informant interviews made evident that senior administration felt alcohol was the sole or significantly contributing factor to many safety and violence issues on-ice. “Every criminal activity – including sexual assault – likely involves alcohol,” said one participant. As one official opined:

#### **Illustrative Quote: Senior Administration and Perceptions of Alcohol**

“When I first came to the program, I was absolutely stunned that we allow alcohol on the continent. . . . You have a small town, that is cut off from the rest of the world. It's a very small insular group with cliques of people and they are operating under this Code of Conduct. And then you throw in 3 bars, 24 hours a day of light in the austral summer . . . For me, it's an incubator of trouble. Almost every issue that we see down there that has to do with some transgression of behavior had alcohol involved at some level. I think it would be a real change for the program if they could recognize that .

. . it's leading to a lot of the problems going on down there. . . Things people would not do when they are sober; they lose their inhibition when they are drunk. In general, I think it's a problem – at least for McMurdo.”

A colleague echoed this sentiment, describing the drinking culture as follows:

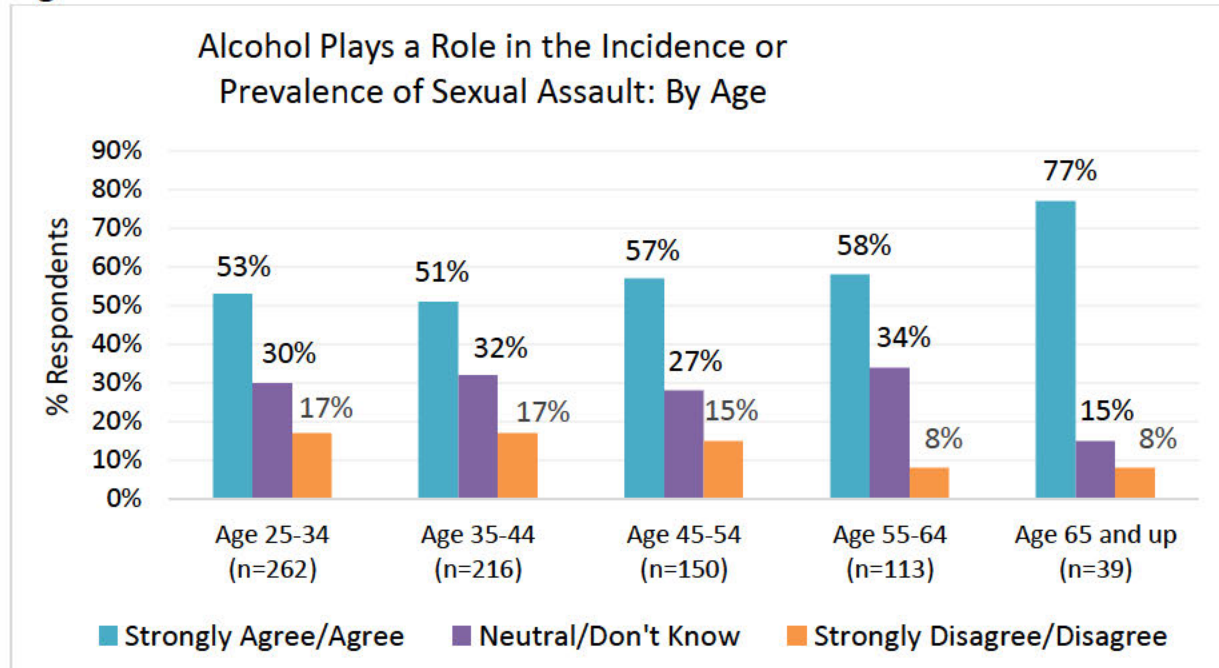
**Illustrative Quote: Senior Administration and Perceptions of Alcohol**

“From a safety and health industrial standard alcohol is the number one risk. . . It is definitely —DEFINITELY — one of the key characteristics of the culture. It's like they never left the fraternity . . . [Some of them] work for 8 hours and party and drink for 16.”

Many focus group participants also noted incidents of groping, harassment, and stalking that occurred at or when leaving the bars at McMurdo.

While alcohol does indeed cause behavioral issues on the ice, it is also an easy scapegoat. Countless incidents were relayed to the team by various community members of sexual assaults and sexual harassment committed when no alcohol was involved. Indeed, community members reported being sexually harassed or assaulted in their workplace, while performing their duties, and in locations that range from working the Galley to the machine shop, the field camps to the transport vans, and immediately following sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness trainings. None of these many incidents described involved the use of alcohol. While the connection between alcohol and sexual misconduct should not be overlooked, it should not be viewed as the sole culprit. “Dry” work locations are not immune. Sexual misconduct occurs in countless locations, when no one is consuming alcohol, including on the research vessels (which are dry) and in the field camps that elect to be alcohol-free.



**Figure 14.**

### **Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Are Not Addressed or Framed as Workplace Safety Hazards**

Prioritizing safety and eliminating risk factors in the workplace are generally prioritized in USAP, but sexual assault and harassment are not viewed as safety hazards and therefore do not elicit similar attention or response.

It is axiomatic that life in the Antarctic can be extremely hazardous. For this reason, workplace safety is viewed as a singular priority and training on safety-related issues is routine. Safety violations are grounds for immediate discipline and re-training. Examples of safety risks provided by participants include the hazards of unsafe driving, improper use of equipment, and inattentiveness at the work site. Throughout the key informant interviews, focus groups, and emails, discussion about the timeliness and repetitive nature of safety training was shared. Participants stated that safety information could be communicated across an entire station/camp or in individual teams, as well as via in-person meetings, demonstrations, emails, or videos. In the event of an incident, safety discussions could be expected to occur the next day.

There is universal acceptance that safety infractions can place individuals and their colleagues at great risk. Antarctica is extremely dangerous and individuals from all backgrounds and experiences must rely on each other to survive. Living and workspace is limited. Privacy is almost nonexistent. Professional and personal lines are blurred when individuals work and play alongside their supervisors, co-

workers, and community members. Clearly, safety is not a consideration that stops at the end of a workday. It is a constant, collective agreement among all who live on the ice.

Yet in interviews and focus groups, it was clear that sexual assault and harassment are not viewed as workplace safety issues. There is not an awareness or understanding of how sexual assaults and harassment undermine the safety (as well as morale, productivity, and career paths) of women and some men working in Antarctica. Rather, as one individual with significant responsibility for ensuring workplace safety explained, they view sexual assault and harassment primarily or solely as “criminal activities outside of [their] scope” of responsibility. This contributes to supervisors’ perspective that these are personal matters to be resolved within the community rather than serious events that undermine on-the-job productivity and safety.

Supervisors we spoke to felt that additional, specialized training specifically for supervisors would be helpful. They reported they needed help with identifying unconscious bias, effective communication, how to intervene effectively in sexual harassment situations, and how to lead difficult discussions. Supervisors suggested that anti-sexual harassment training should be incorporated into their weekly meeting rotations, like other safety trainings. One participant noted the infrequency of anti-harassment trainings relative to the seriousness and pervasiveness of the problem, in contrast to the high priority placed on other safety trainings, which are offered repeatedly throughout the year.<sup>44</sup> “If we did only one safety training at onboarding, people would see that as inappropriate,” one person observed. In so many arenas, safety metrics are consistently monitored. But when it comes to sexual assault and sexual harassment, ongoing trainings are not provided, patterns are not identified, and reviews are not conducted to promote and prioritize safety in the USAP.

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<sup>44</sup> Community members cited numerous examples of the lack of safety precautions that leave victims vulnerable to sexual harassment, stalking, and sexual abuse in their dorm rooms. They reported that some of these could be easily remedied but felt there was no urgency from station management to do so. Examples of some of the safety issues described included common suite or dormitory rooms that do not lock or lock from the inside only, perpetrators’ access to master room keys that they then use to access women’s sleeping quarters uninvited, the phone system showing the name of occupant, and the lack of “peepholes” so occupants can determine who is at the door before they open it.

## **Finding #8: Personnel Screening, Hiring, and Feedback Mechanisms Are Inadequate**

Community members believe that inadequate hiring policies and procedures, combined with inadequate feedback mechanisms, results in contractors hiring and retaining personnel who commit sexual assaults or harassment. Additionally, community members believe that inadequate pre-screening and reference check policies and procedures, including the lack of inter-contractor infrastructure, result in contractors hiring or retaining personnel who commit sexual assaults or harassment.

### **Hiring Practices**

Several community members described what they perceive to be a flawed hiring system. “Weed them out before they get here” was a sentiment expressed in several focus groups. One interviewee outlined what he described as a wholly inadequate employment interview and screening process. This individual recounted how he seemed to be the only person talking to the recruiter at a job fair and, at the end of their exchange, he was offered a position on-the-spot. He was amazed that there seemed to be no formal hiring procedure, no reference checks conducted, or no other vetting to ensure he was a suitable candidate for the USAP. Another focus group participant described how, in her view, if human resources had done a basic internet search it would have learned of issues in the applicant’s background that made him an inappropriate hire.

These perceptions extended not only to new members of the USAP, but also to decisions regarding existing community members. Many community members raised the issue of contractors’ failure to prevent known offenders from returning to the ice. Across the data collection process, USAP participants related there is no formal process in place to ensure that other subcontractors do not hire individuals terminated, disciplined, or otherwise sanctioned for sexually assaulting or harassing members of the USAP community. Multiple interviewees cited examples of individuals they thought had been removed from the ice for behavioral reasons only to have that individual return, working for the same or a different contractor.

One community member recalled, “I knew that sex assault and harassment hadn’t been taken seriously in the past, and that made me feel less inclined to report. [But I did.] Station management informed me at first that [the harasser] was told to leave me alone. That person [the harasser] was eventually sent to McMurdo. I

was under the impression they would not return – but they have returned. I was shocked by that.”

NSF staff and other interviewees also cited a recent example of an individual who was terminated by one subcontractor and then re-hired this year by a different one. Fortunately, someone saw the individual’s name when reviewing the upcoming travel list and raised the issue with the contractor before the individual could be deployed. Most USAP community members we spoke to believe memory and luck are the only available protections against individuals who engage in sexual assault or harassment being terminated by one contractor and then re-hired by another.

However, review of NSF’s Code of Conduct Board procedures suggests there is in fact an established process to inform employers when other contractors’ employees were subject to adverse action. In the Process for Reporting and Reviewing Polar Code of Conduct Violation (updated in February 2021), there is a specific reference to the Board’s ability to identify employees who have been found responsible for Code of Conduct violations. “While it is intended that the participant’s identity will remain anonymous prior to any NSF determination, once determinations are made regarding listing and sharing of the violation, the participant’s identity will, of course, also be shared consistent with the Polar Code of Conduct provisions related to sharing of information with current and future USAP and NSF-funded Arctic activity employing organizations.” The Board, which began hearing sexual assault and harassment incidents in October 2020 and is discussed in more detail in Finding 5 above, has not provided a 2020-2021 report regarding their findings.

### **Personnel Screening**

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Several interviewees believe that what they experience as an inadequate screening of applicants reflects the contractors’ payment system. They view the current system, which they describe as contractors receiving a bonus for achieving their hiring allotment, leads them to sometimes hire “any warm body” with limited regard for the prospective employee’s background or suitability.

The effect of these inadequate screening and hiring practices are compounded by inadequate processes and procedures to elicit employee feedback. Community members report there is no formal mechanism through which workers can provide feedback regarding co-workers who harass or assault other community members. While each contractor uses its own evaluation form, the end-of-season

evaluation form Team LDSS reviewed does not inquire or assess whether the employee suffered such experiences, or otherwise provide an opportunity for relevant input (See Appendix G.) Instead, the closest option for providing feedback on a co-worker's conduct is the "Community Conduct" section.<sup>45</sup> There is no conduct listed on the evaluation that would be related to sexually inappropriate or offensive behavior. As a result, individuals who engage in these behaviors are hired back for the following season. "Nobody checks all these creepy dudes that think it's their right to say sexual things to anyone they want," a survey respondent wrote. "Department heads continue to hire the same abusers every season. Good people leave the program because you keep rehiring bad. Don't hire back the bad, keep the good. It's that simple."

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<sup>45</sup> While the form does contain a "Needs Improvement" section that further explains "has negative attitude, disruptive and/or argumentative" this section is intended for a supervisor to complete, and not for one employee to share their experiences with another employee.

# Response: Recommendations and Prioritization of Corrective Actions

The upcoming comprehensive *Implementation Plan* will provide more robust and detailed solutions and recommended prioritization of corrective actions. The following recommendations are intended to provide initial ideas and some immediate next steps for NSF to consider while the *Implementation Plan* is being developed. Approaches to be considered include the following:

## Coalition Building to Earn and Restore Community Trust

The USAP community is fiercely loyal to the important mission of the program and wants to see changes made that will maintain the quality of the work performed while ensuring safety for community members. In every USAP sector involved in data collection, from NSF and USAP leadership to Principal Investigators and other researchers and contract and sub-contract employees, there are individuals who have deeply invested in this effort. Opportunities should be created to bring together this network of thoughtful, committed, and informed community members to provide a foundation for any efforts to transform the response to sexual misconduct within USAP.

NSF should provide the leadership to ensure there are opportunities for community members to share their experiences, air their grievances to an audience that has the authority to effect change, and to offer their ideas for how to create a better and safer future within USAP. In collaboration with the many individuals who are committed to this effort, a forum should be established to begin the process of healing the community.<sup>46</sup> The following (non-exhaustive) list of recommendations highlight the areas where NSF could lead efforts to launch these conversations and create space for greater transparency moving forward.

## Coalition Building Recommendation #1: Conduct Surveys

Develop and execute “climate surveys” to establish and then expand upon a baseline understanding of the incidence and prevalence of sexual misconduct

<sup>46</sup>As the EEOC explained in the Executive Summary of its report by the Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace, C. Feldblum & V. Lipnic (2016), “We believe effective training can reduce workplace harassment, and recognize that ineffective training can be unhelpful or even counterproductive. However, even effective training cannot occur in a vacuum - it must be part of a holistic culture of non-harassment that starts at the top.”

within USAP programs. These surveys should be administered at repeated intervals to evaluate the efficacy of response (and prevention) programs implemented. The surveys should be distributed across the sectors. (Numerous colleges and universities have utilized climate surveys to establish a baseline regarding gender-based violence on campus, and to measure and monitor what progress they achieve. While frequency varies, the climate surveys are typically conducted every one to two years. Climate surveys are a sufficiently recent tool, and there are no long-term reports on their efficacy and whether frequency impacts outcomes.<sup>47</sup>)

In addition to gathering information regarding the incidence and prevalence of sexual harassment and assault, NSF should continue to administer select questions from the recent (Team LDSS) survey to measure any shifts in individuals' perceptions regarding the scope and seriousness of sexual misconduct, accountability, employer responsiveness, the role of alcohol, and worker safety.

NSF should also conduct periodic evaluations of its response efforts, and publicize those findings, outcomes, and recommendations for improvement, to promote transparency and accountability.

### **Coalition Building Recommendation #2: Create Opportunities for Community Engagement**

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Develop, implement, and sustain community engagement opportunities for gathering candid input from a broad cross-section of employees, grantees, and contractors. Because both national and USAP-specific data confirms that individuals who are most marginalized are at greatest risk of sexual victimization, it is critical to ensure there are “safe space” opportunities for individuals from marginalized and vulnerable communities to share their experiences and/or identify their priority needs. (Efforts should prioritize focus particularly on marginalized groups and groups with least power and influence within the USAP. These include, for example, community members who are bisexual, low-wage, and limited duration contract workers.)

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<sup>47</sup> For additional information on climate surveys, see *Measuring Sexual Violence on Campus: Climate Surveys and Vulnerable Groups*, Journal of School Violence, Volume 16, 2017 - Issue 2: Learning from Campus Climate Surveys: Patterns of Victimization, Disclosure, and Service Awareness; and *Climate Surveys: An Inventory of Understanding Sexual Assault and Other Crimes of Interpersonal Violence at Institutions of Higher Education*, Leila Wood, PhD, Caitlin Sulley, LMSW, Matt Kammer-Kerwick, PhD, Diane Follingstad, PhD, Noël Busch-Armendariz, PhD (2016).

Senior leadership within each sector should participate in any “listening” or “community healing” sessions and ensure they are engaging this cross-section of community members.

These community engagement events should be conducted with the support of a skilled facilitator with deep knowledge of how sexual assault and harassment impact individual survivors and their respective support communities. Because there is so much frustration and mistrust of the current HR representatives (see Findings above) where possible, outside facilitators with sexual misconduct substance matter expertise should be selected to lead these conversations and to ensure they are conducted from a trauma-informed approach.

Such community engagement events could include, for example, a series of town hall or reconciliation hearings with NSF, contractor, subcontractor, grantee, military, and other decision makers to hear from community members regarding their experiences and reactions to the research.

### **Coalition Building Recommendation #3: Establish a Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT)**

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Create an inter-jurisdictional working group attended by representatives from each sector. The representatives should include individuals with authority to effect change and community members invested in these efforts who are or will be present on the ice. This group (like a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), which many communities across the U.S. have established) should be charged with developing more appropriate and effective survivor-centered responses for grantees, contractors, the military, etc.

The CCRT can help develop, make recommendations for, and ensure the practical applicability of proposed policies and procedures. The CCRT also provides a forum for representatives to identify, and problem solve inter-jurisdictional issues, which is key to ensuring appropriate and equitable responses.

A CCRT can also provide leadership and serve as a resource for developing and implementing more effective strategies to advance “know your rights” and other information campaigns throughout USAP. This is especially important as current efforts to educate and inform the community about how to access services, possible sanctions and other response mechanisms appear not to be successful.



Finally, working groups could be created within the CCRT to focus on specific areas of concern. For example, workgroups could be charged with addressing topics such as alcohol (use, access, limits, etc.) within USAP; reporting options and protocols; criminal, civil, and administrative systems, and victims' rights; restorative justice approaches within USAP, and other issues that emerge. The CCRT participants will need to operate in such a manner as to comply with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.<sup>48</sup>

It will also be useful to host information sessions with leadership within NSF, Leidos, and subcontractors to identify and discuss why current response systems and approaches are inadequate.

#### **Coalition Building Recommendation #4: Provide Options for Support Services That Are Not Employer Specific**

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Because of the breadth and depth of USAP community members' distrust of the current reporting systems, perceptions of retaliation, and the inter-jurisdictional nature of life within USAP, it is critical that NSF help create and support opportunities to expand victim-centered services on the ice that are not tied to any particular contractor or award. The current mechanisms do not reflect the realities of the misconduct that occurs or survivors' needs. For example, when a contractor or grantee is assaulted or harassed by an individual who is associated with a different agency or institution, many USAP participants relayed being unclear which entity is responsible for redressing the harms that occurred, whether and how information may be shared, what reporting options and remedies for redress exist, etc. A more integrated approach that centers victims' needs is critical. We recognize that it may be necessary to realign current funding schemes to ensure the financial viability of such an approach, but such a scheme nevertheless merits close consideration.

These expanded services could include the following:

- **Confidential Ombudsperson Position:** This position would provide services for USAP community members. It would be accessible to both current and former USAP community members. The Ombudsperson would not be

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<sup>48</sup> The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requires that the public be informed of and have an opportunity to participate in meetings between federal agencies and groups that the agency has established or that it "manages and controls for the purpose of obtaining group advice and recommendations regarding the agency's operations or activities." Like states' Sunshine Laws, FACA requirements include, in part, that meetings be announced in advance, they be open to the public, and that committees' work product be made available to members of the general public.

employed by the prime or any other individual contractor, at least for an initial two- to three-year period, to restore trust and build confidence in the position. The Ombudsperson's role would include responding to community members' questions, concerns, and complaints of sexual harassment and assault. Before launching this position, the limits to confidentiality and reporting obligations, if any, need to be clearly established and communicated to the field.

- Continue to employ (and, per the recommendation of the counselor deployed from December through February 2021, increase the availability of) a counselor for the stations. The counselor's duties should include but not be limited to conducting in-person and remote (virtual) support groups for sexual assault survivors.
- Provide information (through the Ombudsperson and other key stakeholders) regarding counseling, reporting, and support options for survivors outside the USAP community.
- Solicit input regarding the effectiveness of the portal available to grantees to report sexual misconduct, whether to maintain this resource, and suggestions for how to improve its effectiveness.

## Increase Communications

### **Increase Communications Recommendation #1: Communications Plan**

Throughout this report we identify a variety of policies, protocols, and procedures to review, revise, and/or create regarding how NSF, contractors and subcontractors, the military, grantees, and other entities respond to sexual assault and harassment. Once these are in place, there needs to be a thoughtful and systems-based communications plan, that is updated regularly, to inform and educate the field about these revisions and continued improvement efforts. Because efforts to effect change within USAP are multijurisdictional, this communication strategy should be developed by the relevant entities but spearheaded by NSF leadership. We do not recommend NSF delegate this for a variety of reasons which include the current lack of trust or confidence in, and fear of retaliation by the current contractors and subcontractors, and the value added that will result from NSF leadership messaging these proposed changes to the field.

Key communications could include:

- An annual report highlighting the scope and frequency of services provided, changes to relevant policies and protocols proposed and implemented, data regarding USAP members served, Code of Conduct Review Board outcomes, and anticipated changes or key programming for the next year.
- Communication tools to explain reporting options (and corresponding confidentiality) and other know-your-rights-focused content. Communication tools could utilize multiple venues such as video Public Service Announcements (PSA's), poster campaigns, flowcharts, and communications through USAP's internal email systems. To the extent possible, the various branches of the military would be recruited to participate in these efforts.
- Know Your Rights information regarding sexual harassment and assault to be distributed during the onboarding and orientation processes.

USAP community members are demanding additional and accessible information about available reporting options, their rights, and potential outcomes. They are keen to understand how USAP is working more broadly to ensure safety on the ice. The recommendations outlined below would require greater coordination efforts between contractors, subcontractors, grantees, military, and NSF to provide more in-depth understanding of processes, outcomes, and impact on community members from a trauma-centered approach but can be accomplished.

## Improve Community Education Efforts

### Improve Community Education Efforts Recommendation #1: Update Existing Trainings

We recommend revisions to the content and delivery methods for existing sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training. Currently conducted by NSF's prime contractor, qualitative and quantitative evidence suggests that the current training is inadequate. Several community members reported that the current trainings rely on outdated scenarios, are delivered by trainers with limited subject matter expertise, presenters are known to minimize the impact of sexual misconduct and victims' experiences, and/or do not otherwise understand the scope of these problems within USAP. For some, not only did the trainings not have their intended outcome but rather undermined participants' sense of confidence that the contractors (and by extension NSF) are committed to remedying existing problems. Appropriate skill-based trauma-informed trainings that include role plays, realistic scenarios, and opportunities to practice and

model interventions that reflect life on the ice are necessary to promote a more equitable and safer environment.<sup>49</sup>

### **Improve Community Education Efforts Recommendation #2: Create and Deliver New Trainings**

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As new policies and protocols are established, it will be appropriate to train various sectors (e.g., managers, supervisors) on these new requirements, expectations, and required practices. Trainings should also be developed to ensure response policies remain consistent across contractors, site managers, and other NSF staff, and are consistently enforced. At this juncture, we recommend NSF or Leidos delegate to external partners the responsibility to create, deliver, and periodically update sexual assault and harassment trainings with input from invested community members (in addition to established agencies and other entities). These trainings should be created and presented in partnership with the Ombudsperson, if this position is funded and staffed, and the counselor(s) or other support presence.

### **Improve Community Education Efforts Recommendation #3: Know Your Rights Communications**

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Develop and implement trainings that include improved “know your rights” educational sessions and companion materials. These should include information regarding criminal and civil justice responses to sexual assault and sexual harassment, a range of possible sanctions, consequences imposed to date (annual reporting), and opportunities for improvement.

### **Restructure Policies, Protocols, and Oversight Mechanisms**

We recommend NSF undertake a full review of policies, protocols, and current oversight mechanisms and strengthen them to the full extent allowed by regulation and government mandates. Current policies and practices should be evaluated to assess their effectiveness, and to determine whether they are accomplishing the intended outcomes. The review should also consider what policies do not exist but are needed, as well as a review of those policies where the results are counter to the desired outcome. There appear to be a myriad of policies that could or should be established or modified to help NSF accomplish its

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<sup>49</sup> Research indicates that, in the workplace, “skill-based training is ideal for behavior changes especially when dealing with issues as sexual harassment. Training that includes role playing as both the harasser and victim is beneficial. [If not done correctly, however,] training may do more harm than good.” (Quick & McFadyen, 2017). Sexual harassment training must “be part of a holistic, committed effort to combat harassment, focused on the specific culture and needs of a particular workplace” to be effective (Lipnic, 2016).

goals if NSF were to require more prompt and complete information from its contractors, subcontractors, grantees, and from the branches of the military it authorizes to be present on the ice.

### **Restructure Policies, Protocols, and Oversight Mechanisms Recommendation #1: Contracts and Awards**

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Evaluate and modify the terms of the contracts that NSF executes with its contractor and subcontractors, and the solicitation and special conditions of grantee awards, to require additional safety precautions to be put in place.

- Increase current oversight practices to ensure consistent and appropriate responses when complaints of sexual misconduct are made; and
- Require grantees to outline in their grant application for NSF funding steps taken to ensure institutional staff have not been found responsible for sexual misconduct or are currently being investigated for sexual misconduct within any institutional conduct process, a summary of the sexual assault and harassment prevention and response activities that will be conducted as part of the project, what steps grantees will take to help keep individuals safe, and what support and resources are available if an incident occurs.

### **Restructure Policies, Protocols, and Oversight Mechanisms Recommendation #2: Hiring and Evaluation Practices**

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Modify the hiring and the evaluation forms and procedures for conducting post-season evaluations of the contractor/subcontractor employees and expand the mechanisms in place for how, when, and from whom feedback is solicited.

- Review and modify the pre-screening and background check processes employed in the hiring process.

### **Restructure Policies, Protocols, and Oversight Mechanisms Recommendation #3: Clarify the Role and Authority of the Polar Code of Conduct Review Board**

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The purpose, authority, and actions that may be taken by the Polar Code of Conduct Review Board should be clarified. (There appear to be differing perceptions of what sanctions the Board has the authority to impose for violations of the Code.) Establish new requirements for what information is provided to the Code of Conduct SAHPR Board (and from whom), assess how best this Board can conduct its work, and expand the scope of its authority to ensure accountability.

## **Additional Recommendations**

In addition to the recommendations discussed above, further changes should be considered. These include the following:

### **Additional Recommendation #1: Engage the Military**

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Create and implement a plan for how best to engage the various branches of the military present in the Antarctic as partners in this prevention and response effort, such as securing their participation in focus groups; making military personnel available for additional key informant and other interviews; establishing mechanisms for addressing sexual misconduct by service members reported to the contractors, subcontractors, or NSF; provide an option for victims to report sexual misconduct by service members directly to the military; assess whether JAGs or other Special Victims Counsel are available to represent victims of sexual misconduct; ensure adequate training and compensation for SARCs (Sexual Assault Response Coordinators) on the ice; and provide a confidential space for survivors and advocates to meet.

### **Additional Recommendation #2: Enhance Security On-site**

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Install peepholes in dormitory room doors, locks on common room doors, and external locks to the berth rooms where none exist.

- Expand access to communications by making funds available to subsidize the cost of In-Reach phones and accounts for staff in the field (or require that funds to cover these expenses be included in grantees' budgets).

### **Additional Recommendation #3: Secure External Review, Assessment, and Support**

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Finally, while we have conducted an initial assessment of perceptions, beliefs, and experiences of sexual misconduct within USAP, these efforts are nascent. In addition, Team LDSS' understanding of this unique environment is limited by a lack of on-site, first-hand experience. While the team was able to launch this initial effort remotely, this effort would be well-served to provide opportunities for individuals external to the relevant organizations, with experience providing and evaluating trauma-informed, survivor-centered services to victims of sexual assault and harassment, to conduct assessments, reviews, in-person interviews, attend public hearings, and otherwise attain first-hand knowledge regarding the circumstances on the ice, and how to promote a more fair and just environment.

# Introduction to Prevention

## Analysis Framework

Data analysis for the prevention section was completed utilizing the following three steps:

1. Define the core components necessary to implement an effective prevention strategy.
2. Select the indicators used to assess the current capacity of each component.
3. Describe current capacity for each component, including gaps to be addressed and strengths/assets that can be leveraged toward improvements.

### Step One: Define the Core Components Necessary for Effective Prevention

**Capacity:** Within the *Needs Assessment Report*, capacity is defined as the USAP's ability to leverage existing strengths and resources to address gaps and effect positive change to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault.

**Defining Core Components:** Across the field of prevention, there are many models of prevention that include innumerable components identified as integral to an effective strategy. The Public Health Model incorporates components including, but not limited to, risk and protective factors and evaluation (CDC, 2008); the Sexual Assault Prevention Process incorporates research-informed, comprehensive, and quality implementation as core elements (DoD SAPR, 2019); and the Principles of Effective Prevention Programs addresses the need for sufficient dosage, positive relationships, and sociocultural relevance of all programs (Nation, Crusto, Wandersman, Kumpfer, Seybolt, Morrissey-Kane, & Davino, 2003). The components selected for the *Needs Assessment Report* analysis are research-informed and common across multiple models.

The four components (see *Figure 15*) provided the framework to: (1) guide the development of the needs assessment approach and tools, (2) examine and understand the data and frame current capacity, gaps, strengths, and assets, and (3) organize recommendations and next steps.

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## Step Two: Select Indicators to Determine the Current Capacity of Each Component

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**Criteria for Selection:** Indicators were selected to assess the current capacity of each of the four core components based on the following criteria:

- Research or existing models used within the field support a valid link between the indicator and the capacity of the prevention component
- Data regarding the indicators were readily available with existing data sources
- Meaningful gains could be made given the expectations and parameters described in the scope of work
- Achieving a high degree of success within each indicator would reflect significant strides toward best practice in the corresponding component

Achieving actual decreases in sexual harassment and sexual assault across the USAP involves optimizing each of the core components. Too often prevention strategies fail to achieve impact because they are implemented without sufficient development of and investment in all necessary components. The number of indicators was limited to help ensure resources were focused on areas that would provide greatest gains in prevention efforts (see *Figure 15*).

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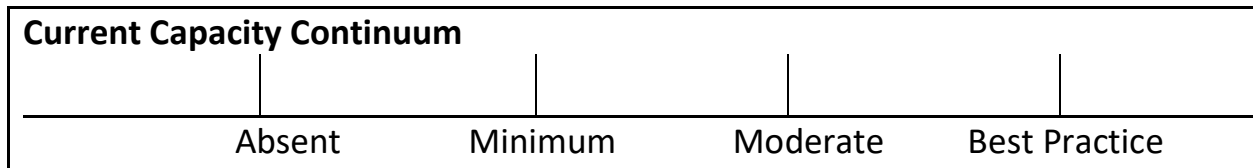
## Step Three: Describe Current Capacity for Each Component, Including Gaps and Strengths/Assets

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**Determination of Current Capacity:** Based on an assessment of indicators, Team LDSS determined the USAP's current capacity within each of the corresponding prevention components. Gaps and strengths were identified, and current capacity was noted on a continuum ranging from absent to best practice.

- Absent: All or most indicators for a component are absent.
- Minimum: Some positive indicators are present, but they are insufficient to make demonstrable progress within the corresponding prevention component.
- Moderate: The indicators show sufficient strength to comprise a solid foundation for progress within the corresponding component.
- Best Practice: The component is aligned with best practice and focus will be on sustainability.

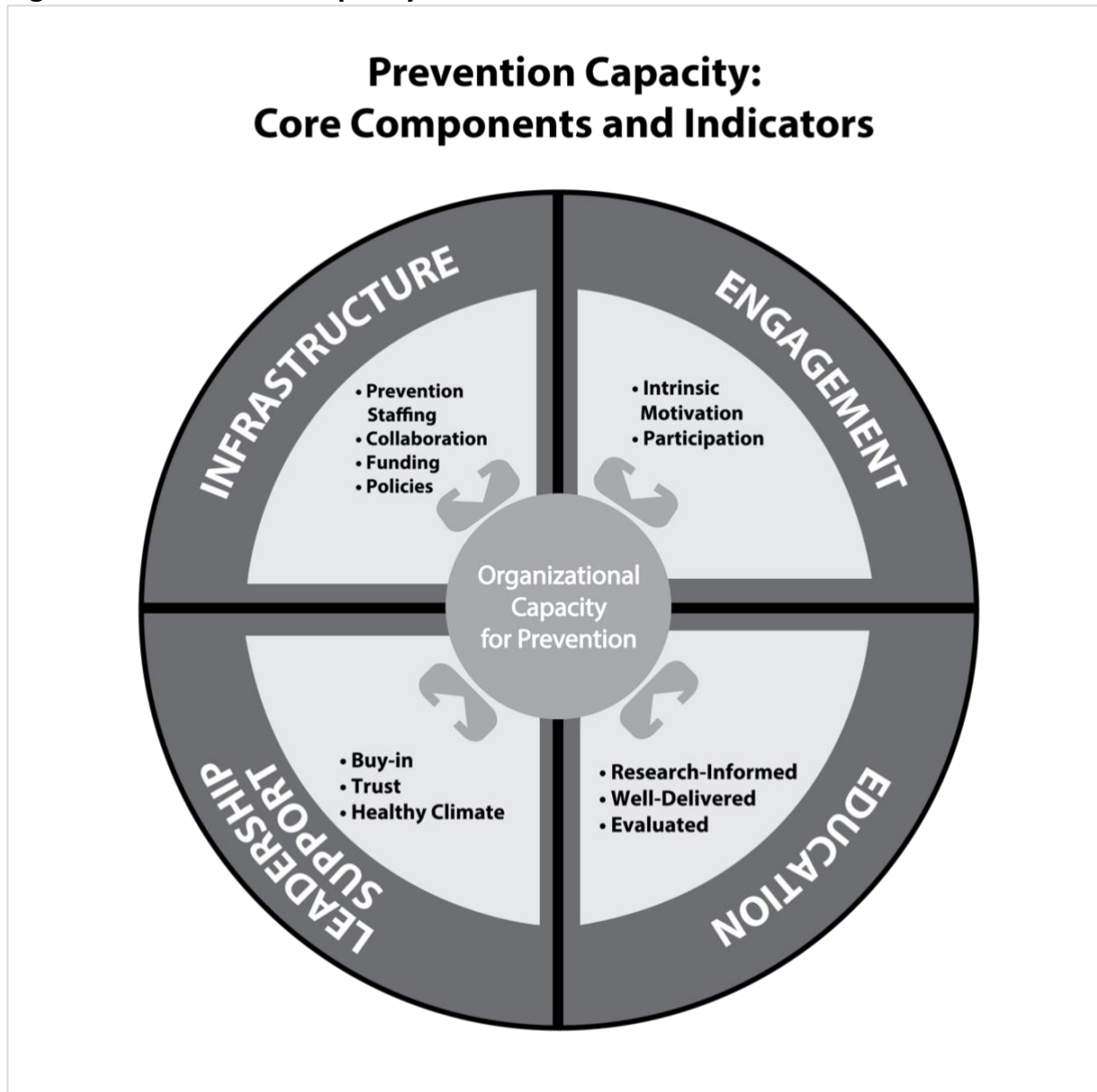




The continuum approach to characterizing capacity allows success to be achieved with each step of progress. As such, the USAP will be better positioned to establish realistic goals that can happen within a three-year timeframe as capacity and resources allow. Capitalizing on current strengths and leveraging existing assets will allow for progress in closing gaps even as additional resources are being marshalled for greater gains. Recommendations will support incremental progress along the continuum, focused on areas with the potential for the most immediate and largest impact.

## Core Components Necessary for Effective Prevention

Figure 15. Prevention Capacity



### Component #1: Leadership Support

There is a significant body of research that supports the importance of leadership in creating and maintaining the climate of a workplace. Leadership support, across all levels of an organization, contributes significantly to fostering a climate free from sexual assault and sexual harassment. Indicators used to assess best practice in leadership support across the USAP include: (1) buy-in, (2) trust, and (3) a healthy climate.

**Indicator: Buy-In**

Leadership buy-in references: (1) an acknowledgement and acceptance of sexual assault and sexual harassment as significant issues, as well as (2) a willingness to actively support and participate in prevention efforts. A high level of leadership buy-in can increase employee buy-in and communicates to employees that leadership is committed to the issue and their employees' well-being.

**Indicator: Trust**

Trust is the “confident and positive prediction of the goodwill and reliability” of employees (Das & Teng, 1998) and the belief that their organization cares for their health and safety (Liu & Lu, 2020). It plays a critical role in shaping individuals' perception and interpretation of the events that take place around them. While trust is subjective, studies have consistently found a link between trust of employees for teammates, supervisors, and top management and their working attitudes and behaviors (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002; Mayer & Gavin, 2005).

**Indicator: Healthy Climate**

Leaders impact organizational climate by their behaviors, what they emphasize, and what they proactively communicate. Without visible leadership support, prevention efforts are undermined and are often dismissed by the workforce. Direct leader engagement in the implementation of a prevention strategy accelerates progress, increases effectiveness, and is necessary to achieve and sustain decreases in sexual assault and sexual harassment.

**Component #2: Infrastructure**

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A substantive investment in prevention infrastructure is necessary to achieve decreases in sexual harassment and sexual assault. To ensure a comprehensive approach, an organization needs a foundation inclusive of an active network of key stakeholders working together toward a cohesive approach; a strong framework of policies that provides guidance and creates accountability; adequate funding to support each element of the prevention strategy; and personnel to deliver programs and guide activities. To ensure consistency, sustainability, and accountability, each of these elements of infrastructure needs to be institutionalized via policies, dedicated budget lines, job descriptions, evaluation criteria, and other permanent parts of the organizational framework. Indicators used to ascertain best practice within prevention infrastructure across the USAP include: (1) prevention staffing, (2) collaboration, (3) funding, and (4) policies.

**Indicator: Prevention Staffing**

For an organization to implement an effective sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention strategy requires a resourced prevention staff (Nation et al., 2003). While prevention staff does not necessarily have to include full-time positions, it is essential that there are staff with sufficient dedicated time to coordinate and implement prevention programs. Further, staff requires adequate prevention-specific expertise, ongoing training, and support and accountability from leadership.

**Indicator: Collaboration**

The importance of collaboration in addressing significant issues across an organization or system is well supported and can take many forms including sharing information or resources; cross-training; integrating programs, policies, or practices; or even merging structures (NIH, 2011; Russell, Ingras, Johri, Kuoh, Pavin, & Wickstrom, 2008). Meaningful collaboration requires all key stakeholders at the table, mutual trust, and shared goals (McNeish, Rigg, Tran, & Hodges, 2019).

**Indicator: Funding**

To make meaningful gains toward reducing sexual harassment and sexual assault requires an organization to designate funds that reflect the organization's capacity and commitment to expand and sustain prevention efforts. This includes funding to support the development of a comprehensive prevention plan, and the tools, training, programs, and staff necessary to implement.

**Indicator: Policies**

Historically, policies focus primarily on response. However, prevention-related policies provide the framework and accountability mechanism to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive approach. Prevention policies are a critical part of the prevention infrastructure that can: (1) codify roles and responsibilities of prevention staff and leadership, (2) establish standards for implementing research supported programs and strategies, and (3) identify dedicated funding that ensures the continuity and sustainability of prevention efforts.

**Component #3: Education**

The goal of prevention education is to effectively equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to take an active role in preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment. Indicators used to ascertain best practice in

prevention education programs across the USAP are: (1) research-informed, (2) well-delivered, and (3) evaluated.

### **Indicator: Research-Informed**

Three important areas of research that should inform prevention education are: (1) content, (2) dosage, and (3) tailoring (Nation et al., 2003).

1. **Content:** Within the context of a workplace, a primary focus of prevention content should be skill-building in the areas of bystander intervention and proactive modeling of healthy behaviors. Specific programs or program content that are utilized should be supported by data and/or informed by research.
2. **Dosage:** A single, mandatory educational program is insufficient to create and maintain the behavior changes necessary to make a meaningful impact on workplace climate and rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment. This is particularly true when unhealthy norms are deeply ingrained in the culture of the organization. Exposure to multiple messages, programs, and activities that are cohesive and reinforce the same skills both strengthens and sustains outcomes (Banyard, Potter, Cares, Williams, Moynihan, & Stapleton, 2018; Nation et al., 2003).
3. **Tailoring:** Tailoring program content to meet the distinct needs of subgroups within the target population is considered an essential part of prevention program selection and implementation (Wingood & DiClemente, 2008). Content should be tailored to reflect the language, values, and context of participants.

### **Indicator: Well-Delivered**

The way prevention programs are delivered has a direct effect on impact. Effective delivery encompasses trainer effectiveness, the timing and context within which curricula are delivered, fidelity of implementation, and applicability to the target audience.

### **Indicator: Evaluated**

Evaluation is essential to understanding what programs are working. Findings should be used by leadership and key stakeholders on an ongoing basis to inform course corrections of all components of a prevention strategy, and to determine whether prevention resources (e.g., money, time, personnel) are achieving the intended outcomes.

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**Component #4: Engagement**

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Successful prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment and an improved climate require widespread engagement of the USAP community in prevention efforts. Engagement is largely predicated on the shared belief that sexual assault and sexual harassment are problems, a trust in the individual and collective ability to make a difference, and intrinsic motivation to implement change. Indicators used to ascertain best practice in engagement across the USAP include: (1) intrinsic motivation, and (2) participation.

**Indicator: Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation to participate requires an individual to be driven by personal values rather than external forces or mandates. Four core beliefs that contribute to intrinsic motivation include: (1) they are making progress, (2) their time and effort will result in meaningful change, (3) the strategy being implemented is effective, and (4) they have the skills to contribute (Kim & Hunter, 1993; Broad, 1997).

**Indicator: Participation**

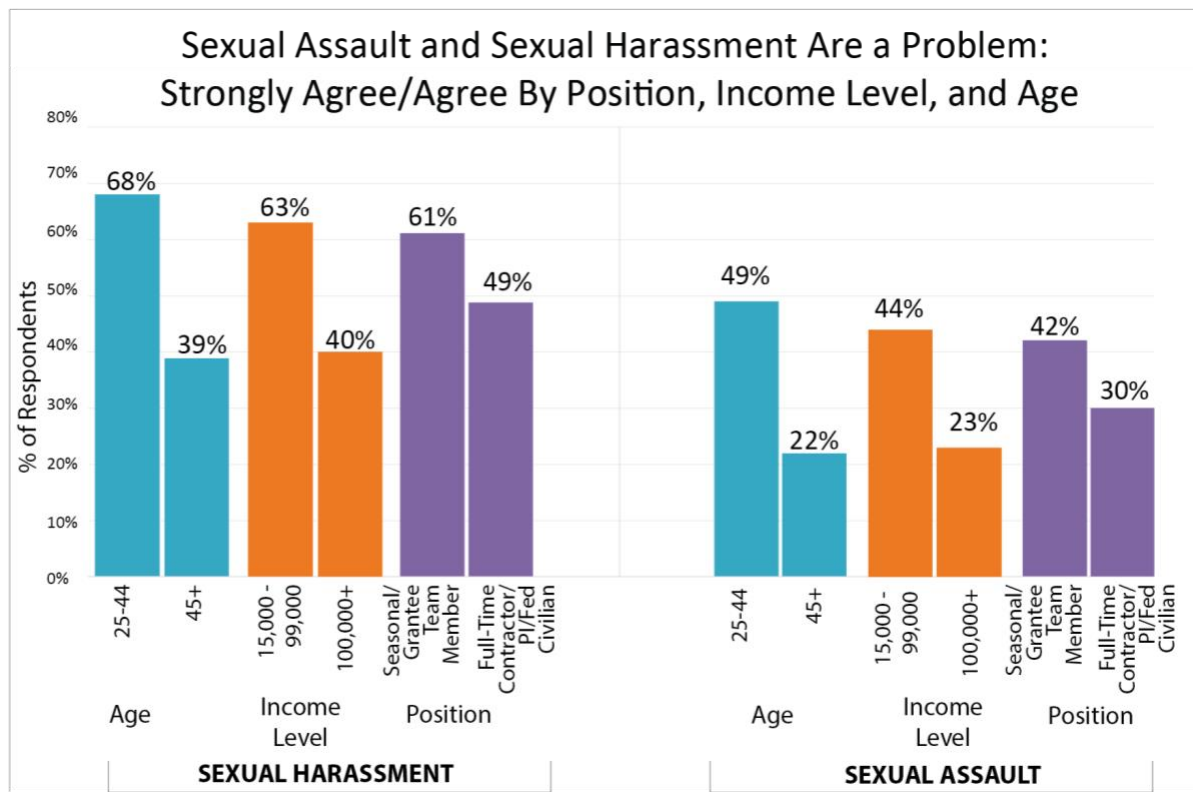
Creating a climate intolerant of sexual assault and sexual harassment requires sustained participation in prevention efforts by a significant cross-section of members within a community or workplace. Participation includes: (1) attending mandatory training, (2) voluntarily participating in additional events and activities, (3) intervening in situations that constitute or may lead to sexual harassment and sexual assault, and (4) in daily life, visibly model and endorse behaviors that contribute to a respectful and safe climate.

# Prevention Findings – Key Issues

## Finding #1: Gap - Leadership less likely to identify sexual assault and harassment as problems.

When using income level, position, and age as proxies for leadership, among those who are older, earning more, and in higher status positions, acceptance of sexual assault and sexual harassment as problems within the USAP community is lower than those in lower-status positions (see *Figure 16*). As buy-in is predicated on acknowledgement of the problem, relatively low rates of agreement from leadership could suggest limited buy-in.

**Figure 16.**



## Finding #2: Asset - Leadership believes addressing sexual assault and harassment is important.

There is a very high degree of consensus among leaders that sexual assault and sexual harassment are important issues to address within the USAP community. Despite lower consensus that sexual assault and sexual harassment are problems, such strong agreement in the importance of the issues supports a degree of buy-in from leadership.

- When using income level, position, and age as proxies for leadership, the average percentage of those who agree or strongly agree that sexual assault and sexual harassment are important issues to address is 88% across all three groups (ranging between 85% and 92%).
- USAP leadership from NSF, ASC, and DoD that participated in key stakeholder interviews expressed concern about sexual assault and sexual harassment and reported a high level of commitment to addressing the issues.

### Illustrative Quotes - Importance of Addressing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

“When it became clear to me that we did not have a robust enough prevention and response program, that was extremely concerning to me.”  
– *NSF Key Stakeholder*

“I would certainly support investing more funding into prevention to address sexual harassment.” – *ASC Key Stakeholder*

“It’s a lot of small efforts and we’re making some positive impact and change in the organization.” – *ASC Key Stakeholder*

“We want to support the program that is developed down there to address these issues. We just have to make sure it falls within the lanes that we have. We are more than happy to help get the best program we can. One big team effort.” – *DoD Key Stakeholder*

### **Finding #3: Gap - Significant minority of participants do not agree or do not know if the organization they work for wants them to be safe.**

While there is relatively high agreement across all survey respondents that the organization/institution they work for wants them to be safe (74% agree or strongly agree), more than one in four do not agree or do not know if the organization for which they work wants them to be safe. As basic safety is an assumption of workplaces, being unsure of employers’ intentions represents a noteworthy lack of trust.

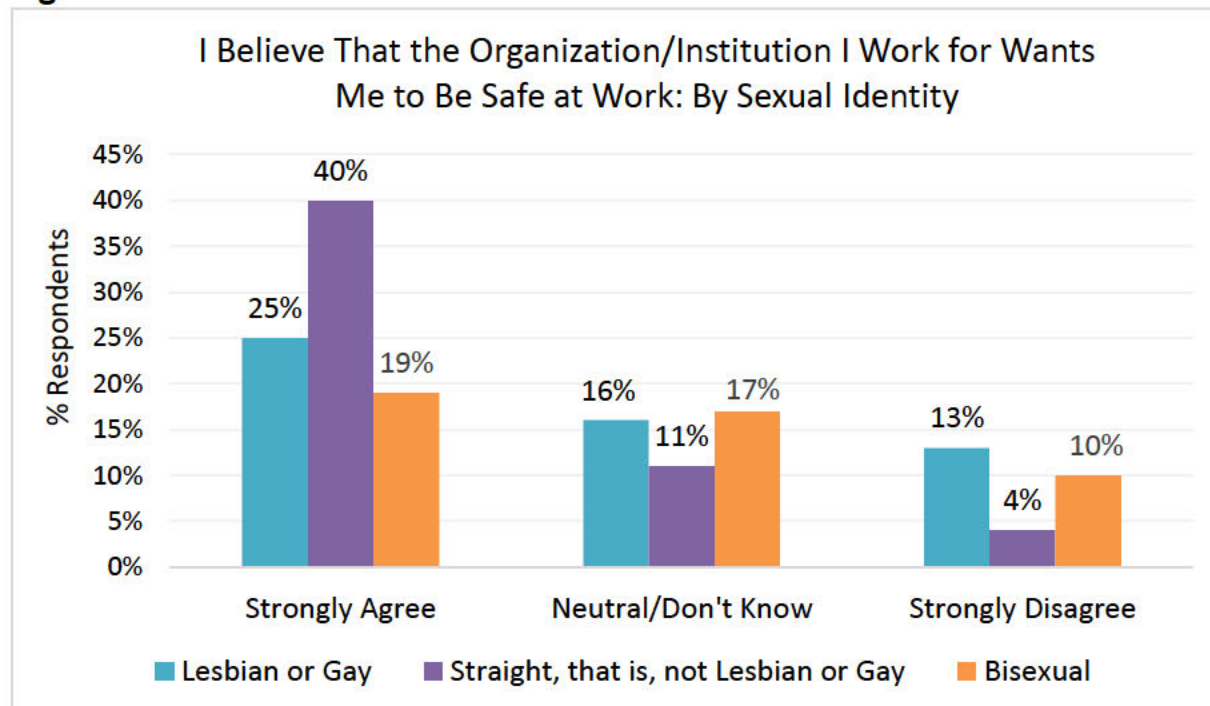


#### Finding #4: Gap - Marginalized groups are less likely to agree that their organization wants them to be safe.

Survey respondents in marginalized groups and/or groups with less status or power are less likely to agree that their organization wants them to be safe.

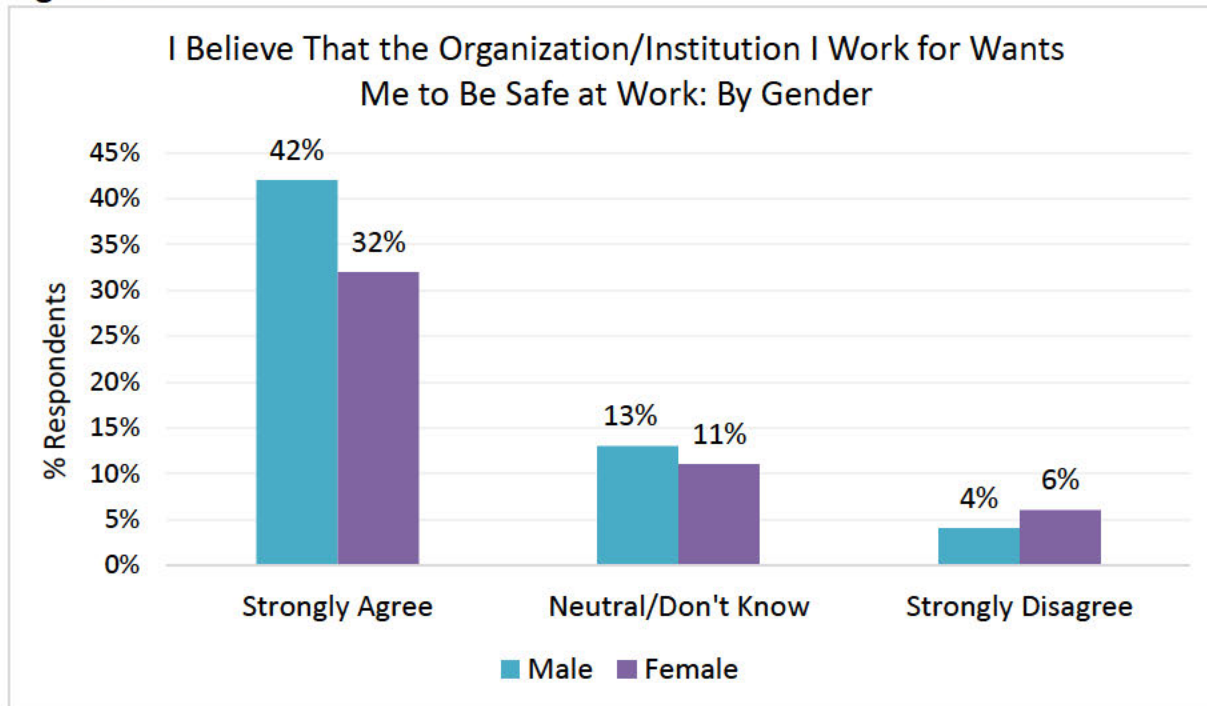
- Those who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual are less likely to strongly agree that the organization wants them to be safe at work compared to those who identify as straight.

Figure 17.



- Women are significantly less likely to strongly agree that the organization cares about their safety compared to men.

**Figure 18.**



- Those more likely to be in high-status positions are more likely to believe the organization they work for wants them to be safe, when compared to those in low-status positions.
- Full-time contractors are significantly more likely to strongly agree their organization wants them to be safe when compared to seasonal and direct-labor contractors.
  - Full-time contractors: 43% strongly agree (62 of 143 respondents)
  - Seasonal/direct-labor contractors: 27% strongly agree (118 of 437 respondents)
- Older participants, ranging in age from 45-65+ are significantly more likely to strongly agree that their organization wants them to be safe compared to younger participants ranging in age from 25-44.
  - Ages 25-34: 29% strongly agree
  - Ages 35-44: 31% strongly agree
  - Ages 45-54: 47% strongly agree
  - Ages 55-64: 51% strongly agree

- Ages 65+: 64% strongly agree
- The highest earners are more likely to believe the organization wants them to be safe compared to those who make less.
  - Income level range \$30K - \$49,999: 62%
  - Income level range \$50 - \$74,999: 75%
  - Income level range \$75K - \$99,999: 76%
  - Income level range \$100K - \$150,000: 88%
  - Income level range > \$150K: 87%

### **Finding #5: Gap - Some respondents believe leadership commits sexual harassment and assault.**

A noteworthy minority of respondents specifically report their belief that leadership is a group that commits sexual assault and sexual harassment more than others and/or protects others who commit sexual harassment and sexual assault.

- Of survey respondents who believe there are groups that are more likely to commit sexual assault, more than 14% (50 of 379) specified leadership, managers, those in power, supervisors, or those with authority.

### **Illustrative Quotes - Perceptions of Groups More Likely to Commit Sexual Assault**

“Men, powerful professors, those with power, supervisors.”

“Personnel presenting as male. Staff in management positions, especially those with influence in contract offers/ extensions/ renewals and performance evaluations. Military Personnel (USAG, NAVCHAPs, etc.), Fleet Ops Personnel, Construction Contractors.”

“Contractors working on station especially in positions of power - e.g., outdoor training group and guides.”

“Men in positions of power. Like the Head chefs, or FSS.”

“Men are the primary, but not exclusive individuals who cause harm like sexual assault. People in positions of power or privilege over others tend to

be the primary perpetrators, because the program's structure makes it more difficult to hold full-time staff, supervisors, and perpetrators who work for a different entity than their targets, accountable for their actions.”

“Men in leadership positions.”

“NYANG by far, regular USAF seems ok GSC leadership is known to protect predators.”

“Males. Especially those in a leadership role or power position (PI, Supervisor, etc.)”

- Of survey respondents who believe there are groups that are more likely to commit sexual harassment, more than 15% (68 of 459) specified leadership, managers, those in power, supervisors or those with authority when asked who.

### **Illustrative Quotes – Perceptions of Groups More Likely to Commit Sexual Harassment**

“Older men who have been on-ice many years and feel in a position of power over younger deployers.”

“NSF staff has a habit of glorifying, promoting, and protecting the members of the research community, usually senior males, who publish in Nature and Science. Some of these senior researchers have a strong enough moral compass not to cause trouble. But others have learned that the support from NSF staff gives them the power to use and abuse other members of the research community (and anybody else for that matter that works with them). I have personally seen a female NSF program director basically apologize to one of these senior researchers that a complaint concerning sexual issues was made against him. On another couple of occasions, I have witnessed NSF program directors engaging in what I can only describe as victim-blaming when a junior female researcher was complaining about a senior researcher. Such behavior only teaches the latter that NSF will 'have their back' when it comes to sexual harassment. NSF is complicit in creating

and sustaining an unhealthy culture when it comes to sexual harassment in the Antarctic community.”

“The same answer as the previous question applies- those in positions of power or privilege (primarily but not exclusively men) tend to be more likely to cause harm. This may be because they are aware of their power and privilege, or it may be because the difficulty in removing these people from the community after their first offense makes it more likely that they will remain in Antarctica to cause further harm.”

“Those who hold power in a perceived or actual power dynamic. Men are more likely to be in this position.”

“Men, tradesmen, men in power, even positions of tiny power. Men who feel entitled to women, regardless of what women want”

“Men with shorter term contracts and men who have power and influence with the program.”

#### **Finding #6: Gap - Participants have little confidence in the organizational response to sexual misconduct.**

There is a low level of confidence in the response of the organization or institution respondents are employed by after an act of sexual assault or sexual harassment has been committed, as detailed in the response portion of the report. Though these findings reflect response rather than prevention, the findings further support a general lack of trust regarding these issues.

#### **Finding #7: Asset - Most participants agree they can turn to leaders if they witness concerning behaviors.**

Overall, survey respondents tend to believe they can turn to leaders or other colleagues if they witness behaviors that lead to or constitute sexual harassment or sexual assault with 70% agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 14% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

**Finding #8: Gap - Most mid-level leadership are perceived as contributing to negative work environment.**

Despite a notable minority of mid-level leadership being described positively by focus group participants, the majority were seen as contributing to a negative work environment.

- Focus group data analysis resulted in 54 coded segments about the tone set by mid-level leaders (including principal investigators, managers, and supervisors on the ice); 39 of those were coded as negative. Common references included: creating a negative environment, not holding subordinates accountable, and retaliating against participants who complain about harassment.

**Illustrative Quotes – Negative Perceptions of Mid-level Leadership’s Impact on Climate**

“If I go to my supervisor and complain, like supervisor or my HR REP is going to consider me a whiner, a complainer, a difficult person. And I have now just blackballed myself, and I am not going to be able to come back next season.”

“I’ll just be honest here the galley supervisors are horrible and the fact that any galley person makes it back into a different position second or third season is remarkable. And the galley is the entry level position for 90% of our people... Those who do manage to bite their tongue and work their way up; kudos to them, but they endure abuse. And they keep their mouth shut. And we all see it.”

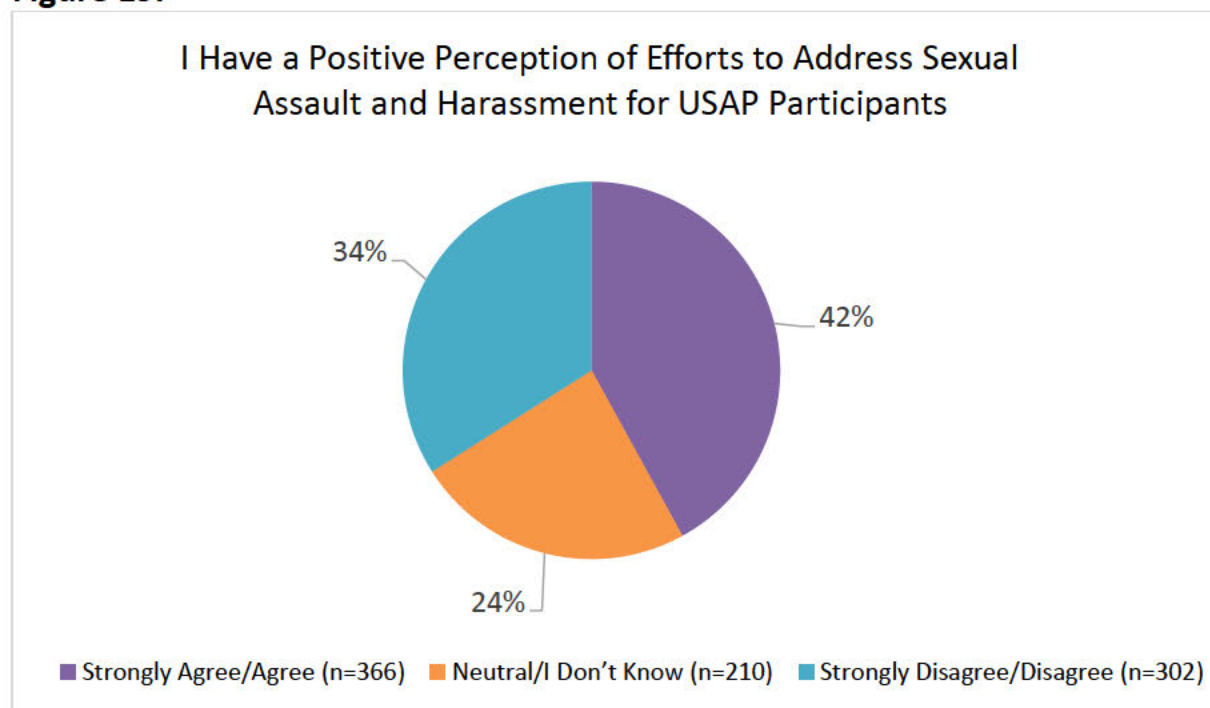
“When I first started working at McMurdo station, like a lot of people, I started in the galley. Gender-based harassment is a daily occurrence for anyone who is female-presenting and working front of house in that department, and it was repeatedly presented to me as just the way things are. Mentioning specific incidents to my supervisory team did not bring changes and any conversation I had with someone outside the department revealed that the harassment endured by the stewards was an open secret- the station knows about it but no one’s working to change it.”

**Finding #9: Asset – The majority of participants believe positive progress is being made in addressing sexual misconduct.**

Despite being in the early stages of developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for prevention, a significant minority of respondents believe positive strides are being made, suggesting a degree of visible leadership support.

- For example, 41% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that leadership is doing their best to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault and 42% agree or strongly agree that they have a positive perception of efforts to address sexual assault and sexual harassment.

**Figure 19.**



**Finding #10: Asset - Most leadership agrees prevention is possible.**

Those most likely to be in leadership positions (based on higher salaries, higher status positions, and being older), have a high degree of consensus that it is possible to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment within the USAP community. Communicating this optimism can be leveraged to establish the desired climate.

- Of those making \$75K or more, 84% agree or strongly agree that it is possible to prevent sexual assault and 77% agree or strongly agree it is possible to prevent sexual harassment within the USAP community.

- Of respondents over the age of 45, 87% agree or strongly agree that it is possible to prevent sexual assault and 83% agree or strongly agree that it is possible to prevent sexual harassment.
- Full-time contractors, grantee principal investigators, and Federal civilian personnel averaged 86% agreement that sexual assault and 81% agreement that sexual harassment can be prevented within the USAP community.

### **Finding #11: Asset - Most leaders believe they have a role to play in prevention of sexual misconduct.**

More than 90% of those most likely to be in leadership positions or positions of influence believe that they have a role to play in prevention. Given the importance of direct leadership engagement in establishing workplace climate, believing in the importance of their role is an asset to be leveraged.

- Across higher-status respondents, 95% of grantee principal investigators, 92% of full-time contractors, and 96% of Federal civilian employees agree or strongly agree they have a role to play in preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- Similarly, of the respondents over the age of 45, 91% believe or strongly believe they have a role to play.
- Of respondents making more than \$50K, 92% agree or strongly agree they have a role to play in preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment. Of that group, the highest earners (with salaries over \$150K) agree or strongly agree the most, with 96% consensus.

### **Finding #12: Gap - A notable minority of mid-level leaders are making positive contributions to a healthy work environment.**

Analysis of focus group data based on a question about who sets the tone in their workspace, found that just over 25% of related coded segments (15 of 54) about mid-level leaders (i.e., investigators, managers, and supervisors) were positive. Of those, eight referenced station managers at Palmer.

#### **Illustrative Quotes – Positive Perceptions of Mid-level Leadership’s Impact on Climate**

“At the beginning in this station (Palmer), they try to set a tone. The expectation of people treating each other with courtesy and respect.”

“There is a culture of respect that's promoted at this station (Palmer).”

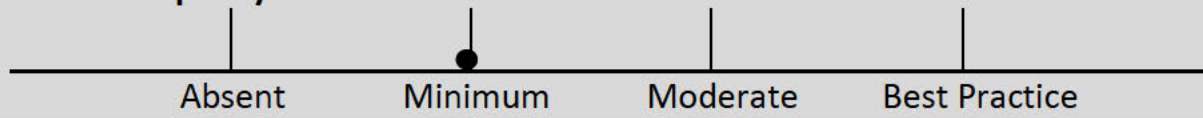


“I think the idea was always impressed upon me by my leadership that even if you might have some sort of personal-like argument with someone or issue with someone or you just don't mesh with them that it's the expectation that you will treat them with respect and make it a welcoming environment, and I think that, for the most part, people do abide by that.”

“An advisor came to the field like towards the middle of our field season and he kind of had like a very explicit conversation with me and [my co-worker] about if you are in a dangerous situation like come get me immediately like I will like do what I can to protect you physically from people and that was like it was a very interesting conversation to have because I didn't really know him too well.”

### Component - Leadership Support: Analysis and Summary

#### Current Capacity Continuum



Data collected suggests overall leadership support to be at a minimum, with a sizeable amount of the workforce believing it is absent, and conflicting data from those in leadership roles that suggest limitations and/or inconsistencies of actual buy-in. While much of the data regarding lack of trust is based on the efforts focused on response, since prevention efforts are limited, employee perceptions of response are defining. Strengths relating to leadership buy-in and creating a healthy climate should leveraged. However, the lack of trust in leadership is deeply entrenched and will take considerable time and commitment to improve.

#### Indicator: Buy-In

**Gaps:** There are mixed results regarding buy-in. First, findings indicate incongruency within the buy-in espoused by leadership. For example, while 88% of leadership (defined by older, higher salaries, and higher-status positions) agree or strongly agree that sexual harassment and sexual assault are important to address, only 23% agree or strongly agree that sexual assault is a problem and 40% agree that sexual harassment is a problem. This discrepancy is

noteworthy as acknowledgement of the problem is an important element of buy-in. Second, there are substantive differences in the perception of buy-in between leadership and the general workforce. For example, when comparing respondents (across age, position, and income), lower status respondents are statistically more likely to agree and strongly agree than higher status respondents that sexual harassment and sexual assault are problems. This not only illustrates the comparative lack of buy-in by leadership, but the discrepancy also likely contributes to a low level of trust in leadership.

**Assets:** Existing assets that can be leveraged to strengthen leadership buy-in include broad agreement that sexual assault and sexual harassment need to be addressed, illustrated by this response from a key-stakeholder, “I’m very invested in this. This is ultimately the most important thing I can do is develop a system to create a better culture down here. I’ll make time and I want to be more involved.”

#### **Indicator: Trust**

**Gaps:** Lack of trust in leadership is the most profound finding. Leadership has not earned the most basic level of trust for more than one fourth of survey respondents who reported not believing or not knowing if the organization for which they work cares if they are safe. The percentage rises considerably for groups that are often marginalized and/or in lower-status positions, including gay and lesbian community members, seasonal employees, younger workers, those who earn less, and women. Further, a small, but noteworthy number of respondents specifically identify leadership as a group more likely than others to commit sexual assault (14%) or sexual harassment (15%). Per findings in the response portion of this report, trust is also low that the organization will show support for victims and/or hold perpetrators accountable.

**Assets:** The potential strength in this area is that most survey respondents (70%) agree they can talk to leadership or colleagues if they see a behavior that might be sexual harassment or sexual assault. However, as the question is framed broadly, to include leaders or colleagues, the results should be interpreted conservatively

#### **Indicator: Healthy Climate**

**Gaps:** A significant challenge to be addressed – which is an important step to creating a healthy workplace climate – is the consistent differences in perceptions between leadership and the general workforce across most key issues that were assessed. Disparities exist in perceptions of the existence and severity of the problem, organizational commitment to employee safety, understanding of who commits sexual assault and harassment and who are victims, and belief that the organization supports victims and holds perpetrators accountable. Not only do these discrepancies likely contribute to mistrust of leadership, but given leadership generally has a more positive perception of climate and organizational response, effectively improving it will require closing the gap. One critical step will include leadership making efforts to better understand the experiences of USAP participants.

**Assets:** Despite significant gaps, there are early indicators of initial progress towards creating a healthy climate. A large majority of those in high-status positions, consistent with the general workforce, believe prevention is possible and they have a role to play. Further, despite a deep lack of trust in leadership regarding these issues, a large minority (over 40%) still believe positive strides are being made and leadership is doing their best. These assets create a window of opportunity that can be leveraged to build momentum.

**Finding #13: Gap - There is inadequate prevention-specific expertise among staff currently involved in addressing sexual harassment and sexual assault.**

A key stakeholder with direct knowledge reported the personnel currently delivering the required sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training to USAP participants have received insufficient training to develop and deliver prevention-specific content effectively.

- Based on key stakeholder interviews and focus group input, there are not prevention-specific subject matter experts, either internal or external, consistently informing the development and implementation of prevention programs.

**Finding #14: Asset - There is currently personnel with dedicated time to deliver limited training that includes information about sexual harassment and sexual assault.**

Based on information gathered from key stakeholder interviews, representing four organizations, the following staffing was identified:

- A Leidos HR representative provides a 90-minute sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training to all USAP participants.
- Though not currently active, two volunteers from the Ice Allies group delivered one or two prevention trainings to a small group of voluntary participants.
- Each company, organization, including the US Military, and educational institution has their own requirements for training that are not specific to the USAP. While specific information about requirements and staffing is not included within the current data set, there appears to be some level of capacity within these organizations to provide training.

**Finding #15: Gap - There is not a current collaborative body, across USAP partner organizations, contractors, and grantees, dedicated to prevention-specific efforts, according to key stakeholders.**

Though there is an existing group focused on response, there is little prevention expertise represented and little time spent addressing prevention-related issues.

**Finding #16: Asset - There is a current collaborative body focused on addressing sexual harassment and sexual assault.**

The USAP SAHPR program has an established working group comprised of NSF staff members from the Antarctic Infrastructure & Logistics (AIL) Section, the Office of Polar Programs (OPP), the Office of General Council (OGC), and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) dedicated to building capacity and allocating adequate resources for response and prevention mechanisms that can be sustained over time.

- As reported by current members of the SAHPR working group, stakeholders from Leidos and the DoD are regularly engaged to collaborate with the SAHPR working group.

**Finding #17: Asset - There are currently positive collaborative relationships across the USAP.**

There was consensus found within the coded data collected from key stakeholder interviews that there are positive working relationships among USAP partners including NSF, ASC, DoD, educational institutions, and other research organizations.

**Finding #18: Asset - Collaborations between key stakeholders are contributing to increased capacity to address sexual harassment and sexual assault.**

One key stakeholder shared that the sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training required as a part of on-boarding for deployment, is the result of a collaborative effort between Leidos and NSF.

- The Polar Code of Conduct is a collaborative agreement, signed by all USAP participating partners, that sets “minimum expectations for personal and professional behavior” for all USAP participants.

**Finding #19: Gap - There is not yet permanent, dedicated funding to support the implementation of a comprehensive prevention strategy.**

While there is support for the inclusion of some prevention content in training provided by Human Resources, a prevention-specific funding stream does not exist.

**Finding #20: Asset - Currently there is potential funding that could be allocated to support prevention programs.**

Key stakeholders report NSF’s Antarctic Infrastructure and Logistics (AIL) section has funding that can be allocated to prevention efforts across the USAP. According to key stakeholder interviews, AIL plans to allocate adequate funding to priorities identified in the *Implementation Plan*, following the current needs assessment.

- NSF currently provides funding to deliver the “USAP Harassment and Assault Awareness and Prevention” to USAP participants in the form of dedicated staff time, provided by Leidos HR.

**Finding #21: Gap - Existing policies do not address prevention-specific initiatives.**

Existing policies do not adequately address the creation, implementation, minimum requirements, funding, or oversight of prevention-specific initiatives.

**Finding #22: Asset - There are existing policies that address, directly or indirectly, the issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment.**

Since there are policies in place addressing response-specific issues associated with sexual harassment and sexual assault, these policies could potentially serve as a vehicle for the inclusion of prevention policies or a model for the creation of prevention policies.

- The Polar Code of Conduct, signed by all USAP participating partners, sets “minimum expectations for personal and professional behavior” for all USAP participants.
- The USAP Non-Harassment Policy Statement is signed by NSF (Antarctic Infrastructure & Logistics (AIL); Antarctic Sciences; Polar Environment, Safety and Health), NIWC, ASC, Air National Guard, and Support Forces Antarctica.
- Independent companies and organizations that are part of the USAP community have their own policies applicable to their employees.

### **Illustrative Excerpts – Prevention-Related Policy Language**

#### **The Polar Code of Conduct**

“The National Science Foundation seeks to ensure that the following objectives and guiding principles are complied with and promoted by all personnel:

- All personnel will treat others with dignity and respect, will exercise the highest level of professional and ethical behavior, and will work cooperatively to resolve differences.
- It is everyone's responsibility to provide a safe workplace and to protect the polar environment.”

“While not exhaustive, the following acts are examples of conduct that violate the fundamental principles and objectives of this Code:

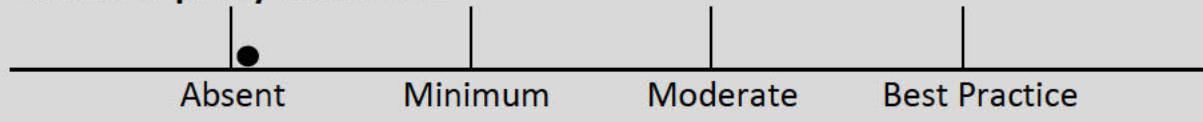
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person, including, but not limited to, harassment, stalking, bullying, or hazing of any kind, whether the behavior is carried out verbally, physically, electronically, or in written form.
- Conduct that is offensive, indecent, obscene, or disorderly.”

#### **The USAP Non-Harassment Policy Statement**

“The United States Antarctic Program (USAP) is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment, free of any form of harassment. All USAP participating organizations take this responsibility very seriously. As harassment can take many forms, definitions and additional context are provided below to assist all USAP organizations and participants in preventing and identifying behavior considered completely unacceptable.”

## Infrastructure: Analysis and Summary

### Current Capacity Continuum



Data collected suggests overall infrastructure to be nearly absent. Existing infrastructure, including staffing, funding, policies, and collaboration is almost entirely focused on response rather than prevention.

### All Indicators:

**Gaps:** Across indicators there is little or no infrastructure that is currently dedicated to prevention. First, there is not currently dedicated prevention staffing and there is inadequate prevention-specific expertise among staff currently involved in addressing sexual harassment and sexual assault. Next, there is not a current collaborative body, across USAP partner organizations, contractors, and grantees, dedicated to prevention-specific efforts, according to key stakeholders. And finally, existing policies do not adequately address the creation, implementation, minimum requirements, funding, or oversight of prevention-specific initiatives.

**Assets:** Some of the existing infrastructure focused on response could potentially be expanded to incorporate prevention-specific elements. Additionally, with significant commitment for prevention expressed by key stakeholders, existing funding could be reallocated to prevention efforts and new funding streams can be explored.

### Finding #23: Gap - The dosage of prevention-specific education is insufficient.

Coded content from key stakeholders and focus group participants included 11 coded segments that referenced concerns that the sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training delivered during deployment on-boarding is insufficient.

A review of training-related documents found the primary focus of the current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training is response.

- A sizeable percentage of the 995 total survey respondents indicate either they do not know or they neither agree nor disagree regarding foundational knowledge pertaining to sexual assault and sexual harassment that ideally

is understood by a community population. A possible reason is that this content is not adequately addressed.

- Sexual assault is a problem: 39%
- Sexual harassment is a problem: 26%
- Some experience sexual assault more than other: 42%
- Some experience sexual harassment more than others: 30%
- I don't think there is much I can do about sexual harassment or sexual assault: 17%

#### **Finding #24: Gap - Program content is insufficiently tailored.**

A review of current documents and key stakeholder conversations did not reveal there is an existing process for tailoring education programs to specific subgroups within the USAP community.

- Analysis of focus group data revealed 17 coded segments indicating that the sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training felt too corporate and was not adequately tailored for the USAP population. Participants also spoke specifically about the scenarios included in the training being irrelevant to them.

#### **Illustrative Quotes – Relatability of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Awareness Training Content**

“There is no comparison with other [settings]... Corporate training doesn't work for it. Military training doesn't work for it. Campus training doesn't work for it.”

“Corporate entities that are nervous want to do a training that is created and blessed by HR, rather than training that is coming from the people on the ice who have all these lived experiences and can share scenarios that have happened and coping mechanisms. I think that the knowledge of all of these people who have been on the ice for so many years really needs to get folded into the training and for whatever reason, the prime and the subs have not allowed that to happen.”

“We're living where we're working with the community that we're working with so that tends to be maybe a part where the harassment trainings that



we've been offered in the past have been lacking; the application to both work and personal life.”

“I think it's very inadequate, personally, I mean it's good that they're doing something, but we have an extremely unique work environment.”

**Finding #25: Asset – SAHPR education currently exists for USAP participants.**

All USAP participants are currently receiving at least one dose of education during their deployment onboarding sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training.

**Finding #26: Asset - There is limited prevention programming already in place.**

Current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training is the primary or only training provided to USAP participants; it includes limited prevention-related content informed by research, including bystander intervention and skill-building activities.

**Illustrative Excerpts – Current Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Awareness Training: Prevention Segment**

“Steps to Bystander Intervention

1. Notice something going on around you
2. Recognize that action needs to be taken
3. Take responsibility for acting
4. Decide how to respond appropriately and safely: 3 Ds
5. Respond”

“How to Intervene? Three Ds

- Direct (Be bold)
- Distract (Be creative to diffuse situation)
- Delegate (Get someone else to help)”

“Scenario: What Would You Do?

- Situation: Derek is Carmen’s co-worker. He notices she has been hunched over her computer for a few hours and looks stressed. He

comes up behind her and rubs her shoulders. Carmen gets up and leaves without saying anything to Derek. You are sitting near Carmen.

- Option 1: You follow Carmen and ask her if she is ok.
- Option 2: You tell Derek it looked to you like Carmen didn't want him giving her a shoulder rub.
- Option 3: You don't feel comfortable saying anything to Derek or Carmen, so you tell your supervisor."

**Finding #27: Gap - Program fidelity is not monitored.**

With little evaluation or oversight mechanisms identified, program fidelity does not appear to be monitored.

**Finding #28: Gap - Current and past sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training is largely perceived negatively.**

Less than half (48%) of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that the information they receive from their employer is valuable to them.

- There is substantial qualitative data (63 negative comments) suggesting HR personnel are widely distrusted when dealing with reports of sexual harassment and sexual assault. Though the comments are largely response-focused, this finding is still relevant for prevention because HR employees deliver the training, and it is probable that the negative perceptions generalize.
- There is a different perception of the training between key stakeholders and focus group participants. Out of 39 coded segments from focus groups and follow-up emails about perceptions of the current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training or training in recent years, 27 coded segments were negative, eight were neutral, and only four were positive.
- Out of 21 coded segments from key stakeholder interviews, 18 expressed neutral or varied perceptions of the training (i.e., some people like it, some people do not), one expressed a negative perception, and two expressed positive perceptions.

### Illustrative Quotes – Perceptions of Training

“Additionally, with regards to HR, when they present the current sexual harassment training to incoming personnel, they’ve consistently presented it as unimportant or a joke. This has been a theme for multiple seasons.”

“I was horrified at some of the comments made by the presenter at orientation as I felt she was really minimizing women’s experiences and feelings towards incidents which didn’t make me feel as if she was taking it seriously. If the presenter isn’t taking the material seriously how can the group be expected to?”

“The HR person who was the... HR person, her [virtual] presentation was just like ‘I gotta do this. I don't like talking about it, I don't want to talk about it. Bye.’ She would shut down questions.”

“I’ve consistently found the orientation portion dedicated to harassment to be lacking and frequently glossed over. I’ve heard stories from other contractors about their HR representatives making dismissive remarks during the harassment portion, as if the people (usually women) cited in the examples are choosing to be harassed instead of taking the inappropriate comments as compliments.”

### Finding #29: Gap - Delivery of training is poorly timed.

When asked about the current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training, 15 coded segments of qualitative data from key stakeholders and focus group participants included concern that the training is poorly timed, reporting the training is a part of several days of on-boarding trainings.

### Illustrative Quotes – Timing of Training

“I don't think [the training] should be in Christ Church because it's death by PowerPoint. I mean you are inundated with PowerPoints, especially where you spend like two weeks. And it was at the end of the presentation. I mean you're sitting there and already your brain is melting.”

“I know plenty of people and I’m guilty of it, I just muted the [virtual presentation] just because it required no participation whatsoever, and I could not listen to somebody talk for four more hours.”

“There are people I sit and watch, observe members as they receive this training to kind of determine if they're truly internalizing this or if they're rolling their eyes at it. There’s both.”

“Doing one training right before you're deploying during a week that you're extraordinarily exhausted, is not sufficient. I think that's an introduction, it needs to be repeated in various ways.”

**Finding #30: Asset - There are opportunities to incorporate prevention activities within existing meetings, gatherings, and contexts.**

When focus group participants and key stakeholders were asked for suggestions about when and where prevention training could take place, 49 coded segments included specific options including staff, all-hands, and safety meetings, as well as virtual points of access during the weeks prior to deployment.

**Finding #31: Gap - There is currently no meaningful evaluation being implemented to monitor program effectiveness and inform development, nor is there evaluation data guiding prevention efforts.**

According to key stakeholders, there is not a strong precedent for program evaluation in the USAP and no formal, ongoing evaluation of outcomes relating to the sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training.

**Finding #32: Asset - There is some participant feedback collected from training participants.**

There is limited informal feedback collected from training participants intended to improve the current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training.

- One ASC key stakeholder shared, “I can't say that I’m aware of a formal feedback session. We always do ask for people, if they have feedback on the sessions, to reach out to the HR representative of their management. I frequently get feedback from people that sat through; they'd send me an email to say, ‘Hey, you know I didn't like this... Have you ever thought about including XYZ?’ So, I’ll usually get some feedback and I usually just pass it on directly to the people that are providing it.”

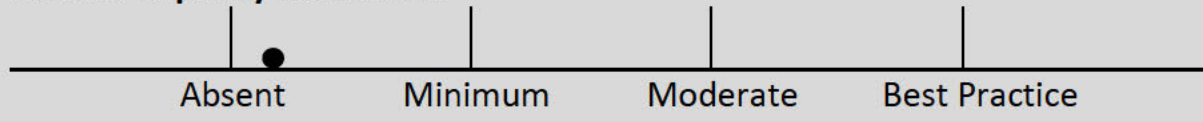
**Finding #33: Asset - There is existing infrastructure for collecting data.**

Key stakeholders shared that there are end of season evaluations, though they do not include questions specifically about harassment or sexual assault.

**Finding #34: Asset - There is intention to expand evaluation efforts.**

Key stakeholders from NSF indicated a plan for survey data collected for this USAP SAHPR needs assessment to be used as a baseline for ongoing prevention, response, and associated evaluation efforts.

- An NSF key stakeholder shared, “We’re working on the process of approvals to follow-up after this. As a government agency, if somebody could come in and say, ‘Well, that wasn't a problem, that was just six women, and you went off and spent all this money to do all this stuff.’ [But I] t’s like, ‘Oh no, I actually have data.’”
- When prompted to discuss harassment training and tracking incidents, there were 12 coded segments indicating stakeholders from ASC and NSF have a desire to build evaluation capacity to assess SAHPR prevention programming and incidents relating to sexual harassment and assault.

**Education: Analysis and Summary****Current Capacity Continuum**

Data collected suggests progress within the education component is nearly absent.

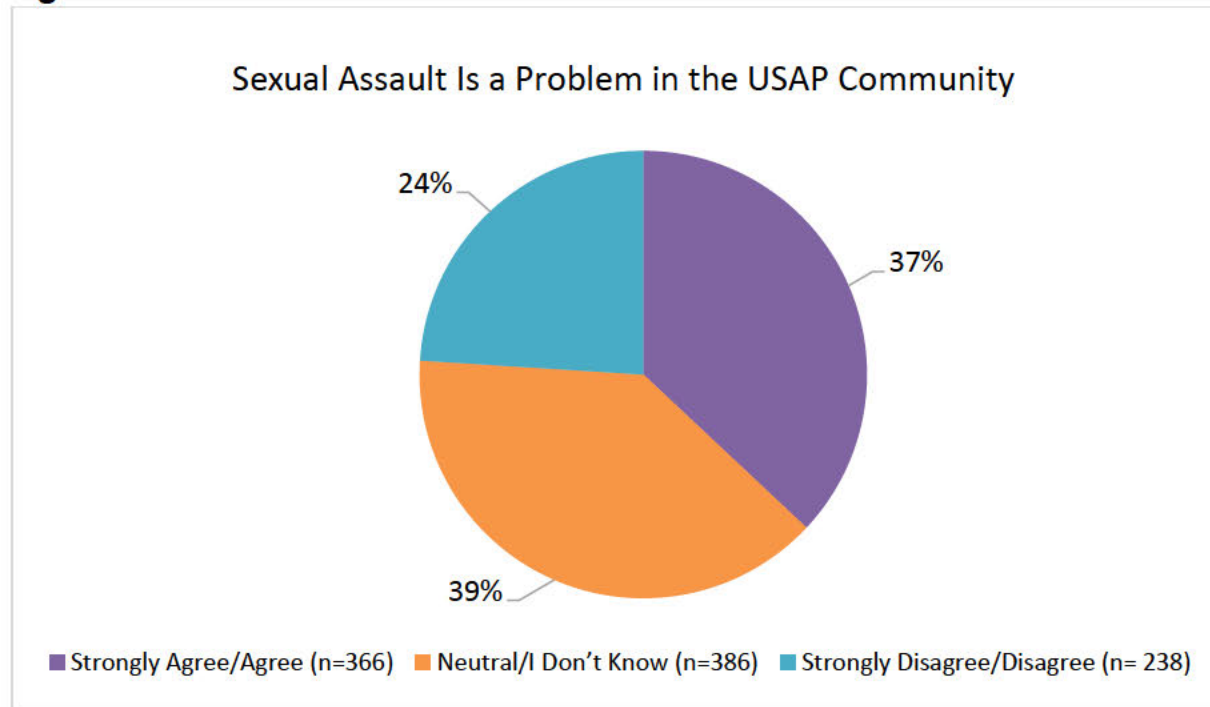
**All Indicators:**

**Gaps:** Currently, there is negligible or non-existent infrastructure for or implementation of most indicators of prevention-specific education. The most dramatic finding is pertaining to employee perceptions of the current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training that is provided during deployment onboarding. Input from surveys and focus groups indicate that the content provided is not useful, the training is poorly timed and inadequately tailored, and the delivery is extremely ineffective, sometimes to the point of alienating participants.

**Assets:** The existing sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training provided to USAP participants, assuming extensive improvements to both content and delivery, could potentially provide a delivery mechanism for prevention-specific content. In addition, with at least one existing survey already disseminated to ASC contractors for end-of-season feedback (see Appendix G), prevention-specific questions could possibly be inserted as a starting point for a more robust evaluation strategy across the USAP.

**Finding #35: Gap - There is little consensus that sexual misconduct is a problem.**

Overall agreement that sexual assault and sexual harassment are problems within the USAP community is relatively low at less than half agreeing or strongly agreeing. Intrinsic motivation to create meaningful change is unlikely without acknowledgement of the problem (see *Figure 20*).

**Figure 20.**

- Over one-third of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that sexual assault is a problem in the USAP community. Nearly a quarter disagree or strongly disagree, and 39% either indicate they do not know, or neither agree nor disagree.
- Over half of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that sexual harassment is a problem in the USAP community. Meanwhile, 18% disagree or strongly disagree, and 26% either indicate they do not know, or neither agree nor disagree.

**Finding #36 Gap - The majority of participants have negative perceptions of efforts to address sexual misconduct.**

A substantial portion of the USAP community have negative perceptions of current efforts to address sexual assault and sexual harassment. This finding could have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation as it suggests a lack of belief that the strategy being implemented can be effective.

- A significant minority of survey respondents (34%) indicate they do not have positive perceptions of current efforts to address sexual assault and sexual harassment. Another 24% indicate they do not know or they neither agree nor disagree.

### Illustrative Quotes – Additional Perceptions of the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Awareness Training

“Literally the worst trainings on sexual harassment that I have ever had the misfortune to have to sit through have been [at the USAP]. People at McMurdo were laughing and ridiculing this training for the rest of the season, for how bad and inappropriate it was.”

“I think it's very inadequate, personally, I mean it's good that they're doing something, but. We have an extremely unique work environment.”

“It’s too simple. The tone of trainings has been ‘some people are sensitive, someone might overhear you, so don’t behave that way.’ ‘If you’re sensitive to rape jokes, just tell them and they’ll stop.’ No talk about the behavior actually being illegal or relevant ways to do something about it.”

“The training implies some people are just sensitive. It doesn’t get at what really happens. And what we can do about it.”

#### **Finding #37: Asset - Among survey respondents, there is relatively low disagreement that sexual harassment and sexual assault are problems.**

Of 909 survey respondents, 24% disagree or strongly disagree that sexual assault is a problem and 18% disagree or strongly disagree that sexual harassment is a problem.

#### **Finding #38: Asset - Few participants disagree sexual misconduct is a problem.**

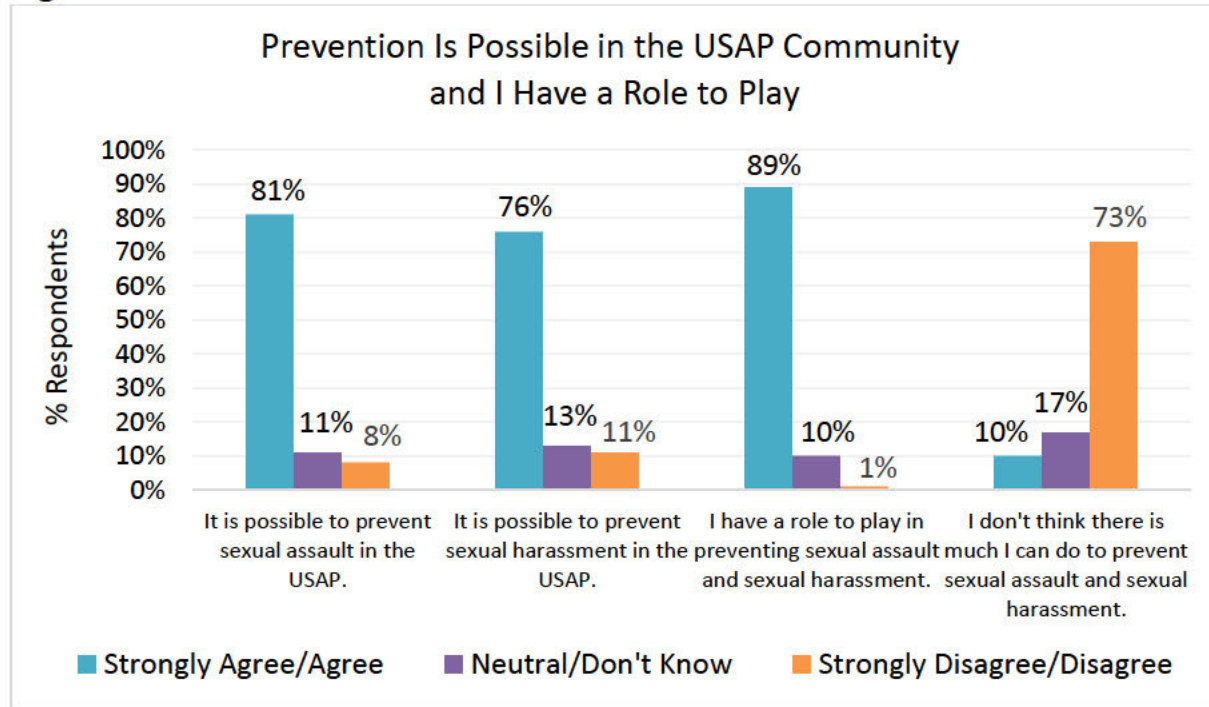
Despite lower consensus that sexual harassment and sexual assault are problems, there is a strong belief that these issues are important to address.

- A majority of respondents (62%) strongly agree that sexual harassment and sexual assault important to address and 90% either agree or strongly agree.

#### **Finding #39: Asset - There is a strong belief that prevention is possible and that everyone has a role to play.**

More than 75% of respondents agree or strongly agree that preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment is possible and that they have a role to play (see *Figure 21*).



**Figure 21.**

The majority of survey respondents (63%) agree or strongly agree that their fellow USAP participants believe that everyone should do something to help reduce sexual assault and sexual harassment.

- There are 74 coded segments of content from focus group participants suggesting the role they are already playing in prevention and a willingness to begin or continue playing a role. Examples that were shared included: speaking to leadership about addressing sexual assault and harassment; being an active bystander; doing things to set a tone of respect when new people join their crew; safety planning for social occasions; and implementing workplans with attention to respectful working conditions.

#### **Illustrative Quotes – Participating in Prevention Efforts**

“When I was put on the spot when the sexual assault and harassment issue came up during a Town Safety meeting, though I knew it would potentially put my career on the ice in jeopardy, I followed through to make all the stations a safer place for both males and females.”

“I am looking out for my friends that are looking out for me and not everyone has that luxury on station... That's very special that my boss

wanted to cultivate that and has for many years as a great tradition with my department.”

“And it goes along a lot with that buddy system and knowing who you work with. When I’m out in the bar I keep an eye on the ladies that I know or even my guy friends. And if I see them doing something that I would feel uncomfortable with or I know that they shouldn't be doing, I’ll go up to them and be like, ‘[H]ey like let's head out’ or something like that.”

“I’m not like trying to be a hero or anything but I feel like I just have to say something and stand up. When I see things going on, that I don't think should be happening, I can't help myself.”

**Finding #40: Gap - There are few opportunities to get involved in prevention.**

Based on current available data, there are few opportunities to participate in voluntary organized prevention activities. In fact, only one event was mentioned during data collection, and it was open to limited participants.

**Finding #41: Gap - There are few opportunities for prevention skill-building.**

There are insufficient opportunities for USAP community members to learn the skills necessary to intervene in high-risk situations and to proactively model and endorse behaviors that support a safe, healthy climate.

- According to key-stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and document reviews, content that is currently included in mandatory sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training does not sufficiently equip participants to intervene, and does not include content related to proactive behaviors that can set more positive community norms.

**Finding #42: Asset - Most community members have exposure to prevention efforts early.**

Training required by multiple organizations, including the sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training, ensures a high degree of initial participation in prevention efforts.

**Finding #43 Asset - Many report they would intervene if they saw high risk behaviors.**

When asked about bystander intervention, a substantial number of USAP participants will intervene or believe their peers will intervene when they see concerning behaviors like sexual assault or harassment.

- A small majority of survey respondents (51%) believe their peers will intervene when they see warning signs for sexual harassment or sexual assault.
- Analysis of focus group and participant emails resulted in 49 coded segments specifically referencing bystander interventions that participants had either engaged in or witnessed.

**Illustrative Quotes – Bystander Interventions**

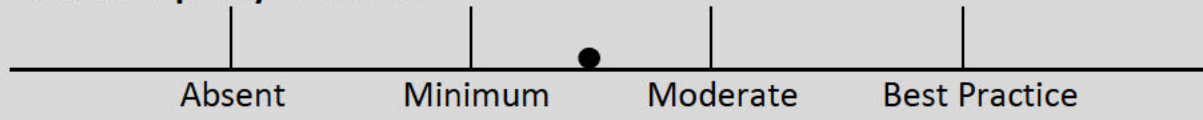
“We walk away and I’m with another person, and we were walking towards the galley and these guys ended up following us. I could hear them in the hall like calling for me. I'm like, ‘Oh God.’ I kind of hid in the corner and then my advisor ran out of the bathroom like, ‘Are you okay?’ And like looking around and then he had shared that that wouldn't have been the first time he needed to punch someone. So, he wasn't surprised that he was in that situation.”

“My first season, I just stopped like going to bars and parties at night because it started to get pretty uncomfortable and my second season, I had enough male friends that would just not let me go anywhere alone because they also observed these things happening and didn’t want me to be alone.”

“I’ve definitely done the ‘Hey do you want to get out of here?’ to other women that I don't know in bars in McMurdo because I could see that they were in a situation that they didn't want to be in and it's kind of hard to get out of.”

## Engagement: Analysis and Summary

### Current Capacity Continuum



Data collected suggests overall engagement of the USAP community to be between minimum and moderate. While opportunities to participate in prevention efforts are nearly absent, potential assets related to intrinsic motivation increase the overall engagement toward moderate.

### Indicator: Intrinsic Motivation

**Gaps:** Accepting there is a problem is an obvious prerequisite to working toward a solution. As such, the lack of broad acceptance of sexual assault and sexual harassment as a problem poses significant challenges to increasing engagement. Further, individuals are reluctant to contribute energy toward a solution if they do not believe the effort will be successful. With less than 50% of survey respondents having positive perceptions of the current approach to prevention, intrinsic motivation is likely diminished.

**Assets:** While there are broad concerns about the current specific efforts by USAP leadership to address sexual assault and sexual harassment, there is broader consensus that these issues are important to address, and prevention is possible. These core beliefs are significant assets that can be leveraged to increase engagement.

### Indicator: Participation

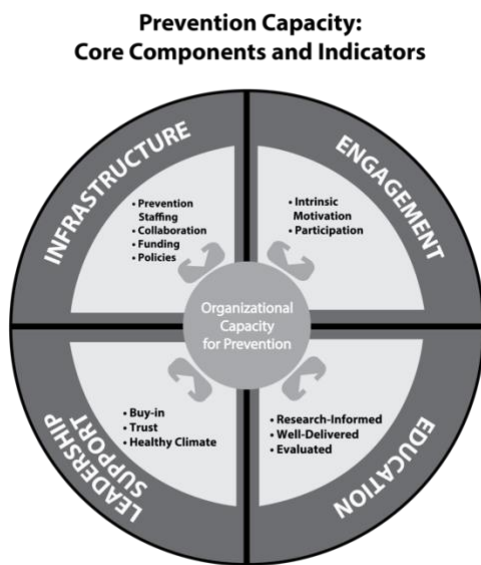
**Gaps:** There are negligible (or no) organized opportunities to engage the USAP community in prevention efforts. Further, there are insufficient opportunities for community members to learn the basic skills necessary to engage in prevention activities outside the scope of an organized activity or event.

**Assets:** There is at least one opportunity for participation via the required current sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training. Though the training is not currently an effective engagement tool, it serves as a potential starting point for engagement. With improvement in the training, it could serve as both a motivator for further participation in voluntary events, as well as an

opportunity to teach skills to all USAP participants, equipping them to participate in prevention efforts within their daily routines.

# Prevention: Recommendations and Prioritization of Corrective Actions

The forthcoming comprehensive *Implementation Plan* will provide more robust and detailed solutions and recommended prioritization of corrective actions. The following recommendations are intended to provide initial ideas and some immediate next steps for NSF to consider while the *Implementation Plan* is being developed.



Recommendations are organized by prevention components and indicators. Each recommendation addresses existing gaps, leverages current assets, and when achieved, progresses the associated prevention component toward best practice.

Priority is placed on providing recommendations that will allow for the development of realistic steps that are specific, measurable, and can be achieved within three years, including actions that can be taken immediately.<sup>50</sup> Further,

recommendations are prioritized based on likelihood of achieving the most significant prevention-related gains given the current capacity of the USAP.

Recommendations are informed by current models, research, and best practice in the field including the Prevention Plan of Action (DoD SAPRO, 2019) developed by the Department of Defense to guide the Department's strategic approach to sexual assault prevention; the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2018) and World Health Organization's (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002) technical packages supporting prevention development; and promising practices outlined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (U.S. EEOC, 2017).

<sup>50</sup> Per guidance provided within contract requirement 2.4.2.

While the focus of the *Needs Assessment Report* and associated *Implementation Plan* is short-term, ultimately the implementation and maintenance of a comprehensive prevention strategy is a long-term undertaking. As such, recommendations to support long-term sustainability are also included.

### **Prevention Component: Leadership Support**

Indicated by buy-in, trust, and a healthy climate.

The cornerstone of an effective prevention strategy is the consistent, demonstrated, and visible engagement of organizational leadership. While senior leadership may play a limited role in the day-to-day implementation of a prevention strategy, to communicate effectively and provide meaningful, substantive support and accountability, they must have a foundational understanding of each component and their role in resourcing, supporting, and providing oversight. Recommendations below apply to both programmatic NSF leadership and contractor leadership, as both are instrumental in the successful implementation of a prevention strategy and in setting the tone within their spheres of influence.

### **Leadership Recommendation #1: Develop a Communication Strategy**

Develop a communication strategy specific to rolling out new initiatives adopted from the *Implementation Plan*.

#### **Communication Strategy: Years 1-3**

- Recruit an external facilitator to facilitate initial conversations, debriefing sessions, and planning meetings.<sup>51</sup>
- An external facilitator should debrief the *Needs Assessment Report* findings with key stakeholders and leadership to ensure an understanding of the fundamentals of prevention (and response), potential pitfalls, and their role in next steps.
- Develop a process to solicit input from a cross-section of the general workforce across the USAP regarding relevant recommendations of the *Implementation Plan* before the plan is finalized or rolled out.

<sup>51</sup> Given the significant distrust of leadership, it is strongly recommended that initial conversations, debriefing sessions, planning meetings, etc. should be led by outside facilitators.

Coordinate opportunities for an external facilitator to host discussions to process select findings from the *Needs Assessment Report* with small, focused groups. Groups may include:

- NSF SAHPR Team.
- Senior leadership across NSF OPP, ASC, and partner organizations or institutions.
- Representatives from a cross-section of USAP volunteers who participated in the needs assessment process (e.g., focus group participants or survey respondents who volunteer).
- Allies who have been outspoken regarding current insufficiencies with response and prevention efforts.<sup>52</sup>
- Develop an annual communications plan for leaders at all levels specific to current prevention efforts.
  - Provide training to ensure communication across leaders is consistent, effectively delivered, responsive to the current climate, and aligned with goals of the strategic plan (see Leadership Recommendation #4).

#### **Communication Strategy: Long-Term**

- Provide regular updates to all USAP participants during Summer and Winter Seasons, including prevention progress, program and policy updates, and evaluation findings. Options for regular communication may include:
  - Prevention newsletter
  - Email blasts
  - PSA on-station
  - Supervisor talking points for staff meetings
  - Station manager talking points during safety briefs
- Engage and equip full-time staff members (e.g., NSF Station Managers, returning full-time contractors, long-term grantee PIs, etc.) who are credible and respected by their peers to play a role in the ongoing communication strategy.
- Develop, implement, and sustain a safe process for gathering candid input and ensuring open and ongoing communication between senior leadership and a broad cross-section of USAP participants.

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<sup>52</sup> This should include, but not be limited to, members of the Ice Allies group.



- Efforts should focus particularly on marginalized groups and/or groups with the least power and influence within the USAP (e.g., USAP participants who identify as LGBTQ+, people of color, and/or participants in entry-level positions).
- Information gathering may include an anonymous feedback mechanism, focus groups, an annual climate survey, and/or key informant interviews.

## **Leadership Recommendation #2: Develop a Toolkit of Prevention Resources for Leaders**

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Develop a toolkit of prevention resources that equips leaders with an understanding of the core components of prevention, the specific prevention strategy being implemented, and talking points to effectively communicate about the prevention strategy with key decision makers, peers, and subordinates.

### **Leadership Packet: 1-3 Years**

- In consultation with a prevention subject matter expert (SME), develop a toolkit of prevention resources for leaders at each echelon of the USAP hierarchical structure. For example, develop tailored toolkits for:
  - NSF SAHPR Team Members
  - NSF Executive Management Board
  - USAP Station Managers
  - ASC Human Resources
  - ASC Full-Time Supervisors
  - ASC Shop Leads
  - Grantee Principal Investigators
  - Military Leaders
- Establish a highly accessible distribution mechanism for the toolkits, for example, a physical packet, or an online portal, shared folder, or community forum.

### **Leadership Packet: Long-Term**

- Provide regular updates to toolkits based on new discoveries in the field of prevention and advances in best practices.

- Establish an evaluation plan for leaders to communicate feedback regularly, assess behavioral outcomes, and to ensure continuous quality improvement.

### **Leadership Recommendation #3: Institutionalize a Comprehensive Prevention Strategy**

In consultation with prevention SMEs, institutionalize resources necessary to support a sustainable, comprehensive prevention strategy, including but not limited to designated staff time, funding to support prevention programs, ongoing training for prevention staff, and ongoing evaluation. (See Infrastructure and Education Recommendations.)

### **Leadership Recommendation #4: Institutionalize Annual Strategic Prevention Plan**

Institutionalize in policy the creation of an annual strategic prevention plan that clearly delineates roles and responsibilities, including leadership role in oversight and accountability. Strategic prevention plan should include at a minimum, training and evaluation requirements, and accountability mechanisms. (See Infrastructure and Education Recommendations.)

### **Prevention Component: Infrastructure**

Indicated by prevention staffing, collaboration, funding, and policies.

Within the USAP, consistent with nearly all other institutions and organizations, existing infrastructure, including staffing, policies, and collaborative groups, was initially created to respond to, rather than prevent, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Prevention and response are different fields, with different goals, models, research-support, and staffing requirements. As such, it is necessary to review response-focused infrastructure to determine if and how it has prevention applications and then determine what modifications and additions are necessary to support a comprehensive prevention strategy.

### **Infrastructure Recommendation #1: Institutionalize Prevention Funding**

Determine prevention resourcing needs and institutionalize funding to enable and assure the implementation of a long-term strategy that is sustained long enough to realistically achieve measurable reductions in sexual assault and sexual harassment.

### **Prevention Funding: 1-3 Years**

- Review current funding sources that can be allocated for prevention.
- Develop a prevention budget for a comprehensive approach to prevention, based on the *Implementation Plan* and annual prevention strategic plan (Leadership Recommendation #3).
- Allocate appropriate funding for the comprehensive approach to prevention including funding for prevention staffing, program implementation, and evaluation.

### **Prevention Funding: Long-Term**

- Determine and allocate sustainable funding sources for the comprehensive approach to prevention.
- Conduct annual evaluation of prevention budget and programmatic outcomes. Make budget adjustments and program improvements based on findings.

## **Infrastructure Recommendation #2: Develop Prevention Policies**

In collaboration with prevention SMEs, review, revise, and or develop policies that codify minimum prevention-focused requirements (e.g., funding, leadership training, USAP participant (workforce) training, oversight responsibilities, evaluation requirements, staffing, etc.).

### **Prevention Policies: 1-3 Years**

- Review existing policies related to addressing or preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- Determine revisions to existing policies to incorporate prevention-related requirements.
- Develop new prevention-related policies, as necessary, based on findings from first two steps outlined above.

### **Prevention Policies: Long-Term**

- Institutionalize revised and new prevention-related policies to be sustained over time.
- Conduct annual evaluation of prevention policy implementation. Make necessary policy improvements based on findings.

### **Infrastructure Recommendation #3: Identify, Resource, and Support Prevention Staffing**

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In collaboration with prevention SMEs, identify, resource, and support prevention staffing with the appropriate prevention experience and expertise. Prevention staffing will be tasked with prevention program implementation, coordination, and evaluation efforts. Depending on staffing needs, a prevention position may be full-time, an additional duty for multiple positions, or another configuration.

#### **Prevention Staffing: 1-3 Years**

- Assess staffing needs based on the implementation requirements of the comprehensive prevention strategy (as outlined in the upcoming *Implementation Plan*).
- Develop position description(s) for prevention staffing, including duties, qualifications, and performance evaluation metrics.
- Increase dedicated prevention-specific staffing capacity accordingly through hiring, contracting, and/or dedicating time of current qualified staff.
- Develop a training and oversight plan for prevention staff to ensure to quality implementation of programs, including effective delivery and fidelity.
- Equip leadership, supervisors, and others charged with recruiting, screening, hiring, and overseeing prevention staff, with tools to effectively identify, hire, train, and supervise prevention staff.
- Develop appropriate training and professional development guidelines for providing effective oversight.

#### **Prevention Staffing: Long-Term**

- Institutionalize prevention staffing position(s) in policy.
- Conduct annual performance evaluation of prevention staffing, in relation to prevention program outcomes. Make necessary changes to personnel, assigned duties, and support mechanisms, based on findings.

### **Infrastructure Recommendation #4: Develop a Prevention Collaborative Body**

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Create and codify a collaborative body dedicated to prevention, comprised of key stakeholders including leaders and representatives from the general workforce (non-managerial, non-HR, non-PI). The purpose of this collaborative body will be to ensure the comprehensive approach to prevention is well-received and

reaching similar outcomes across USAP participants from partner organizations, institutions, and NSF-managed contracts. (This collaborative body may be determined to be a dedicated sub-committee of the CCRT, outlined in the Coalition Building Recommendation #3 in Response Recommendations.)

### **Prevention Collaborative Body: 1-3 Years**

- Determine specific number of seats for the collaborative body and individuals and/or positions across USAP partner organizations and institutions who should fill those seats. Pay close attention to recruiting and including representation across a diverse cross-section of the USAP community.
- Ensure group is adequately trained on prevention and advised by prevention SMEs.
- In early meetings, collaborate to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that establishes the groups guiding principles and how they will work together to successfully increase prevention capacity across the USAP. Ensure each member of the group signs the MOU.
- In early meetings, collaborate to develop a clear mission and objectives.
- Report progress regularly to senior leadership at NSF, ASC, and other partner organizations and institutions.

### **Prevention Collaborative Body: Long- Term**

- Institutionalize prevention collaborative body in policy.
- Review prevention strategy evaluation findings annually and provide guidance and insights to ensure continuous quality improvement.
- Develop a sustainable, ongoing communication plan to update senior leaders across USAP partner organizations and institutions of prevention strategy progress, improvements

### **Prevention Component: Engagement**

Indicated by intrinsic motivation and participation.

Effective prevention is predicated on engagement from the target population. Climate is defined by the aggregate of individual behaviors and cannot be created

or sustained by leadership absent broad-based and consistent participation of a significant cross-section of the community.

### **Engagement Recommendation #1: Develop Plan of Action to Address Negative Perceptions**

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Utilizing the *Needs Assessment Report* findings, and in collaboration with prevention SMEs, develop a plan of action to address existing negative perceptions of current sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention efforts.

#### **Plan of Action to Address Negative Perceptions: 1-3 Years**

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- Review the *Needs Assessment Report* and determine sources of USAP participants' negative perceptions of leadership responses, current sexual assault and sexual harassment awareness training, and other key findings.
- Develop a plan of action to address the negative perceptions. Elements of the plan should be incorporated into program development, education goals, communication strategies, and leadership training.
- Develop an evaluation plan for measuring related perceptions annually to assess changes, gaps, and measures of success.
- Implement the plan of action and evaluation plan.

#### **Plan of Action to Address Negative Perceptions: Long-Term**

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- Institutionalize ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms.

### **Engagement Recommendation #2: Increase Prevention Opportunities**

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In consultation with prevention SMEs and as a part of the comprehensive prevention strategy (Leadership Recommendation #3), increase formal and informal opportunities for participation in prevention efforts that are practical and actionable given the roles, responsibilities, and contexts of individuals and groups across the USAP community.

#### **Prevention Opportunities: 1-3 Years**

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- As a part of the comprehensive prevention strategy, develop an engagement plan that incorporates prevention activities in formal and informal settings. These prevention activities should reinforce and strengthen prevention-related skills, inspire participation in prevention, and

remind members of the USAP community of the importance of prevention. Examples may include:

- Booster activities in regular staff meetings.
- Talking points delivered during safety briefs or all hands meetings.
- Short, one- to three-minute reminders as a part of toolbox talks.
- Community-wide social marketing or other initiatives.
- Develop an evaluation plan to measure prevention engagement.
- Implement engagement and related evaluation plan.

### **Prevention Opportunities: Long-Term**

- Institutionalize ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms.

## **Prevention Component: Education**

Indicated by education that is research-informed, well-delivered, and evaluated.

The goal of prevention education is to equip community members with the knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to intervene in high-risk situations and to proactively engage in behaviors that contribute to a climate where every USAP participant works and lives free from the experience or fear of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

### **Education Recommendation #1: Develop Prevention Training for Leadership**

Develop and implement prevention training that equips leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to establish a healthy community and workplace climate, institutionalized within policy.

#### **Prevention Training for Leadership: 1-3 Years**

- In consultation with prevention SMEs, develop and implement a prevention training for leaders at each echelon of the USAP hierarchical structure (as referenced in Leadership Recommendation #2).
  - Content should be tailored to the specific role leaders play in decision-making, oversight, and accountability.
  - Topics should include, but are not limited to communication, hiring, the role of mid-level managers and supervisors, evaluation, and the leadership role in creating a healthy community and workplace climate.

- Develop and implement an evaluation plan to track knowledge and behavioral outcomes associated with the prevention training for leadership.
- Utilize evaluation findings to make program improvements.

### **Prevention Training for Leadership: Long-Term**

- Incorporate the prevention training for leadership into policy to ensure the training is sustained overtime.
- Establish an ongoing evaluation plan to assess outcomes over time and ensure continuous quality improvement.

## **Education Recommendation #2: Identify or Develop Prevention Programs**

In consultation with prevention SMEs, identify and/or develop prevention education programs that are informed by research and/or supported by evidence, and tailored to the contexts and subgroups across the USAP. Create and/or select prevention refreshers, booster activities, and educational campaigns that reinforce key messages, and align with staffing capacity, access to participants, and minimum dosage recommendations necessary to support durability of impact.

### **Prevention Programs: 1-3 Years**

- Review existing prevention programs to determine fit for the USAP.
- Select and tailor or develop prevention programs to be implemented across the USAP.
- Include a plan for selecting or developing prevention refreshers, as outlined in Engagement Recommendation #2.
- Implement prevention programs and refreshers across the USAP. (The *Implementation Plan* will provide more information about when and where prevention programs should be delivered, as well as who should be delivering the programs.)

### **Prevention Programs: Long-Term**

- Institutionalize prevention programming in policy.
- Develop an ongoing evaluation plan to ensure the program is meeting desired outcomes. Utilize evaluation findings for program improvements and to ensure continuous quality improvement.



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**Education Recommendation #3: Institutionalize an Evaluation Plan**

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Develop, fund, and institutionalize an evaluation plan that can expand in increments as capacity allows. Evaluation efforts should initially target education programs, climate, employee and contractor perceptions, and leadership. The plan should be incorporated into policy and include a process for oversight, utilizing findings for prevention strategy improvements, and communicating results to the USAP community.

**Evaluation Plan: 1-3 Years**

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- Assess current evaluation capacity, existing data collection sources that may be utilized or adjusted to include prevention, and funding for evaluation.
- Create or expand capacity for evaluating the comprehensive prevention strategy including staffing, expertise, and funding. This may include developing an evaluation position or allocating dedicated time to evaluation in other positions.
- Develop an evaluation plan to assess the comprehensive prevention strategy (inclusive of evaluation efforts across all prevention recommendations).

**Evaluation Plan: Long-Term**

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- Institutionalize evaluation efforts in policy.
- Develop a sustainable and ongoing evaluation communication strategy for sharing evaluation findings across USAP participants and partner organizations and institutions.

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## Conclusion

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The USAP operates in a unique and challenging environment, where multi-generational community members live and work in close quarters, interact socially and professionally daily, and must collaborate across different disciplines, organizations, and research institutions.

The NSF and partner organizations have taken necessary steps to build a foundation for creating a healthier climate in the USAP. However, findings in this *Needs Assessment Report* shed an important and urgent light on the current state of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the USAP. It is clear these issues are impacting a high number of USAP participants and efforts to address and prevent related harm have been inadequate and ineffective.

Key findings and recommendations from this *Needs Assessment Report* will be utilized to determine the most efficient and effective route to better address and prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault in the USAP. Detailed action steps will be outlined in the forthcoming *SAHPR Implementation Plan and Training Materials*. Given how the *Needs Assessment Report* directly informs the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*, the two volumes are strongly encouraged to always be distributed in tandem.

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# Appendix A: Preliminary Key Stakeholder Interview Script and Questions

## Introduction

[Brief introductions: Lea Hegge (Alteristic), Lindy Aldrich (VRLC), Key Stakeholder(s)]

As you know, we are members of a team who is conducting a needs assessment of OPP and partner organizations to develop a comprehensive approach to addressing sexual assault and harassment. We are speaking with you today to learn more about the OPP, partner organizations, and the community on the ice. We'll be asking questions about organizational structure, culture, and relationships between organizations and individuals. Your answers will be used to inform the *Needs Assessment Data Collection Plan*, and ultimately the *SAHPR Implementation Plan* and *SAHPR Training Materials*.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

## Questions

[*Note: Prompts to be used as needed.*]

1. First, can you give us a high-level lay of the land? For example, who are the biggest sub-groups during winter and summer seasons?
  - [*Prompt*] How do those groups interact with each other?
  - [*Prompt*] Please explain the breakdown at McMurdo, South Pole, and Palmer.
  - [*Prompt*] Are there any other large subpopulations?
  - [*Prompt*] Are there any especially unique subpopulations?
  - [*Prompt*] What is the chain of command? (We have heard the hierarchy is flatter in person, rather than how it looks on paper).
2. If you wanted to get a diverse cross-section of employees across organizations who work on the ice for the needs assessment, who would you include in focus groups or key stakeholder interviews?
  - [*Prompt*] How would you group the different levels of authority or hierarchy?

- *[Prompt]* What are the unique levels of authority? (For example: Executive leadership, mid-level leaders, supervisors, etc.)
  - *[Prompt]* For McMurdo, who are the most populated grantee groups? Which grantee groups are most unique?
  - *[Prompt]* How would you breakdown Leidos contractors and employees?
  - *[Prompt]* What is the general demographic breakdown on the ice? Across different organizations?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you have any suggestions for recruiting participants to ensure we have a diverse cross-section based on race, gender, sexuality, age, or other identities?
  - *[Prompt]* Who would you recruit from South Pole? Palmer? Why?
3. How do individuals or organizations intersect with each other?
- *[Prompt]* Who communicates with whom? Why?
  - *[Prompt]* What is the everyday culture like on the ice?
  - *[Prompt]* What do social interactions look like, both formal and informal?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate within organizations?
  - *[Prompt]* How do grantees communicate with others? Who do they communicate with most?
  - *[Prompt]* How do individuals communicate outside of their organization?
  - *[Prompt]* How are relationships between organizations? Are they positive, negative, neutral?
4. Is there a precedence for trainings or programs that address social issues on the ice? Prevention programs?
- *[Prompt]* What issues have social programs addressed?
  - *[Prompt]* How were these programs implemented?
  - *[Prompt]* How were these programs received?
5. Is there anything else you think would help us develop the *Needs Assessment Data Collection Plan*?

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today. Your answers will help us as we move forward with the needs assessment.



# Appendix B: Key Stakeholder Interview Script and Questions

## Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. Let's do brief introductions.

[Brief introductions: Facilitator and notetaker (Alteristic), facilitator and notetaker (VRLC), key stakeholder(s)]

As you may know, we are a part of a team conducting a needs assessment for the National Science Foundation (NSF), Office of Polar Programs (OPP) and for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) Sexual Assault Harassment Prevention Training and Response (SAHPR) program. The purpose of the needs assessment is to learn more about current conditions relating to sexual assault and harassment on the ice, and across OPP and partner organizations; and identify feasible recommendations that will support OPP in developing a successful, comprehensive approach to address and prevent sexual assault and harassment.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us and discuss your experience. We are holding several key stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and administering surveys as a part of this needs assessment with many USAP participants. We are going to record our conversation today and *[INSERT NAMES OF NOTETAKERS]* will be taking notes. We will capture the actual words that are said, to ensure the needs assessment accurately reflects participants' experiences and perceptions. After we complete the data collection process, we will analyze the information and identify themes to inform the *Needs Assessment Report*. **Please note, we will not link your name to your words in any way.** Recordings and transcripts will be available *only* to the needs assessment team. They will not be made available to members of PPO or Partner Organizations. Themes and data will be summarized in group form for the *Needs Assessment Report* but there will be no way to link your name to anything you say. I do ask that you keep what is spoken here confidential. I will let you know before I start recording.

You can skip any questions you don't want to answer, and you may take a break or quit at any time. If there is something you would like to share with one of us privately, we will provide our contact information in the chat box, and you can feel free to contact us directly.

We have two hours to talk. We may or may not use the full time.

I'm going to start the recording now.

## Questions

[Note: Prompts to be used as needed.]

1. Can you explain the organizational structure where you work or for the USAP organization you are most familiar with?
  - *[Prompt]* What are the different roles and how are they distinct from each other?
  - *[Prompt]* Explain the different levels of authority and/or influence.
2. Who are the most significant subpopulations within your workplace or the USAP organization you are most familiar with?
  - *[Prompt]* What makes each of these groups unique?
  - *[Prompt]* Are any groups impacted by sexual assault, harassment, or other concerning behaviors more than others?
3. How do individuals or organizations interact with each other?
  - *[Prompt]* Who communicates with whom? Why?
  - *[Prompt]* What is the everyday culture like on the ice?
  - *[Prompt]* What do social interactions look like, both formal and informal?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate within the USAP organization you are most familiar with?
  - *[Prompt]* How do individuals communicate outside of their organization?
  - *[Prompt]* How are relationships between organizations? Are they positive, negative, neutral?
4. What are current programs, policies, or other activities that address or prevent sexual assault and harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Are the programs or activities mandatory?
  - *Prompt]* How often do employees receive training or related information?
  - *[Prompt]* How are these programs, policies, or other activities received by employees?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you perceive them as helpful? Do they make a difference?

- *[Prompt]* What is the perception of employees or contractors? Positive, negative, neutral?
  - *[Prompt]* How are programs, policies, or other related activities evaluated?
  - *[Prompt]* What is the current capacity of your organization to evaluate programs, policies, or other related activities?
  - *[Prompt]* Where do training or workshops happen? Where could they happen? Virtual or in-person?
5. Do you have a position or group of people dedicated to addressing and/or preventing sexual assault and/or harassment?
- *[Prompt]* What is their role?
  - *[Prompt]* What kind of training or expertise do they have?
  - *[Prompt]* How much time are they able to dedicate to those efforts?
6. Is there funding dedicated to addressing and/or preventing sexual assault and/or harassment?
- *[Prompt]* How much?
  - *[Prompt]* How is that funding currently being used?
  - *[Prompt]* How do you think it should be used?
7. How much access do you, members of leadership, and/or HR have to implement a prevention program with USAP participants across different organizations?
- *[Prompt]* What about as a part of on-boarding before an individual arrives on the ice?
  - *[Prompt]* How much time could a training, workshop, or other activity be?
8. We know that effective prevention requires multiple doses of key content. Which types of the following training and activity options would work with the USAP participants you are most familiar with?
- Two-hour in-person, interactive training?
  - Thematic campaigns?
  - *[If yes:]* What do you envision as the methods for this type of campaign?
  - Short (5- to 20-minute) booster activities that can be incorporated into existing meetings and activities?

9. Is there anything that we have asked that you think would help us to inform the development of an effective approach to addressing and preventing sexual assault and harassment for USAP participants?

*[Depending on role and position, these questions were also asked to some, but not all key stakeholders.]*

### **Reporting Procedures**

10. If there were a sexual assault complaint, can you explain the process of how you would learn of it? What would the next steps be? Who would have a say in that decision?
11. The Polar Code of Conduct tells potential complainants to report to a “supervisor, principal investigator, department chair, commanding officer, human resources, ethics or legal representatives.” Could you help us understand what employer each of these positions reports to? How do employees know who specifically to report it to?
12. Can the other positions listed as potential persons to report be given any training on best practices for response and providing information on resources to complainants?
13. What are the criteria for when you contact the US Attorney’s Office (USAO) in HI (is it for every case or only those where guidance is requested)?
14. Do you have an assigned contact at the USAO?
15. How easy or difficult is it to reach a contact at the USAO??
16. Working with contractors, what is the process for determining whether an individual who has violated the Code of Conduct can return to a USAP location?
17. How long has the NSF Portal for individual complaints been operational? Could you give us a sense of how many complaints you have received?
18. Do you relay that information to the employer? How and when is this done?

### **Investigations**

19. If there were a sexual assault on-ice (including in the field) and it was reported, would there always be an investigation? What if it were someone other than the victim who reported it? Who decides?
20. Are you trained/expected to collect evidence following a sexual assault?

21. What trauma-informed investigation techniques have you been trained in? (E.g., Have you ever heard of FETI interviews?)
22. What types of training are human resources investigators given re: trauma-informed response to sexual harassment, trauma-informed investigation techniques and/or trainings about specific forms of gender-based violence?
23. Are their assessments of conflict of interest?
24. Are steps taken to prevent retaliation?

#### Resources Available on the Ice

25. What resources might be available for a victim sexual assault on-ice? SANE, medical help, evidence collection, rape crisis or mental health counseling?
26. Do you have a list of these resources that you could provide to a victim?
27. Is there anyone on the ice who can conduct a medical forensic examination? Are you set up to do these via telehealth?
28. If parties needed to be separated, is there a practice for putting individuals at separate stations on-ice or just restricting within the building? How do you determine who gets moved versus who stays? Have you ever separated individuals because of a report of SA or SH? Can you tell us more about that?
29. Is the NSF Portal for individual complaints included in these trainings?

#### Overall Perceptions

30. Are there policies or procedures you can think of that could/should be implemented to address the SH/SA that does take place?
31. How serious a problem would you say it is? Sexual harassment? Sexual assault?
32. Has anyone ever reported SA or SH to you? Did you feel equipped to address it? Why or why not?

Thank you for your time. Along with others, your responses will be used to inform a comprehensive approach to address and prevent sexual assault and harassment for all USAP participants.

# Appendix C: Focus Group Script and Questions

## Introduction

***Please note that the following script will be read at the beginning of each focus groups, detailed below.***

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. Let's do brief introductions.

[Brief introductions: Facilitator and notetaker (Alteristic), facilitator and notetaker (VRLC), participants]

As you may know, we are a part of a team conducting a needs assessment for the National Science Foundation (NSF), Office of Polar Programs (OPP) and for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) Sexual Assault Harassment Prevention Training and Response (SAHPR) program. The purpose of the needs assessment is to learn more about current conditions related to sexual assault and harassment on the ice and across OPP and partner organizations and identify feasible recommendations that will support OPP in developing a successful, comprehensive approach to address and prevent sexual assault and harassment.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us and discuss your experience. We are holding several, focus groups and administering surveys as a part of this needs assessment with many USAP participants. We are going to record our conversation today and [INSERT NAMES OF NOTETAKERS] will be taking notes. We will capture the actual words that are said, to ensure the needs assessment accurately reflects participants' experiences and perceptions. After we complete the data collection process, we will analyze the information and identify themes to inform the *Needs Assessment Report*. **Please note, we will not link your name to your words.** Recordings and transcripts will be available only to the needs assessment team. When we are done with the data collection process, we will preserve them to inform the project and then delete them. They will not be made available to members of OPP or Partner Organizations. Themes and data will be summarized in group form for the *Needs Assessment Report* and responses will be reported as a group and not attributed to a single individual. I do ask that you keep what is spoken here confidential. I will let you know before I start recording.

You can skip any questions you don't want to answer, and you may take a break or quit at any time. If there is something you would like to share with one of us privately, we will provide our contact information in the chat box, and you can feel free to contact us directly.

We have two hours to talk. We may or may not use the full time. A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number; the number for this is 3145-0260.

## Definitions

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Before we start, I want to share some definitions so that we have a shared understanding of what we're talking about.

*[Share in Chat.]*

**USAP participants and community members** are defined as all persons working or visiting at a USAP or an NSF managed station, field site, other facility, ship, or aircraft. This includes, but is not limited to, researchers, students, contractors, and federal civilian and military personnel. We may refer to USAP participants as community members on the ice, during this focus group.

**Sexual assault** is defined as intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent.

**Sexual harassment** includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or other conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct is made a condition of securing or maintaining employment or when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Are there any questions before we get started?

Will you please verbally agree that you consent to participate in this virtual focus group?

*[Get verbal indication that each participant consents to participate. If anyone would like to leave at this point, that is fine. Thank them for their time.]*

I'd like to start by doing a round robin in which each of you share your first name and your job/position. We'll do this before I start the recorder.

I'm going to start recording now.

*[Note: You may not have time to get to all the questions. Concentrate on the main questions, the prompts are optional.]*

*[INSERT QUESTIONS HERE]*

### **Conclusion**

Thank you so much for your time today. As a reminder, your names will not be used in any report. Your answers will be compiled with many others and themes from these conversations will be used to tailor and develop an effective prevention and response strategy to address sexual assault and harassment on the ice.

Please feel free to contact us if you think of anything else you would like to add.

*[PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION]*



## Focus Group Questions by Group

[Note: Prompts to be used as needed.]

### USAP Participants at South Pole Station

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**Demographics:** A mix of USAP participants who have worked at the South Pole station for a minimum stay of two weeks. Includes Antarctic Support Contract (ASC) (prime and subs), grantees, federal employees (NSF, NOAA, etc.), with a focus on individuals lower in the organizational hierarchy.

**Purpose:** This focus group will capture the unique perceptions of non-supervisors/management employees regarding recent employment conditions at the South Pole Station.

### Prevention-Related Questions:

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Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at the South Pole Station.
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
  - *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
  - *[Prompt]* Do people tend to get to know each other while they're at work?
  - *[Prompt]* Do they socialize or keep it professional?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work? How do they socialize? What do they do?
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions at South Pole Station?
  - *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?
  - *[Prompts]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

---

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?

- *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
- *[Prompts]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?

4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at South Pole Station?

- *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
- *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
- *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere at South Pole Station where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at South Pole Station.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?

- *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
- *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
- *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
- *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to grab coffee.

**Response Questions:**

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1. Are you aware of how anyone at South Pole Station would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
2. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at South Pole Station?
3. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at the South Pole station for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
4. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at South Pole Station?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
5. If two people needed to be separated at South Pole Station, is that possible or realistic during the Summer? Winter?
6. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

### **USAP Participants at Palmer Station**

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**Demographics:** A mix of USAP participants who have worked at Palmer Station (PAL) for a minimum stay of one month. Includes ASC (prime and subs), grantees, federal employees, etc. with a focus on individuals who are lower in the organizational hierarchy.

**Purpose:** This focus group will capture the unique perceptions of non-supervisors/management employees regarding recent employment conditions at the Palmer Station.

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## Prevention Questions:

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Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at the Palmer Station.
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
  - *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
  - *[Prompt]* Do people tend to get to know each other while they're at work?
  - *[Prompt]* Do they socialize or keep it professional?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work? How do they socialize? What do they do?
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions at Palmer Station?
  - *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?
  - *[Prompt]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
  - *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?
4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at Palmer Station?
  - *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
  - *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?

- *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere at Palmer Station where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at Palmer Station.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
  - *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
  - *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
  - *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to grab coffee.

### **Response Questions:**

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at Palmer Station? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how anyone at Palmer Station would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at Palmer Station?

4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at Palmer Station for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
5. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at Palmer Station?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
6. If two people needed to be separated at Palmer Station, is that possible or realistic during the Summer? Winter?
7. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

### **USAP Participants on Research Vessels**

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**Demographics:** A mix of USAP participants who voyaged aboard the NBP and LMG research vessels. Includes ASC (prime and subs including vessel crew), grantees, federal employees, etc., with a focus on individuals lower in the organizational hierarchy.

**Purpose:** This focus group will capture the unique perceptions of non-supervisors/management employees regarding recent employment conditions on research vessels.

### **Prevention Questions:**

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Let's start by talking about the culture on the research vessels and your work environments in general.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture on the research vessels.
  - *[Prompts]* How many people do you interact with daily on the vessel? Who? Why?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?

- *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
  - *[Prompt]* Do people tend to get to know each other while they're at work?
  - *[Prompts]* Do they socialize after hours or keep it professional? Are there social times or activities on the vessels?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work? How do they socialize? What do they do?
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions on the vessels?
- *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?
  - *[Prompts]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?
- *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
  - *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?
4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening on the research vessels?
- *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
  - *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
  - *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an environment where sexual assault or harassment is likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen on the research vessels.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?

- *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
- *[Prompts]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening? What are barriers to intervening?
- *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
- *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to work on something else.

### **Response Questions:**

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen on a research vessel? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how someone would report sexual harassment or sexual assault on a research vessel?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what the logistics would be of making a report off the research vessel?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault on a research vessel?
4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.



- *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available on the research vessels for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
5. If two people needed to be separated on a research vessel, is that possible or realistic?
  6. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

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### Seasonal Contractors at McMurdo Station

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**Demographics:** A mix of ASC participants contracted to work as a seasonal employee at McMurdo Station (McM) for a minimum stay of one month over the austral summer, winter, or both. No full-time-employees: ASC contracted only. Focus on non-supervisors, galley staff.

**Purpose:** This focus group will be important to understand the experiences of USAP participants during both seasons, but especially the summer season, when McMurdo Station can have over 1,000 employees deployed. It is important to capture the perceptions of the largest group at McMurdo - contract employees. This focus group will capture perceptions of non-full-time employees in mid-to-lower-level positions regarding recent employment conditions at the McMurdo Station who have spent some of the summer or winter season as a part-time employee.

### Prevention Questions:

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Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at McMurdo Station.
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
  - *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?

- *[Prompt]* Do people tend to get to know each other while they're at work?
  - *[Prompt]* Do they socialize or keep it professional?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work? How do they socialize? What do they do?
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions at McMurdo Station?
- *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?
  - *[Prompts]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?
- *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
  - *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?
4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at McMurdo Station?
- *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
  - *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
  - *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an environment on the ice where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at McMurdo Station.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?
- *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?

- *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
- *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
- *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to grab coffee.

### Response Questions:

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at McMurdo Station? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how anyone at McMurdo Station would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at McMurdo Station?
4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at McMurdo Station for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?

5. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at McMurdo Station?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
6. If two people needed to be separated at McMurdo Station, is that possible or realistic during the Summer? Winter?
7. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

### **Seasonal Contractors at McMurdo Station: Women-Only**

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**Demographics:** ASC women participants contracted to work as a seasonal employee at McMurdo Station (McM) for a minimum stay of one month over the austral summer, winter, or both. No full-time-employees: ASC contracted only. No men. Focus on non-supervisors, galley staff.

**Purpose:** This focus group will include only part-time, female contract employees who make up the over 1,000 employees deployed at McMurdo Station in the summer or winter seasons. A woman-only focus group will allow female-identified respondents to feel comfortable and safe discussing the issues with others who may have similar experiences and perspectives.

### **Prevention Questions:**

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Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at McMurdo Station.
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
  - *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
  - *[Prompt]* Do people tend to get to know each other while they're at work?
  - *[Prompt]* Do they socialize or keep it professional?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work? How do they socialize? What do they do?
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions at McMurdo Station?

- *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?
- *[Prompts]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
- *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?

- *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
- *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?

4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at McMurdo Station?

- *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
- *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
- *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an environment on the ice where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.
- *[Prompt]* What groups of individuals tend to experience sexual assault or harassment more often than others? Why or why not?
- *[Prompt]* What groups of individuals cause harm like sexual assault or harassment more often than others? Why or why not?

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at McMurdo Station.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?

- *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
- *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
- *[Prompt]* What circumstances make it more difficult to intervene as a bystander?

- *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
- *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to grab coffee.

### Response Questions:

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at McMurdo Station? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how anyone at McMurdo Station would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at McMurdo Station?
4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at McMurdo Station for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
5. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at McMurdo Station?

- *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
6. If two people needed to be separated at McMurdo Station, is that possible or realistic during the Summer? Winter?
  7. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

### **Full-Time Contractors at McMurdo Station**

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**Demographics:** A mix of ASC participants employed full time by Leidos ASC or one of its subcontractors who deployed to McMurdo for a minimum stay of one week. No Supervisors.

**Purpose:** Full-time employees may not face the same concerns as a part-time employee who fears losing their job due a report. This focus group will work to understand the perceptions of full-time employees who may provide training, interact with complainants, and see patterns over time of which a seasonal employee would not be aware.

### **Prevention Questions:**

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Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at McMurdo Station.
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
  - *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
  - *[Prompt]* Do people tend to get to know each other while they're at work?
  - *[Prompt]* Do they socialize or keep it professional?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work? How do they socialize? What do they do?
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions at McMurdo Station?
  - *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?

- *[Prompts]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
- *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?

- *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
- *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?

4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at McMurdo Station?

- *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
- *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
- *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an environment on the ice where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at McMurdo Station.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?

- *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
- *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
- *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
- *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
- *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.



- *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to grab coffee.

### Response Questions:

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at McMurdo Station? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how anyone at McMurdo Station would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at McMurdo Station?
4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at McMurdo Station for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
5. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at McMurdo Station?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
6. If two people needed to be separated at McMurdo Station, is that possible or realistic during the Summer? Winter?
7. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

## Full-Time Supervisors at McMurdo Station

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**Demographics:** A mix of ASC participants employed full time by Leidos ASC or one of its subcontractors who deployed to McMurdo for a minimum stay of one week. Supervisors Only.

**Purpose:** Full-time supervisors will likely be involved in providing training, overseeing complaints, and implementing protocols. This focus group will work to understand the perceptions of full-time supervisors who may see patterns over time of which a seasonal, or mid-to-lower-level employee would not be aware.

### Prevention Questions:

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Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at McMurdo Station.
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
  - *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
  - *[Prompt]* Do people tend to get to know each other while they're at work?
  - *[Prompt]* Do they socialize or keep it professional?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work? How do they socialize? What do they do?
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. What do you do on a regular basis to set the tone for behavioral expectations of your employees?
  - *[Prompt]* How do your employees know how you expect them to act?
  - *[Prompt]* What do you do to support your employees and ensure they are operating in a positive work environment?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
  - *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?

4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at McMurdo Station?
- *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
  - *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
  - *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an environment on the ice where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at McMurdo Station.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?
- *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
  - *[Prompts]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening? What about your entry-level or low-level employees?
  - *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways that you or someone else might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
  - *[Prompt]* If someone doesn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could they delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to grab coffee.

### **Response Questions:**

1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at McMurdo Station? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)

2. Can you describe the process at McMurdo Station to report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at McMurdo Station?
4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at McMurdo Station for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
5. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at McMurdo?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
6. If two people needed to be separated at McMurdo Station, is that possible or realistic during the Summer? Winter?
7. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

### **Grantees at McMurdo Station**

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**Demographics:** A mix of USAP grantees who deployed to McMurdo – minimum stay of one month. Includes any private citizen deploying under an NSF grant or any individual deploying as part of a partner agency’s scientific endeavor. Includes NASA and NOAA and individuals contracted by a grantee or institution. Focus on graduate and undergraduate students.

**Purpose:** For those deployed to McMurdo Station as part of a grant from an institution of higher education, the working relationships and connection to other groups (i.e., contractor or military) at McMurdo can be different. This focus group will capture the perceptions of graduate and undergraduate students working on

these grants, including the power dynamics on and off the ice that could influence behavior.

### Prevention Questions:

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Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at McMurdo Station.
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
  - *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
  - *[Prompt]* Do people tend to get to know each other while they're at work?
  - *[Prompt]* Do they socialize or keep it professional?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work? How do they socialize? What do they do?
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions at McMurdo?
  - *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?
  - *[Prompts]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
  - *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?
4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at McMurdo Station?
  - *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?

- *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
- *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an environment on the ice where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at McMurdo Station.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
  - *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
  - *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
  - *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, your PI, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to grab coffee.

### **Response Questions:**

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at McMurdo Station? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how anyone at McMurdo Station would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Would you anticipate reporting to your institution and staff at McMurdo?

- *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at McMurdo Station?
  4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
    - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
    - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at McMurdo Station for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
    - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
  5. Have you been trained by your institution on their policy regarding preventing sexual harassment and sexual violence?
  6. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at McMurdo Station?
    - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
  7. If two people needed to be separated at McMurdo Station, is that possible or realistic during the Summer? Winter?
  8. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

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### USAP Participants at Near Field Sites

**Demographics:** A mix of USAP participants who work at near field sites such as the Dry Valleys, LDB, etc. Work within a helo-ride of McMurdo. Includes ASC (prime and subs), grantees, and federal employees. Includes graduate and undergraduate students.

**Purpose:** Like other stations, near field research sites bring their own safety and employment concerns. Near field research sites within a helo-ride of McMurdo Station are both logistically and culturally different from any station (i.e., very small group, inability to physically distance from other employees). It is important to collect information from the unique environments of near field research sites.

## Prevention Questions:

---

Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at the near field sites you have worked on.
  - *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
  - *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
  - *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
  - *[Prompt]* Do people socialize or keep it professional?
  - *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work hours? How do they socialize? What do they do?
  
2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions at near field sites?
  - *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?
  - *[Prompt]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
  - *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
  - *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?
  
4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at near field sites?
  - *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
  - *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?



- *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere at the South Pole where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at near field sites.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
  - *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
  - *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
  - *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to talk about another task.

### Response Questions:

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at a near field site? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how anyone at a near field site would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what the logistics would be of making a report off the site?
  - *[Prompt]* Would you anticipate reporting to your institution and staff at McMurdo?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?

3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at a near field site?
4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at the near field site for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
5. Have you been trained by your institution on their policy regarding preventing sexual harassment and sexual violence?
6. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at a near field site?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
7. If two people needed to be separated at a near field site, is that possible or realistic?
8. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

### **USAP Participants at Deep Field Sites**

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**Demographics:** A mix of USAP participants who work at deep field sites such as Thwaites. Work within a plane-ride or traverse from McMurdo Station or South Pole Station. Includes ASC (prime and subs), grantees, and federal employees. Includes graduate and undergraduate students.

**Purpose:** Like other stations, deep field research sites bring their own safety and employment concerns. Deep field research sites are both logistically and culturally different from any station (i.e., inability to get out quickly, inability to physically distance from other employees). It is important to collect information from the unique environments of deep field research sites.

### **Prevention Questions:**

---

Let's start by talking about the culture on the ice and your work environments.

1. Tell me a little bit about the culture at the deep field sites you have worked on.

- *[Prompt]* How do people communicate with each other formally or for work?
- *[Prompts]* How often do you meet with your team? Who is present? How long are the meetings? What topics are covered, in general?
- *[Prompt]* What about informally or socially?
- *[Prompt]* Do people socialize or keep it professional?
- *[Prompts]* Do people tend to spend time with each other outside of work hours? How do they socialize? What do they do?

2. We know that people often behave in certain ways based on the people around them. Who is most influential in setting informal norms of day-to-day interactions at deep field sites?

- *[Prompt]* For example, is it the supervisors, those who have been around longest, specific personality types, people with certain jobs, etc.?
- *[Prompt]* Who sets the tone in terms of behavioral expectations? How do they set the tone?
- *[Prompt]* How do people express themselves or endorse issues they care about (e.g., social media, t-shirts, or other swag, etc.)?

Now let's talk about concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment.

3. What kind of training do you receive about sexual assault or harassment?

- *[Prompt]* When do you receive it?
- *[Prompt]* Is the training helpful? Why or why not?

4. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening at deep field sites?

- *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
- *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
- *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere at deep field sites where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen at deep field sites.

5. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
  - *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
  - *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
  - *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to talk about another task.

### **Response Questions:**

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at a deep field site? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how anyone at a deep field site would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what the logistics would be of making a report off the site?
  - *[Prompt]* Would you anticipate reporting to your institution and staff at McMurdo?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?
3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at a deep field site?

4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available at the deep field site for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
5. Have you been trained by your institution on their policy regarding preventing sexual harassment and sexual violence?
6. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at a deep field site?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
7. If two people needed to be separated at a deep field site, is that possible or realistic?
8. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?

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### Focus Group 13: Ice Allies

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**Demographics:** USAP participants who identify as a member of the Ice Allies group, who formed to hold leadership accountable to on-ice sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other sexually discriminatory behaviors.

**Purpose:** USAP participants have created a grassroots group to address their concerns regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other sexually discriminatory behaviors they have witnessed, or been a victim of, while on-ice. This focus group would capture the perceptions of participants regarding concerning behaviors on-ice and potential changes to systems and training that could better address sexual misconduct within this community.

#### Prevention Questions:

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1. Tell me why you decided to join the Ice Allies group.
  - *[Prompt]* What prompted the formation of the group?
  - *[Prompt]* Have you seen any success or changes because of the group? If yes, describe them.
2. What do you think NSF/ASC Contract companies should be doing differently to ensure that sexual assault and harassment are prevented and addressed on the ice?
  - *[Prompt]* What needs to happen to ensure safety of all USAP participants?
  - *[Prompt]* What kind of training would help? When?
  - *[Prompt]* Who would be the best messengers/instructors for that type of training? Why?
3. What kinds of concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault or harassment have you witnessed, heard about, or worry about happening on the ice?
  - *[Prompt]* What concerning interactions have you seen between individuals?
  - *[Prompt]* What are subtle behaviors you've seen or heard about that make you uncomfortable, but do not violate a policy?
  - *[Prompt]* Please describe circumstances that you feel create an environment on the ice where sexual assault or harassment is more likely to happen.
  - *[Prompt]* What groups of individuals tend to experience sexual assault or harassment more often than others? Why or why not?

- *[Prompt]* What groups of individuals cause harm like sexual assault or harassment more often than others? Why or why not?

Finally, let's talk about how others respond when concerning behaviors happen on the ice.

4. How do bystanders respond when they see concerning behaviors relating to sexual assault and harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do bystanders intervene? Why or why not?
  - *[Prompt]* What would stop yourself or another bystander from intervening?
  - *[Prompt]* What circumstances make it more difficult to intervene as a bystander?
  - *[Prompt]* Describe any bystander interventions that you have done or seen others do.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways that you might intervene directly? For example, call someone out, check in with a friend, or tell someone to stop.
  - *[Prompt]* If you didn't feel comfortable intervening yourself, who could you delegate to that might have more authority or confidence in intervening? For example, your PI, a supervisor, manager, co-worker, friend, or group of friends.
  - *[Prompt]* What are ways you might distract or de-escalate a situation as a bystander? For example, you could distract by changing the subject, asking for help on a task, or by pulling someone away from a situation to grab coffee.

### **Response Questions:**

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1. Are there circumstances that you feel create an atmosphere where sexual assault does or is likely to happen at McMurdo? (Provide Polar Code of Conduct definition for sexual assault and sexual harassment.)
2. Are you aware of how anyone at McMurdo would report sexual harassment or sexual assault?
  - *[Prompt]* Can you describe what you think that process is?
  - *[Prompt]* Are there different reporting procedures for sexual harassment versus sexual assault?

3. Do you feel there are any challenges or barriers you have seen, heard of, or expect might occur when someone alleges sexual harassment or sexual assault at McMurdo?
4. Are you aware of any reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* If so, based on what you know, what are your feelings about the response to that report? As a reminder, please do not use any names or identifying information.
  - *[Prompt]* Are you aware of any resources available on the ice for victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you believe leadership at your organization takes these reports seriously?
5. To what extent do you think alcohol plays a role in any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs at McMurdo?
  - *[Prompt]* Do you think alcohol use should be regulated or monitored more than it is currently?
6. If two people needed to be separated at McMurdo, is that possible or realistic during the Summer? Winter?
7. Are there steps you feel could be taken to better respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault?



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# Appendix D: USAP Participant Survey

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## Introduction

You are being invited to respond to a survey as a part of a needs assessment for the National Science Foundation (NSF), Office of Polar Programs (OPP) and for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) Sexual Assault Harassment Prevention Training and Response (SAHPR) program. The purpose of the needs assessment is to learn more about current conditions relating to sexual assault and harassment on the ice and identify feasible recommendations that will support OPP in developing a successful, comprehensive approach to prevent and respond to sexual assault and harassment.

We are holding several focus groups and administering surveys as a part of this needs assessment with many USAP participants. We will not be asking you to provide any identifying information. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Please feel free to skip questions you cannot or do not wish to answer. You may skip any questions and quit at any time. If you wish to participate in this survey, please click “Next” to proceed. If you do not wish to participate, you can exit the survey platform now.

The survey will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. We appreciate your time and valuable input. This study is authorized by law (42 U.S.C. 1862 Section 3.a.6.). The OMB control number for this study is 3415-0260.

## Definitions

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Before you start, we want to share some definitions so that there is a shared understanding of what we’re talking about.

For this survey, **USAP participants and community members** are defined as all persons working or visiting at a USAP or an NSF managed Antarctic station, field camp, other facility, ship, or aircraft enroute. This includes, but is not limited to, researchers, students, contractors, federal civilian, and military personnel.

**Sexual assault** is defined as intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent.

**Sexual harassment** includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual

favours, and other verbal or other conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct is made a condition of securing or maintaining employment or when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

## Questions

### **USAP Participant Perceptions: Sexual Assault and Harassment**

The following questions will ask you about your view on sexual assault and harassment in the USAP community. For each statement, tell us how much you agree or disagree. Choices: Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree; I don't know.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
1. Sexual assault is a problem in the USAP community.						
2. Sexual harassment is a problem in the USAP community.						
3. Sexual assault and harassment are important issues to address in the USAP community.						
4. There are members of the USAP community who experience sexual assault more often than others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you agree, what groups do you believe experience sexual assault more often? (open)</li> </ul>						
5. There are members of						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
<p>the USAP community who experience sexual harassment more often than others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you agree, what groups do you believe experience sexual harassment more often? (open)</li> </ul>						
<p>6. There are members of the USAP community who cause harm like sexual assault more often than others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you agree, which groups of individuals cause harm like sexual assault more often? (Please do not use any names.) (open)</li> </ul>						
<p>7. There are members of the USAP community who cause harm like sexual harassment more often than others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you agree, which groups of individuals cause harm like sexual harassment more often? (Please</li> </ul>						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
do not use any names.) (open)						

### USAP Participant Perceptions: Personal Influence

The following questions will ask you what you believe about your role in preventing sexual assault and harassment. For each question, tell us how much you agree or disagree. Choices: Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree; I don't know.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
8. It is possible to prevent sexual assault in the USAP community.						
9. It is possible to prevent sexual harassment in the USAP community.						
10. I have a role to play in preventing sexual assault and harassment in the USAP community.						
11. I don't think there is much I can do about sexual assault and harassment in the USAP community.						

### USAP Participant Perceptions: Organizational Support

The following questions will ask you about your thoughts on organizational support for USAP participants. For each question, tell us how much you agree or

disagree. Choices: Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Strongly Disagree; I don't know.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
12. I believe that the organization/institution I work for wants me to be safe at work.						
13. I believe that if a co-worker or myself reports an incident of sexual assault or harassment, the organization/institution I work for will thoroughly investigate.						
14. I believe that the organization/institute I work for holds those people who cause harm (like sexual assault and harassment) accountable.						
15. If I saw behaviors that could lead to or constitute sexual assault or harassment, I have leaders or colleagues I can turn to for help.						
16. I trust that the leadership of the organization/institute I work for is doing their best to prevent sexual assault and harassment.						

17. The information I have received about sexual assault and harassment is valuable to me.						
18. I have a positive perception of efforts to address sexual assault and harassment for USAP participants.						
19. I understand the reporting process for sexual harassment because of the training I received.						
20. I understand the process for making an internal report of sexual assault because of the training I received.						
21. I am confident if I needed more information about the reporting process I know where to find it.						

### USAP Participant Perceptions: Community Norms

The next set of questions will ask you about what USAP participants think or do. For each question, tell us how much you agree or disagree. Choices: Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree; I don't know.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
22. USAP participants think that everyone should do something to keep things like sexual						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
assault and harassment from happening.						
23. Alcohol plays a role in the incidence or prevalence of sexual assault.						
24. USAP participants know what to do if someone reported sexual harassment to them.						
25. USAP participants will intervene if they see warning signs that could lead to sexual assault.						
26. USAP participants will intervene if they see someone harassing another person.						
27. USAP participants will check in with someone who looks uncomfortable because of the way someone else is showing they are interested in them sexually.						
28. USAP participants will talk to others in the community about sexual assault or harassment prevention or post comments online on social media that support preventing						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
sexual assault or harassment.						

## Demographic Information

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Tell us more about yourself.

29. Which category best matches your current position?

- a. Grantee/Research team member
- b. Grantee/PI
- c. Contractor: Seasonal, direct labor
- d. Contractor: Full-time employee
- e. Federal civilian personnel
- f. Military personnel
- g. Other, please specify:

30. Where was your most recent duty station?

- a. McMurdo: Local
- b. McMurdo: Near field
- c. McMurdo: Deep field
- d. South Pole
- e. Palmer
- f. Research Vessel
- g. Other, please specify:

31. How many times have you deployed as a USAP participant?

- a. 1 time
- b. 2-3 times
- c. 4-5 times
- d. 6 or more times

32. When was your last deployment?

- a. Summer 2021
- b. Winter 2021
- c. Summer 2020
- d. Winter 2020



- e. Summer 2019
- f. Winter 2019
- g. Summer 2018
- h. Winter 2018
- i. Summer 2017
- j. Winter 2017
- k. 2016 or before

33. What is your age?

- a. 18-24
- b. 25-34
- c. 35-44
- d. 45-54
- e. 55-64
- f. 65+
- g. Prefer not to answer

34. Do you currently describe yourself as male, female, or transgender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Transgender
- d. Prefer not to answer
- e. Other, please specify:

35. Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?

- a. Lesbian or gay
- b. Straight, that is not lesbian or gay
- c. Bisexual
- d. Prefer not to answer
- e. Other, please specify:

36. What is your race/ethnic background? (Check all that apply.)

- Black or African American
- White
- Hispanic/Latino/a/x
- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- Native American/American Indian/First Nations/Indigenous

- Middle Eastern/North African
- Prefer not to answer
- Other, please specify:

37. Of the following levels of education, please tell us the highest level you have completed:

- a. Secondary (completed high school)
- b. Some post-secondary/college/trade school
- c. Completed trade school/associate degree
- d. Completed college/Bachelor's Degree
- e. Some graduate school
- f. Completed graduate school/Master's Degree/Ph.D. or equivalent
- g. Prefer not to answer

38. Finally, what is your annual income?

- a. Under \$15,000
- b. Between \$15,000 and \$29,999
- c. Between \$30,000 and \$49,999
- d. Between \$50,000 and \$74,999
- e. Between \$75,000 and \$99,999
- f. Between \$100,000 and \$150,000
- g. Over \$150,000
- h. Prefer not to answer

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Along with others, your responses will be used to inform a comprehensive approach to address and prevent sexual assault and harassment for all USAP participants.

## Appendix E: Major Code Categories

### Qualitative Analysis: Prevention

For the prevention section, qualitative data was analyzed using MAXQDA, a qualitative analysis software. Data was coded into categories based on several key factors including questions that were asked of participants, identified prevention components and indicators, and emerging thematic topics. Coded segments refer to participant comments or segments from supplemental documents. Some participant comments are short, and some are more extensive; for example, the comments may be one word or a full paragraph on a specific topic. One individual participant may have made multiple comments about a topic, resulting in multiple coded segments in the same category for an individual. Therefore, code segments should be thought of as comments, not people.

The following table provides context as to the total number of coded segments for major code categories, examples of associated sub-codes, and where from the coded segments came. There was a total of 1,964 coded segments across seven major code categories.

### Major Code Categories

Code	ASC	Grantees	NSF	DoD	Totals
Organizational Efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Leadership Trust</li> <li>• Leadership Tone</li> <li>• Retaliation</li> </ul>	203	52	72	9	<b>336</b>
Culture on Ice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McMurdo</li> <li>• South Pole</li> <li>• Palmer</li> <li>• Research Vessels</li> <li>• Field Sites</li> <li>• Gender Imbalance</li> </ul>	223	64	57	5	<b>349</b>

<b>Code</b>	<b>ASC</b>	<b>Grantees</b>	<b>NSF</b>	<b>DoD</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Organizational Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positions</li> <li>• Hiring</li> <li>• Locations</li> </ul>	169	53	51	4	<b>277</b>
Current Prevention Training and Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Training Perceptions</li> <li>• Training Dosage</li> <li>• Policies</li> </ul>	258	26	57	3	<b>344</b>
Prevention Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Participants</li> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>	113	37	74	1	<b>225</b>
Concerning Behaviors	171	67	17	NA	<b>255</b>
Prevention-Related Behaviors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bystander Interventions</li> <li>• Proactive Norm-setting Behaviors</li> </ul>	105	56	7	NA	<b>168</b>
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1,964</b>

# Appendix F: Polar Code of Conduct



## National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs

OPP-POL\_6000.01  
Polar Code of Conduct

Effective Date: July 2018  
Review Date: July 2023

### Introduction

Since its establishment in 1950, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has supported research in the Arctic to better understand the region and its interactions with the rest of the planet. The 1984 Arctic Research and Policy Act designated NSF as the lead federal agency for the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) and initiated an emphasis on research in the Arctic that was furthered by the 2013 National Strategy for the Arctic Region. Fieldwork in the Arctic frequently takes place in towns and villages, in other nations, and in collaboration with other U.S. federal agencies and organizations. It is inherently risky, and it receives considerable attention from the media.

Without interruption since 1956, American scientists have been studying the Antarctic and its interactions with the rest of the planet. The United States Antarctic Program (USAP) carries forward the nation's goals of supporting the Antarctic Treaty, fostering cooperative research with other nations, and protecting the Antarctic environment. By Presidential Memorandum 6646 in 1982, NSF was affirmed as the single-point manager for funding and managing U.S. activities in Antarctica. The USAP has been highly visible and is growing ever more so, often with activities and events making the domestic U.S. and global news cycle on a regular basis.

The preeminence of NSF's Polar Programs is predicated on the dedication and hard work of researchers, support personnel, and other program participants. A high standard of professionalism from all personnel is of the utmost importance.

### Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to restate important principles and expectations for professional conduct and acceptable behavior by all personnel. While non-exhaustive, this Code is a shared statement of commitment to uphold the ethical, professional, and legal standards required to fulfill these principles and objectives.

### Code of Conduct

The National Science Foundation seeks to ensure that the following objectives and guiding principles are complied with and promoted by all personnel:

- The foremost objective of your presence in Antarctica and/or the Arctic is to contribute to accomplishing the mission of the U.S. Government while fully adhering to all applicable international and national legal and policy requirements, including those of the Antarctic Treaty System and the Arctic's state, local, and tribal governments.

- All personnel will treat others with dignity and respect, will exercise the highest level of professional and ethical behavior, and will work cooperatively to resolve differences.
- It is everyone's responsibility to provide a safe workplace and to protect the polar environment.

## Scope

This Code applies to all persons working at or visiting a USAP or an NSF-managed Arctic station, field camp, other facility, ship, or aircraft, and this includes researchers, students, contractors, official visitors, federal civilian and military personnel, and others. Further, persons who are financially supported by NSF, through grant, contract, or otherwise, are also expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct while deployed to other field locations in the Arctic and Antarctic. Finally, the Code equally applies to all conduct occurring in foreign countries and logistics gateway cities (e.g., Punta Arenas, Chile; Christchurch, New Zealand; and Kangerlussuaq, Greenland), as personnel travel to and from their polar deployments.

This Code sets minimum expectations for personal and professional behavior. More stringent requirements imposed by third parties (e.g., employing organizations, vessel or station management) remain fully in effect.

While not exhaustive, the following acts are examples of conduct that violate the fundamental principles and objectives of this Code:

- Physical or verbal abuse of any person, including, but not limited to, harassment, stalking, bullying, or hazing of any kind, whether the behavior is carried out verbally, physically, electronically, or in written form.
- Conduct that is offensive, indecent, obscene, or disorderly.
- Possession, use, sale, manufacture, transfer, trafficking in, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, including marijuana, and abuse of legal drugs.
- Violation of applicable policies, including, but not limited, to the NSF Safety and Occupational Health Policy; the USAP Alcohol Policy, and the USAP Lodging Policy.
- Violation of the USAP Information Technology Enterprise Rules of Behavior.
- Violation of the Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic.
- Solicitation of gifts. In general, Federal ethics laws prohibit the solicitation of gifts (for example, any gratuity, favor, food, or entertainment). See e.g. 5 C.F.R. 2635.202(c)(2). Personnel may not solicit gifts.
- Endorsements, expressed or implied, of products, services, or enterprises. Such endorsements are prohibited. See e.g. 5 C.F.R. § 2635.702. USAP and/or NSF facilities, property, logos, or insignias may not be used for endorsement purposes.

Violations of this Code of Conduct may be shared with current and future USAP or Arctic program support contractors, federal agency partners, or grantee institutions. Further, violations of this Code of Conduct may result in adverse consequences to the individual, including, but not limited to, removal from a USAP or Arctic station, field camp, other facility, ship, or aircraft; termination of employment (by the employer); or other administrative, civil, or criminal enforcement actions, as appropriate.

## **Policy Review**

This policy is valid until rescinded. It will be reviewed at an interval of not more than 5 years.

# Appendix G:

## PAE – Antarctic Support Contract End of Season Employee Performance Feedback Form



### PAE – Antarctic Support Contract End of Season Employee Performance Feedback

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION				
Name :	<p align="center"><b>Ratings Defined</b></p> <p><b>Exceptional (E)</b> – Demonstrates exceptional performance that consistently exceeds job requirements; considered role model or mentor</p> <p><b>Highly Effective (HE)</b> – Effective performance that meets and often exceeds job requirements in most areas</p> <p><b>Successful Performer (SP)</b> – Satisfactory performance and knowledge; meets and occasionally exceeds in some areas</p> <p><b>Needs Improvement (NI)</b> – Did not meet majority of requirements; frequent errors; performance improvement required; requires substantial supervision</p>			
Job Title:				
Department:				
Station:				
Season:				
PAE Manager/Supervisor:				
Evaluation Date:				
RATINGS				
	E	HE	SP	NI
SPECIFIC JOB KNOWLEDGE				
<b>Job Knowledge &amp; Skills</b> ( <i>competency, job/equipment knowledge</i> )				
<i>Exceptional</i> – consistently demonstrates advanced skills & job knowledge, considered subject matter expert for department				
<i>Highly Effective</i> – mitigates issues, shares knowledge, acts as resource for others				
<i>Successful Performer</i> – accurately completes assigned tasks				
<i>Needs Improvement</i> – lacks minimum required knowledge, requires close supervision, frequent errors and rework required				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Quality</b> ( <i>accuracy of completion of assigned tasking</i> )				
<i>Exceptional</i> – self-identifies areas for improvement, exceptional quality of work, willingness to accept challenging tasking				
<i>Highly Effective</i> – frequently completes projects ahead of schedule, takes time to review work to ensure accuracy				
<i>Successful Performer</i> – completes assigned tasking on time, work rarely has errors or requires rework				
<i>Needs Improvement</i> – doesn't complete assigned tasking and/or doesn't complete on time and rework is often required				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Initiative &amp; Process Improvement</b> ( <i>seeks out new tasks, value added</i> )				
<i>Exceptional</i> – consistently presents viable solutions to problems, develops plan to execute, seeks out additional tasking				
<i>Highly Effective</i> – proactive, initiates process improvements that results in enhanced efficiencies				
<i>Successful Performer</i> – readily takes direction, follows action plans to achieve objectives				
<i>Needs Improvement</i> – ignores direction, not adaptable, overwhelmed by basic tasks				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES				
<b>Safety Awareness &amp; Housekeeping</b> ( <i>PPE, clean &amp; hazard free work environment</i> )				
<i>Exceptional</i> – promotes safety, identifies hazards, consistently wears PPE, maintains clean & organized work center				
<i>Highly Effective</i> – consistently follows safe work practices, wears required PPE, maintains clean & organized work center				
<i>Successful Performer</i> – usually follows safe work practices, wears required PPE, maintains clean & organized work center				
<i>Needs Improvement</i> – does not follow safety rules, has to be reminded about PPE, prior safety incidents or violations				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Teamwork/Conflict</b> ( <i>work place cooperation, deals positively with conflict</i> )				
<i>Exceptional</i> – excels in encouraging cooperation, models a strong sense of team spirit, manages conflict & discourages gossip				
<i>Highly Effective</i> – works with others to achieve goals, manages conflict well, remains positive during stressful situations				
<i>Successful Performer</i> – deals with conflict well, works well with others, cooperative and approachable				
<i>Needs Improvement</i> – has conflicts with others, is source of conflict, promotes negativity, constantly complains				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Community Conduct</b> ( <i>behavior, house-mouse, volunteerism</i> )				
<i>Exceptional</i> – regularly volunteers, encourages others to be positive, discourages gossip & defuses situations				
<i>Highly Effective</i> – regularly involved in the community, encourages others, volunteers				
<i>Successful Performer</i> – conducts self in non-disruptive manner, makes amends quickly, respectful, minimal volunteering				
<i>Needs Improvement</i> – has negative attitude, disruptive and/or argumentative				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
LEADERSHIP (FOR EVALUATING SUPERVISORS ONLY)				
<i>Exceptional</i> – consistently takes initiative, anticipates needs, provides guidance & encouragement, excellent communicator				
<i>Highly Effective</i> – provides constructive input, approachable, leads by example, manages conflict				
<i>Successful Performer</i> – satisfactory job of communicating and managing team				
<i>Needs Improvement</i> – inability to effectively manage employees or stress, waits for direction, seldom takes responsibility				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
OVERALL RATING				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				



**Supervisor Comments (collaborative feedback including non-PAE personnel). Include attachment for additional comments below:**

Area with horizontal lines for supervisor comments.

If you have comments, please provide them in writing to your Supervisor within 24 hours. They will be added to your evaluation for your file.

**PAE Manager/Supervisor Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature acknowledges receipt of evaluation, not necessarily agreement with evaluation)



National Science Foundation (NSF)  
Office of Polar Programs (OPP)  
United States Antarctic Program (USAP)

Sexual Assault/Harassment Prevention  
and Response (SAHPR)

Volume Two:  
Implementation Plan



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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

The purpose of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan* is to provide specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic steps to develop a Sexual Assault/Harassment Prevention and Response (SAHPR) program for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP).<sup>53</sup>

## SAHPR Implementation Plan Structure

The *SAHPR Implementation Plan* is an integrated, comprehensive approach to building an effective SAHPR Program for the USAP. Response and prevention goals, objectives, and tasks are integrated throughout the plan. In some cases, the goal includes both response and prevention objectives and tasks, in other cases only one. Distinctions are highlighted throughout.

The plan is organized with goals, objectives, and corresponding tasks. It also includes limited, high-level examples of resources required for each objective, designees responsible for completing each task, and indicators of success. The examples are intended to provide enough basic information about capacity requirements to inform next steps.

Ultimately, the pace of implementation will be determined by the priorities, resources, and capacity of NSF. As such, it is assumed that the more detailed elements of execution that include specific due dates and timelines, designees responsible for each task, a comprehensive list of necessary resources, and finalized indicators that will be used to measure progress, will be completed after final decisions of next steps have been made.

## Summary of Goals, Objectives, and Tasks

The *SAHPR Implementation Plan* is organized into six phases sequenced in order of priority. While the plan is linear, depending on capacity and resources, work in multiple phases can be happening simultaneously.

- Phase One: Pre-Implementation Engagement
- Phase Two: Early Implementation Capacity Building
- Phase Three: Safety, Victim Support, and Leadership Education

<sup>53</sup> Per *SAHPR Implementation Plan* Requirements 2.4 and 2.5 of the Statement of Work – National Science Foundation, Office of Polar Programs, Federal Consulting Group Interagency Agreement Number: 12125.

- Phase Four: Comprehensive Training
- Phase Five: Strengthen Policies and Procedures, Data Collection, and Transparency
- Phase Six: Sustainability

The summary of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan* below includes all goals, objectives, and tasks, but does not include expository narrative, resources, assigned designees to each task, or indicators. Each of those elements are included in the full narrative. It is recommended that the entirety of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan* is overseen by NSF. Recommended collaborations with other groups and individuals are noted throughout. Any task that requires expertise specific to prevention or response should be completed in partnership with an appropriate subject matter expert. Additional expertise may be required for specific tasks depending on existing capacity with the NSF.

## Phase One: Pre-Implementation Engagement

### Goal

1. Effectively communicate SAHPR-related information prior to and in the early stages of rolling out the *Implementation Plan*.

### Objective

- 1.1. Develop an *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan* to be used prior to implementation. The plan will be narrow in scope and will focus on the window of time prior to formal rollout of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan* to avoid early missteps or miscommunication.

### Tasks

- 1.1.1. Engage decision makers and key stakeholders who will provide input into the development of key messages, goals, etc. for the *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan*. The Plan should address, in part, existing negative perceptions of SAHPR efforts clearly delineated in the *Needs Assessment Report*.
- 1.1.2. Gather input from a small cross-section of employees to inform and shape the *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan*. Input should include (but not be limited to) what they would like to be addressed early on and potential pitfalls. This will be very limited in scope and is not a replacement for

opportunities to give input into broader efforts outlined elsewhere in the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*.

- 1.1.3. Develop an *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan* that includes elements such as talking points, framing, key language, etc.
- 1.1.4. Create materials to support *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan* (e.g., PowerPoint deck, information sheets, briefing scripts, etc.). Final materials depend on the plan.

### **Objective**

- 1.2. Develop a training to educate leadership and others who will serve as spokespeople for initial SAHPR-related efforts (e.g., sharing *Needs Assessment Report* findings, the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*, next steps, etc.). The training will be interim and will target the information most important for leadership/spokespeople to understand prior to the launch of the *Implementation Plan*. It will not replace more comprehensive training described in phases three and four of the *Implementation Plan*.

### **Tasks**

- 1.2.1. Solicit input from high-level decision makers regarding desired outcomes of the launch of the *Implementation Plan*, key messages to be included, etc.
- 1.2.2. Identify those who will be involved in initial SAHPR-related communication, the roles they will play, and the sequence with which they should be trained. This information will inform content development, tailoring, and attendees.
- 1.2.3. Develop the interim training to include key fundamentals of prevention and response, findings of the *Needs Assessment Report*, and their role in implementing the *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan*. Length to be determined based on participant availability.
- 1.2.4. Develop a brief post-training survey to evaluate the outcomes of the leadership/spokespeople training.
- 1.2.5. Schedule the leadership/spokespeople training. Delivery method to be decided with NSF guidance. An onsite option is highly recommended.
- 1.2.6. Review post-training surveys to determine if additional steps are necessary to ensure all spokespeople are sufficiently equipped.

### **Objective**

- 1.3. Develop and distribute a climate survey to the USAP community. Disseminating a climate survey early in the implementation process ensures

accurate baseline data that will allow NSF to monitor progress, course correct efforts, and objectively demonstrate successes.

### **Tasks**

- 1.3.1. Identify personnel across sectors with relevant expertise pertaining to climate surveys.
- 1.3.2. Create a climate survey that includes, but is not limited to, questions pertaining to incidence and prevalence of sexual misconduct, community member perceptions, and effectiveness of SAHPR efforts.
- 1.3.3. Identify and/or develop survey distribution methods to achieve target response rates across demographics, roles, and locations.
- 1.3.4. Compile and analyze data and develop recommendations for next steps.
- 1.3.5. Publicize findings, outcomes, and recommendations for improvement to promote transparency and accountability within the USAP community.

### **Goal**

2. Engage the USAP community in the planning process for implementation.

*Note: The sequence, rollout, and structure of the forums included in Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 should be determined based on capacity, resources, access to participants, etc. While each forum is topic-specific, there may be a need to combine or reconfigure content.*

### **Objective**

- 2.1. Conduct a series of Listening Sessions focused on the SAHPR-related experiences of USAP deploying participants. The sessions should be attended by senior leadership and decision makers and will serve as an opportunity for them to listen, acknowledge, and share their commitment to continuing efforts to address areas of response and prevention that could be strengthened.

### **Tasks**

- 2.1.1. Develop overall structure of sessions (e.g., number to be held, who should attend, etc.).
- 2.1.2. Identify the leaders who should attend the Listening Sessions based on their role, their authority to make change, and the perceived importance of their attendance by USAP deploying participants.
- 2.1.3. Engage outside facilitators with sexual misconduct subject matter expertise to collaborate with NSF in designing and facilitating the sessions.

- 2.1.4. Develop a detailed outline of the content and structure of the Listening Sessions.
- 2.1.5. Develop a brief training for leadership to equip them to effectively co-facilitate the Listening Sessions.
- 2.1.6. Deliver the training to leadership.
- 2.1.7. Develop and execute a strategy to engage participants, prioritizing marginalized groups and those with least power and influence.
- 2.1.8. Develop a brief post-survey to ascertain both participant and leadership perceptions of the Listening Sessions.
- 2.1.9. Identify opportunities to use post-survey input to guide and improve next steps.
- 2.1.10. Conduct Listening Sessions both in-person and virtually.
- 2.1.11. Identify alternative means for the USAP deploying participants to share experiences with leadership for those who would prefer not to attend a Listening Session in person.

### **Objective**

- 2.2. Conduct a series of Informational Sessions focused on sharing findings from the *Needs Assessment Report* and next steps. Informational Sessions should be co-facilitated by an appropriate NSF representative and an external subject matter expert (ideally a member of the team that conducted the needs assessment who can be on hand to answer questions about the data, analysis, findings, etc.).

### **Tasks**

- 2.2.1. Develop overall structure of sessions (e.g., number to be held, who should attend, etc.).
- 2.2.2. Develop and frame the content of the sessions.
- 2.2.3. Develop corresponding outlines, talking points, PPT slides, and/or information sheets as necessary.
- 2.2.4. Develop a brief post-session survey to ascertain participant perceptions of the Informational Sessions.
- 2.2.5. Identify and invite specific groups who should be briefed on the findings based on their role or investment in SAHPR-related efforts (e.g., the NSF SAHPR Team, employees who participated in the needs assessment, those who have been vocal with their concerns, those who have been a significant part of working for change, etc.). Some portions of content should be added or expanded for specific groups as appropriate.
- 2.2.6. Develop and execute a strategy to engage participants from the general population.



- 2.2.7. Develop and conduct a brief training for NSF representatives who will be co-facilitating the Informational Sessions.
- 2.2.8. Conduct Informational Sessions both in-person and virtually.
- 2.2.9. Identify opportunities to use post-survey input to guide and improve next steps.

### **Objective**

- 2.3. Conduct a series of Collaborative Sessions to meaningfully engage the USAP deploying participants in the planning and development process. NSF may introduce new SAHPR efforts (e.g., policies, resources, programs) and, if appropriate, ask for community feedback. While soliciting input is vital to rebuilding trust and building buy-in, it is important to discern between components of deliverables that must be developed by subject matter experts and components that can be shaped by the input, experiences, and feelings of those who have been or will be impacted by the final *SAHPR Implementation Plan*.

### **Tasks**

- 2.3.1. Develop overall structure of sessions (e.g., number to be held, who should attend, whether sessions will be topic-specific or general, etc.).
- 2.3.2. Develop and frame the content and process for the Collaborative Sessions.
- 2.3.3. Identify deliverables from the *Implementation Plan* that should be informed by the USAP deploying participants and included for discussion in the sessions.
- 2.3.4. Develop corresponding outlines, talking points, PPT slides, and/or information sheets as necessary.
- 2.3.5. Develop a brief post-survey to ascertain participant perceptions of the Collaborative Sessions.
- 2.3.6. Develop and execute a strategy to engage any interested participants and/or specific stakeholders to attend. Some Collaborative Sessions may be topic-specific and of particular interest to certain individuals or groups.
- 2.3.7. Facilitate sessions in-person and virtually.
- 2.3.8. Identify opportunities to use post-survey input to guide and improve next steps.
- 2.3.9. Identify alternative means for members of the USAP community to provide input into the planning and development process.

## Phase Two: Early Implementation Capacity Building

### **Goal**

3. Build necessary capacity to begin implementation.

### **Objective**

- 3.1. Establish a Collaborative Action Team (CAT). The CAT should serve as a multi-jurisdictional consultive group to help coordinate and support SAHPR implementation efforts, advise NSF as appropriate, and strengthen communication between partners.

### **Tasks**

- 3.1.1. NSF work with USAP partners to develop a framework for the CAT (e.g., membership, functions, scope, authority, limitations, etc.).
- 3.1.2. Create a committee structure for the CAT to incorporate greater numbers of USAP community members.
- 3.1.3. Develop a required training for anyone who serves on the CAT.
- 3.1.4. Develop supporting materials as necessary.
- 3.1.5. Develop brief post-training survey to evaluate outcomes of the training.
- 3.1.6. Conduct training.
- 3.1.7. Review post-training surveys to determine if additional steps are necessary to ensure training is effective.

### **Objective**

- 3.2. Finalize the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*. Though the goals, objectives, and tasks will have been completed and prioritized, specific timelines and responsible parties will need to be determined based on NSF capacity and resources. It is recommended that NSF references input from the Collaborative Sessions and solicits input from the CAT as the plan is finalized.

### **Tasks**

- 3.2.1. Specify necessary resources to support each task or deliverable including personnel time, external subject matter experts, money, and other infrastructure/capacity needs.
- 3.2.2. Allocate resources based on priorities identified by subject matter experts, optimal timing for maximum impact, input from stakeholders, and NSF leadership priorities.
- 3.2.3. Identify responsible parties for each task and deliverable, to include internal personnel and external subject matter experts as appropriate.

### 3.2.4. Determine specific timeline and due dates.

#### **Objective**

3.3. Determine and resource staffing needs for effective implementation. While internal expertise is being hired and/or developed, immediate staffing needs will rely heavily on contracted external subject matter experts.

*Note: Completing a long-term staffing plan is not necessary to move to Phase Three of the Implementation Plan. However, if new positions will ultimately be created, moving forward with hiring and training early in the process will help ensure adequate staffing exists and is sufficiently trained for timely execution of the Implementation Plan.*

#### **Tasks**

3.3.1. Based on existing resources identify: (1) which response and prevention tasks will be resourced from recommendations included in the *Implementation Plan*, and (2) the sequence and timetable within which they will be implemented.

3.3.2. Determine: (1) total hours necessary to execute tasks recommended by subject matter experts and prioritized by NSF, (2) existing internal capacity to implement those tasks, (3) tasks requiring external subject matter experts, and (4) total hours that need to be funded in the near-term and ongoing.

3.3.3. Determine internal full-time equivalents (FTEs) NSF will resource. After completion of time-limited tasks, a minimum of 1 FTE is recommended for response-related responsibilities, and a minimum of .25 FTE is recommended for prevention responsibilities.

*Note: The creation of an Ombudsperson is highly recommended to execute response-related functions. Details in Phase Three.*

3.3.4. Determine how to best distribute the FTEs to meet the needs of the USAP community most effectively and complete the ongoing tasks adopted from the *Implementation Plan* (e.g., hiring new staff, re-allocating dedicated time of existing staff, engaging subject matter experts, etc.).

3.3.5. Depending on final staffing decisions: (1) Develop a transition plan to ensure internal staff are adequately trained by subject matter experts to effectively execute ongoing tasks, and (2) Develop position description(s) for staffing, including duties, qualifications, and performance evaluation metrics.

3.3.6. When staffing decisions are made, begin the hiring and training process as soon as possible to ensure personnel are in place in sufficient time to execute the *Implementation Plan* and sustain SAHPR efforts.

### **Goal**

4. The USAP community will have positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts, resulting in increased receptivity, buy-in and participation in improving both response and prevention efforts.

### **Objective**

4.1. Replace negative perceptions of SAHPR efforts with positive ones.

### **Tasks**

- 4.1.1. Identify existing negative perceptions of SAHPR prevention efforts and their causes.
- 4.1.2. Identify opportunities to shift negative perceptions within training, materials, booster activities, formal and informal interactions, etc.
- 4.1.3. Develop and implement a plan of action to replace negative perceptions of SAHPR prevention efforts with positive.
- 4.1.4. Develop an evaluation plan to assess effectiveness of efforts to create positive perceptions of SAHPR prevention efforts. Evaluation elements may be integrated into the existing evaluation tools used for training (e.g., adding items to post-training surveys that assess for perceptions, etc.).
- 4.1.5. Establish a process to analyze and apply outcomes to revisions and next steps.

## **Phase Three: Safety, Victim Support, and Leadership Education**

### **Goal**

5. Increase safety and victim support.

### **Objective**

5.1. Create resources for victims to access information and support that is unaffiliated with a specific entity on the ice (e.g., contractor, subcontractor, grantee, etc.).

### **Tasks**

5.1.1. Establish a confidential Ombudsperson position.

- 5.1.2. Develop a job description, requirements and credentials, oversight mechanisms, roles, and responsibilities, etc.
- 5.1.3. Recruit, hire, and train Ombudsperson.

### **Objective**

- 5.2. Promote safety of grantees and other field personnel.

### **Tasks**

- 5.2.1. Solicit input from field personnel regarding what structural changes would help to meet their reporting and support needs. Where appropriate, consider input gathered from Collaborative Sessions.
- 5.2.2. Establish and require a minimum number of NSF-owned, contractor managed SAT phones (e.g., two or more) be available at each site as part of the application and funding process.
- 5.2.3. Require a plan to address victim safety in the field as well as en route to and from the camps and stations.
- 5.2.4. Require each field camp, with a to-be-determined minimum number of occupants, to have at least two individuals designated to receive reports of sexual harassment or assault.
- 5.2.5. Provide training and support to principal investigators and others designated to receive reports of sexual misconduct on trauma-informed responses, the neurobiology of trauma, and their reporting obligations.

### **Goal**

- 6. Leadership will provide substantive oversight, support, and accountability for SAHPR-related efforts.

### **Objective**

- 6.1. Develop and implement SAHPR training for leadership.

### **Tasks**

- 6.1.1. Solicit military input to provide military-specific information and context that should be included in leadership training.
- 6.1.2. Solicit input from stakeholders as appropriate to inform training development.
- 6.1.3. Incorporate input from Collaborative Sessions as appropriate.
- 6.1.4. Develop foundational SAHPR content to be included in leadership training (e.g., effective oversight and accountability, hiring, understanding, and applying evaluation/assessment findings, etc.).

- 6.1.5. Develop response-focused content to be included in leadership training (e.g., identifying prohibited behaviors in the workplace, conflict resolution, trauma-informed responses to disclosures, etc.).
- 6.1.6. Develop prevention-focused content to be included in leadership training (e.g., selecting prevention training programs, creating healthy climates, reinforcing prevention behaviors in employees, etc.).
- 6.1.7. Tailor the training for different groups of leaders (e.g., senior NSF leadership, onsite supervisors, etc.), creating multiple versions that align with each group's level, role, sector, functions, and responsibilities.
- 6.1.8. Develop an action plan for providing leadership training to include minimum training requirements, frequency, modes of delivery, etc.
- 6.1.9. Implement training.
- 6.1.10. Ensure training is delivered in a manner that: (1) engages participants, and (2) effectively builds knowledge and skills. See Phase Four, goal three for details.

### **Objective**

- 6.2. Provide resources to support leadership in their role in SAHPR efforts.

### **Tasks**

- 6.2.1. Develop a Prevention Toolkit to support leadership in effectively executing their roles within the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*.
- 6.2.2. Establish an easily accessible distribution for the Prevention Toolkit.
- 6.2.3. Develop a mechanism to keep resources within the Prevention Toolkit current.

### **Objective**

- 6.3. Ensure effectiveness of leadership training and Prevention Toolkit.

### **Tasks**

- 6.3.1. Develop a brief post-training survey to ascertain knowledge, skills, and participant perceptions of the leadership training.
- 6.3.2. Develop a method to collect feedback from leadership regarding the usefulness of the Prevention Toolkit.
- 6.3.3. Identify opportunities to use post-training survey data and leadership feedback to improve training and tools.

## Phase Four: Comprehensive Training

### **Goal**

7. USAP deploying participants are aware of their legal rights, reporting options, supportive resources available, and policies delineating unacceptable behavior regarding sexual misconduct.

*Note: As changes are made to policies and procedures, training and materials will need to be updated and the USAP community reeducated.*

### **Objective**

- 7.1. Develop effective response-focused training and materials.

### **Tasks**

- 7.1.1. Review existing response-focused content currently included in training, programs, activities, and materials to ascertain alignment with research and best practice, accuracy, and the inclusion of the most up-to-date information.
- 7.1.2. Solicit military input on materials and training content to be delivered to civilian audiences regarding sexual misconduct committed by service members, reporting options, victims' confidentiality rights and options, and how to access services.
- 7.1.3. Develop and/or update training content and informational materials to ensure they are trauma-informed, include contact information, reporting options and the corresponding levels of confidentiality or lack thereof, step-by-step guidance and procedural information of what the reporting and investigation processes entail, and how to seek services. Materials should also communicate that sexual assault and sexual harassment are not tolerated.
- 7.1.4. Develop marketing materials to reinforce key response-focused knowledge and skills taught in training. Examples could include posters, Public Service Announcement (PSA) videos, supervisor-specific handouts for dealing with disclosures, and flowcharts of reporting options or complaint process.
- 7.1.5. Tailor all response-focused materials, including training content and supplemental activities, for the USAP context generally, and specific subgroups as appropriate (e.g., first time employees, grantees, etc.).
- 7.1.6. Develop a dissemination strategy that ensures every USAP community member is exposed. Solicit input from USAP community members including what was gathered from Collaboration Sessions.

### 7.1.7. Provide training.

#### **Objective**

7.2. Create community based “Know Your Rights” resources for USAP.

#### **Tasks**

- 7.2.1. Develop content that informs participants with information about protections available to varying sectors. Content should include general rights from Title VII, Title IX, the Polar Code of Conduct, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and policies detailed within their employee handbooks.
- 7.2.2. Develop companion materials (e.g., pamphlets, flow charts, safety planning tips) that can be disseminated in print and online to accompany the trainings.
- 7.2.3. One to two times per season, offer all community members voluntary, in-person, Know Your Rights educational sessions on the ice.
- 7.2.4. Develop a live question and answer follow-up session and offer it to those who attend the trainings remotely.
- 7.2.5. Resend companion materials periodically as a refresher.

#### **Goal**

8. USAP deploying participants are equipped to engage in behaviors that contribute to a workplace and community climate that is free from sexual harassment and sexual assault.

#### **Objective**

- 8.1. Develop and implement effective prevention-focused training, programs, activities, and materials.

#### **Tasks**

- 8.1.1. Review existing prevention training, programs, activities, and materials to ascertain alignment with best practice.
- 8.1.2. Develop, revise, and/or select prevention training to be delivered to all employees and contractors of the USAP community. Where appropriate, consider input gathered from Collaborative Sessions. Training should be informed by current research and aligned with best practice.
- 8.1.3. Develop a series of trainings for USAP participants who are deployed more than one year, with each training reinforcing and building on the previous year.



- 8.1.4. Develop or select supplemental (booster) activities, programs, campaigns, and events that reinforce key prevention skills taught in annual training workshops and provide additional opportunities to participate in prevention efforts in formal and informal contexts.
- 8.1.5. Tailor all prevention materials, including training content and supplemental activities, for the USAP context generally, and specific subgroups as appropriate.
- 8.1.6. Develop and tailor scenarios that resonate with participants by ensuring they are relevant, reflect specific on-ice situations, and incorporate the language, values, and context of each group of participants.
- 8.1.7. Implement training and supporting activities.

### **Goal**

9. Maximize impact of all SAHPR training.

### **Objective**

- 9.1. Ensure those designated to provide SAHPR-related training are equipped to deliver it in a manner that: (1) engages participants, (2) effectively builds knowledge and skills, and (3) increases positive perceptions of overall SAHPR efforts.

### **Tasks**

- 9.1.1. Develop supporting materials necessary to recruit, screen, hire, and train a qualified person to deliver SAHPR training (e.g., minimum qualifications, job description, evaluation criteria, experience, etc.).
- 9.1.2. Solicit input from stakeholders, consider input from Collaborative Sessions, and reference data included in the *Needs Assessment Report* regarding identifying and engaging potential trainers.
- 9.1.3. Identify and engage trainer or trainers. As indicated in Phase Two, 3.3, this position may be an external contractor, a newly hired position, or an existing position with time reallocated for prevention.
- 9.1.4. Train personnel who will be delivering SAHPR training.
- 9.1.5. Ensure training evaluations include items that assess participant perceptions of quality of delivery, facilitation skills of presenter, and level of engagement.
- 9.1.6. Develop a plan for oversight, accountability, and monitoring of SAHPR training, including systematically reviewing evaluations.
- 9.1.7. Conduct annual performance evaluations of prevention staff member(s), in relation to prevention program outcomes. Make necessary changes to personnel, assigned duties, and support mechanisms based on findings.

**Objective**

9.2. Develop and implement an annual SAHPR Training Plan.

**Tasks**

- 9.2.1. Determine the structure of response- and prevention-focused training, including when training both response and prevention content is combined and when it is offered independently.
- 9.2.2. Review response and prevention training content, supplemental materials, and booster activities to ensure they are mutually reinforcing and consistent when there is appropriate overlap of concepts and language.
- 9.2.3. Determine a training sequence that maximizes impact and most efficiently leads to community-wide changes in work climate (e.g., train leadership first, followed by highly respected staff, followed by permanent staff, etc.).
- 9.2.4. Develop booster activities that support behavioral goals and reinforce skills taught in training.
- 9.2.5. Determine requirements for training frequency, attendance, and length.
- 9.2.6. Determine processes for oversight, monitoring, and accountability that requirements are met annually.

**Objective**

9.3. Increase the impact of SAHPR training by reviewing and updating to ensure materials, training, and requirements are current and align with best practice.

**Tasks**

- 9.3.1. Increase the frequency trainings, offering them at both orientations (summer and winter) and repeating them while on-ice, allowing for smaller, in-person discussions and interactive exercises.
- 9.3.2. Clearly define the purpose and intended outcomes for each training (e.g., to increase knowledge, develop skills, have opportunities to apply those skills, etc.).
- 9.3.3. Ensure training is applied, actionable, skill-based, interactive, and includes opportunities to practice and model target behaviors.
- 9.3.4. Require all deployers and service members to attend trainings to be permitted on the ice.
- 9.3.5. When appropriate, have designated support people present during and after trainings are conducted to provide information about accessing support.

- 9.3.6. Require personnel who are training and/or developing training content to stay up to date on research and emerging best practices and update content accordingly.
- 9.3.7. Develop a process for systematically updating response-focused training content and materials to reflect policy changes related to sexual misconduct, prohibited behaviors, and additional reporting options.

### **Objective**

- 9.4. Evaluate and improve SAHPR training and materials.

### **Tasks**

- 9.4.1. Assess current evaluation capacity (e.g., existing data collection sources, dedicated staff time, access to data-analysis software, staff capabilities, etc.).
- 9.4.2. Within the constraints of available capacity, develop an evaluation plan for prioritized components of the annual SAHPR Training Plan that can be realistically implemented and utilized.
- 9.4.3. Ensure the evaluation plan includes a safe process for gathering candid input from marginalized groups and/or groups with the least power and influence and sustaining open and ongoing communication.
- 9.4.4. Implement evaluation plan.
- 9.4.5. Analyze findings and utilize results to make improvements.
- 9.4.6. Establish requirements for reporting findings to leadership and other key stakeholders and communicating findings to the USAP community.

## **Phase Five: Strengthen Policies and Procedures, Data Collection, and Transparency**

### **Goal**

- 10. Improve safety of USAP deploying participants leveraging existing vehicles.

### **Objective**

- 10.1. Within the constraints of federal and regulatory requirements, strengthen foundational agreements to provide additional safety and accountability on the ice.

### **Tasks**

- 10.1.1. Establish and/or strengthen contractual requirements for ASC partners to provide information, training, and safety modifications to address sexual

- misconduct of their employees and to communicate incidence and outcomes to NSF.
- 10.1.2. Establish additional special conditions under grantee awards to provide information, training, and safety modifications to address and report to NSF sexual misconduct of their employees.
  - 10.1.3. Engage subject matter experts to evaluate recommended contractual terms and special conditions for compliance with existing requirements and guidelines.
  - 10.1.4. Submit recommended additions to contractual terms and special conditions that are consistent with federal and regulatory requirements to NSF contracting and legal departments for approval.
  - 10.1.5. Develop a process to ensure updates are made to all relevant training and materials when changes are made to existing policies.

### **Goal**

11. Promote transparency and increase communication between the USAP community and leadership.

### **Objective**

- 11.1. Consistently distribute a climate survey to the USAP community.

### **Tasks**

- 11.1.1. Informed by NSF capacity, access to USAP community members, and best practice, determine the frequency of conducting climate surveys.
- 11.1.2. Develop processes and procedures delineating who is responsible, methods of dissemination, and monitoring and improving processes as necessary to maximize participation.
- 11.1.3. Compile and analyze data and develop recommendations for next steps.
- 11.1.4. Publicize findings, outcomes, and recommendations for improvement to promote transparency and accountability.

### **Objective**

- 11.2. Develop and disseminate an Annual Report.

### **Tasks**

- 11.2.1. Create guidelines for the creation and dissemination of an Annual Report including who is charged with collecting and compiling required information, who is responsible for oversight, timeline, etc.

- 11.2.2. Create an Annual Report template that prompts for annual data regarding number of formal complaints of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking received and the non-identifying outcomes of those complaints.
- 11.2.3. Develop a process for disseminating the report, including creating a link to the report, distributing an electronic option, and/or printed options for relevant stakeholders.
- 11.2.4. Develop and implement a strategy to communicate how to access the report.

### **Objective**

- 11.3. Develop and implement a *SAHPR Communication Plan* that will increase the understanding of and investment in the SAHPR Prevention strategy by the USAP community.

### **Tasks**

- 11.3.1. Develop communication objectives (e.g., target audiences, key messages, intended outcomes, etc.). The *SAHPR Communication Plan* should be utilized, in part, to shift existing negative perceptions of SAHPR efforts.
- 11.3.2. Determine methods of communication.
- 11.3.3. Create tools to provide formal leadership, and informal leaders who have credibility and the respect of their peers, information and support they need to effectively implement the plan within their sphere of influence.
- 11.3.4. Provide training to ensure communication coming from leaders is consistent, effectively delivered, responsive to the current climate, and aligned with the goals of the *SAHPR Communication Plan*.
- 11.3.5. Implement the *SAHPR Communication Plan*.
- 11.3.6. Develop processes to determine responsibility, oversight, and accountability for the effective development and implementation of a *SAHPR Communication Plan*.
- 11.3.7. Develop and implement an evaluation of the *SAHPR Communication Plan*, including a mechanism to use findings to inform improvements.

### **Objective**

- 11.4. Expand existing opportunities for USAP community members to provide feedback to organizational leadership.

### **Tasks**

- 11.4.1. Review utilization of existing feedback options, including the intranet anonymous safety reporting system and comment cards available at multiple locations.

- 11.4.2. Solicit input from USAP deploying participants regarding utilization (or lack thereof) of existing options and possible replacement or supplemental options. Where appropriate, consider input gathered from the Collaborative Sessions.
- 11.4.3. Develop and execute new feedback mechanisms, ideally to include, at least one physical suggestion box per base and an online portal that allows for de-identified submissions directly to NSF.
- 11.4.4. Designate responsible parties to collect, curate and respond to comments submitted and communicate systematically to NSF.

### **Objective**

- 11.5. Improve the breadth and quality of information collected regarding employee performance.

### **Tasks**

- 11.5.1. Conduct evaluations that include peer and subordinate feedback.
- 11.5.2. Revise the evaluation forms and processes to facilitate the collection of relevant feedback and information.
- 11.5.3. Require regular and periodic “360” evaluations for personnel.
- 11.5.4. Create a sample evaluation form to be used as a model that includes questions and criteria specific to sexual harassment.
- 11.5.5. Include in the evaluation form a question that must be answered by the supervisor as to whether the individual is eligible for rehire based on established performance criteria.

### **Goal:**

12. Strengthen the ability of the Polar Code of Conduct Review Board to assess patterns, gaps, and successes within the USAP regarding sexual misconduct.

### **Objective**

- 12.1. Consider a multi-jurisdictional approach to Polar Code of Conduct Review for sexual misconduct reports.

### **Tasks**

- 12.1.1. Solicit input regarding the Polar Code of Conduct Review Board structure for sexual misconduct reports. Where appropriate, consider input gathered from Collaborative Sessions.
- 12.1.2. Working with a subject matter expert as appropriate, NSF determine, implement, and/or oversee changes.

## Phase Six: Sustainability

### **Goal**

13. Ensure stability and sustainability of SAHPR efforts.

### **Objective**

13.1. Institutionalize key components of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*.

### **Tasks**

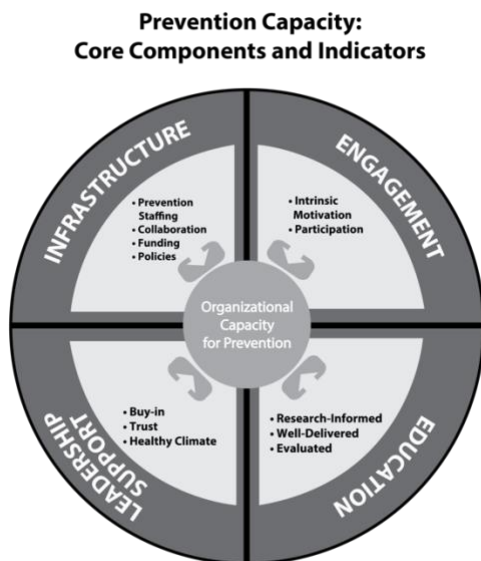
- 13.1.1. Incorporate critical responsibilities into job descriptions.
- 13.1.2. Create permanent positions to support response and prevention initiatives.
- 13.1.3. Identify and/or create permanent funding streams for necessary personnel, materials, evaluation, and other costs.
- 13.1.4. Develop new policies or revise existing policies to address minimum training requirements.
- 13.1.5. Incorporate SAHPR-related requirements into existing vehicles (e.g., contracts, grant awards, etc.).
- 13.1.6. Write into policies, procedures, handbooks, job descriptions, evaluation forms (and any other documents that inform the roles and responsibilities of individuals and organizations): (1) Requirements for oversight and monitoring of SAHPR efforts, (2) Methods of accountability and remediation should be included, (3) Minimum requirements for evaluation and reporting of outcomes, (4) Minimum requirements for response-related infrastructure (e.g., reporting mechanisms, victim resources, etc.), (5) Minimum elements to be included in an annual strategic plan, and (6) Requirements for reviewing and updating training, materials, and policies.

# Introduction

## A Comprehensive Approach

The SAHPR program objectives (*Table 1, Volume One*) highlight elements relevant to both prevention and response. To create a workplace and community that fosters a climate free from sexual assault and harassment within such a challenging environment requires a comprehensive and tailored approach that effectively responds to and prevents sexual harassment and sexual assault. Though response and prevention are distinct concepts, when they are effectively integrated into a comprehensive approach, they can increase safety and well-being for all USAP participants.

## Prevention Framework



As outlined in the *Volume One: Needs Assessment Report*, prevention activities and tasks represent research-informed prevention components: Infrastructure, Engagement, Education, and Leadership Support. Each activity will address existing gaps, leverage current assets, and progress the USAP toward best practices in prevention.

## Response Framework

It is well-recognized that a trauma-informed approach is critical to providing appropriate survivor-centered services. As the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) notes in their *Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach* (July 2014) (accessed online at: [https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA\\_Trauma.pdf](https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf)), “the pervasive and harmful impact of traumatic events on individuals, families and communities and the re-traumatizing effect of many of our public institutions and services



systems makes it necessary to rethink doing “business as usual.” SAMSHA further explains,

In a trauma-informed approach, all people at all levels of the organization or system have a basic realization about trauma and understand how trauma can affect families, groups, organizations, and communities as well as individuals. People’s experience and behavior are understood in the context of coping strategies designed to survive adversity and overwhelming circumstances, whether these occurred in the past (i.e., a client dealing with prior child abuse), whether they are currently manifesting (i.e., a staff member living with domestic violence in the home), or whether they are related to the emotional distress that results in hearing about the firsthand experiences of another (i.e., secondary traumatic stress experienced by a direct care professional).

\* \* \*

[T]here is a realization that trauma is not confined to the behavioral health specialty service sector, but is integral to other systems (e.g., child welfare, criminal justice, primary health care, peer–run and community organizations) and is often a barrier to effective outcomes in those systems as well.

A “trauma-informed” approach is rooted in an understanding of the neurobiology of trauma, and how trauma impacts memory and behaviors. It recognizes the physiological and psychological effects of the experience on both the individual survivor and the larger community. “Trauma-informed responses” are grounded in and reflect the understanding that, “[i]ndividual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.” *Id.* at 7.

It is axiomatic that trauma-informed approaches are survivor-centered. They place the survivor’s needs at the center of the assessment and allow them to direct the strategies to be employed. They are informed and determined by the wishes and needs of the individual who experienced the harm, and not by the community as a whole or the institution’s needs. For example, while a prosecutor or a community may want to see an assailant prosecuted and incarcerated for their crimes, a survivor may determine that they are safer if the offending individual is not criminally charged. Or a survivor may want an assailant to avoid jail or prison time and instead maintain their employment and be required to

provide support and other financial compensation. Creating opportunities for the person who caused harm to engage the survivor (and, sometimes, other community members) in a restorative justice process<sup>54</sup> is also an example of a survivor-led, trauma-informed response.

These values and principles inform and provide the foundation for our recommendations to responding to sexual assault and harassment within the USAP. For ease of access, the recommendations set forth below are organized into three distinct sectors: Engagement, Infrastructure, and Education. These distinctions are somewhat fluid, however. There is both cross-over and alignment between response efforts.

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<sup>54</sup> A restorative justice is a process where parties with a stake resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offense and its implications for the future. While restorative justice processes are not currently an option through USAP, there may be opportunities to use restorative justice practices to encourage community accountability and healing.

# Implementation Plan by Phase

*Note: It is recommended that the entirety of the SAHPR Implementation Plan is overseen by NSF. Recommended collaborations with other groups and individuals are noted throughout. Any task that requires expertise specific to prevention or response should be completed in partnership with an appropriate subject matter expert. Additional expertise may be required for specific tasks depending on existing capacity with the NSF.*

## Phase One: Pre-Implementation Engagement

### **Goal**

1. Effectively communicate SAHPR-related information prior to and in the early stages of rolling out the *Implementation Plan*.

### **Objective**

- 1.1. Develop an *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan* to be used prior to implementation. The plan will be narrow in scope and will focus on the window of time prior to formal rollout of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan* to avoid early missteps or miscommunication.

### **Tasks**

- 1.1.1. Engage decision makers and key stakeholders who will provide input into the development of key messages, goals, etc. for the *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan*. The Plan should address, in part, existing negative perceptions of SAHPR efforts clearly delineated in the *Needs Assessment Report*.
- 1.1.2. Gather input from a small cross-section of employees to inform and shape the *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan*. Input should include (but not be limited to) what they would like to be addressed early on and potential pitfalls. This will be very limited in scope and is not a replacement for opportunities to give input into broader efforts outlined elsewhere in the *Implementation Plan*.
- 1.1.3. Develop an *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan* that includes elements such as talking points, framing, key language, etc.
- 1.1.4. Create materials to support *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan* (e.g., PowerPoint deck, information sheets, briefing scripts, etc.). Final materials depend on the plan.

**Resources:** Leadership and stakeholder time, access to cross-section of employees, funding for subject matter experts and materials

**Responsibility:** NSF supported by subject matter experts

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Completion of *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan* and supporting materials
- *Interim Communication Plan* effectively and accurately communicates key messages that resonate with the USAP community

**Objective**

1.2. Develop a training to educate leadership and others who will serve as spokespeople for initial SAHPR-related efforts (e.g., sharing *Needs Assessment Report* findings, the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*, next steps, etc.). The training will be interim and will target the information most important for leadership/spokespeople to understand prior to the launch of the *Implementation Plan*. It will not replace more comprehensive training described in phases three and four of the *Implementation Plan*.

**Tasks**

- 1.2.1. Solicit input from high-level decision makers regarding desired outcomes of the launch of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*, key messages to be included, etc.
- 1.2.2. Identify those who will be involved in initial SAHPR-related communication, the roles they will play, and the sequence with which they should be trained. This information will inform content development, tailoring, and attendees.
- 1.2.3. Develop the interim training to include key fundamentals of prevention and response, findings of the *Needs Assessment Report*, and their role in implementing the *Interim SAHPR Communication Plan*. Length to be determined based on participant availability.
- 1.2.4. Develop a brief post-training survey to evaluate the outcomes of the leadership/spokespeople training.
- 1.2.5. Schedule the leadership/spokespeople training. Delivery method to be decided with NSF guidance. An onsite option is highly recommended.
- 1.2.6. Review post-training surveys to determine if additional steps are necessary to ensure all spokespeople are sufficiently equipped.

**Resources:** Facilitators, access to high-level decision makers, leadership time, funding for subject matter experts and materials

**Responsibility:** Subject matter experts with guidance from NSF

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Leadership confidence in communicating effectively regarding SAHPR efforts
- Increased trust of leadership and HR
- Increase in positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts

**Objective**

1.3. Develop and distribute a climate survey to the USAP community.

Disseminating a climate survey early in the implementation process ensures accurate baseline data that will allow NSF to monitor progress, course correct efforts, and objectively demonstrate successes.

While the survey results from the needs assessment provided valuable information about perceptions of sexual misconduct on the ice, there is not enough information to ascertain the incidence or prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment at the three stations, field sites, and research vessels. New research is needed to:

1. Establish and expand a baseline understanding of the incidence and prevalence of sexual misconduct within USAP programs.
2. Administer select questions from the recent needs assessment survey to measure any shifts in individuals' perceptions regarding the scope and seriousness of sexual misconduct, accountability, employer responsiveness, the role of alcohol, and worker safety.
3. Conduct periodic evaluations of prevention and response efforts.
4. Publicize findings, outcomes, and recommendations for improvement to promote transparency and accountability.

Climate surveys should endeavor to achieve statistically significant response rates. It is recommended that NSF partner with a subject matter expert in developing the survey and compiling the data. Every effort should be made to reach as many diverse USAP community members as possible as those from vulnerable populations are experiencing more misconduct than their non-marginalized peers.

**Tasks**

- 1.3.1. Identify personnel across sectors with relevant expertise pertaining to climate surveys.
- 1.3.2. Create a climate survey that includes, but is not limited to, questions pertaining to incidence and prevalence of sexual misconduct, community member perceptions, and effectiveness of SAHPR efforts.
- 1.3.3. Identify and/or develop survey distribution methods to achieve target response rates across demographics, roles, and locations.
- 1.3.4. Compile and analyze data and develop recommendations for next steps.
- 1.3.5. Publicize findings, outcomes, and recommendations for improvement to promote transparency and accountability within the USAP community.

**Resources:** Access to relevant personnel, distribution methods, funding for dissemination, materials, analysis, communication, and subject matter experts

**Responsibility:** Subject matter experts with guidance from NSF and internal experts

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Climate survey is created
- Survey is disseminated
- Target response rate is achieved
- A representative cross-section of community members from sectors and locations participates
- A majority of the USAP community can access the findings

**Goal**

2. Engage the USAP community in the planning process for implementation.

*Note: The sequence, rollout, and structure of the forums included in Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 should be determined based on capacity, resources, access to participants, etc. While each forum is topic-specific, there may be a need to combine or reconfigure content.*

While community members are invested in the overall mission of USAP, the siloed nature of the organizations serving the USAP has created a fractured response to sexual misconduct training, interventions, sanctions, and responses to complainants. As a result, too often little information is shared among and between entities and organizations; opportunities to collaborate on inter-

agency issues appear nonexistent. This is especially challenging when sexual misconduct occurs between individuals affiliated with two distinct sectors, such as employees of two different contractors or when a service member harasses or assaults a contractor employee.

Due to this lack of communication and inadequate response mechanisms, many community members distrust human resources (HR). Senior management (including NSF) are perceived as not overseeing the process to ensure safety and compliance of policies/procedures. Grantee institutions are often perceived as too far away, too disconnected from the reality of life on the ice, and/or too hierarchical to be able to meet survivors' needs. Rebuilding community trust must be a top priority in aiding community healing, which starts with an acknowledgment of harm caused and a public commitment to fixing systemic problems.

NSF is encouraged to reengineer their oversight processes over contractors, subcontractors, grantees, and the military to find practical ways to ensure communication among the partners, to be thorough and accurate when implementing NSF's policies, and to make certain that any changes to sexual misconduct protocols are responsive to the communities' on-the-ground needs. NSF will be expected to provide early leadership on the following initiatives as many of those who have been designated to oversee sexual misconduct reports are distrusted or not qualified to undertake such a role. An important step in leading will be to rebuild trust between NSF and those harmed within the USAP workforce by acknowledging harms and committing to fixing systemic problems. Evaluation of community perceptions and experiences will aid in determining whether NSF can take less of a leadership role in the future.

### **Objective**

- 2.1. Conduct a series of Listening Sessions focused on the SAHPR-related experiences of USAP deploying participants. The sessions should be attended by senior leadership and decision makers and will serve as an opportunity for them to listen, acknowledge, and share their commitment to continuing efforts to address areas of response and prevention that could be strengthened.

USAP community members need an opportunity to feel heard by the individuals with the authority to facilitate change such as a series of Listening Sessions with NSF, contractor, subcontractor, grantee, military, and other decision makers to hear from community members regarding their experiences with sexual

misconduct and reactions to the needs assessment. NSF is encouraged to clearly communicate that Listening Sessions are an opportunity for the USAP community to share their response to the Need Assessment Report and provide any additional information they may want NSF to hear, and they will be heard without judgement to ensure NSF is more informed as they move forward in the process.

Events should be conducted with the support of a skilled facilitator with deep knowledge of how sexual assault and harassment impact individual survivors and their respective support communities. Because there is so much frustration and mistrust of the current HR representatives, where possible, outside facilitators with sexual misconduct subject matter expertise should be selected to lead these conversations and to ensure they are conducted from a trauma-informed approach. It is critical to ensure there are “safe space” opportunities for individuals from marginalized and vulnerable communities to share their experiences and/or identify their priority needs. Efforts should prioritize marginalized groups and groups with the least power and influence within the USAP. Needs assessment findings suggest community members who are bisexual, low-waged, and limited duration contract workers should be prioritized. It is recommended that a series of Listening Sessions be offered, both in-person (at McMurdo station) and remotely for South Pole and Palmer stations. Virtual listening sessions could be offered for USAP community members who are currently not deployed or have deployed within the last three years. It is encouraged that one virtual session be communicated as female-identified community members only, and another virtual session for self-identified sexual assault or harassment victims.

### **Tasks**

- 2.1.1. Develop overall structure of sessions (e.g., number to be held, who should attend, etc.).
- 2.1.2. Identify the leaders who should attend the Listening Sessions based on their role, their authority to make change, and the perceived importance of their attendance by USAP deploying participants.
- 2.1.3. Engage outside facilitators with sexual misconduct subject matter expertise to collaborate with NSF in designing and facilitating the sessions.
- 2.1.4. Develop a detailed outline of the content and structure of the Listening Sessions.
- 2.1.5. Develop a brief training for leadership to equip them to effectively co-facilitate the Listening Sessions.
- 2.1.6. Deliver the training to leadership.



- 2.1.7. Develop and execute a strategy to engage participants, prioritizing marginalized groups and those with least power and influence.
- 2.1.8. Develop a brief post-survey to ascertain both participant and leadership perceptions of the Listening Sessions.
- 2.1.9. Identify opportunities to use post-survey input to guide and improve next steps.
- 2.1.10. Conduct Listening Sessions both in-person and virtually.
- 2.1.11. Identify alternative means for the USAP deploying participants to share experiences with leadership for those who would prefer not to attend a Listening Session in person.

**Resources:** Leadership time, participant time, funding for subject matter experts, materials, and surveys

**Responsibility:** NSF with support of subject matter experts

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Target participation rate is achieved (in sessions and evaluation)
- A representative cross-section of community members from sectors and locations participates
- Increased trust of leadership and HR
- Increase in positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts

**Objective**

- 2.2. Conduct a series of Informational Sessions focused on sharing findings from the *Needs Assessment Report* and next steps. Informational Sessions should be co-facilitated by an appropriate NSF representative and an external subject matter expert (ideally a member of the team that conducted the needs assessment who can be on hand to answer questions about the data, analysis, findings, etc.).

Informational Sessions provide a forum for NSF and other sectors to communicate to (as distinct from forums to *listen to*) the field about the efforts underway. Unlike Listening Sessions, where NSF is there to reflect on what has occurred and show the community their experiences matter, Informational Sessions are forward looking. Here, NSF will introduce new policies and resources and, if appropriate, ask for community feedback on new strategies considered and resources to be launched, or invite attendees to attend a Collaboration Session which will be more focused on getting input from

participants. Because there is much frustration and mistrust of the current HR representatives, however, where possible outside facilitators with sexual misconduct substance matter expertise should be selected to lead these conversations in partnership with NSF (or other Information Session host). Partnering with an independent, outside expert to serve as a cultural broker can also help to ensure these sessions are conducted from a trauma-informed approach. It is critical there are “safe space” opportunities for individuals from marginalized and vulnerable communities to share their experiences and/or identify their priority needs as part of this process.

### **Tasks**

- 2.2.1. Develop overall structure of sessions (e.g., number to be held, who should attend, etc.).
- 2.2.2. Develop and frame the content of the sessions.
- 2.2.3. Develop corresponding outlines, talking points, PPT slides, and/or information sheets as necessary.
- 2.2.4. Develop a brief post-session survey to ascertain participant perceptions of the Informational Sessions.
- 2.2.5. Identify and invite specific groups who should be briefed on the findings based on their role or investment in SAHPR-related efforts (e.g., the NSF SAHPR Team, employees who participated in the needs assessment, those who have been vocal with their concerns, those who have been a significant part of working for change, etc.). Some portions of content should be added or expanded for specific groups as appropriate.
- 2.2.6. Develop and execute a strategy to engage participants from the general population.
- 2.2.7. Develop and conduct a brief training for NSF representatives who will be co-facilitating the Informational Sessions.
- 2.2.8. Conduct Informational Sessions both in-person and virtually.
- 2.2.9. Identify opportunities to use post-survey input to guide and improve next steps.

**Resources:** Leadership time, participant time, funding for subject matter experts, materials, and surveys

**Responsibility:** NSF with support of subject matter experts

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Target participation rate is achieved (in sessions and evaluation)

- A representative cross-section of community members from sectors and locations participates
- Increase in knowledge among USAP deploying participants regarding the NAR and next steps
- Increased trust of leadership and HR
- Increase in positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts

### **Objective**

2.3. Conduct a series of Collaborative Sessions to meaningfully engage the USAP deploying participants in the planning and development process. NSF may introduce new SAHPR efforts (e.g., policies, resources, programs) and, if appropriate, ask for community feedback. While soliciting input is vital to rebuilding trust and building buy-in, it is important to discern between components of deliverables that must be developed by subject matter experts and components that can be shaped by the input, experiences, and feelings of those who have been or will be impacted by the final *SAHPR Implementation Plan*.

### **Tasks**

- 2.3.1. Develop overall structure of sessions (e.g., number to be held, who should attend, whether sessions will be topic-specific or general, etc.).
- 2.3.2. Develop and frame the content and process for the Collaborative Sessions.
- 2.3.3. Identify deliverables from the *Implementation Plan* that should be informed by the USAP deploying participants and included for discussion in the sessions.
- 2.3.4. Develop corresponding outlines, talking points, PPT slides, and/or information sheets as necessary.
- 2.3.5. Develop a brief post-survey to ascertain participant perceptions of the Collaborative Sessions.
- 2.3.6. Develop and execute a strategy to engage any interested participants and/or specific stakeholders to attend. Some Collaborative Sessions may be topic-specific and of particular interest to certain individuals or groups.
- 2.3.7. Facilitate sessions in-person and virtually.
- 2.3.8. Identify opportunities to use post-survey input to guide and improve next steps.
- 2.3.9. Identify alternative means for members of the USAP community to provide input into the planning and development process.

**Resources:** Leadership time, participant time, funding for subject matter experts, materials, and surveys

**Responsibility:** NSF with support of subject matter experts

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Target participation rate is achieved (in sessions and evaluation)
- A representative cross-section of community members from sectors and locations participates
- Meaningful input is collected and documented
- Increased trust of leadership and HR
- Increase in positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts
- Increased engagement in SAHPR activities by the USAP community members

## Phase Two: Early Implementation Capacity Building

### Goal

3. Build necessary capacity to begin implementation.

### Objective

- 3.1. Establish a Collaborative Action Team (CAT). The CAT should serve as a multi-jurisdictional consultive group to help coordinate and support SAHPR implementation efforts, advise NSF as appropriate, and strengthen communication between partners.

The Collaborative Action Team (CAT) will be an inter-jurisdictional working group that includes representatives from each sector. The CAT will provide consultation to the NSF in developing more appropriate and effective survivor-centered response programs for grantees, contractors, subcontractors, and the military, and in developing effective prevention programs and strategies. The CAT will act as an important partner to NSF and provide information to aid decisions in an informed and responsible way. To the extent the CAT is a place for various entities to engage or alert one another to challenges or issues that arise, team members can share ideas and information with their individual agencies, organizations, and institutions. It will be a place to share model and best practices across disciplines.

The CAT should be structured with an Executive Committee that is responsible for ensuring the team stays on task, that there is meaningful engagement in the work of the Committee and in the subcommittees, and that CAT responsibilities are fully executed. The CAT Executive Committee should have members from all three stations (Polar, McMurdo and South Pole) as well as the field camps, research vessels, and members of the military. It will also engage USAP community members across all sectors of employment or grant work, salary ranges, and gender and sexual orientation as well as, to the extent possible, include representatives who offer racial and ethnic diversity. (This smaller group should reflect the diverse communities on the ice and the successes and conflicts they encounter.) It is recommended that subject matter experts assist NSF and the CAT in determining final CAT structures, providing scaffolding, and helping to develop programmatic planning, aid in developing mission and value statements, and providing direction on early priorities. The CAT will need a designated facilitator/convener responsible for ensuring meetings occur,

preparing/distributing agenda, ensuring committee complies with Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and other notice requirements.

Broadly, the CAT will consult with NSF on:

1. Naming and maintaining an Executive Committee
2. Developing a mission statement and values for the CAT
3. Identifying and prioritizing yearly goals
4. Establishing sub-committees for named priorities
5. Forward progress of systems wide programming

One structure recommended is an Executive Committee consisting of six to eight members who represent the contractor, subcontractor, military, grantee, and NSF entities. Executive Committee members should, ideally, be employed full-time by their respective institutions. They should be tasked with either overseeing subcommittee work or also serving directly on the subcommittees. To allow for a diversity of voices at the highest levels, promote meaningful engagement, and maintain continuity, Executive Committee members could rotate at two- to three-year intervals on a staggered basis. Attention to finding Executive Committee members who are respected by peers is paramount as distrust of existing reporting systems is significant.

The Executive Committee will meet initially to determine several key priorities for the upcoming year. It is likely that three to four subcommittees will be named in the first year, with other subcommittees weaving together or dissolving as priorities are met. Subcommittees of six to eight members each will tackle prioritized areas and include more community members outside the Executive Committee to amortize the work. Subcommittee topics could include Training, Prevention, Climate Surveys, Reporting Protocols, Policy Development,<sup>55</sup> Communication Plan, and Annual Report. Subcommittee representatives should include a mixture of management and staff to ensure there are individuals with authority to effect change and community members invested in these efforts who are or will be present on the ice. To ensure all facets of employment on the ice are represented, the subcommittees can determine how many “seats” each sector (contractor, subcontractor, grantee,

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<sup>55</sup> This committee may also be charged with convening a workgroup to continue prior efforts and conversations regarding alcohol use within USAP. The workgroup may wish to consider incorporating alcohol use and misuse into the worker safety educational curriculum, addressing how those who engage in offending behaviors often target individuals who are vulnerable and accessible, supporting “dry” camps, limiting alcohol deliveries to the field, etc.

military, NSF) should receive. For those positions that rotate out for summer and winter, name a representative for each season at the start of the season.

Subcommittees will be responsible for presenting recommendations and findings to the full Executive Committee, some who may be participating on the subcommittee. Executive Committee members will provide checks and balances to the subcommittees and engage with legal or other NSF requirements.

### **Tasks**

- 3.1.1. NSF work with USAP partners to develop a framework for the CAT (e.g., membership, functions, scope, authority, limitations, etc.).
- 3.1.2. Create a committee structure for the CAT to incorporate greater numbers of USAP community members.
- 3.1.3. Develop a required training for anyone who serves on the CAT.
- 3.1.4. Develop supporting materials as necessary.
- 3.1.5. Develop brief  
post  
training survey to evaluate outcomes of the training.
- 3.1.6. Conduct training.
- 3.1.7. Review post-training surveys to determine if additional steps are necessary to ensure training is effective.

**Resources:** Dedicated staff time for training and ongoing participation, funding for materials and subject matter expert (the creation of an Ombudsperson to oversee is recommended)

**Responsibility:** NSF, in collaboration with representatives from each sector, with support from subject matter experts (external or a newly hired Ombudsperson)

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- CAT is created
- Members have sufficient knowledge to meaningfully contribute
- CAT meets
- NSF meaningfully engages the CAT to support, advise, and strengthen communication regarding SAHPR efforts

**Objective**

3.2. Finalize the *Implementation Plan*. Though the goals, objectives, and tasks will have been completed and prioritized, specific timelines and responsible parties will need to be determined based on NSF capacity and resources. It is recommended that NSF references input from the Collaborative Sessions and solicits input from the CAT as the plan is finalized.

**Tasks**

- 3.2.1. Specify necessary resources to support each task or deliverable including personnel time, external subject matter experts, money, and other infrastructure/capacity needs.
- 3.2.2. Allocate resources based on priorities identified by subject matter experts, optimal timing for maximum impact, input from stakeholders, and NSF leadership priorities.
- 3.2.3. Identify responsible parties for each task and deliverable, to include internal personnel and external subject matter experts as appropriate.
- 3.2.4. Determine specific timeline and due dates.

**Resources:** CAT member time, leadership support and input, input gathered from Collaborative Sessions

**Responsibility:** NSF with support from subject matter experts, Ombudsperson, and/or CAT members

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Plan is complete
- Identified priorities are resourced
- Action steps are appropriately assigned and realistic to execute by designated personnel

**Objective**

3.3. Determine and resource staffing needs for effective implementation. While internal expertise is being hired and/or developed, immediate staffing needs will rely heavily on contracted external subject matter experts.

*Note: Completing a long-term staffing plan is not necessary to move to Phase Three of the Implementation Plan. However, if new positions will ultimately be created, moving forward with hiring and training early in the process will help ensure adequate staffing exists and is sufficiently trained for timely execution of the Implementation Plan.*



## **Tasks**

- 3.3.1. Based on existing resources identify: (1) which response and prevention tasks will be resourced from recommendations included in the *Implementation Plan*, and (2) the sequence and timetable within which they will be implemented.
- 3.3.2. Determine: (1) total hours necessary to execute tasks recommended by subject matter experts and prioritized by NSF, (2) existing internal capacity to implement those tasks, (3) tasks requiring external subject matter experts, and (4) total hours that need to be funded in the near-term and ongoing.
- 3.3.3. Determine internal full-time equivalents (FTEs) NSF will resource. After completion of time-limited tasks, a minimum of 1 FTE is recommended for response-related responsibilities, and a minimum of .25 FTE is recommended for prevention responsibilities.

*Note: The creation of an Ombudsperson is highly recommended to execute response-related functions. Details in Phase Three.*

- 3.3.4. Determine how to best distribute the FTEs to meet the needs of the USAP community most effectively and complete the ongoing tasks adopted from the *Implementation Plan* (e.g., hiring new staff, re-allocating dedicated time of existing staff, engaging subject matter experts, etc.).
- 3.3.5. Depending on final staffing decisions: (1) Develop a transition plan to ensure internal staff are adequately trained by subject matter experts to effectively execute ongoing tasks, and (2) Develop position description(s) for staffing, including duties, qualifications, and performance evaluation metrics.
- 3.3.6. When staffing decisions are made, begin the hiring and training process as soon as possible to ensure personnel are in place in sufficient time to execute the *Implementation Plan* and sustain SAHPR efforts.

**Resources:** Leadership time and support, funding for staffing

**Responsibility:** NSF with support of subject matter experts (and CAT members as appropriate)

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Adequate FTEs are funded to support successful implementation of SAHPR efforts
- Materials are created to support appropriate recruitment and hiring

- A sustainable staffing plan is created to ensure ongoing implementation of SAHPR efforts

### **Goal**

4. The USAP community will have positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts, resulting in increased receptivity, buy-in and participation in improving both response and prevention efforts.

Successful response to and prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and an improved climate require widespread engagement of the USAP community in prevention efforts. Climate is defined by the aggregate of individual behaviors and cannot be created or sustained absent broad-based and consistent participation of a significant cross-section of the community. Engagement is largely predicated on the shared belief that sexual assault and sexual harassment are problems, a trust in the individual and collective ability to make a difference, and intrinsic motivation to implement change.

Negative perceptions of SAHPR efforts can decrease intrinsic motivation to get involved as it indicates a lack of belief that the strategy being implemented will be effective and/or that those leading the efforts are trustworthy or competent.

The key steps to decreasing negative perceptions and replacing them with positive include:

1. Review the *Needs Assessment Report* to understand the existing negative perceptions across groups and identify possible contributors to the negative perceptions (e.g., belief that leadership is not supportive, negative experiences with related training).
2. As necessary, follow up with key stakeholders and subgroups whose experiences and perceptions may not be adequately represented in the *Needs Assessment Report*.
3. Identify the desired perceptions of prevention efforts and the steps necessary to create them. Steps should include message development and a plan to create changes at the source. Examples include, but are not limited to, changing content and delivery of required training, improving leadership ability to effectively communicate, and developing campaigns that incorporate new, positive prevention messages.

**Objective**

4.1. Replace negative perceptions of SAHPR efforts with positive ones.

**Tasks**

- 4.1.1. Identify existing negative perceptions of SAHPR prevention efforts and their causes.
- 4.1.2. Identify opportunities to shift negative perceptions within training, materials, booster activities, formal and informal interactions, etc.
- 4.1.3. Develop and implement a plan of action to replace negative perceptions of SAHPR prevention efforts with positive.
- 4.1.4. Develop an evaluation plan to assess effectiveness of efforts to create positive perceptions of SAHPR prevention efforts. Evaluation elements may be integrated into the existing evaluation tools used for training (e.g., adding items to post-training surveys that assess for perceptions, etc.).
- 4.1.5. Establish a process to analyze and apply outcomes to revisions and next steps.

**Resources:** Dedicated staff time, access to a cross section of community members, access to leadership from all levels, funding for materials and subject matter experts

**Responsibility:** Subject matter experts with guidance from NSF experts (and CAT members as appropriate)

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Existing perceptions of SAHPR efforts have been accurately identified
- A plan has been developed to increase positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts
- An evaluation plan has been developed to measure progress
- Implementation of the plan is started
- An increase in positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts

## Phase Three: Safety, Victim Support, and Leadership Education

### Goal

5. Increase safety and victim support.

### Objective

- 5.1. Create resources for victims to access information and support that is unaffiliated with a specific entity on the ice (e.g., contractor, subcontractor, grantee, etc.).

Due to the breadth and depth of USAP community members' distrust of human resources departments, the current reporting systems, perceptions of retaliation, and inter-jurisdictional nature of life within the USAP, it is critical that NSF help create and support opportunities to expand survivor-centered services on the ice that are not tied to any particular contractor, subcontractor, or grantee. There is a perceived ambivalence of institutional reporting systems with little understanding of on-ice conditions, and limited understanding of what options and resources are available when there are intra- and inter-jurisdictional complaints (e.g., sexual harassment of an ASC employee by a grantee employee), providing a resource that can help USAP community members identify and navigate their options is critical.

The current reporting mechanisms do not reflect the realities of the misconduct that occurs or survivors' needs. For example, when a contractor or grantee is assaulted or harassed by an individual who is associated with a different agency or institution, USAP participants reported they did not know to whom a report should be made, which entity was responsible for redressing the harms that occurred, whether and how information might be shared, and what reporting options and remedies for redress exist. A more integrated approach that centers on victim's needs is critical.

A confidential Ombudsperson position would, ideally, provide services to all USAP community members. This position could be accessible to both current and former USAP members to provide information or support. This position would be full-time and would not be employed by any individual contractor or grantee, at least for an initial two- to three-year period. This independence from any one sector of the community would allow time to rebuild trust and restore confidence in the contractors' HR units and programs under their auspices such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). This position can also

provide additional resources in organizing CAT meetings, training different USAP communities, and awareness building of reporting structures and options throughout the OPP.

We recommend that, ideally, the Ombudsperson position be staffed by an individual whose communication with USAP community members may be privileged and whose knowledge of sexual assault or harassment will not be imputed to the employer, to allow communications to remain confidential. We anticipate additional research and conversations regarding structure, training requirements, and more may be required to determine the feasibility of such an effort.

### **Tasks**

- 5.1.1. Establish a confidential Ombudsperson position.
- 5.1.2. Develop a job description, requirements and credentials, oversight mechanisms, roles, and responsibilities, etc.
- 5.1.3. Recruit, hire, and train Ombudsperson.

**Resources:** Funding for subject matter experts and position

**Responsibility:** NSF with support of subject matter experts (and CAT members as appropriate)

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- The position is established
- The position is filled by a qualified individual
- Ombudsperson is effectively trained and utilized

### **Objective**

- 5.2. Promote safety of grantees and other field personnel.

Grantees and field personnel told us that, in the field, they have limited access to phones or other means of communication that would allow them to conduct a confidential phone call to report or otherwise seek assistance regarding sexual harassment or assault. Accessing support is especially challenging when it is difficult if not impossible to make a confidential phone call, when the individual to whom the report is to be made is thousands of miles away, or if the person committing or tacitly endorsing the misconduct is the individual to whom it should be reported.

Include in the solicitation for proposals that grant applicants address personal safety issues and have a plan in place for how they will respond to disclosures of sexual assault and harassment. A detailed safety plan should be developed in collaboration with the relevant institution's Title IX office and advocacy resources on campus and to certify that the plan is distributed to all team members' onboarding processes and procedures. NSF would review and approve the plans.

### **Tasks**

- 5.2.1. Solicit input from field personnel regarding what structural changes would help to meet their reporting and support needs. Where appropriate, consider input gathered from Collaborative Sessions.
- 5.2.2. Establish and require a minimum number of NSF-owned, contractor managed SAT phones (e.g., two or more) be available at each site as part of the application and funding process.
- 5.2.3. Require a plan to address victim safety in the field as well as en route to and from the camps and stations.
- 5.2.4. Require each field camp, with a to-be-determined minimum number of occupants, to have at least two individuals designated to receive reports of sexual harassment or assault.
- 5.2.5. Provide training and support to principal investigators and others designated to receive reports of sexual misconduct on trauma-informed responses, the neurobiology of trauma, and their reporting obligations.

**Resources:** Input gathered from Collaborative Sessions, funding for equipment and training, staff time of NSF and grantee institutions

**Responsibility:** NSF with support of subject matter experts, grantee institutions (and CAT members as appropriate)

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Increased access to phones
- Positive indicators on climate survey
- Positive grantee feedback
- Appropriate, trauma-informed, survivor-centered safety plans are submitted and are utilized as needed
- Grantees to confirm awareness of the safety options.

**Goal**

6. Leadership will provide substantive oversight, support, and accountability for SAHPR-related efforts.

Regarding response-related skills, supervisors noted during the needs assessment that they needed additional skills-based training on how to handle interpersonal conflict between employees and what options were available to provide more safety to co-workers involved in complaints.

Training is needed for contractor supervisors, subcontractor supervisors, and grantee supervisors in areas such as:

1. How to identify prohibited behaviors in the workplace
2. New reporting options for employees
3. Information about the investigation processes their specific employer follows
4. How to identify information the supervisor can expect to receive about the investigation and how to communicate this expectation to employees
5. Conflict resolution techniques
6. Trauma-informed responses to disclosures
7. Neurobiology of trauma
8. Maintaining emotionally and physically safe work environments when sexual misconduct has been alleged, including safety planning techniques and options
9. How/where to access resources to support their efforts to improve response and prevention efforts

To effectively support prevention efforts, leaders must have a full understanding of the prevention process to support and oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive approach. Providing effective education to leaders at every level is essential to equipping them to effectively fulfill this responsibility.

Topics should include but are not limited to the role leaders can play within their specific sphere of influence (e.g., grantee principal investigators, military leaders, ASC shop leads, NSF Executive Management Board (EMB), etc.), leaders' roles in creating a healthy community and workplace climate,

bystander intervention, supporting and reinforcing target prevention behaviors in subordinates, integrating prevention into daily routines, communication, providing effective oversight and accountability, hiring, fundamentals of program evaluation. Additional content should be developed and tailored based on gaps identified in the *Needs Assessment Report*.

Tailoring content to meet the distinct needs of different leadership functions is an essential part of content development. Content should be tailored to the specific role leaders play in decision-making, oversight, and accountability. In addition, it is important for content, images, language, scenarios, and contexts to resonate with participants. This can be done by conducting key stakeholder interviews and pilot training workshops with different levels of leadership across USAP.

### **Objective**

6.1. Develop and implement SAHPR training for leadership.

### **Tasks**

- 6.1.1. Solicit military input to provide military-specific information and context that should be included in leadership training.
- 6.1.2. Solicit input from stakeholders as appropriate to inform training development.
- 6.1.3. Incorporate input from Collaborative Sessions as appropriate.
- 6.1.4. Develop foundational SAHPR content to be included in leadership training (e.g., effective oversight and accountability, hiring, understanding, and applying evaluation/assessment findings, etc.).
- 6.1.5. Develop response-focused content to be included in leadership training (e.g., identifying prohibited behaviors in the workplace, conflict resolution, trauma-informed responses to disclosures, etc.).
- 6.1.6. Develop prevention-focused content to be included in leadership training (e.g., selecting prevention training programs, creating healthy climates, reinforcing prevention behaviors in employees, etc.).
- 6.1.7. Tailor the training for different groups of leaders (e.g., senior NSF leadership, onsite supervisors, etc.), creating multiple versions that align with each group's level, role, sector, functions, and responsibilities.
- 6.1.8. Develop an action plan for providing leadership training to include minimum training requirements, frequency, modes of delivery, etc.
- 6.1.9. Implement training.



6.1.10. Ensure training is delivered in a manner that: (1) engages participants, and (2) effectively builds knowledge and skills. See Phase Four, goal three for details.

**Resources:** Input gathered from Collaborative Sessions, funding for subject matter experts and materials, leadership time, personnel time to provide training

**Responsibility:** Subject matter experts, with support from NSF, and/or Ombudsperson (if hired), and Human Resources Departments (for response-specific content)

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Training is created
- Training content resonates with different groups of leaders
- Training is implemented
- Leadership confidence and competence in executing their SAHPR-related responsibilities
- Information and skills are applied and sustained by leaders
- Positive training evaluations

**Objective**

6.2. Provide resources to support leadership in their role in SAHPR efforts.

Given high demands on the time and focus of leadership, the prevention packet should provide resources that are quick to consume, easy to understand and utilize, and have high face validity (i.e., the resource can be understood without additional information or context). Resources should equip leaders to play their role in setting norms, overseeing prevention efforts, and implementing the *SAHPR Communication Plan*. Further, they should include summaries of key content that can be used for reference, including but not limited to the SAHPR Training Plan, the training content provided to the workforce, and the communications strategy. Resources should be tailored to specific leadership roles and spheres of influence (e.g., NSF Executive Management Board, ASC full-time supervisors, USAP Station Managers, etc.). Resources can include but are not limited to:

- Prevention talking points

- Short prevention boosters to incorporate into regular meetings, briefs, or other workforce gatherings
- Action steps to visibly support and endorse prevention efforts
- Summary of key prevention content for USAP participants (their specific subordinates)
- Options for proactive behaviors that contribute to a healthy community and workplace climate

Given time limitations of leadership, the more accessible resources are, the more likely they are to be utilized. Methods can include physical packets, electronic versions that are emailed, an online portal or shared folder, etc.

### **Tasks**

- 6.2.1. Develop a Prevention Toolkit to support leadership in effectively executing their roles within the *Implementation Plan*.
- 6.2.2. Establish an easily accessible distribution for the Prevention Toolkit.
- 6.2.3. Develop a mechanism to keep resources within the Prevention Toolkit current.

**Resources:** Funding for supplemental materials, subject matter expertise and/or dedicated staff time

**Responsibility:** Subject matter experts with support from NSF

**Indicators:**

- Resources from Prevention Toolkit are utilized by leaders
- Increased efficacy of leadership in executing their roles and responsibilities pertaining to SAHPR efforts

### **Objective**

- 6.3. Ensure effectiveness of leadership training and Prevention Toolkit.

### **Tasks**

- 6.3.1. Develop a brief post-training survey to ascertain knowledge, skills, and participant perceptions of the leadership training.
- 6.3.2. Develop a method to collect feedback from leadership regarding the usefulness of the Prevention Toolkit.
- 6.3.3. Identify opportunities to use post-training survey data and leadership feedback to improve training and tools.

**Resources:** Funding for subject matter experts (or dedicated staff time) to support development, distribution, and analysis of evaluations and feedback

**Responsibility:** Subject matter experts with support from NSF

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Surveys are developed, distributed, and analyzed
- Leadership completes surveys and provides feedback
- Changes and improvements are made to the Prevention Toolkit as appropriate

## Phase Four: Comprehensive Training

### **Goal**

7. USAP deploying participants are aware of their legal rights, reporting options, supportive resources available, and policies delineating unacceptable behavior regarding sexual misconduct.

*Note: As changes are made to policies and procedures, training and materials will need to be updated and the USAP community reeducated.*

Information communicated to, from, and between USAP community members varies widely depending on an individual's position, the entity for whom each works, professional positions, duration on the ice, and a multitude of other factors. The multi-jurisdictional aspect of life in the USAP community presents additional challenges regarding reporting options and mechanisms, how best to promote accountability, survivors' and other community members' safety concerns, and even what constitutes sexual misconduct and the range of possible sanctions. Currently, in the absence of appropriate and accurate information, rumors abound, often confirming community members' pre-existing perceptions and beliefs. Further exacerbating these challenges is that the current sexual assault and harassment prevention and response trainings are viewed as outdated or inadequate. Finally, supervisors and others often lack the training, information and support they need to respond appropriately to reports of sexual misconduct, including survivors' disclosures.

## **Objective**

### 7.1. Develop and provide effective response-focused training and materials.

Information communicated to, from, and between USAP community members varies widely depending on an individual's position, the entity for whom each works, professional positions, duration on the ice, and a multitude of other factors. The multi-jurisdictional aspect of life in the USAP community presents additional challenges regarding reporting options and mechanisms, how best to promote accountability, survivors' and other community members' safety concerns, and even what constitutes sexual misconduct and the range of possible sanctions. Currently, in the absence of appropriate and accurate information, rumors abound, often confirming community members' pre-existing perceptions and beliefs. Further exacerbating these challenges is that the current sexual assault and harassment prevention and response trainings are viewed as outdated or inadequate. Finally, supervisors and others often lack the training, information and support they need to respond appropriately to reports of sexual misconduct, including survivors' disclosures.

## **Tasks**

- 7.1.1. Review existing response-focused content currently included in training, programs, activities, and materials to ascertain alignment with research and best practice, accuracy, and the inclusion of the most up-to-date information.
- 7.1.2. Solicit military input on materials and training content to be delivered to civilian audiences regarding sexual misconduct committed by service members, reporting options, victims' confidentiality rights and options, and how to access services.
- 7.1.3. Develop and/or update training content and informational materials to ensure they are trauma-informed, include contact information, reporting options and the corresponding levels of confidentiality or lack thereof, step-by-step guidance and procedural information of what the reporting and investigation processes entail, and how to seek services. Materials should also communicate that sexual assault and sexual harassment are not tolerated.
- 7.1.4. Develop marketing materials to reinforce key response-focused knowledge and skills taught in training. Examples could include posters, PSA videos, supervisor specific handouts for dealing with disclosures, and flowcharts of reporting options or complaint process.

- 7.1.5. Tailor all response-focused materials, including training content and supplemental activities, for the USAP context generally, and specific subgroups as appropriate (e.g., first time employees, grantees, etc.).
- 7.1.6. Develop a dissemination strategy that ensures every USAP community member is exposed. Solicit input from USAP community members including what was gathered from Collaboration Sessions.
- 7.1.7. Provide training.

**Resources:** Input gathered from Collaborative Sessions, funding for subject matter experts (or dedicated staff time) and materials

**Responsibility:** Sub-committee within CAT in coordination with Ombudsperson and/or subject matter expert (depending on timeline), with guidance and support from NSF

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Training is completed
- Marketing materials are created
- Increase in community members seeking services with Ombudsperson
- Training is created
- Training content resonates with different groups of leaders
- Training is implemented
- Leadership confidence and competence in executing their SAHPR-related responsibilities
- Information and skills are applied and sustained by leaders
- Positive training evaluations

**Objective**

- 7.2. Create community based “Know Your Rights” resources for USAP.

Ensuring that USAP community members are informed about their rights is trauma-informed and fundamental to ensuring survivors have all the necessary information to make critical decisions. Providing all community members with voluntary, in-person Know Your Rights educational sessions on the ice will educate members about what federal, USAP, and employer protections are available to varying sectors.

**Tasks**

- 7.2.1. Develop content that informs participants with information about protections available to varying sectors. Content should include general rights from Title VII, Title IX, the Polar Code of Conduct, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and policies detailed within their employee handbooks.
- 7.2.2. Develop companion materials (e.g., pamphlets, flow charts, safety planning tips) that can be disseminated in print and online to accompany the trainings.
- 7.2.3. One to two times per season, offer all community members voluntary, in-person, Know Your Rights educational sessions on the ice.
- 7.2.4. Develop a live question and answer follow-up session and offer it to those who attend the trainings remotely.
- 7.2.5. Resend companion materials periodically as a refresher.

**Resources:** Funding to create resources, dedicated staff time for development and delivery, deploying participant time to attend

**Responsibility:** Sub-committee within Collaborative Action Team in coordination with Ombudsperson and subject matter experts, with guidance from NSF.

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Training and materials are created
- Materials are consistently sent post-training as refreshers
- Increase in community members seeking services with Ombudsperson
- Increased knowledge about available protections among USAP deploying participants

**Goal**

8. USAP deploying participants are equipped to engage in behaviors that contribute to a workplace and community climate that is free from sexual harassment and sexual assault.

An effective prevention education program/strategy will equip USAP community members with the knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to intervene in high-risk situations and to proactively engage in behaviors that contribute to a climate where every USAP participant works and lives free from the experience or fear of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The indicators

used to inform goals, objectives, and tasks, and that ensure a prevention activity is best practice include the training or activity must be: (1) research-informed, (2) well-delivered, and (3) evaluated.

### **Objective**

#### **8.1. Develop and implement effective prevention-focused training, programs, activities, and materials.**

To establish a workplace and community climate that is free from sexual harassment and sexual assault, a large cross-section of USAP participants must engage prevention-related behaviors consistently, over time. Prevention-related behaviors include bystander intervention behaviors and proactive behaviors that communicate prevention-related values and establish healthy workplace and community norms.

The sexual harassment and sexual assault awareness training provided to all incoming employees and contractors as part of pre- or early deployment onboarding will be reviewed, as will any written materials referring to prevention efforts intended to educate participants in the USAP community. The review will determine which content is supported by evidence and the degree to which appropriate tailoring has been completed to ensure content resonates with target populations.

The selected or developed prevention programs should include content consistent with the most current research and best practice. Content should also be informed by gaps identified in the *Needs Assessment Report*. Multiple programs should be developed and/or selected that correspond with the role, function, and current career stage. Since training should happen annually (at a minimum), for the USAP participants employed over the course of more than one year, a series of programs should be selected or developed that build on the prior training and evolve over the course of participants' careers.

The effect of exposure to a single training is insufficient to create and maintain the behavior changes necessary to make a meaningful impact on rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and outcomes tend to decay over time. As such, exposure to multiple messages, programs, and activities is necessary to support durability of impact. Supplemental (booster) activities should be cohesive and reinforce the same prevention skills taught in required training.



Tailoring program content to meet the distinct needs of subgroups within the target population is considered an essential part of prevention program development/selection and implementation. To maximize impact of prevention training and supplemental activities it is important for content, images, language, scenarios, and contexts to resonate with participants. Since the USAP community has a diverse range of participants with distinct backgrounds, roles, and functions, tailoring is particularly critical. The tailoring process typically involves incorporating input gathered from: (1) focus groups and key stakeholder interviews with a representative cross-section of employees and contractors, and (2) pilot training workshops with a cross-section of participants.

### **Tasks**

- 8.1.1. Review existing prevention training, programs, activities, and materials to ascertain alignment with best practice.
- 8.1.2. Develop, revise, and/or select prevention training to be delivered to all employees and contractors of the USAP community. Where appropriate, consider input gathered from Collaborative Sessions. Training should be informed by current research and aligned with best practice.
- 8.1.3. Develop a series of trainings for USAP participants who are deployed more than one year, with each training reinforcing and building on the previous year.
- 8.1.4. Develop or select supplemental (booster) activities, programs, campaigns, and events that reinforce key prevention skills taught in annual training workshops and provide additional opportunities to participate in prevention efforts in formal and informal contexts.
- 8.1.5. Tailor all prevention materials, including training content and supplemental activities, for the USAP context generally, and specific subgroups as appropriate.
- 8.1.6. Develop and tailor scenarios that resonate with participants by ensuring they are relevant, reflect specific on-ice situations, and incorporate the language, values, and context of each group of participants.
- 8.1.7. Implement training and supporting activities.

**Resources:** Input gathered from Collaborative Sessions, funding for subject matter experts and materials, leadership time, personnel time to provide and attend training, copy of USAP Harassment and Assault Awareness and Prevention Training (2021-2022) and Harassment Awareness One Pager (December 2020)

**Responsibility:** Subject matter expert with support from NSF

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Training and materials are created
- Training is implemented
- Training content resonates with different groups of participants
- Evaluations and survey responses indicate increased prevention-related behavioral engagement
- Participant confidence and competence in executing prevention-related behaviors increases
- New skills are applied and sustained

**Goal**

9. Maximize impact of all SAHPR training.

**Objective**

9.1. Ensure those designated to provide SAHPR-related training are equipped to deliver it in a manner that: (1) engages participants, (2) effectively builds knowledge and skills, and (3) increases positive perceptions of overall SAHPR efforts.

**Tasks**

- 9.1.1. Develop supporting materials necessary to recruit, screen, hire, and train a qualified person to deliver SAHPR training (e.g., minimum qualifications, job description, evaluation criteria, experience, etc.).
- 9.1.2. Solicit input from stakeholders, consider input from Collaborative Sessions, and reference data included in the *Needs Assessment Report* regarding identifying and engaging potential trainers.
- 9.1.3. Identify and engage trainer or trainers. As indicated in Phase Two, 3.3, this position may be an external contractor, a newly hired position, or an existing position with time reallocated for prevention.
- 9.1.4. Train personnel who will be delivering SAHPR training.
- 9.1.5. Ensure training evaluations include items that assess participant perceptions of quality of delivery, facilitation skills of presenter, and level of engagement.
- 9.1.6. Develop a plan for oversight, accountability, and monitoring of SAHPR training, including systematically reviewing evaluations.

- 9.1.7. Conduct annual performance evaluations of prevention staff member(s), in relation to prevention program outcomes. Make necessary changes to personnel, assigned duties, and support mechanisms based on findings.

**Resources:** Funding and/or allocated time for trainers, materials, and subject matter experts

**Responsibility:** Subject matter expert with guidance from NSF

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Hiring materials are completed
- Effective trainers are engaged
- A plan for oversight is completed and implemented
- Evaluation data provided by trainers regarding their training show positive outcomes in skills levels and confidence
- Training evaluations of participants show positive outcomes in terms of gains in knowledge and skills, and effectiveness of trainer

**Objective**

- 9.2. Develop and implement an annual *SAHPR Training Plan*.

An annual plan should include: (1) behavioral goals, (2) the sequence and target populations for training, (3) selection of supplemental/booster activities that support behavioral goals, and (4) a timeline for implementation. Plan should include training for leadership, and USAP participants across partner organizations.

**Tasks**

- 9.2.1. Determine the structure of response- and prevention-focused training, including when training both response and prevention content is combined and when it is offered independently.
- 9.2.2. Review response and prevention training content, supplemental materials, and booster activities to ensure they are mutually reinforcing and consistent when there is appropriate overlap of concepts and language.
- 9.2.3. Determine a training sequence that maximizes impact and most efficiently leads to community-wide changes in work climate (e.g., train leadership first, followed by highly respected staff, followed by permanent staff, etc.).
- 9.2.4. Develop booster activities that support behavioral goals and reinforce skills taught in training.

- 9.2.5. Determine requirements for training frequency, attendance, and length.
- 9.2.6. Determine processes for oversight, monitoring, and accountability that requirements are met annually.

**Resources:** Training plan template or guide, dedicated staff time to develop the *SAHPR Training Plan*, funding for materials and subject matter experts

**Responsibility:** Subject matter experts with guidance from NSF

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Curricula are finalized
- *SAHPR Training Plan* is completed
- *SAHPR Implementation Plan* is executed

**Objective**

- 9.3. Increase the impact of SAHPR training by reviewing and updating to ensure materials, training, and requirements are current and align with best practice.

**Tasks**

- 9.3.1. Increase the frequency of trainings, offering them at both orientations (summer and winter) and repeating them while on-ice, allowing for smaller, in-person discussions and interactive exercises.
- 9.3.2. Clearly define the purpose and intended outcomes for each training (e.g., to increase knowledge, develop skills, have opportunities to apply those skills, etc.).
- 9.3.3. Ensure training is applied, actionable, skill-based, interactive, and includes opportunities to practice and model target behaviors.
- 9.3.4. Require all deployers and service members to attend trainings to be permitted on the ice.
- 9.3.5. When appropriate, have designated support people present during and after trainings are conducted to provide information about accessing support.
- 9.3.6. Require personnel who are training and/or developing training content to stay up to date on research and emerging best practices and update content accordingly.
- 9.3.7. Develop a process for systematically updating response-focused training content and materials to reflect policy changes related to sexual misconduct, prohibited behaviors, and additional reporting options.

**Resources:** Dedicated trainer time, access to participants

**Responsibility:** NSF with support from subject matter experts

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Positive changes in climate survey outcomes
- Increase in positive perceptions of SAHPR efforts
- Training content is current

**Objective**

9.4. Evaluate and improve SAHPR training and materials.

Monitoring SAHPR training and materials can be guided by the use of a Prevention Strategic Plan. The Prevention Strategic Plan is a living, breathing document that should evolve because of evaluation findings, emerging research in the field of prevention, or shifts in the USAP culture or infrastructure occur. A comprehensive and tailored approach that effectively responds to and prevents sexual harassment and sexual assault requires a comprehensive evaluation plan. Evaluation findings should be used by leaders, prevention staff, and key stakeholders to determine if prevention resources (e.g., funding, personnel, curriculum) are achieving intended outcomes, why or why not, and how to make improvements that increase the efficacy of the strategy.

Current areas of capacity necessary for evaluation include existing data collection sources that may be utilized or adjusted to include prevention, funding for evaluation, dedicated staff time, staff evaluation capabilities, access to data analysis software, access to program participants, and the ability to apply evaluation findings to a continuous quality improvement process.

Depending on resources, the scope of evaluation may be limited. As such, priorities must be established along with a plan to expand evaluation as resources allow. Evaluation efforts may focus on specific training activities, expand to a full evaluation of the comprehensive SAHPR Training Plan, or outline something in between. This *Implementation Plan* includes evaluation efforts for every component of the plan; however, elements of the evaluation plan will need to be implemented based on available resources and capacity.

Based on resources and capacity, the components of the evaluation plan that are implemented first should include analyzing existing data, simple program evaluations of specific training activities (i.e., pre/post surveys), and other

prioritized elements of the SAHPR Training Plan that may result in short term impact or allow for accessible data collection points.

Finally, an evaluation plan should include safe processes for gathering candid input and ensuring open and ongoing communication between senior leadership and a broad cross-section of USAP participants. Efforts should focus particularly on marginalized groups and/or groups with the least power and influence within the USAP (e.g., USAP participants who identify as LGBTQ+, people of color, and/or participants in entry-level positions). Information gathering may include an anonymous feedback mechanism, focus groups, an annual climate survey, and/or key informant interviews

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is an important component of implementation and should be utilized throughout the life of the Prevention Strategic Plan and/or to improve specific prevention activities. To conduct CQI, practitioners should use process and outcome evaluation data to track what has worked well, what has resulted in challenges or barriers to success, and what can be adjusted or corrected to improve prevention outcomes.

For each area that is being evaluated, there should be a clear process for reviewing and updating elements of the Prevention Strategic Plan. The process should include, but is not limited to, frequency of data analysis and revisions, responsible parties, and methods of oversight and accountability.

### **Tasks:**

- 9.4.1. Assess current evaluation capacity (e.g., existing data collection sources, dedicated staff time, access to data-analysis software, staff capabilities, etc.).
- 9.4.2. Within the constraints of available capacity, develop an evaluation plan for prioritized components of the annual *SAHPR Training Plan* that can be realistically implemented and utilized.
- 9.4.3. Ensure the evaluation plan includes a safe process for gathering candid input from marginalized groups and/or groups with the least power and influence and sustaining open and ongoing communication.
- 9.4.4. Implement evaluation plan.
- 9.4.5. Analyze findings and utilize results to make improvements.
- 9.4.6. Establish requirements for reporting findings to leadership and other key stakeholders and communicating findings to the USAP community.

**Resources:** Dedicated time and expertise, funding for subject matter experts

**Responsibility:** NSF with support of subject matter experts

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Actionable evaluation strategy is resourced and implemented
- Findings are used to inform improvements

## Phase Five: Strengthen Policies and Procedures, Data Collection, and Transparency

### **Goal**

10. Improve safety of USAP deploying participants leveraging existing vehicles.

While NSF provides oversight of the USAP within the constraints of several federal and regulatory requirements, several vehicles exist to improve current operations. First, through the bidding and grant application processes, NSF can ensure every contractor, subcontractor, or grantee is informed of NSF's expectations for behavior of all employees, and the expectation that no one is permitted to undermine or impede a safe, harassment-free work environment. Second, grantees should be required to conduct a safety assessment and to create a safety plan for how they will respond if a sexual assault or harassment occurs. Third, background checks can be improved as currently they are sometimes cursory or otherwise insufficient. As a result, individuals who cause harm are hired and allowed to arrive at / maintain a presence on vessels, at research stations, and in the field. Fourth, the evaluation process should be improved. While evaluations are conducted at the end of the season, that process and the forms utilized do not elicit or document the information that would allow contractors to make more informed hiring and retention decisions that protect worker safety. Overall, NSF does not leverage its "power of the purse" to require grantees and contractors to have the necessary safeguards in place. By undertaking a full review of policies, protocols, and current oversight mechanisms, NSF can strengthen them to the fullest extent allowed by regulation and government mandate.

### **Objective**

10.1. Within the constraints of federal and regulatory requirements, strengthen foundational agreements to provide additional safety and accountability on the ice.

Current contracts with ASC contractors and subcontractors lack adequate protections and remedies for survivors. In addition, the *Needs Assessment Report* suggested that institutional grantees are not currently required to provide information regarding background checks, reference checks, or previous sexual harassment or sexual misconduct findings made about the individuals representing the institution under the NSF grant. Any recommended



changes will need to be reviewed and approved by NSF grants and legal departments.

The following contractual terms and grantee special conditions should be evaluated and included if they meet guidelines. Any recommended changes will need to be reviewed and approved by NSF contracting and legal departments.

1. Provide an annual deliverable to NSF stating what actions the contractor, subcontractor, or grantee has taken to increase safety, awareness, and education of all employees.
2. Require a quarterly report to NSF from each contractor, subcontractor, and grantee with de-identified information regarding:
  - a. The number of reports and incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault (alleged violations of the Polar Code of Conduct) made during that period.
  - b. The number of investigations undertaken and completed during the period.
  - c. Average length of each investigation,
  - d. Investigation outcomes (i.e., whether violations were found to have occurred, if so for what offense(s), and any sanctions imposed).
3. Require that any employee who commits repeated and/or serious violations of the Polar Code of Conduct for sexual harassment, or who commits sexual assault, face immediate, documented consequences that include removal from the ice as soon as it can be accomplished (i.e., forthwith). In the interim, require that safety measures be implemented to promote the emotional and physical safety of the victim and other involved community members. Further, the contractors, military liaison, grantee, or other responsible entity should be required to promptly report to NSF the identity of every individual removed from the USAP for misconduct and the reasons for the individual's removal.
4. Require each contractor, subcontractor, or grantee's Principal Investigator to receive a complaint of sexual harassment or sexual assault from all community members, including for persons not affiliated with the company or grantee. (For grantees, this is in addition to a victim's options to report to Title IX or the Ombudsperson once the position exists, if receiving reports is within the Ombudsperson's scope of duties.)

5. Provide a report form (and assistance to the individual(s) making the report) to collect the information necessary for an investigation to occur and to document the content of the report. Inform the reporting individual(s) they may submit a supplemental report as they remember or acquire additional information.
6. Require that background checks and pre-screening processes are completed with each new hire or re-hire. Background checks should include questions specific to allegations or history of sexual assault or sexual harassment.<sup>56</sup> The application form should require applicants to sign and affirm that all information provided is complete and accurate and clarify that lying or withholding information regarding sexual assault or sexual harassment will be grounds for immediate dismissal.
7. Require contractors, subcontractors, and grantees (a) to include required questions specific to whether the applicant has been found responsible in a civil, administrative, criminal, academic or other hearing for sexual misconduct as part of the application process and the corresponding sanction if any, and (b) to have a policy that sets out when an applicant is ineligible for hire based on that misconduct.
8. Establish specific guidelines for what behaviors make an employee or grantee unsuitable to be added or remain on the contract. This may include, for example, prior findings of sexual misconduct from a previous employer or educational institution, conviction for sexual assault or other sexual violence, or registration as a sex offender. (N.B. The policy should be framed in such a way as not to violate states' "ban the box" laws regarding per se employment exclusions for individuals with a criminal history.)
9. Require contractors, subcontractors, and grantees to certify to NSF that they ask these questions of all applicants for USAP-related employment and for individuals participating in NSF-funded activities.

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<sup>56</sup> For instance, the Fulbright Specialist application includes the following questions "Have you been subject to any disciplinary action, or entered into a settlement, in connection with any misconduct, including but not limited to unethical practices, conduct, or behavior; harassment; sexual harassment or abuse; or are you currently under investigation for any such misconduct? Have you been asked to resign from a professional or academic appointment, or have you resigned in lieu of disciplinary action, in connection with misconduct, including but not limited to unethical practices, conduct, or behavior; harassment; sexual harassment or abuse?" Additional questions could include "Have you ever been the subject of a formal or informal complaint of sexual assault or sexual harassment in an employment context?" Employers could also be required to basic online searches of prospective employees.

10. Require adequate training for those individuals involved in receiving and investigating sexual misconduct complaints.

### **Tasks**

- 10.1.1. Establish and/or strengthen contractual requirements for ASC partners to provide information, training, and safety modifications to address sexual misconduct of their employees and to communicate incidence and outcomes to NSF.
- 10.1.2. Establish additional special conditions under grantee awards to provide information, training, and safety modifications to address and report to NSF sexual misconduct of their employees.
- 10.1.3. Engage subject matter experts to evaluate recommended contractual terms and special conditions for compliance with existing requirements and guidelines.
- 10.1.4. Submit recommended additions to contractual terms and special conditions that are consistent with federal and regulatory requirements to NSF contracting and legal departments for approval.
- 10.1.5. Develop a process to ensure updates are made to all relevant training and materials when changes are made to existing policies.

**Resources:** NSF contract staff time, funding for subject matter experts

**Responsibility:** NSF contracting and legal departments, with CAT input as appropriate

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Inclusion of new clauses in contractor and subcontractor contracts
- Inclusion of special conditions in grantee awards, quarterly reports submitted

### **Goal**

11. Promote transparency and increase communication between the USAP community and leadership.

The needs assessment research determined that, where there are information gaps, the gaps are filled with assumptions based on perceptions, historical events, and institutional memory. Mistakes – real and perceived – on the part of NSF, human resources, and other leadership are amplified, further eroding confidence and exacerbating mistrust.

**Objective**

11.1. Consistently distribute a climate survey to the USAP community.

**Tasks**

- 11.1.1. Informed by NSF capacity, access to USAP community members, and best practice, determine the frequency of conducting climate surveys.
- 11.1.2. Develop processes and procedures delineating who is responsible, methods of dissemination, and monitoring and improving processes as necessary to maximize participation.
- 11.1.3. Compile and analyze data and develop recommendations for next steps.
- 11.1.4. Publicize findings, outcomes, and recommendations for improvement to promote transparency and accountability.

**Resources:** Access to relevant personnel, distribution methods, funding for dissemination, materials, analysis, communication, and subject matter experts

**Responsibility:** Subject matter experts with guidance from NSF and internal experts

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Climate survey is updated as necessary
- Survey is disseminated
- Target response rate is achieved
- A representative cross-section of community members from sectors and locations participates
- A majority of the USAP community can access the findings

**Objective**

11.2. Develop and disseminate an Annual Report

Working in conjunction with the *SAHPR Communication Plan*, an Annual Report would provide yearly data to the USAP community regarding how many formal complaints of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking were received and the non-identifying outcomes of those complaints. The report would be disseminated electronically, with information on how to access the report, links to the report, and/or printed copies provided to the relevant stakeholders.

**Tasks**

- 11.2.1. Create guidelines for the creation and dissemination of an Annual Report including who is charged with collecting and compiling required information, who is responsible for oversight, timeline, etc.
- 11.2.2. Create an Annual Report template that prompts for annual data regarding number of formal complaints of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking received and the non-identifying outcomes of those complaints.
- 11.2.3. Develop a process for disseminating the report, including creating a link to the report, distributing an electronic option, and/or printed options for relevant stakeholders.
- 11.2.4. Develop and implement a strategy to communicate how to access the report.

**Resources:** Dedicated time, cost for materials

**Responsibility:** NSF with guidance from the CAT and/or the Ombudsperson

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Annual Report is created
- Annual report is widely disseminated
- Increase in knowledge and awareness regarding the scope and impact of sexual harassment and sexual assault and other SAHPR-related issues

**Objective**

- 11.3. Develop and implement a *SAHPR Communication Plan* that will increase the understanding of and investment in the SAHPR Prevention strategy by the USAP community.

A strategic *SAHPR Communication Plan* with recommendations of the CAT Executive Committee would assist NSF in determining how and when to inform on-ice partners about upcoming events, pending or adopted revisions to programs or policies, and improvements or new services, resources, events, or programming.

**Tasks**

- 11.3.1. Develop communication objectives (e.g., target audiences, key messages, intended outcomes, etc.). The *SAHPR Communication Plan* should be utilized, in part, to shift existing negative perceptions of SAHPR efforts.
- 11.3.2. Determine methods of communication.

- 11.3.3. Create tools to provide formal leadership, and informal leaders who have credibility and the respect of their peers, information and support they need to effectively implement the plan within their sphere of influence.
- 11.3.4. Provide training to ensure communication coming from leaders is consistent, effectively delivered, responsive to the current climate, and aligned with the goals of the *SAHPR Communication Plan*.
- 11.3.5. Implement the *SAHPR Communication Plan*.
- 11.3.6. Develop processes to determine responsibility, oversight, and accountability for the effective development and implementation of a *SAHPR Communication Plan*.
- 11.3.7. Develop and implement an evaluation of the *SAHPR Communication Plan*, including a mechanism to use findings to inform improvements.

**Resources:** Leadership time, expertise, availability of leadership and stakeholders for training and implementation, funding for training materials and subject matter experts (if internal expertise is insufficient)

**Responsibility:** NSF supported by subject matter experts and the CAT team as appropriate

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Completion of *SAHPR Communication Plan* and supporting materials
- Completion of training for leadership
- Completion of the *SAHPR Communication Plan*
- *SAHPR Communication Plan* effectively and accurately communicates key messages that resonate with the USAP community
- Leadership is effectively communicating key messages
- Decrease in negative perceptions of SAHPR efforts
- Increase in positive engagement with SAHPR efforts by USAP community members

**Objective**

- 11.4. Expand existing opportunities for USAP community members to provide feedback to organizational leadership.

**Tasks**

- 11.4.1. Review utilization of existing feedback options, including the intranet anonymous safety reporting system and comment cards available at multiple locations.
- 11.4.2. Solicit input from USAP deploying participants regarding utilization (or lack thereof) of existing options and possible replacement or supplemental options. Where appropriate, consider input gathered from the Collaborative Sessions.
- 11.4.3. Develop and execute new feedback mechanisms, ideally to include, at least one physical suggestion box per base and an online portal that allows for de-identified submissions directly to NSF.
- 11.4.4. Designate responsible parties to collect, curate and respond to comments submitted and communicate systematically to NSF.

**Resources:** Dedicated staff time on site at all three stations, funding, and staff time to create an online portal

**Responsibility:** NSF in collaboration with Ombudsperson, Station Manager, and their designees,

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Suggestion boxes at each base
- Portal created
- Relevant suggestions submitted
- Comments are responded to

**Objective**

- 11.5. Improve the breadth and quality of information collected regarding employee performance.

The needs assessment demonstrated that there are significant information gaps leading to critical failures regarding who remains and returns to the USAP community. Community members reported insufficient structures in place to provide feedback on co-workers who engage in sexual misconduct. Evaluation forms are not designed to elicit such information and subordinates are not invited to provide input on supervisors' performance in this arena. This results in individuals being retained or returned to the ice who have engaged in sexual assault or harassment.

**Tasks**

- 11.5.1. Conduct evaluations that include peer and subordinate feedback.
- 11.5.2. Revise the evaluation forms and processes to facilitate the collection of relevant feedback and information.
- 11.5.3. Require regular and periodic “360” evaluations for personnel.
- 11.5.4. Create a sample evaluation form to be used as a model that includes questions and criteria specific to sexual harassment.
- 11.5.5. Include in the evaluation form a question that must be answered by the supervisor as to whether the individual is eligible for rehire based on established performance criteria.

**Resources:** Staff time of NSF, contractors, subcontractors, grantees, and military.

**Responsibility:** NSF in collaboration with contractors, subcontractors, grantees, and military personnel.

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Evaluations are revised and there is an increase in implementing

**Goal:**

- 12. Strengthen the ability of the Polar Code of Conduct Review Board to assess patterns, gaps, and successes within the USAP regarding sexual misconduct.

NSF needs to address that the Review Board collects some, albeit incomplete, information regarding sexual assault and harassment within the USAP community, although it does not appear to have any authority or responsibility for ensuring it has accurate information, or for acting on the information it has. If other recommendations from this plan are instituted, the Review Board would continue to rely on grantees, contractors, and subcontractors to provide information about reports, with additional requirements as detailed in the *Needs Assessment Report*. Along with data from the climate surveys regarding incidence and prevalence of sexual misconduct, the Review Board would be able to receive information in a more informed and reliable way to assess patterns, gaps, or successes within the USAP.

We believe that there needs to be a coordinated, collaborative, multi-jurisdictional effort to determine the most effective way to gather and receive information regarding the number of reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment, whether an investigation was conducted, the outcome of that



investigation, and sanctions imposed if any. To have the full picture, we believe this information should be shared and reviewed by a working group that operates collaboratively in a multi-jurisdictional setting. It is our further recommendation the Review Board submit de-identified data to the Annual Report for distribution to the USAP community in a reasonable time allowing for evaluation and analysis. To solicit USAP community feedback, this framework discussion could be a subject of one Townhall meeting.

### **Objective**

12.1. Consider a multi-jurisdictional approach to Polar Code of Conduct Review for sexual misconduct reports.

### **Tasks**

- 12.1.1. Solicit input regarding the Polar Code of Conduct Review Board structure for sexual misconduct reports. Where appropriate, consider input gathered from Collaborative Sessions.
- 12.1.2. Working with a subject matter expert as appropriate, NSF determine, implement, and/or oversee changes.

**Resources:** Leadership time and support, time of key-stakeholders, appropriate expertise

**Responsibility:** NSF

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Changes are made that result in demonstrable gains

## Phase Six: Sustainability

### Goal

13. Ensure stability and sustainability of SAHPR efforts.

### Objective

13.1. Institutionalize key components of the *SAHPR Implementation Plan*.

### Tasks

- 13.1.1. Incorporate critical responsibilities into job descriptions.
- 13.1.2. Create permanent positions to support response and prevention initiatives.
- 13.1.3. Identify and/or create permanent funding streams for necessary personnel, materials, evaluation, and other costs.
- 13.1.4. Develop new policies or revise existing policies to address minimum training requirements.
- 13.1.5. Incorporate SAHPR-related requirements into existing vehicles (e.g., contracts, grant awards, etc.).
- 13.1.6. Write into policies, procedures, handbooks, job descriptions, evaluation forms (and any other documents that inform the roles and responsibilities of individuals and organizations): (1) Requirements for oversight and monitoring of SAHPR efforts, (2) Methods of accountability and remediation should be included, (3) Minimum requirements for evaluation and reporting of outcomes, (4) Minimum requirements for response-related infrastructure (e.g., reporting mechanisms, victim resources, etc.), (5) Minimum elements to be included in an annual strategic plan, and (6) Requirements for reviewing and updating training, materials, and policies.

**Resources:** Leadership support, funding for positions and materials

**Responsibility:** NSF

**Indicator(s) of Success:**

- Components are funded and incorporated into policies