Setting the Tone

Creating a Respectful and Professional Work Environment

Bill Cole, IPMA-SCP
Human Resources Director - Town of Barnstable
Three Part-Harmony

1. Before the Complaint
2. During the Investigation
3. After the Investigation
Develop and Distribute a Policy

- Policy should not just speak to sexual harassment. Should include all forms of harassment including bullying.
- Use model policy from MCAD if necessary.
- Distribute policy annually to all staff (including part-time, temporary, and seasonal employees).
Before the Complaint

Designate a Sexual Harassment Officer and Alternate

• Can be Human Resources Director or other high level management representative.

• Often good to have a Male and Female as Officer and Alternate.
Before the Complaint

Lead By Example

• Interact with public, staff, and each other in a professional and respectful manner

• Speak up when you observe unprofessional or disrespectful behavior. Don’t look the other way (tacit approval)

• Regularly remind staff and the public of your expectations
Before the Complaint

Conduct Periodic Training

• Train Managers and Supervisors about their responsibilities regarding harassment complaints

• Train all employees on the policy. What are the organization’s expectations of them and how can they bring items to management’s attention.
During the Investigation

Immediately Begin Investigation

• It is critical to commence investigation as soon as the issue is brought to management’s attention.

• Do not make any initial assumptions concerning the validity of the claim.

• Your actions from this point forward will be potential testimony at a later time.

• Decide on in-house versus outsourced investigation.
During the Investigation

Critical Reminders

• There is no such thing as “between us”

• Absolute confidentiality should never be guaranteed

• Stress that retaliation of any kind will not be tolerated

• Keep the employee who brought forward the complaint appraised of the investigation’s progress

• Conduct a thorough investigation, but do not let it drag out
After the Investigation

• Take appropriate corrective action

• Inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation

• Identify any training opportunities for staff and management

• Continue to follow up with employee/department to make sure things are remaining positive
Questions?
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