

## Unwanted Sexual Advances: Not Just a Hollywood Story

More than half of American women have experienced unwanted and inappropriate sexual advances from men, three in 10 have put up with unwanted advances from male co-workers and a quarter have endured them from men who had influence over their work situation.

Those results in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll show the vast extent to which women encounter inappropriate sexual conduct from men across American society – marking the current scandal involving the movie mogul Harvey Weinstein as merely the latest public eruption of a far broader and deeper problem.

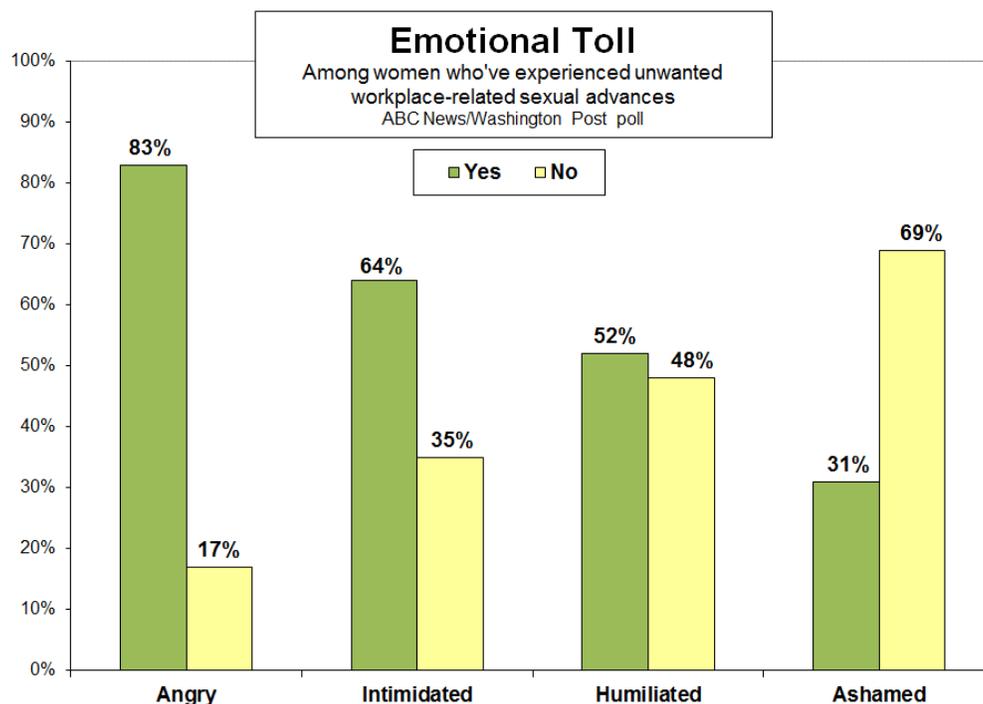


Indeed, among women who've been subjected to unwanted work-related sexual advances, eight in 10 say it rose to the level of sexual harassment, and a third say it went a step further, to sexual abuse. This translates to approximately 33 million American women being sexually harassed, and 14 million sexually abused, in work-related incidents.

Yet among women who've personally experienced unwanted sexual advances in the workplace, nearly all, 95 percent, say male harassers usually go unpunished. Seventy-seven percent of

women overall say the same, as do 56 percent of men in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#).

Female victims, meanwhile, suffer an emotional toll: Among those who've experienced unwanted workplace-related sexual advances, 83 percent say they're angry about it, 64 percent felt intimidated by the experience and 52 percent say they were humiliated by it. Fewer, about three in 10, felt ashamed.



Most Americans recognize the problem: Seventy-five percent overall call sexual harassment in the workplace a problem in American society, and 64 percent call it a serious problem – up 11 and 17 percentage points, respectively, since last asked in an ABC/Post poll in 2011, at the time of a scandal involving presidential candidate Herman Cain.

A peak of 85 percent called workplace sexual harassment a problem in an ABC/Post poll in December 1992, at the time of reports of sexual misconduct by Sen. Bob Packwood and about a year after then-Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas was accused of misconduct by Anita Hill in his Senate confirmation hearings.

Yet 25 years later, this survey indicates, broad levels of harassment continue. Among other challenges, there are shortfalls in reporting such behavior. Among women who've experienced unwanted sexual advances in the workplace, fewer than half, 42 percent, say they reported it to someone in a supervisory position.

**GROUPS** – Women who've experienced unwanted and inappropriate sexual advances are especially apt to see the issue as a problem for the country – 90 percent do, vs. 69 percent of

women who've not had these experiences. And women who've experienced inappropriate advances also are much more likely to think men usually get away with them, 92 vs. 58 percent.

People who think men get away with harassment are similarly more apt to see it as a problem, compared with those who think men usually get punished for it, 87 vs. 53 percent.

As noted, women are much more likely than men to think men usually get away with harassment, 77 vs. 56 percent. In addition, older, more educated and wealthier Americans are more apt to think harassers evade punishment.

Partisanship and political ideology are related to views on the subject. Eighty-nine percent of Democrats see sexual harassment in the workplace as a problem, as do 76 percent of independents, compared with 58 percent of Republicans.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Oct. 12-15, 2017, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,260 adults. Questions 1 and 6 were asked of 1,010 adults; question 2 was asked of 740 women; questions 3-5 were asked of the 242 women who've experienced unwanted workplace-related sexual advances. Results have a margins of sampling error of 3.5, 4 and 7 points, respectively, including the design effects.

The survey was produced for ABC News by Langer Research Associates of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS of Glen Mills, Pa. See details on the survey's methodology here.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at http://abcnews.com/pollingunit.

Media contacts: Heather Riley or Julie Townsend.

Full results follow.

\*= less than 0.5 percent

1. Do you think sexual harassment of women in the workplace is a problem in this country or not? (IF PROBLEM) Is it a serious problem, or not serious?

	----- Problem -----			Not a	No	
NET	Serious	Not serious	No op.	problem	opinion	
10/15/17	75	64	10	1	21	4
11/13/11	64	47	13	3	30	6
6/8/94	71	NA	NA	NA	27	2
12/14/92	85				13	2
10/13/91	74				21	5
10/12/91	76	"	"	"	16	7

2. (AMONG WOMEN) Have you ever received unwanted sexual advances from a man [ITEM]?

10/15/17 - Summary Table

Never worked No

	Yes	No	(vol.)	op.
a. that you felt were inappropriate, or not? This can be in any circumstance, whether or not work-related.	54	46	NA	*
b. who worked for the same company as you, or not	30	68	2	*
c. who had influence over your work situation, or not	23	75	2	*

3. (AMONG WOMEN WHO'VE EXPERIENCED UNWANTED WORKPLACE-RELATED SEXUAL ADVANCES) Thinking about the unwanted sexual advances you received at work, do you consider this [ITEM], or not?

10/15/17 - Summary Table

	Yes	No	No opinion
a. sexual harassment	79	21	0
b. sexual abuse	33	66	*

4. (AMONG WOMEN WHO'VE EXPERIENCED UNWANTED WORKPLACE-RELATED SEXUAL ADVANCES) Did you ever report unwanted sexual advances that you received at work to anyone in a supervisory position there, or not?

	Reported it	Did not	No opinion
10/15/17	42	58	0

5. (AMONG WOMEN WHO'VE EXPERIENCED UNWANTED WORKPLACE-RELATED SEXUAL ADVANCES) Please tell me if each of the following words does or does not describes your feelings about these unwanted sexual advances.

10/15/17 - Summary Table

	Does	Does not	No opinion
a. Humiliated	52	48	0
b. Intimidated	64	35	1
c. Angry	83	17	*
d. Ashamed	31	69	0

6. Generally speaking, do you think that a man who sexually harasses a woman in the workplace usually (is punished for it), or usually (gets away with it)?

	Punished	Gets away with it	No opinion
10/15/17	29	65	6

\*\*\* END \*\*\*