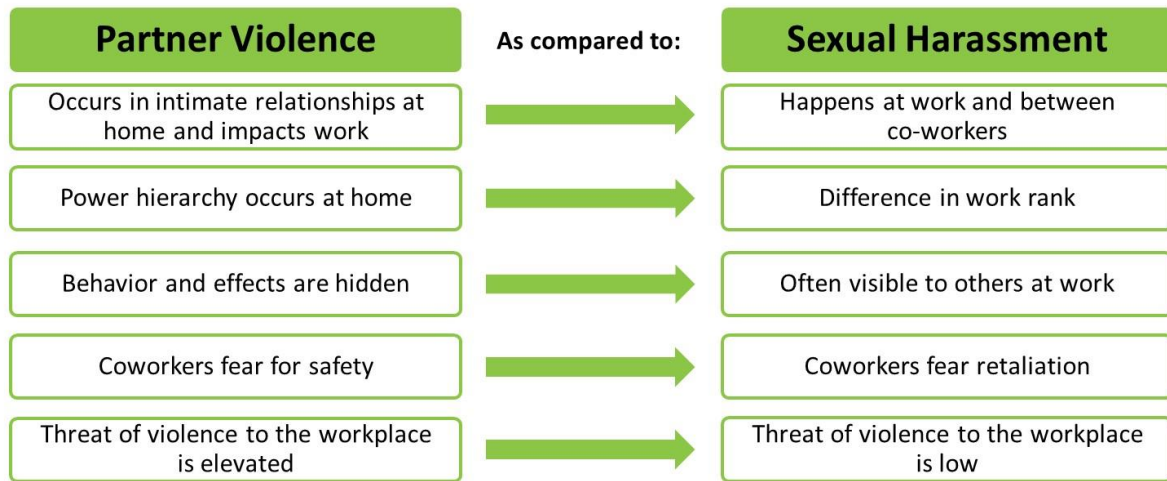




Partner Violence and Sexual Harassment: A Comparison

Partner violence and sexual harassment are both critical workplace issues that need to be addressed, but they are different and need to be handled by the workplace differently.

A Comparison



Partner violence and sexual harassment can be confused and are often used interchangeably; however, while they are the same in some ways, they are also quite different.

Both partner violence and sexual harassment affect victims', coworkers', and perpetrators' productivity and they are both based on a control, "power over" dynamic. Both pose security threats, and need employers to take action. Every effort should be made in the workplace to encourage victims to ask for help and to express the intolerance for either of these behaviors.

There are very distinct differences between partner violence and sexual harassment:

- With partner violence, the actual abuse typically happens outside the workplace. With sexual harassment, the perpetrator and the victim work in the same place and the perpetrator uses the work hierarchy or influence to exert power over the victim.
- Partner violence is often hidden at work by the victim while sexual harassment may be observed and well-known by coworkers.
- Effective responses to partner violence and sexual harassment, when they are identified in the workplace, are not the same.
- It is important to note that in an individual situation, a person may experience both partner violence and sexual harassment. Take, for example, an employee who is in an abusive partner relationship with a co-worker who is also engaging in sexual harassment at the workplace.