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Three-in-ten Canadians say they've been sexually harassed at work, but very few have reported this to their employers

14% of Canadians, both men and women, say they've been sexually touched, or worse, while on the job

December 5, 2014 – Three-inten Canadians (28%) say they have been on the receiving end of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or sexually-charged talk while on the job.

And for one-in-seven adults in this country, the experience has been more intense than innuendo or talk: 14 per cent tell the Angus Reid Institute (ARI) they have experienced anything from sexual touching to more serious unwanted sexual contact in their working lives.

The findings are the result of an ARI national online survey of more than 1500 Canadian adults who are currently working or who have worked outside of the home.

Key Findings:

The results show that while both genders identified experiences of harassment, women are – unsurprisingly – almost four times as likely to have been

Have you ever been subject to sexual harassment or unwanted contact in your workplace or at a work function?

43%

28%

20%

14%

9%

Canadians

Women

Men

Sexual harassment

Unwanted contact

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute (ARI) conducted an online survey among 1504 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists from November 18-21, 2014. A probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

This survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI.

harassed as men. For one-in-four of those who told ARI they've been sexually harassed at work, the experiences are recent; occurring within the last 24 months. Based on employment statistics, a rough approximation would mean this represents more than one million working Canadians, most of them women.

Canadians may be willing to talk about their experiences of sexual harassment and unwanted contact to ARI, but vast majority – four-in-five - who say they had these unwanted experiences never actually reported the behavior to their own employers. When asked "why not?" the largest number said they'd preferred to deal with the problem on their own. A range of other reasons were also cited.



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Out of respect for their privacy, the Institute offered all respondents the opportunity not to answer any questions about sexual harassment or unwanted contact. Roughly ten per cent declined (see tables at the end of this report).

Definitions

For the purposes of this survey, sexual harassment was defined as 'unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal (non-touching) conduct of a sexual nature'. Although technically sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact (unwanted contact) was defined as 'anything from an unwanted quick sexual touch to more serious unwanted physical sexual contact'.

Sexual harassment at work

As mentioned above, this ARI survey finds more than one-in-four (28%) Canadians have been sexually harassed at work or at a work function and one-in-seven (14%) have been subject to unwanted sexual contact at work.

As stated, women are more than three times as likely as men to say they have experienced sexual harassment at work – 43 percent versus 12 per cent. Women are also twice as likely to report experiencing unwanted contact at work – 20 per cent of women versus nine per cent of men.

These strong gender differences are noted within each major age grouping. Considering age alone, the survey results show Canadians over 35 are more likely than younger people to have experienced harassment or unwanted contact in the workplace at some point.

There are no large differences between reported experiences of sexual harassment across other socio-demographic descriptors – for example, by educational attainment, affluence and occupation type.

Big numbers

This turns out to be a lot of Canadians when you convert what might look like somewhat modest percentages into real numbers of people. A total of 29.5 per cent of Canadians surveyed said they experienced either harassment or contact or both in the workplace (illustrating the very high overlap between the two groups), and roughly one-in-four of those with some experience placed the most recent occurrence within the past two years.

This boils down to roughly seven per cent of Canadians overall. A rough extrapolation against employment statistics indicates that this represents approximately more than a million working Canadians who have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work within the past 24 months, most of them women.

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How recently?

Asked when the most recent occurrence of sexual harassment at work happened, one-in-four (24%) of those with some experience said it had been within the past two years.

More specifically, eight per cent of those harassed said the most recent incident was within the last six months. Six per cent said it happened between six months and a year ago, and ten per cent said it happened between one and two years ago.

For most, experiences of sexual harassment at work are less recent: one-in-ten (11%) said it was three to five years ago, one-in-five (20%) said it was six to ten years ago, and almost half (45%) said it was more than 10 years ago.

A very similar picture was provided by those indicating they had experienced unwanted sexual contact at work. Again, roughly half (49%) said this had happened more than ten years ago, and another one-in-three (33%) that it was between three and ten years ago. This still leaves almost one-in-five (18%) of this group indicating this unwanted contact occurred within the past two years.

How often?

The ARI study also shows for most of those who have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work, it has occurred on multiple occasions.

Among those who experienced sexual harassment at work three-quarters (76%) said this happened more than once; indeed, one-in-four (28%) of the harassed group said it happened more than five times. One quarter (24%) of these respondents said it happened once.

And, in the case of unwanted contact, two-thirds (69%) said this had happened more than once (nearly one-in-five (18%) said it happened more than five times). Thirty-one per cent of these respondents said this non-consensual contact was a singular incident.

Precise calculation of an average or mean is not possible since the survey used ranges to capture the frequency data, but a quick calculation suggests the average number of incidents is in the neighborhood of seven to eight among those who have experienced sexual harassment and between four and five among those who have experienced unwanted contact.

Report continues on next page....

49%

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In your working life, have you ever been subject to sexual harassment/non-consensual sexual contact at your workplace or at a work function?									
Total sample, excluding the one-in-ten who opted out of the topic	Yes Harassed (Total = 377)	Yes Unwanted Contact (Total = 188)							
Yes	28%	14%							
In your working life, how often have yo	ou experienced sexual harassment or	non-consensual sexual contact							
Once	24%	31%							
2 – 5 times	48%	50%							
More than 5 times	28%	18%							
Whe	n was the most recent occurrence?								
Within the past 6 months	8%	7%							
Within the past year	6%	4%							
1-2 years ago	10%	7%							
3 – 5 years ago	11%	9%							
6 – 10 years ago	20%	24%							

Most don't report

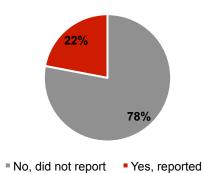
More than 10 years ago

While the ARI survey results indicate real and significant experiences of sexual harassment and unwanted contact in the workplace for both Canadian women and men, it also shows most are choosing not to speak about this behavior to their employers. Indeed, four out of five of those respondents indicating they'd been harassed, or worse, said they never reported it.

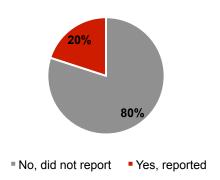
45%

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Have you ever reported sexual harassment to your employer?



Have you ever reported non-consensual sexual contact to your employer?



Why aren't Canadians reporting?

There are a wide range of reasons to explain why Canadians do not report incidents of sexual harassment and unwanted contact in the workplace. It is noteworthy that there are no significant differences in reasoning between the two groups.

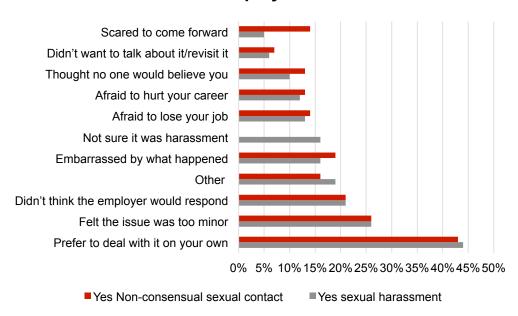
The single biggest reason selected by both groups? They preferred to "deal with it on their own". More than four-in-ten respondents selected this from a list of possibilities (44% of those who did not report sexual harassment and 43% of those who did not report unwanted contact).

Other reasons respondents said they didn't report included:

- Felt the issue was too minor (26% of both groups)
- Didn't think the employer would respond well (21% of both groups)
- Embarrassed by what happened (16% sexual harassment, 19% unwanted contact)
- Not sure it was harassment (16% sexual harassment)
- Afraid to lose your job (13% sexual harassment, 14% unwanted contact)
- Afraid to hurt your career (12% sexual harassment, 13% unwanted contact)
- Thought no one would believe you (10% sexual harassment, 13% unwanted contact)
- Didn't want to talk about it/revisit it (6% sexual harassment, 7% unwanted contact)
- Scared to come forward (5% sexual harassment, 14% unwanted contact)

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Why did you not report sexual harassment/ non-consensual sexual contact to your employer?



How did your employer respond?

In spite of the overwhelming propensity of respondents not to report, it is notable that a plurality of the roughly one-in-five who did tell their employers found they were "responsive and conducted a serious investigation and took appropriate action" (40% sexual harassment and 42% non-consensual sexual contact).

About a third of both groups said their employer was "responsive but did not take any concrete action" (36% sexual harassment, 32% unwanted contact) and one-in-four described their employer as "unresponsive and dismissive" in response to their complaint (24% sexual harassment, 27% unwanted contact). (Note: the sub-bases of those who reported are very small.)

Other actions taken

What else do people do when they experience harassment in the workplace? The ARI study asked respondents who experienced sexual harassment or unwanted contact at work what actions they had taken other than reporting to their employer.

The most common other action respondents chose was:

Confronted the person directly (40% sexual harassment and 42% unwanted contact).

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Other responses included:

- Told someone else, like a friend or family member (34% sexual harassment and 33% unwanted contact).
- Did nothing/took no action (19% sexual harassment and 22% unwanted contact).
- Left their jobs (16% sexual harassment and 18% unwanted contact)
- Requested a transfer to another area (7% sexual harassment and 8% unwanted contact)

What would you do if it happened to you?

People who never experienced sexual harassment or unwanted contact at work were unsure whether they would report if it ever happened to them. Some of these respondents said they "definitely would report" (27% in the case of sexual harassment and 39% for unwanted contact).

A quarter (24%) of respondents in both categories said they "probably" would report and many said they "might or might not, it depends" (38% and 29% respectively). Approximately one-in-five said "probably not / definitely not report it" (11% and 8% respectively).

While most people were not positive they would report, they were more confident that their employers would be responsive than those who had actual experiences of harassment (59% for hypothetical sexual harassment and 64% for hypothetical unwanted contact, compared to 40% and 42% for those reporting actual experiences).

When asked why they might not report sexual harassment to their employers, respondents' answers were very similar to those who had actual experiences of harassment, and did not report, including:

- 'Prefer to deal with it on their own' (44% sexual harassment, 39% hypothetical)
- 'Felt the issue was too minor (26% sexual harassment, 21% hypothetical)
- 'Didn't think employers would respond well (21% sexual harassment, 22% hypothetical)
- 'Embarrassed by what happened' (16% sexual harassment, 19% hypothetical)
- 'Not sure it was harassment' (16% sexual harassment, 10% hypothetical)
- 'Afraid to lose your job' (13% sexual harassment, 17% hypothetical)
- 'Afraid to hurt your career' (12% sexual harassment, 16% hypothetical)
- 'Thought no one would believe you' (10% sexual harassment, 18% hypothetical)

For more detail, please see tables at the end of this report.

Overblown, or important?

Three-quarters (75%) of Canadians say that the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace is an important issue and should get more attention. Most Canadians (76%) believe it is widespread or at least a common occurrence.

Conversely, only a quarter of respondents say the issue of sexual harassment is overblown.

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What is acceptable in the workplace?

A section of this study explored what Canadians do and do not consider to be appropriate behavior at work or with co-workers.

Overall, these results show that men tend to be more accepting of a number of workplace behaviours than women. There is also a sizeable generation gap with older Canadians less comfortable than their younger counterparts with many of the behaviors we looked at.

Taken together, then, younger men (aged 18-34) are most accepting of many of the potential behaviors assessed, in sharpest contrast to the views of older (55+) women. In addition, older men (55+) tended to find more behavior acceptable than women, particularly in their peer group. Younger women were more willing to approve of behavior older women did not approve of (see table and graphs following for details).

Turning to some of the specifics, the vast majority of Canadians say that 'after work drinks' are okay in the workplace context (91% of men and 85% of women).

Most Canadians also say it's acceptable to 'ask a co-worker out on a date or to date a co-worker' (68% answered in favour for both). However, fewer than one-in-five said it was acceptable to 'express sexual interest in a co-worker' (18%).

The ARI survey shows that the least acceptable behaviors in the workplace are:

- Reading pornographic magazines during a lunch break (5% said "acceptable")
- A boss kissing the cheek of an employee (20% said "acceptable")
- Telling 'off colour' jokes (20% said "acceptable")
- Wearing 'sexy' clothing (27% said "acceptable")
- Calling a co-worker's outfit sex (27% said "acceptable")
- Standing very close to a co-worker in their personal space (28% said "acceptable")
- An unmarried boss asking a single employee for a date (31% said "acceptable")
- Kissing the cheek of a co-worker (34% said "acceptable")
- Giving a colleague a shoulder rub (34% said "acceptable")

There are notable differences when you examine the acceptability ratings across age/sex groupings. Men aged 18-to-34 found the following behaviors more acceptable than men 35 and older and all women older than the age of 18.

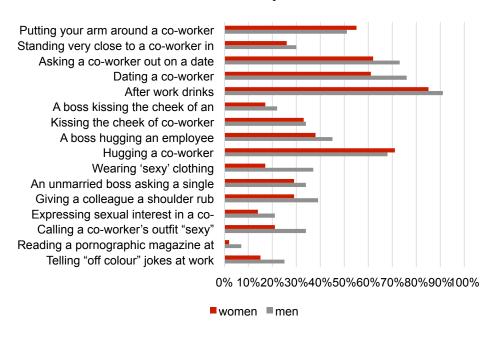
- Telling 'off colour' jokes (34% compared to 18% of their female peers)
- Expressing sexual interest in a co-worker (29% compared to 20% of their female peers)
- More often than women, men were more likely to say that 'calling a co-worker's outfit "sexy" (34% of men and 21% of women). When asked about dating, more men than women said it was acceptable to 'ask a co-worker out on a date' (73% of men, 62% of women). They were also more accepting of 'dating a co-worker' than women (76% of men and 61% of women).



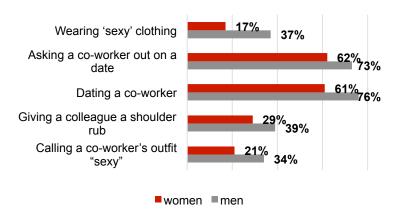
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Which of the following are acceptable in the workplace?



Which of the following are acceptable in the workplace?



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The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

Due to the nature and complexity of these survey results, the complete results are appended at the end of this report. Survey includes a full cross-section of Canadians currently working and not.

In your working life, have you ever been subject to <u>sexual harassment</u> at your workplace or at a work function?									
Total sample, excluding the one-in-ten who opted to skip this series	Total (1372)	Age and Gender Male Male Female Female Female 18-34 35-54 55+ 18-34 35-54 55-							
Yes	28%	9%	16%	11%	37%	47%	44%		
No	72%	91%	84%	89%	63%	53%	56%		

In your working life, have you ever been subject to <u>sexual harassment</u> at your workplace or at a work function?									
	Total	Region							
	(1372)		BC (185)	AB (133)	SK (95)	MB (89)	ON (465)	PQ (313)	ATL (92)
Yes	28%	29%	28%	21%	33%	32%	24%	25%	
No	72%	71%	72%	79%	67%	68%	76%	75%	

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In your working life, have you ever been subject to non-consensual sexual contact at your workplace or at a work function? Age and Gender Total sample, excluding Total the one-in-ten who opted (1317)Male Male Male **Female Female** Female to skip this series 18-34 35-54 35-54 55+ 18-34 55+ Yes 14% 8% 11% 7% 11% 22% 23% No 86% 92% 89% 93% 89% 78% 77%

Have you ever been subject to sexual harassment in the workplace or a work function?						
	Total	(ender			
	(1372)	Men	Women			
Yes, sexual harassment	28%	12%	43%			
No, sexual harassment	72%	88%	57%			

Note that the survey sub-base sizes are too small to provide detailed break-outs within these two groups: those who have experienced harassment or non-consensual contact at work. A more detailed review of the survey findings, however, does suggest a lot of consistency within the group across main socio-demographic descriptors such as: gender, age and "collar type" for the key survey questions on frequency and rate of occurrence, for example, and reporting behavior and other actions.

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Have you ever reported sexual harassment/non-consensual sexual contact to your employer?								
	Yes sexual harassment (Total = 377) Yes Non-consensual sexual (Total = 188)							
No, did not report	78%	80%						
Yes, reported	22%	20%						
Why was this not reported?								
Did not report	(Total = 291)	(Total = 148)						
Prefer to deal with it on your own	44%	43%						
Felt the issue was too minor	26%	26%						
Didn't think the employer would respond well	21%	21%						
Other	19%	16%						
Embarrassed by what happened	16%	19%						
Not sure it was harassment	16%	N/A						
Afraid to lose your job	13%	14%						
Afraid to hurt your career	12%	13%						
Thought no one would believe you	10%	13%						
Didn't want to talk about it/revisit it	6%	7%						
Scared to come forward	5%	14%						

What other actions, if any, did you take in response to sexual harassment/non-consensual sexual contact?								
	Experienced sexual harassment (377) Experience non-consens contact (188)							
Confronted the person directly	40%	42%						
Told someone else, like a friend or family member	34%	33%						
Did nothing/took no action	19%	22%						
Left your job	16%	18%						
Some other action	13%	9%						
Requested a transfer to another area	7%	8%						

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Have you ever reported sexual harassment/non-consensual sexual contact to your employer?								
Yes Sexual harassment (Total = 377) Yes Non-consensual sexual contact (Total = 188)								
Yes	22%	20%						
No	78%	80%						
Thinking about the most serious incident best	of sexual harassment that you reported treflects your employer's response?	to your employer, which statement						
	Total = 86	Total = 39						
Responsive and conducted a serious investigation and took appropriate action	40%	42%						
Responsive but did not take any concrete action	36%	32%						
Unresponsive and dismissive	24%	27%						

In your working life, have you ever been subject to <u>sexual harassment</u> at your workplace or at a work function?									
	Total	Region							
	(1372)	BC (185)	AB (133)	SK (95)	MB (89)	ON (465)	PQ (313)	ATL (92)	
Yes	28%	29%	28%	21%	33%	32%	24%	25%	
No	72%	71%	72%	79%	67%	68%	76%	75%	

In your working life, have you ever been subject to <u>non-consensual sexual</u> <u>contact</u> at your workplace or at a work function?									
	Total	Region							
	(1317)	BC (184)	AB (126)	SK (98)	MB (86)	ON (448)	PQ (296)	ATL (88)	
Yes	14%	17%	12%	15%	17%	17%	10%	12%	
No	86%	83%	88%	85%	83%	83%	90%	88%	

29%

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Suppose you experienced sexual harassment or non-consensual sexual contact how likely would you be to report it to your employer?* Did not experience sexual harassment (995) Definitely report it 27% Probably report it 24% Did not experience non-consensual sexual contact (1130) 39% 24%

38%

11%

Suppose you did and reported it to your employer, which statement best reflects what you think your employer's response would be?* Did not experience sexual Hypothetical non-consensual sexual contact harassment (995)(1130)Responsive and conducted a serious 64% 59% investigation and took appropriate action Responsive but did not take any 37% 32% concrete action Unresponsive and dismissive 4% 4%

Might or might not, it depends

Probably not/definitely not report it

^{*}Includes respondents who answered "no" to sexual harassment and non-consensual sexual contact. Excludes those who opted out.

^{*}Includes respondents who answered "no" to sexual harassment and non-consensual sexual contact. Excludes those who opted out.

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And what would you say are the main reasons you might not report sexual harassment to your employer? Would you say it's because you might...*

Total (995)
39%
21%
22%
19%
10%
17%
16%
18%
9%
9%
5%

^{*}Includes respondents who answered "no" to sexual harassment. Excludes those who opted out.

Which of the following best reflects your view on sexual harassment in the workplace in Canada?

	Total	Total Gender			Age			
	(1504)	Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+		
This issue is overblown and receives more attention than it should	25%	34%	16%	27%	27%	20%		
This issue is really important and should get more attention than it does	75%	66%	84%	73%	73%	80%		

Which of the following best reflects your view?									
	Total				Region				
	(1504)	BC (200)	AB (149)	SK (100)	MB (100)	ON (502)	PQ (353)	ATL (100)	
This issue is overblown and receives more attention than it should	25%	24%	25%	28%	37%	24%	23%	22%	
This issue is really important and should get more attention than it does	75%	76%	75%	72%	63%	76%	77%	78%	

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Thinking generally about the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace – overall, would you describe sexual harassment in the workplace as...

	Total (1504)	Gender		Age		
		Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Widespread, happens a lot	15%	10%	20%	14%	12%	18%
Common, it happens	62%	58%	65%	61%	60%	64%
Doesn't happen very often	21%	29%	14%	21%	25%	17%
Quite rare	3%	4%	1%	4%	4%	1%

We know this is a sensitive issue for many people. Please feel free to skip these questions if you wish (sexual harassment)

	Total (1504)	Ger	Gender		Age	
		Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
I would like to skip this section	9%	9%	9%	11%	6%	10%
I am comfortable talking about this issue and would like to continue	91%	91%	91%	89%	94%	90%

How closely have you been following the Jian Ghomeshi issue in the media?

	Total (1504)	Ger	Gender		Age		
		Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+	
Very closely – Read a lot of stories and discussed it with friends and family	8%	9%	7%	9%	9%	7%	
Closely following the issue, and having the odd conversation about it	28%	29%	27%	28%	30%	27%	
Not following that closely, just scanning the headlines	43%	43%	42%	36%	41%	51%	
Not following at all	21%	18%	24%	28%	21%	16%	

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People sometimes discuss what is and is not acceptable behavior in the workplace. For each of the following, please indicate whether you personally consider the following acceptable:

	Total	Gender		Age		
	(1504)	Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Telling "off colour" jokes at work	20%	25%	15%	26%	18%	17%
Reading a pornographic magazine at one's workstation on lunch break	5%	7%	2%	4%	4%	6%
Calling a co-worker's outfit "sexy"	27%	34%	21%	24%	27%	31%
Expressing sexual interest in a co- worker	18%	21%	14%	25%	18%	11%
Giving a colleague a shoulder rub	34%	39%	29%	33%	34%	35%
An unmarried boss asking a single employee for a date	31%	34%	29%	30%	27%	37%
Wearing 'sexy' clothing	27%	37%	17%	30%	30%	20%
Hugging a co-worker	70%	68%	71%	81%	65%	65%
A boss hugging an employee	41%	45%	38%	54%	40%	33%
Kissing the cheek of co-worker	34%	34%	33%	29%	35%	36%
A boss kissing the cheek of an employee	20%	22%	17%	20%	20%	19%
After work drinks	88%	91%	85%	91%	89%	83%
Dating a co-worker	68%	76%	61%	74%	66%	65%
Asking a co-worker out on a date	68%	73%	62%	73%	63%	68%
Standing very close to a co-worker in their personal space	28%	30%	26%	34%	31%	19%
Putting your arm around a co- worker	53%	51%	55%	60%	52%	48%

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People sometimes discuss what is and is not acceptable behavior in the workplace. For each of the following, please indicate whether you personally consider the following acceptable:

	Total (1504)	Age and Gender					
		Male 18-34	Male 35-54	Male 55+	Female 18-34	Female 35-54	Female 55+
Telling "off colour" jokes at work	20%	34%	21%	23%	18%	15%	12%
Reading a pornographic magazine at one's workstation on lunch break	5%	6%	6%	10%	1%	2%	2%
Calling a co-worker's outfit "sexy"	27%	32%	31%	39%	16%	23%	24%
Expressing sexual interest in a co-worker	18%	29%	20%	15%	20%	17%	6%
Giving a colleague a shoulder rub	34%	39%	35%	44%	27%	33%	26%
An unmarried boss asking a single employee for a date	31%	32%	29%	40%	27%	25%	35%
Wearing 'sexy' clothing	31%	41%	39%	31%	18%	22%	10%
Hugging a co-worker	70%	78%	60%	68%	83%	70%	63%
A boss hugging an employee	41%	59%	38%	41%	48%	41%	26%
Kissing the cheek of co- worker	34%	32%	35%	36%	26%	35%	36%
A boss kissing the cheek of an employee	20%	23%	18%	24%	15%	21%	15%
After work drinks	88%	90%	92%	89%	93%	87%	77%
Dating a co-worker	68%	76%	74%	77%	72%	59%	55%
Asking a co-worker out on a date	68%	73%	69%	78%	73%	58%	59%
Standing very close to a co-worker in their personal space	28%	37%	30%	22%	30%	32%	17%
Putting your arm around a co-worker	53%	58%	46%	50%	62%	58%	46%