

DOMESTIC WORKERS ORGANIZE AGAINST VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT

TRAINING PACK



Training Aid

2

KEY DWOVH TERMS

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Overview

This training aid is an easy and quick information source for trainers.

It explains the key terms that are used in the Domestic Workers Organize against Violence & Harassment (DWOVH) Training Pack in the usual A-Z alphabetical order of many languages.



Tip for trainers

If you are not familiar with the A-Z alphabetical order, look for the word in the List of key DWOVH terms on pages 1 and 2 to find the page where its meaning is explained.

2.1 List of Key DWOVH Terms

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2.2 Meaning of Key DWoVH Terms

Active listening

is about giving your full attention and concentrating on WHAT a person says and HOW she says it. It is about wanting to understand the other and offering her support and empathy.

Agency and Autonomy

is about our capacity to be in control of our own lives, to make our own choices, to act on our own behalf, to defend our own interests and to have self-worth, self-respect and self-confidence.

Bias – see Gender bias, prejudices and gender stereotypes

Bullying – see also Mobbing

is repeated and deliberate physical or psychological, often verbal abuse by someone with more power than the victim. A bully is a harasser of the weak.

Cat-calling

is whistling, shouting, or making comments of a sexual nature to women passing by. It is a form of sexual harassment that is common worldwide.

Case work – see also Peer support

in DWOs includes outreach and one-on-one support to domestic workers who need emotional support from fellow workers or assistance to tackle practical problems, as well as immediate action in abuse cases and longer-term assistance and follow-up with domestic workers who face serious problems, like violence & harassment in their job or at home.

Child labor

- Any activity done by children and adolescents under 18 years that damages and has negative effects on their well-being, health, education and participation in society
- Work performed by children and adolescents who are below the legal minimum age to be allowed to work.

Claimant – see also Complainant, Respondent and Defendant

is the term used for victims of violence & harassment who file a complaint in labor tribunals.

Collective care – see also Self care

is about being careful with one another and caring for one another in a group. It is about looking after our needs, respecting our limits and finding our community in our DWOs. The aim is collective empowerment. The well-being of each of us is a shared responsibility of the group. It is not an extra task on top of our other work. It is HOW we do our work.

Complainant – see also **Claimant, Defendant and Respondent**

is the term used for victims of violence & harassment who file a complaint in the criminal courts.

Confidentiality

means not discussing the stories, thoughts and feelings of violence victims and survivors with other people, because this may harm them. It is about respecting the privacy of the people who seek our help. Confidentiality is about being trustworthy and protecting our sisters. We should only share our sisters' stories, if she is in immediate danger or we need to get advice from others to help her.

Consent

is about the voluntary, clear and conscious agreement between people to engage in a sexual activity. Consent is like our favorite FRIES: Freely given. Respect a NO. Informed and honest. Enthusiastic. A Specific YES every time.

Constitutional law

is the foundation of all laws in a specific country or territory. It sets out the power and authority of government, as well as the fundamental rights of individuals.

Coping strategies and skills

are about learning how to handle stress and trauma, and fight the harmful effects of violence & harassment on our health and well-being with our body, heart and mind. It is about checking what we feel and think, and then deciding what we want to do or not do. We need to go through and process what happened, and to act and deal with the problem by reaching out and seeking help, reducing the pain and the stress, and taking care of ourselves.

Criminal or penal laws

prohibit the most severe types of violence & harassment like physical and sexual assault and rape in most countries. These laws cover the most serious wrongdoings in society, protect all individuals in a country and aim to punish perpetrators of crimes such as assault, violence and murder with jail time and fines.

Debt bondage – see also **Forced labor and Modern slavery**

is about a situation in which a person is forced to work to pay-off an (ever increasing) debt.

Defendant – see also **Complainant, Claimant and Respondent**

is the term used for the accused wrongdoers or perpetrators in the criminal courts.

Direct discrimination

happens when a prohibited ground of discrimination, like sex or race, is used to treat people differently in law or in practice. Examples:

- A labor law stating that male workers shall receive more pay than female workers for the same job or a job of equal value is direct sex discrimination in the law.
- Employers who pay black domestic workers less than white domestic workers engage in direct discrimination in practice against black domestic workers because of their race, color or ethnicity. This type of direct or 'taste-based' discrimination in practice is very common in the job market.

Discrimination

is about making an unfavorable decision about a person, based on the group or class the person belongs to. It is about disadvantaging people because of a personal characteristic, like their sex or the color of their skin, that is not their fault and that they cannot change. It is about treating a person or group of persons differently in a way that is worse than the way people are usually treated, because of prejudices and stereotypes about the group that the person belongs to. It is unjust, unreasonable and unfair, because it is based on opinions and not on facts.

Discrimination at work

is about unequal opportunities and treatment of workers that result in disadvantages for these workers in their job. An example of gender discrimination in domestic work is that men are often paid more than women while their jobs are similar or of equal value: The job responsibilities of a male security guard and a female child carer are comparable, but security guards often earn more than child carers.

Discrimination in law and in practice

exists in laws or regulations (known as 'de jure' in legal circles), and/or in practice, in our real life and work (known as 'de facto'). Examples:

- A labor code stating that female domestic workers shall receive less pay than male domestic workers because of their sex is discrimination in law.
- The actual practice of paying male domestic workers more than female domestic workers, without there being any law or regulation about this, is discrimination in practice.

Diversity

is about recognizing that no one culture or group of people is superior to another and that everyone is unique, and has value and dignity. It is about respecting differences and trying to understand one another.

Domestic violence

is violence or harassment in a household. It is also known as domestic abuse or family violence. It happens mostly between family members who live together in a household but can also be directed at those living and/or working in a household, like domestic workers.

Due diligence – also known as Reasonable care

is the level of judgement, care, prudence, determination and activity that a person would reasonably be expected to do in particular circumstances. Investigation and prosecution must be carried out in compliance with the principles of reasonable care.

Economic violence and harassment

is about denying a person access to and control over their money, economic activity, or other basic needs, by either controlling their finances, or stopping them from achieving financial independence. Economic violence also happens when employers do not pay any or too little wages.

Empathy

is about sharing the feelings of someone else by putting yourself in her place. Empathy is about sharing the feelings of the other, not your own.

Emotional violence & harassment – see Psychological violence & harassment

Empowerment

is about becoming strong and self-confident, and gaining the freedom and power to do what you want and to control what happens to you. The universal agreement is that women's empowerment is essential to overcome the negative effects of discrimination against women and achieve gender equality. Today, many groups and organizations are using the empowerment strategy to fight for equality for discriminated people and groups.

Equality, equal protection or equal treatment before the law

is about the principle that every human being, woman or man, must be treated equally by the law and that all human beings are subject to the same laws of justice. It is also known as equality under the law, equality in the eyes of the law, or formal equality or legal equality.

Equality between women and men – see Gender equality

Exploitative economic and political systems

exist in societies where workers produce and small groups of rich people (elites) take and profit from their work. The elite gets rich from exploiting the labor of the working classes.

Fact – see also Opinion

is the same and correct for everyone. We can find out if a fact is true or false by evidence. It can be tested, observed or measured. Examples: The sun is hot: We can test the temperature of the sun and prove that it is hot. $2 + 2 = 4$ in calculations and mathematics. Only women can give birth. Global WHO estimates indicate that 1 in 3 (35%) of women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their life time.¹

1 See: WHO, [Violence against women, Factsheet, 2021](#)

Family violence – see **Domestic violence**

Femininity – see also **Masculinity**

is about people’s ideas and expectations of the ‘ideal woman’ and how women should act. These ideas are often restrictive and not in line with reality. They limit the potential of girls and women and often don’t reflect their actual contributions in the community and society. In many societies women should be feminine: beautiful, cute, obedient and good housewives.

Fight-flight-freeze responses

is our body’s natural reaction to danger and the will to survive. It is not a conscious decision. It happens automatically.

Forced labor

is about situations in which people are forced to work through the use of violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as an increasing debt that they can not pay off, withholding of wages or identity papers, or threats to harm them or the ones close to them. Forced labor, modern forms of slavery, debt bondage and human trafficking are closely related terms, though not exactly the same in a legal sense.

Freedom of association

is about the right to form, join and lead workers’ organizations. It is a fundamental workers’ right.

Gender – see also **Sex**

is about social characteristics and relations between women and men: The roles that women and men have in the family, at work and in society, and the ideas that people have about women and men. Girls and boys are socialized, and learn to grow up as women and men. Ideas about gender differences are learned, vary widely within and between societies and change over time.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) – see also **Violence against Women**

is violence against persons on the basis of their sex or gender, that results in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm. It is directed mostly at women and girls, boys and sometimes men, as well as at LGBTI+ people and persons with disabilities and health conditions. It is one of the most common and widespread human rights violations. GBV is rooted in the unequal power relations between men and women that exist in many societies. This unequal power relation is not related to the actual biological differences between men and women, but to the social, gender roles that are assigned to both sexes in social and economic life.

C190 defines gender-based violence & harassment as violence & harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment.

Gender bias, prejudices and gender stereotypes

are widely-held, fixed and oversimplified opinions or feelings that people have about women and men and what they can and can not do, should and should not do, and what they are capable of doing. Examples: women can not be good leaders or men can not be good nurses. These opinions limit the opportunities that women and men have in their work and life. They are unfair and often harmful.

Gender equality

is about equal rights, opportunities, treatment and power of women and men in life and at work. It is about women and men enjoying:

- The same human and workers’ rights
- Equal opportunities, treatment, value, respect, voice and representation
- Fair distribution of workload, decision-making power and income.

Gender equity

is about equality of outcomes and results. It is about the fair and just treatment of both sexes that takes into account their different needs because of cultural barriers and (past) discrimination of specific groups. It is a means to ensure that girls and boys, and women and men have equal chances not only at the starting point but also when reaching the finishing line.

Gender norms and values

are collective and personal ideas, opinions and beliefs that people have on what men and women should do, should be like and are capable of doing. They influence how women, girls, boys and men behave or express themselves, including the way they talk and dress, as well as the opportunities and chances that they have in work and in life. Gender norms and values can be flexible or strict, and change over time, usually slowly and sometimes quickly, if people want to.

Gender roles

are about the activities that men and women actually do. Gender roles vary widely between and within societies. They can change quickly depending on changes in the economic, social and political environment and personal situations. Example: In many current patriarchal societies men work outside the house and women work at home. In practice, many women nowadays earn the main family income and many men increasingly share household and family care work.

Grounds of discrimination

common in many places are: Sex and gender; race, ethnicity and color, including indigenous and tribal peoples; socio-economic class and social or national origin, including grounds like rural origin, caste, occupational category, birth, nationality and migrant status; religion and creed; political opinion, for example, anti-union discrimination; age; sexual orientation and gender identity; ability and health conditions such as infectious diseases or disabilities; and family status (pregnancy and family responsibilities).

Hostile working environment – see **Sexual harassment in the world of work**

Human rights

are the absolute rights that a person has by being a human being, no matter what sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, class or caste, or any other status, they have. The United Nations (UN) has defined these human rights in the civil, cultural, economic, political and social spheres. They provide basic protection for people as individuals and as workers by putting restraints on the power of states and other powerful parties and persons.

Human trafficking

is done by human traffickers, who use or threaten to use force, fraud or coercion to lure and persuade their victims into exploitation:

- Acts of trafficking include all actions of recruiting, transporting, transferring, housing or receiving persons that lead to and result in exploitation.
- Exploitation means the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.
- In the case of children under 18 years, any act committed for the purpose of exploitation is a case of human trafficking even if there is no use or threat of force, fraud or coercion.
- In all cases, the consent of a victim of trafficking to the intended exploitation is irrelevant when there was any use or threat of use of force, fraud or coercion.

Indirect discrimination

is about rules and practices which appear neutral but in practice lead to disadvantages primarily suffered by people of one sex, race, color or other characteristics, and cannot be justified by the inherent requirements of the job. For example, when a lower minimum wage is set for domestic workers than for other workers, and most domestic workers are women they suffer from indirect discrimination against them because they are women.

Institutional violence

is about abuse of power by people working for institutions (for example, police stations, the courts and health centres) who treat people from discriminated groups as second-class citizens. It happens to women and domestic workers when the authorities they go to for help:

- Do not listen to them
- Do not treat them with respect
- Do not provide them with the public services they are entitled to
- Turn them away, or may even abuse them further.

Intimate partner rape

is about forcing a lover or partner to engage in sexual acts against their will. It is a form of sexual assault and violence.

Judgement

is an opinion or decision that is based on facts and careful thinking.

Justice – see also Laws

is about fairness and equality for everyone.

Labor and employment laws

aim at balancing the power relations between workers and employers. They aim at benefitting workers in vulnerable situations and protecting them from violence and unfair labour practices such as, slavery, non payment of wages and benefits, excessive hours of work or unfair dismissal.

Laws

are the social contract people make to have a civilized society:

- Laws are the rules made for people to obey in civilized societies so that people can trust one another, and the weak are protected from the strong.
- Laws create trust, safety and stability in society when everyone knows that all must follow the same rules and that the rights of all are respected, protected and enforced.

Marital rape

is about forcing a spouse or partner to engage in sexual acts against their will. It is a form of sexual assault and violence.

Masculinity – see also Femininity

is about people’s ideas and expectations of the ‘ideal man’ and how men should act. These ideas are often restrictive and not in line with reality. They limit the potential of boys and men and often don’t reflect their actual contributions in the community and society. In many societies men are expected to be masculine: strong, brave and leaders of the family and community.

Militarization

is about the use of force by the State (military, police, decision-makers) or other power-holding groups (gangs, terrorist groups) to solve conflicts.

Mobbing

is group aggression against somebody who is considered weak and inferior by a group for one reason or another (for example, because of their sex, colour, class, job or religion).

Modern slavery

is an umbrella term that refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave, because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power. It covers forced labor, debt bondage, forced marriage, other slavery and slavery like practices, and human trafficking.

Occupational safety and health (OSH) laws

aim at protecting the safety and health of workers and require employers to create safe workplaces.

Opinion – see also Fact

is a point of view, judgement, feeling or belief about something. Opinions are often attempts to draw a conclusion from facts but they are usually not based on facts but on subjective feelings, tastes or views. People may change their opinion and different people have different opinions. For example, opinions about riding a motorcycle vary: It is fast, convenient, fun or dangerous, and some people may not have any opinion about it.

Pace of training

is about adapting the speed of the training to suit the participants and their learning process. It is about progressing at the same speed as the group, not too quick and not too slow.

Patriarchy

is about an economic, social and political system in societies that is male-dominated and sexist: Men have all the power and privilege, and exploit and oppress women.

Penal law – see Criminal laws

Peer support – see also Case work

in DWOs is support by domestic workers to domestic workers. Emotional and practical support from peers with similar work and life experiences is valuable to domestic workers who are confronted with violence & harassment.

Physical violence & harassment

is the use of physical force or threat of force to harm and hurt someone's body. From a pinch to a punch, any act or threat of violence is damaging, whether the damage can be seen or not.

Power

is about access to and control over resources, benefits, and decision-making. We need 4 types of power to successfully fight for our human and workers' rights and stop the violence & harassment that we often face in our jobs and lives:

- Power within or personal power
- Power to or creative power
- Power over or caring power for ourselves and others.
- Power with or shared power in our DWOs.

Prejudice – see Gender bias, prejudices and gender stereotypes

Probable cause

means a reasonable basis for believing that a crime may have been committed. Where probable cause exists, the prosecutors in criminal systems must take action and start proceedings against suspects.

Psychological violence & harassment

is about verbal abuse, humiliation, and controlling what a person can and cannot do. It has negative effects on a person's emotional and mental health. Psychological and economic violence are as damaging and disempowering as physical and sexual violence.

Public prosecutor or prosecution

is the legal party or office (appointed by government in most countries) responsible for bringing a criminal case against a person accused of breaking the law based on victims' complaints of violations of the criminal laws.

Quid pro quo – see Sexual harassment in the world of work

Rape

is a type of sexual assault that usually involves forced sexual intercourse or penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth, no matter how slight, with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person against a person's will.

Rape culture

exists in communities and societies where sexual violence and harassment is normalized and seen as a natural part of daily work and life that is taken for granted and not questioned: Abusers think they are entitled to do it and victims do not dare to question it.

Reasonable care – see Due diligence

Respondent – see also Claimant, Complainant and Defendant

is the term used for the accused wrongdoers or perpetrators in labor tribunals.

Self care

is about caring for ourselves to stay healthy and happy. It is about being active to protect our own well-being and happiness. Self care activities help us to have a good mood and good relations with other people, and to lessen anxiety in times of stress. If we care for ourselves we remind ourselves that we are important. It boosts our confidence and self-esteem.

Sex – see also **Gender**

is about biological characteristics: They are assigned to us at birth based on the genitals we have. It is about the biological characteristics of men and women, determined by a person’s genes. For example, only men produce sperm. Only women produce eggs and can become pregnant. Biological sex differences usually do not change, although it is possible to do sex change operations.

Sextortion – see **Sexual harassment in the world of work**

Sexual assault

is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the voluntary, conscious and explicit agreement (consent) of the recipient by use of force, threat or abuse of authority. Examples are: rape and attempted rape, forced sodomy (oral or anal sex), child sexual abuse, incest, fondling (unwanted, inappropriate sexual contact), stalking and battery (touching without consent).

Sexual harassment

is any conduct of a sexual nature, and other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of a person which is unwelcome, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient. It happens in private and public spaces, such as schools, workplaces, in the streets, and on public transport. See below for the 2 main types in work situations.

Sexual harassment in the world of work

is any conduct of a sexual nature, and other conduct based on sex that happens in work-related situations, affects the dignity of a person and is unwelcome, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient. There are 2 main types:

- **Quid pro quo (this for that) or sextortion:** When a worker is asked for a sexual favor in exchange for a work advantage. This abuse of power forces the victim to choose between giving in to unwanted sexual demands or not getting or losing a job or job benefits.
- **Creation of a hostile work environment:** This includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that create an offensive, intimidating, humiliating, abusive or poisoned environment for the victim.

Sexual violence & harassment

is unwanted sexual contact in all situations in which the victim does not or can not consent to the sexual activity. It is not about pleasure but about power abuse. It is not mutually agreed (consensual) sexual behavior between two people. It is about forcing, intimidating, or tricking someone to engage in any sexual activity against her/his will. Any sexual activity with someone who is unable to understand what s/he is doing, or is unable to consent because of her/his age, an illness, disability, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, is sexual violence.

Slavery – see **Modern slavery**

Stigmatization

happens when people with power treat a person or group of persons unfairly by publicly disapproving of them, and shaming and discrediting them.

Systemic or Structural violence – see **Institutional violence**

Trafficking in persons – see **Human trafficking**

Trauma

is the normal human response of the brain to an abnormal event, such as violence and abuse. It is a physical and psychological response to an event and experience that is so deeply distressing and disturbing, that it is too much to handle for our body, heart and mind. As a result we are unable to be happy, to feel good and to relax. We feel stressed all the time and are not able to cope anymore with the physical, mental and emotional demands of our day-to-day life and work.

Victimization

happens when a violence victim, a witness or a whistleblower become a target of unjust, aggressive or cruel actions by a powerful person or institution with a view to harm, oppress or destroy them.

Violence against Women (VAW) – see also **Gender Based Violence**

is violence against women and girls on the basis of their sex or gender, that results in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm. It is one of the most common and widespread human rights violations. It is also known as Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Violence and harassment

is any act that is undertaken against someone's will. It is any act in which a person is assaulted and abused. It includes any behavior that embarrasses, humiliates, intimidates, threatens, annoys, or alarms people. Violence and harassment, and threats of violence and harassment:

- Are about abuse of power that violates the well-being and dignity of people.
- Are unwelcome and unwanted by the recipients.
- Create a hostile, intimidating or humiliating working environment for the victims. It poisons their well-being and the employment relationship.

Violence and harassment in the world of work always creates a hostile, intimidating and humiliating working environment for the victims, and poisons their well-being and the employment relationship.

C190 defines 'violence and harassment in the world of work' as: A range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occasion or repeated, that aim at, or result in, or are likely to result in:

- physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and
- includes gender-based violence and harassment (Article 1).

Women's empowerment – see **Empowerment** and **Gender equality**

Workers' rights

are the rights of working people, laid down in international labour standards, defined, negotiated and agreed in the ILO (International Labour Organization) by governments, employers' and workers' organizations. These standards set out the internationally agreed minimum standards to safeguard workers' rights, protect workers from labour exploitation and create more and better jobs.