

THE STATE OF SEXISM

A survey by

JUMP

SOLUTIONS FOR EQUITY AT WORK



With the financial support of Wallonia



With the financial support
of the Brussels-Capital Region



And the collaboration of





WAW

Women
At Work coalition

MISSION

Promoting gender equality in
the workplace and women's
participation across the
economy.

avec le soutien financier de :
Financieel ondersteund door:



Institut pour l'égalité
des femmes et des hommes
Instituut voor de gelijkheid
van vrouwen en mannen

.be

Who are we?



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The JUMP logo consists of the word "JUMP" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a magenta rounded rectangle. Below the rectangle, the tagline "SOLUTIONS FOR EQUITY AT WORK" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

JUMP

SOLUTIONS FOR EQUITY AT WORK



JUMP aims to create a more equitable and inclusive society
by working with organisations to achieve
gender equality and fair representation of diversity



ASHOKA

Everyone A Changemaker™

JUMP is a social enterprise and its founder Isabella Lenarduzzi is a certified Ashoka Fellow.

Ashoka Fellows are social entrepreneurs who are recognised to have innovative solutions to social problems and the potential to change patterns across society.

JUMP mission

Our mission

is to help change the world and change companies. We work for a fairer society and for more inclusive organisations.

JUMP puts equality between women and men at the heart of its work

because we believe that, by addressing 51% of the population, gender equality is the most powerful lever for building the basics of inclusion and tackling all other inequalities and underrepresentations.

To achieve our goals,

we share our reflections widely, we offer numerous studies and tools free of charge, and we provide a wide range of solutions to public and private organisations.



JUMP produces free tools, analyses and surveys

👉 www.jump.eu.com/resources

Handbooks



2020
Libérez votre
entreprise du sexisme



2020
Bevrijd uw
onderneming
van seksisme



2020
How to build an
inclusive workplace



2023
Rethinking inclusion in
the new world of work



2023
Repenser l'inclusion
dans le nouveau monde
du travail



2025
L'inclusion : La force
de votre culture
d'entreprise

Studies & surveys

JUMP's societal studies and surveys analyse women, men and corporate practices on gender equity and DEI



2009
Concilier vie
professionnelle et suivi
scolaire des enfants



2010
L'entreprenariat
féminin en Belgique



2012
Women leaders
in the workplace



2013
Pioneering dads
reverse traditional roles



2016
Do men want equality
in the workplace



2016
Where do we stand
on sexism



2018
How to get more
women into
leadership roles?



2019
How can companies
embark women
in digital transformation



2025
The state of sexism

Toolboxes

JUMP toolboxes bring together our webinars, presentations and articles on the many dimensions of Equality and Inclusion

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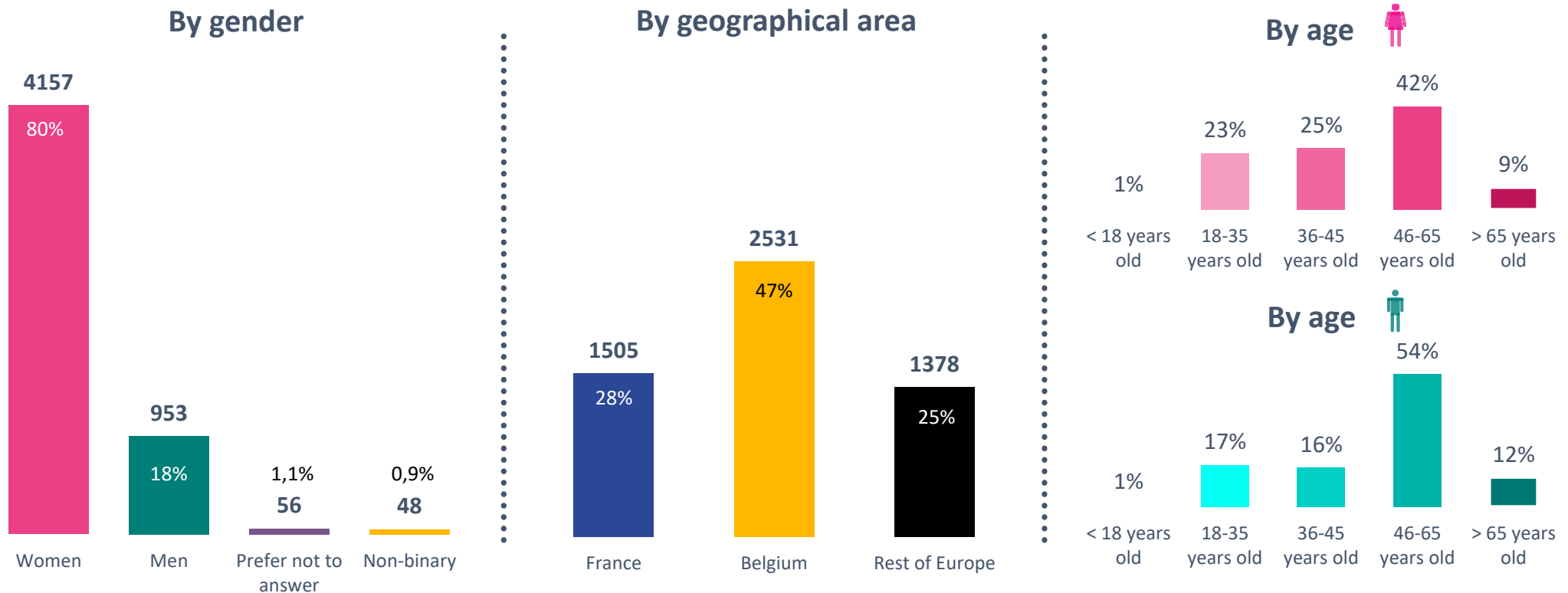
The full report is available, along with a 10-page executive summary in French, English and Dutch.

👉 www.jump.eu.com/resources/sexism

Number of respondents: 5,214

Number of written testimonies: 3,976

> 70% completion rate, but nearly 90% of responses were usable for statistical analysis



Results by country: We carried out several statistical regressions to check whether the results differed significantly between countries (where the number of responses allowed). No notable differences were observed, apart from **the perception of sexism as “very serious”** in France, where it is higher (+9 points among women and +12 among men). We also observe that French women are better able to identify and respond to sexism, probably due to the scale of the #MeToo movement, driven by the strength of feminist civil society, and thanks to the legislation that followed, in particular against sexist and sexual violence, which is clearly addressed with appropriate measures in the Labour Code. This makes France the only country in Europe with such a comprehensive set of measures.

Men represent 20% of respondents

Drawing on our experience from 2016, JUMP used a different questionnaire for men and women (non-binary people had access to the women's questionnaire), in order to collect women's experiences and men's perceptions.

Why have different questionnaires for women and men?

There is no 'reverse sexism' against men, just as there is no 'reverse racism' against white people. Men can experience sexism individually. Most often, this involves criticism of their attitudes or choices when they do not conform to expected masculine norms, or comments about their abilities in relation to the home, children or social relationships. The sexism men may experience individually is a secondary effect of a system that devalues what is perceived as feminine and assigns different roles to women and men.

THE SEXISM EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN IS BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE. IT STRUCTURES THE GENDER HIERARCHY.

3,976 testimonials received!

Every word was read, every testimony counted

These life experiences are at the heart of our survey and remind us of the importance of continuing to listen, analyse and act

We received **3,976 comments** in **7 languages**, a mixture of personal stories and messages of gratitude. Many respondents emphasised the therapeutic impact of the survey and its role in raising awareness of ordinary sexism.

The women felt **confident** as they read the questions. This safe environment provided them with both the motivation and the opportunity to share their experiences. JUMP is particularly proud of this.

*"Congratulations on this initiative!
It gives us a voice, and that's vital."*

*"Thank you for allowing me to **reflect on my own experiences** and share them."*

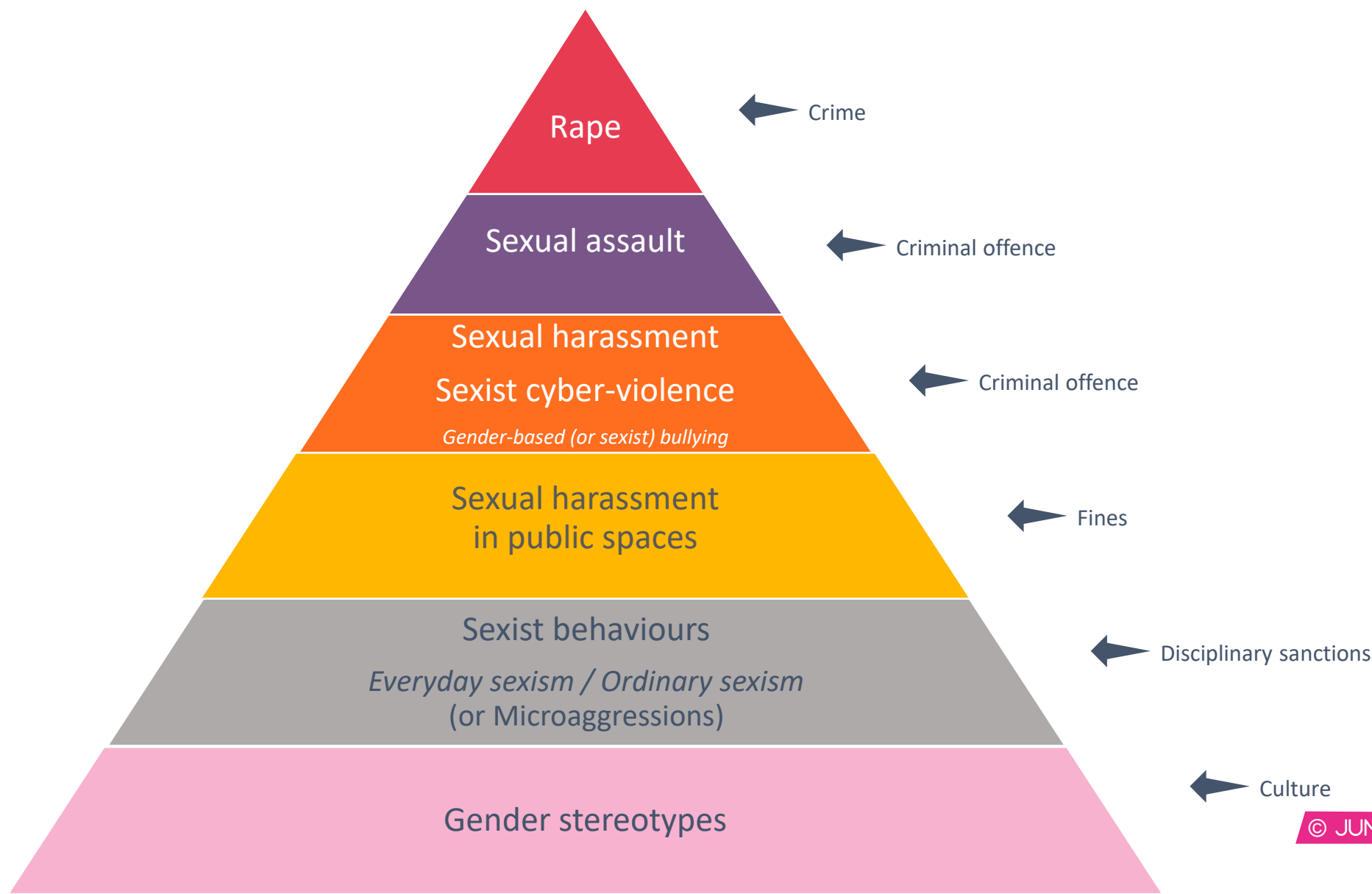
*"The testimonies of female students are often ignored. **Please listen to us!**
We have things to say too."*

*"Thank you for your survey, it has
a therapeutic effect on those who speak out."*

*"This survey made me realise how much sexism is part of our everyday lives. Thank you for **raising our awareness**."*

The pyramid of sexist and sexual violence at work

Sexism is an ideology based on the belief that women are inferior to men, that manifests itself through a range of behaviours and actions, from seemingly harmless comments to extremely serious acts of rape and murder. High Council for Gender Equality (France)



EVERYDAY SEXISM IS DOMINATION IN ITS SMALLEST, MOST BANALISED FORMS

Everyday sexism in the workplace is defined as the totality of attitudes, remarks, and behaviours based on gender stereotypes (...) which, although seemingly harmless or of low intensity, have the purpose or effect, consciously or unconsciously, to delegitimise individuals, to make them feel inferior, to destabilise them in an insidious—or even seemingly benevolent—way in the workplace, and to cause harm to their physical or mental health.

High Council for Equality (France)

HOSTILE SEXISM

Sexist insults

Disrespectful remarks

Discriminatory behaviour

SUBTLE SEXISM

Sexist humour

Gendered Division of Labour

Mansplaining*

Maninterrupting*

Bropropriating*

BENEVOLENT SEXISM

“Sweetheart, Honey, Beautiful...”

Standards of femininity

Paternalistic chivalry

Performative motherhood

Essentialist view

***Mansplaining:** when a man explains something to a woman in a condescending or patronising manner, often on a subject she already understands, assuming she knows less than he does.

***Maninterrupting:** when a man repeatedly or unjustifiably interrupts a woman, especially during a meeting or discussion.

***Bropropriating (or bropropriation):** when a man takes credit for an idea expressed by a woman, by repeating or rephrasing it, and receives the credit or recognition in her place.

RESULTS

The full report is available, along with a 10-page executive summary in French, English and Dutch.

 www.jump.eu.com/resources/sexism

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Please mention “Resources shared by JUMP, solutions for Equity at Work”

The perception of sexism

1

"#MeToo has led to
a better understanding of sexism."



"What used to be courtesy or
chivalry has become sexism."

"In any case, sexism is **less socially accepted**
and we're finding **some allies**."

"As everywhere else, I see a **polarisation**
between places that no longer tolerate anything and
places where anything goes."



"I have the feeling that there is still just as much sexism as it
is expressed **in a much more violent way**. But I also
know that there are lots of men and women who are taking
up the subject to find out how to **behave, react, etc.**"

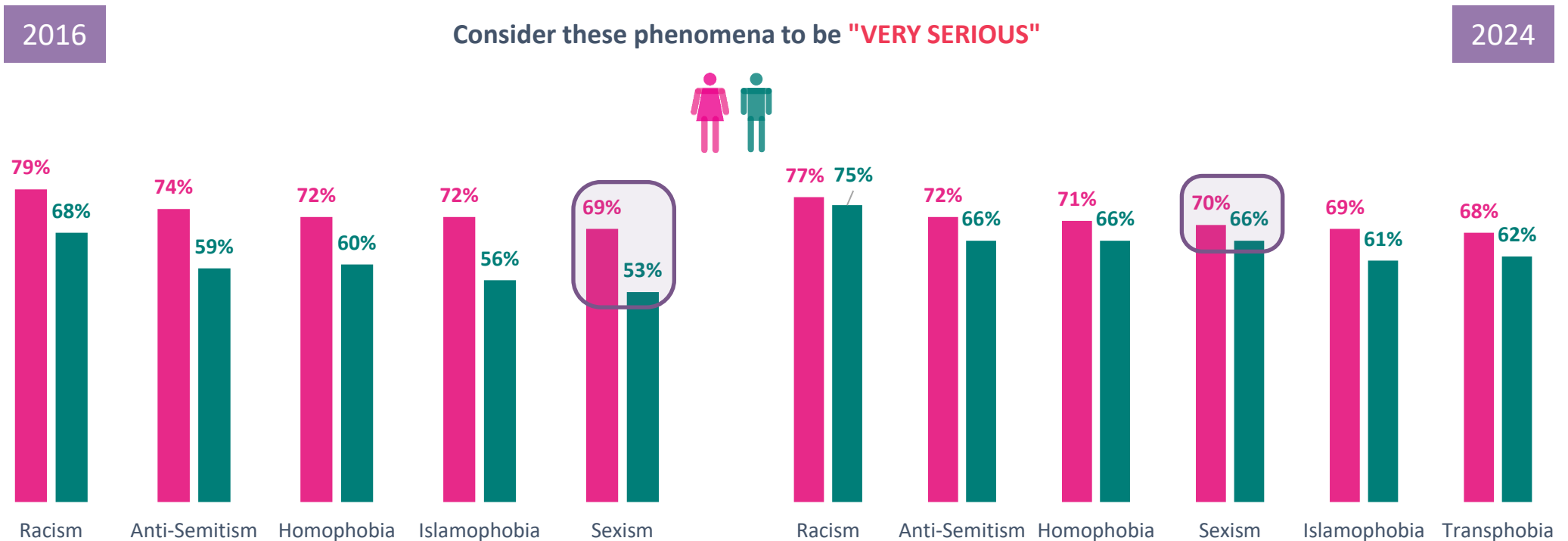


Pink box =
women's comments

Green box =
men's comments

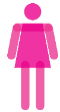
Changes in perceptions of discrimination between 2016 and 2024

Racism is still perceived as the most serious issue

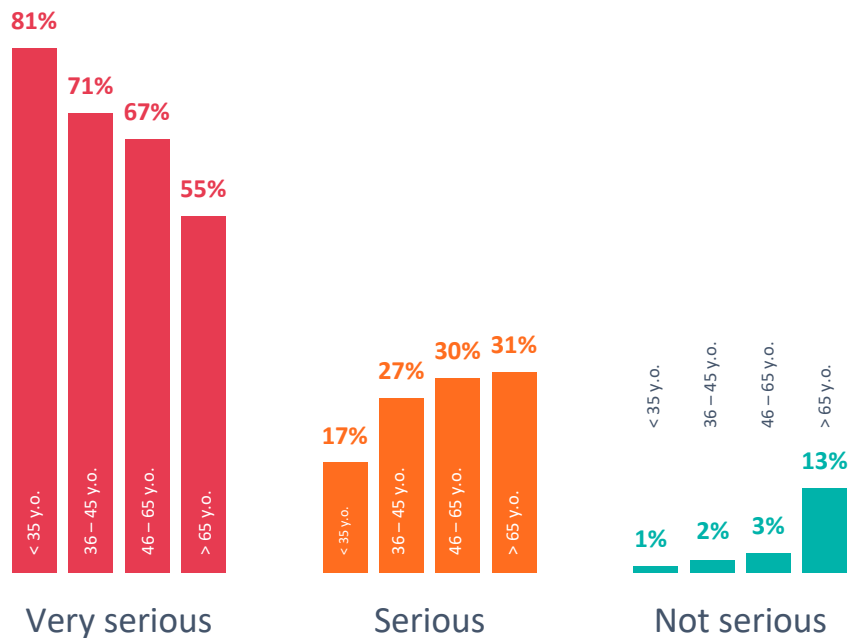


Perceptions of sexism change with age

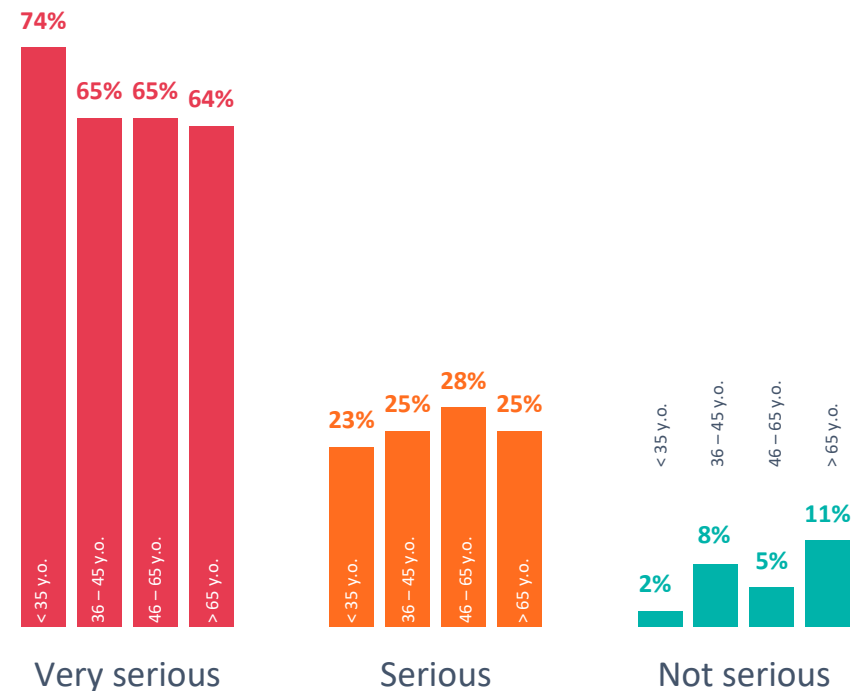
The younger you are, the less tolerant of sexism you are. Especially for women.



Perception of the seriousness of sexism by age



Perception of the seriousness of sexism by age

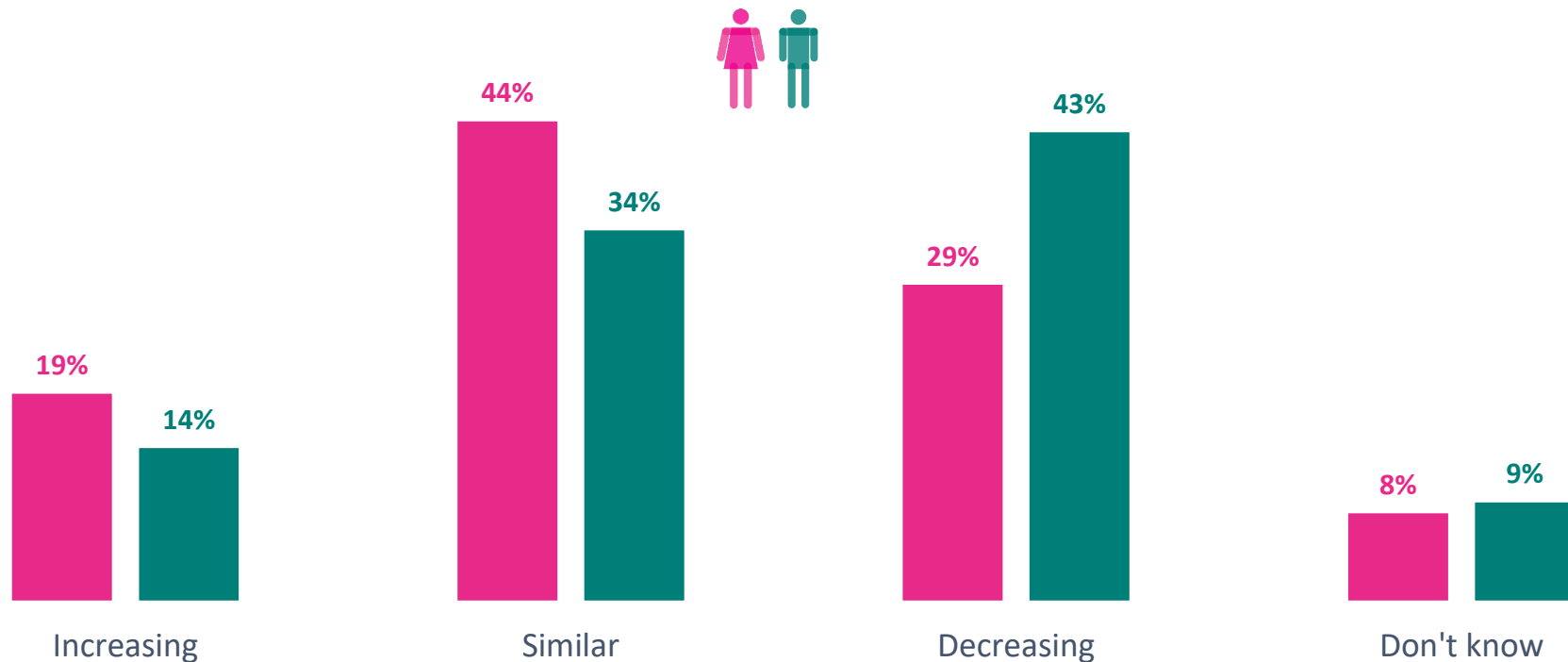


The perception of sexism as a 'very serious' phenomenon decreases much more significantly among women as they get older (81% of the under-35s, down to 55% of the over-65s) than among men (74% of the under-35s, down to 64% of the over-65s). This age-related tolerance of sexism was already observed in our 2016 survey. It suggests that women have internalised such violence as “normal” for generations.

The impact of #MeToo – Society has changed

63% of women think that the frequency of sexism is similar or increasing
43% of men think that sexism is decreasing

The frequency of sexism over the last 10 years: up, down or the same?



*"I don't let anything pass anymore,
even if it means **arguing** with
everyone."*

*"I feel personally **stronger and more
legitimate** in refusing sexist behaviours."*

*"I learnt that **giving in was
not consent.**"*

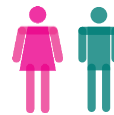
The impact of #MeToo...

9 out of 10 people are better at detecting sexism

8 out of 10 indicate they react differently

9 out of 10 women and 8 out of 10 men are calling for more action.

Do you feel that you are better able to detect sexism than you were 10 years ago?



Yes



Do you react to sexism differently than you did 10 years ago?

Yes



Do you think specific tools should be put in place to tackle sexism?

Yes



Yes



Women's experience of sexism

2

"Posters of **naked women** were displayed in the technicians' changing room, right next to the meeting room."

"You'll **put on your nice skirt** to see the clients tomorrow?"

"A colleague created **a pornographic montage** using my photo and shared it."

"My colleagues look at **pornographic pictures** together at the office."

"I was assigned **note-taking** and event planning tasks simply because I was the only woman on the team."

"During a technical explanation, the teacher spoke only to my male colleague, even though **it was my project**."

"I've been **asked to organise the company seminar**, even though I'm in charge of payroll."

"When I spoke up in a meeting, my manager rephrased what I said **as if I weren't credible**."



A All women are victims of sexism, everywhere *All men know this*

98% of women respondents say they have **EXPERIENCED** sexism at least once.

97% of men respondents say they have **WITNESSED** it.

In which context are women most impacted by sexism?

98% of women respondents say they have been **VICTIMS** of sexism at least once

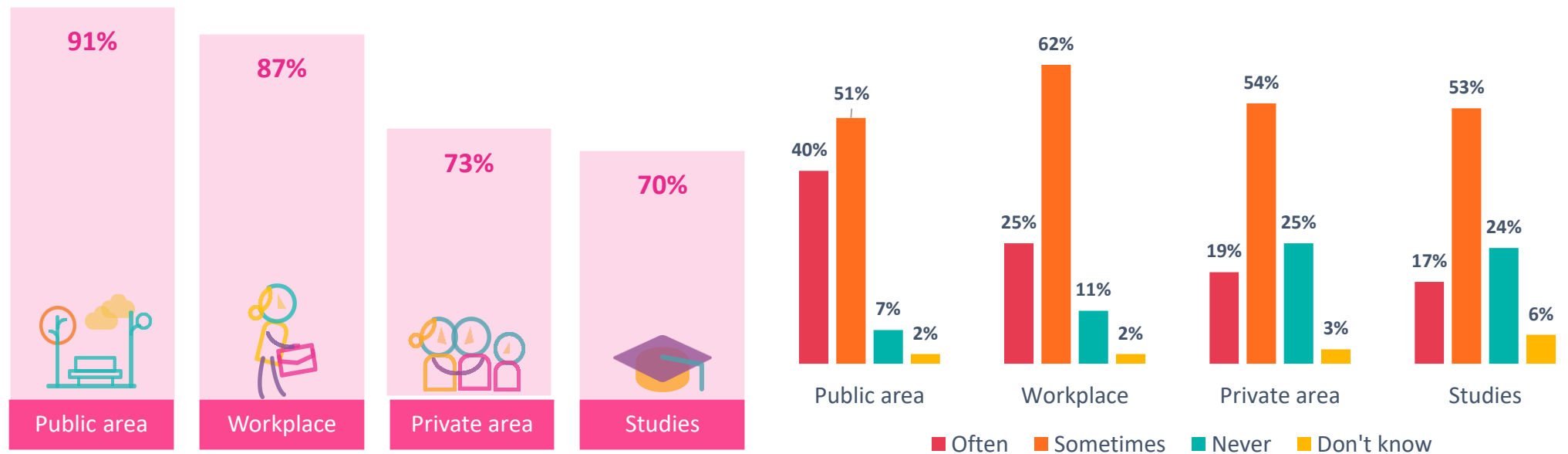
97% of men respondents say they have **WITNESSED** sexism

Sexism is a universal reality, widely experienced and widely observed



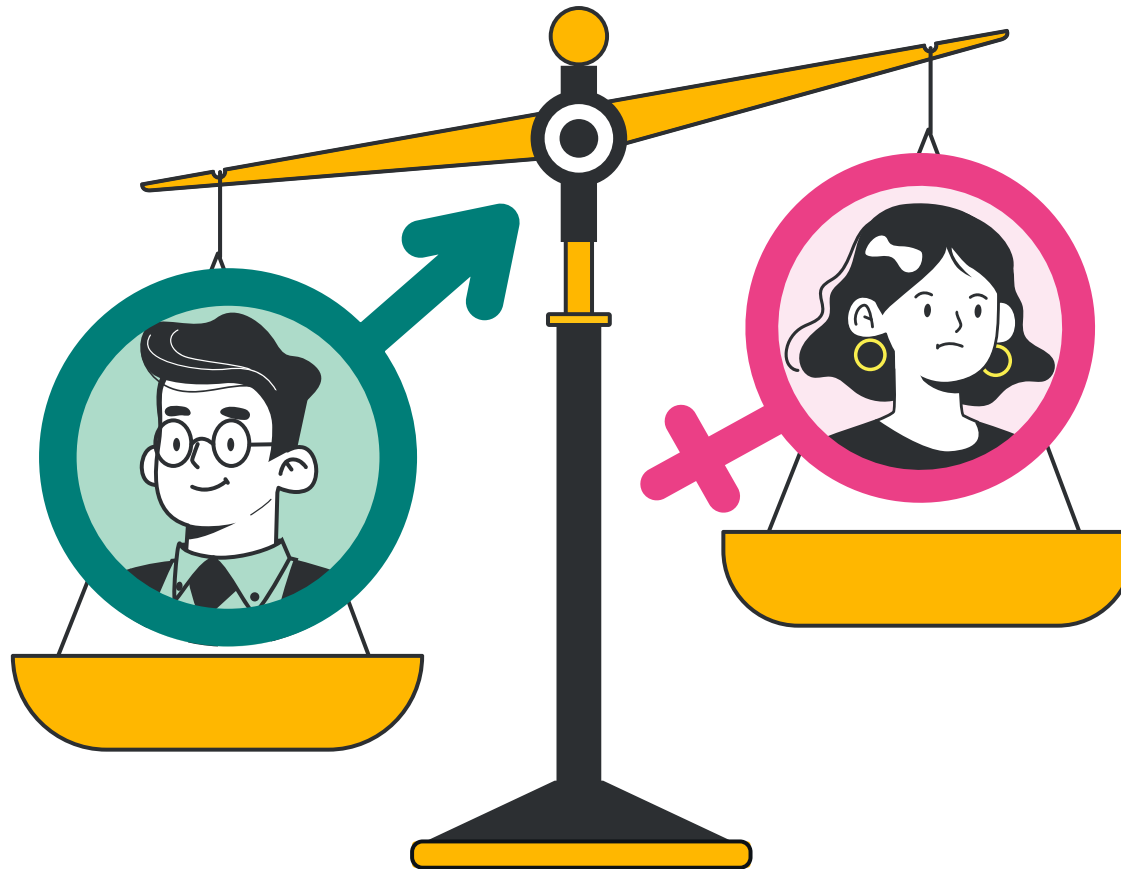
Have you ever been a **VICTIM** of sexist behaviours?

Sum of "**sometimes**" and "**often**" responses among women



C Focus on sexism in the workplace

Women's psychological and physical insecurity at work

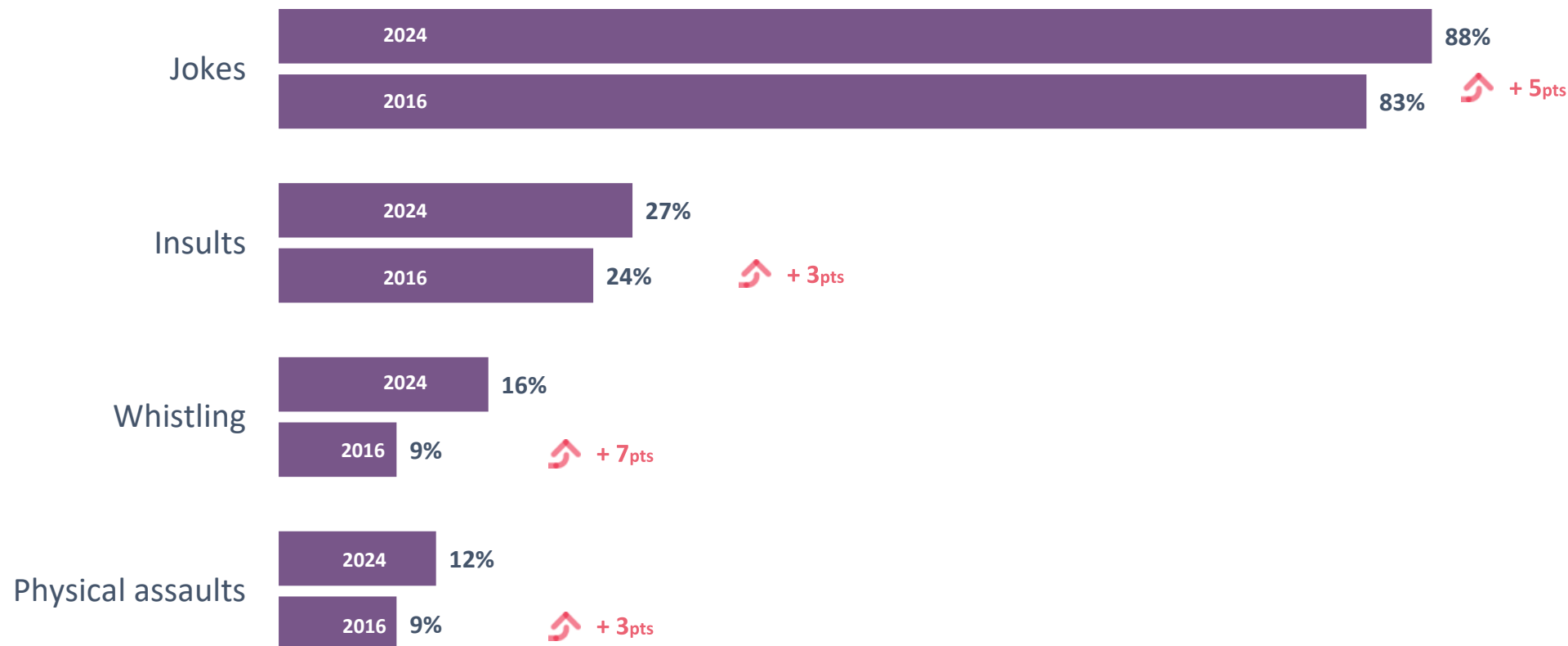




Workplace

All forms of sexism are on the rise

Comparison 2016 – 2024 (Multiple answers possible)

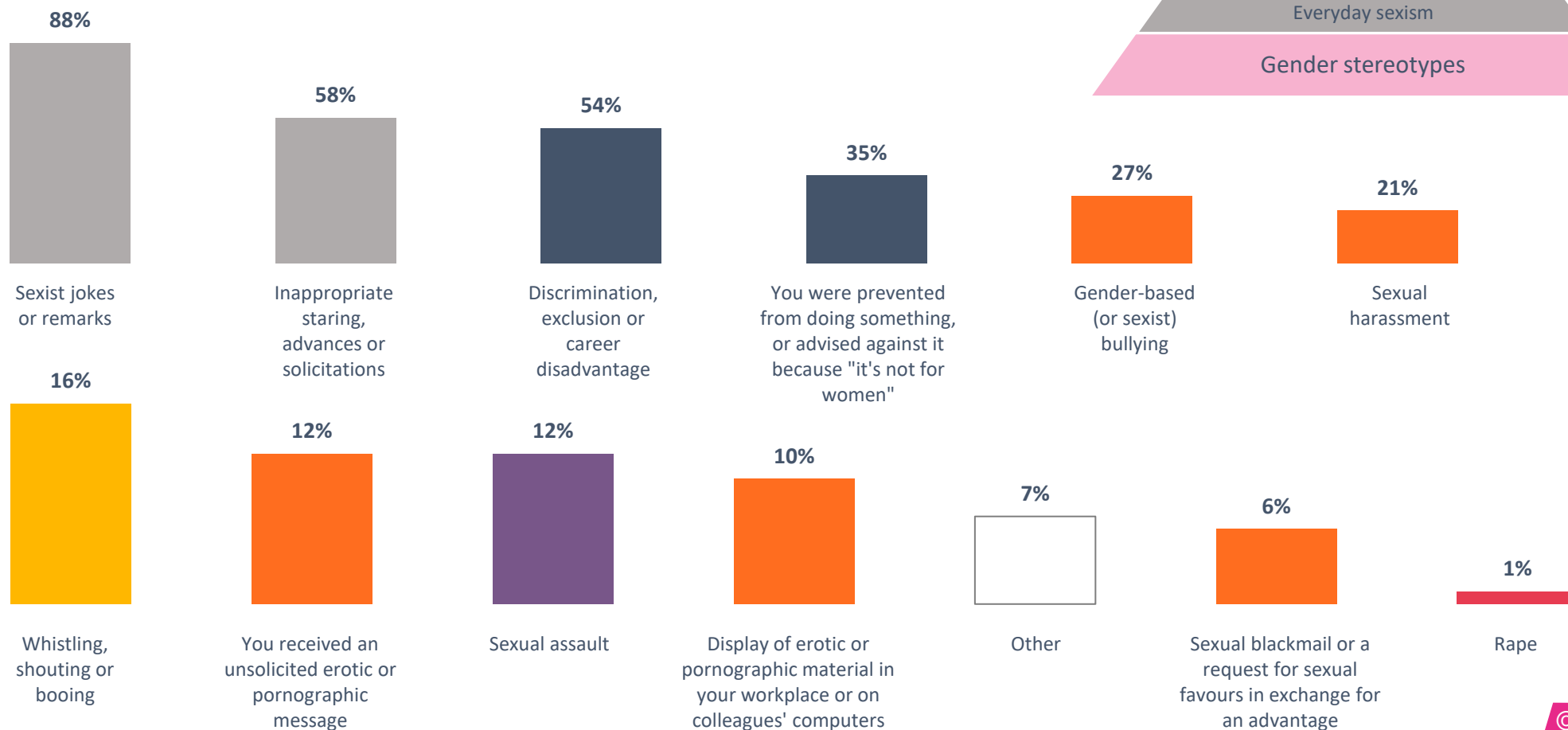
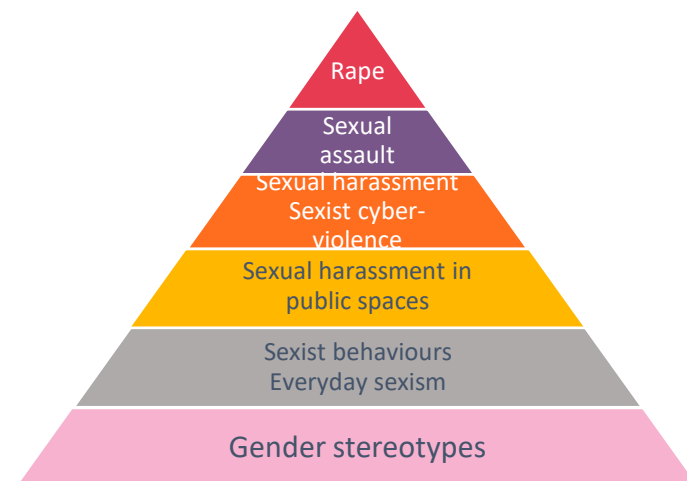




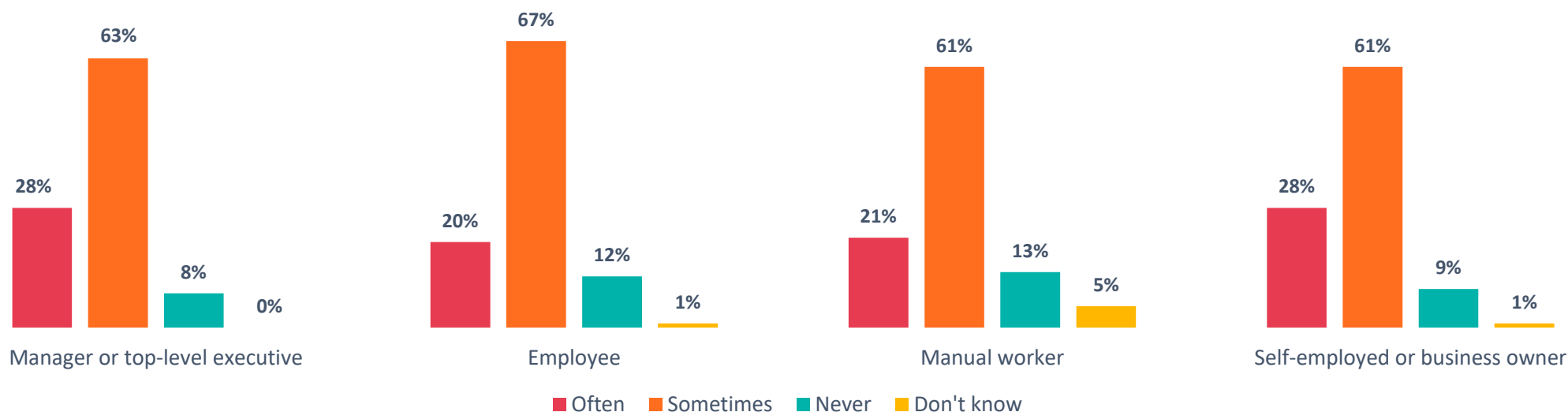
Sexist and sexual violence experienced in the workplace

2024 analysis *Multiple answers possible*

Workplace



Sexism affects all women, whatever their status or position



*"It's surprising that a woman is handling such a demanding project team so well!",
"Don't you think **this big project** would be better handled by a man?"*

*"A client called me '**sweetheart**' and refused to deal with me until a man took over."*

*"I was told I shouldn't apply for a promotion because **the responsibilities would be 'too heavy' for a woman.**"*

*"(When applying for a loan), the banker **refused to listen to me** until my male colleague arrived to pitch with me."*

Sexism is reinforced for women in precarious situations, but also for those who challenge power

ILO 2022: People in precarious or low-skilled jobs are the most exposed to sexist violence and the least likely to report it.

"The Reality Gap" Shape Talent 2024 (Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Sweden): Inequalities increase with seniority. Nearly one in two women managers or executives tends to feel devalued during meetings.

IPSOS Survey 2023 (France): 49% of women scientists report having experienced sexual harassment during their career. 65% report a negative impact on their commitment to science and on their career.

D The impact of sexism

"It has haunted me all my life."

*"One small thing after another...
in the end, it becomes a lot.
And **we keep enduring it.**"*

*"**Anger and therapy** are
the only things that
helped me get through it."*

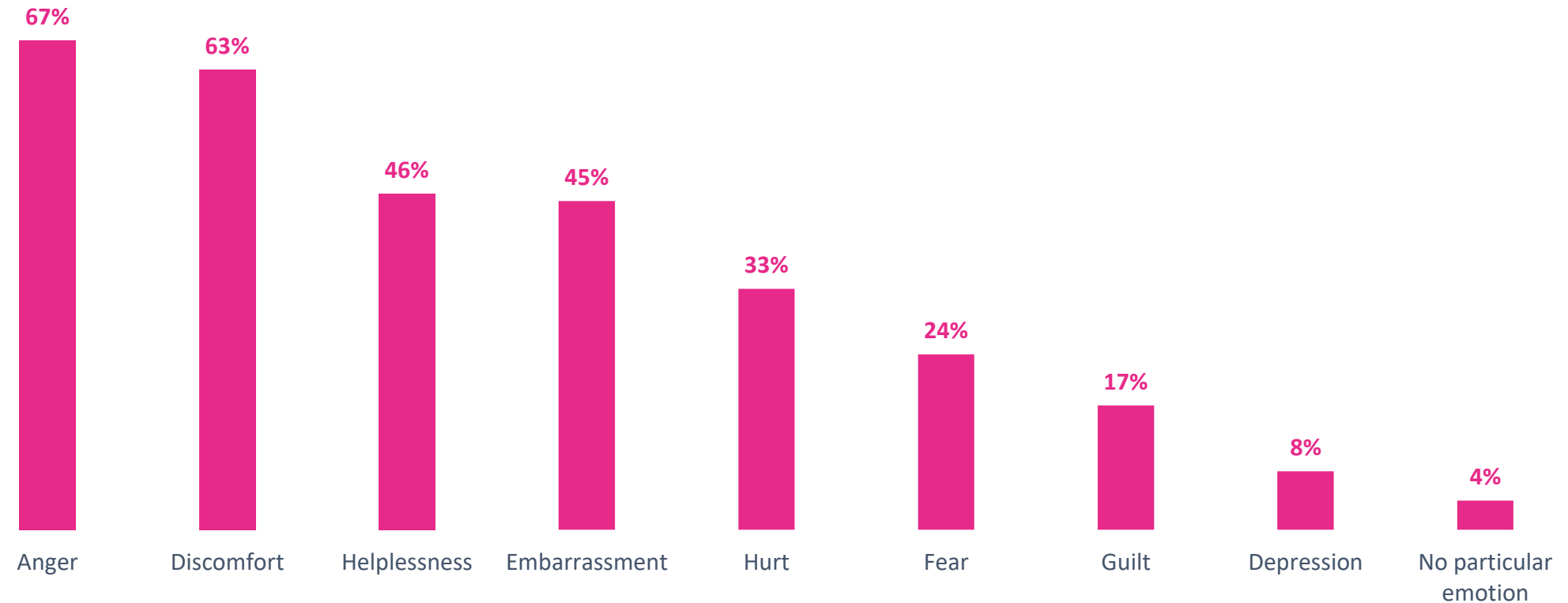
*"It's been years, and I **still have nightmares** about it."*



The psychological impact of sexism

What were your most frequent feelings when you experienced sexism?

(Multiple answers possible)



*"Years after the assault,
I still feel guilty."*

*"Due to my past experiences,
I've developed **a general sense of
mistrust towards men.**"*

*"In my youth, **fear kept me silent.**
Now, I respond with anger."*

Sexism harms women's health

Discrimination has harmful and lasting effects on women's mental and physical health. Sexism must be recognised as an occupational risk in its own right.

2x

Higher levels of psychological distress at work among women (Santé Publique France, 2019)

60%

of people on long-term sick leave in Belgium are women.
80% among those aged over 55.

70%

of periods of incapacity lasting more than six months (burnout, anxiety disorders) concern women in Belgium.

+345%

increase in disability among women in Belgium between 1996 and 2022, compared with 71% among men.

Repeated & cumulative exposure

- **Devaluing, hostile and discriminatory** environments throughout a career
- **Everyday sexism = lasting stress and exhaustion**
- Sleep disorders, depression, chronic fatigue, pain

The allostatic load of sexism

- **Physiological and psychological wear** caused by repeated exposure to sexist violence and microaggressions
- Constant stress → **the stress-response system remains permanently activated**
- This is the **biological cost of constantly having to adapt**

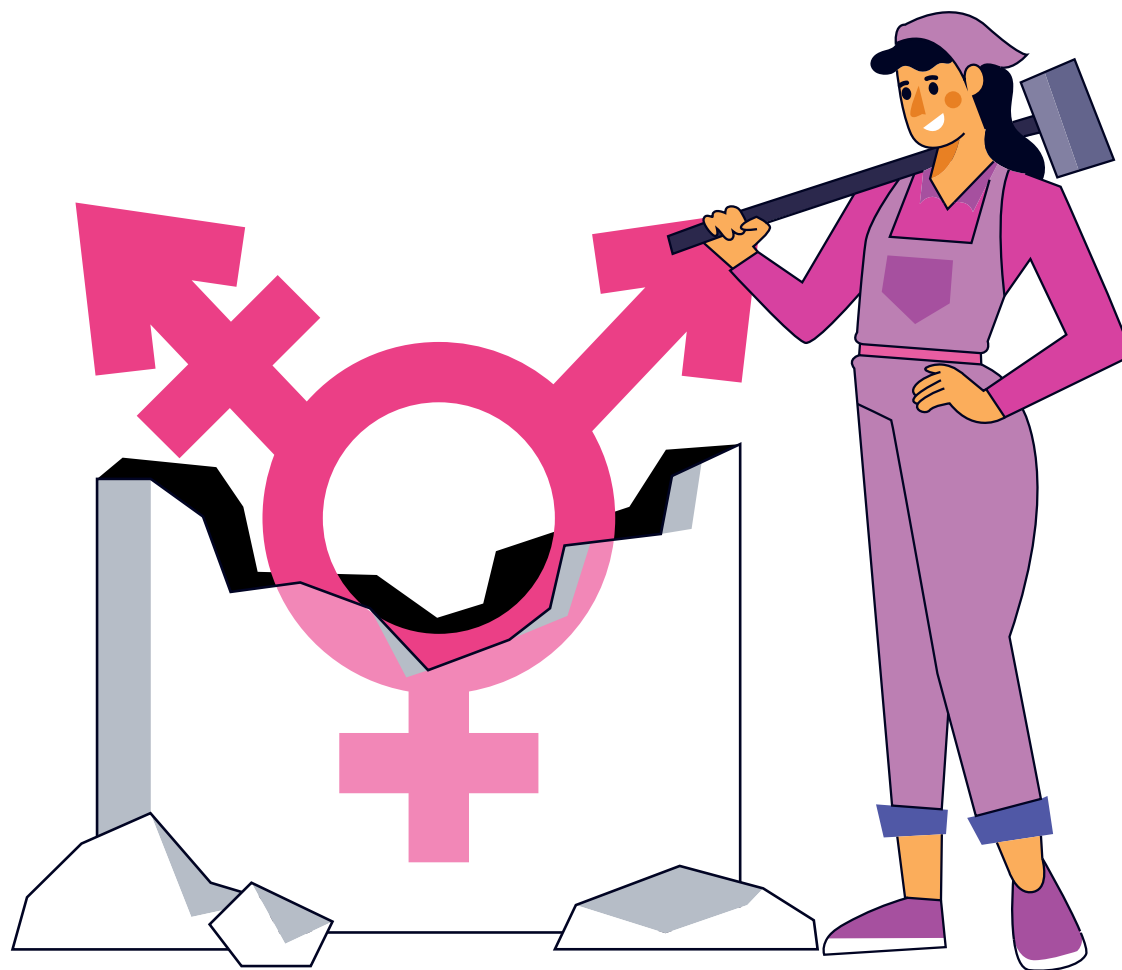
Cerebral scars (PNAS study)

- **7,876 MRI scans**, 29 countries, ages 18-40
- Sexism and violence against women → **thinning of the right hemisphere**, involved in emotional regulation → depression, post-traumatic stress
- More gender-equal countries (Finland, Sweden): **no difference** between women and men
- Less gender-equal countries (India, Türkiye, Brazil): **brain alterations** among women

Impact on organisations: long-term absenteeism, loss of talent and reduced productivity. Sexism is treated as an interpersonal issue rather than an occupational risk.

Recognising it as an occupational risk in its own right is an essential prerequisite; otherwise, organisations address the consequences (burnout, absence) without tackling the causes.

F Reporting sexism



Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of women do not report it

And when they do, $\frac{2}{3}$ are not protected

Have you ever reported sexist behaviours to the authorities?



"A female client **was sent threats** after reporting sexism within her organisation."

"I might better leave the **company**, by the time my boss reacts..."

Men and sexism **3**

"I still struggle not to tell **young girls who are barely dressed** that I wouldn't dress like that if I were them."

"**I often turn my head** to look at women whose appearance I appreciate. Aside from that, I deeply believe in equality."

"Honestly, **I don't know how to behave with women anymore.**"

"At school (40 years ago), **I tolerated and even took part in** sexist behaviours and games during my teenage years."

"In the family context, I must admit that years ago, **I would sometimes remain at the table with the other men** while the women cleared it."

« Sometimes women seem to enjoy the sexism. Then, even **if it's only a facade**, it makes outside reactions useless. »

"**A lot of women tend to exaggerate situations** to illustrate just how condescending men can be."

« I, as a man, was confronted with **machist behaviour at work**. Don't forget the other side of the coin. »

In which context have men witnessed sexism?

98% of women respondents say they have been **VICTIMS** of sexism at least once

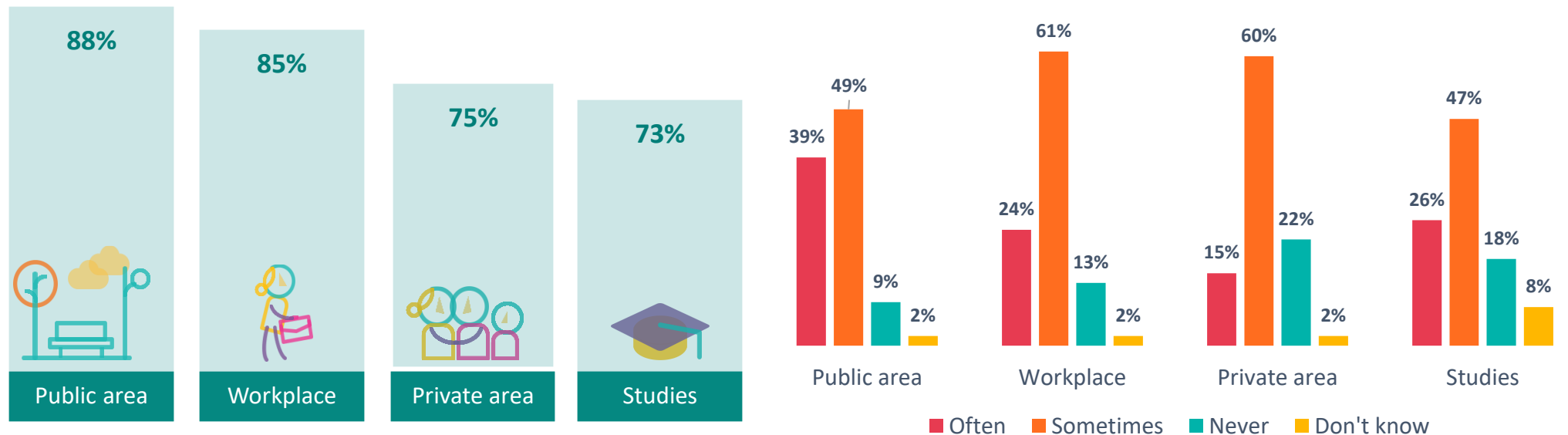
97% of men respondents say they have **WITNESSED** sexism

Sexism is a universal reality, widely experienced and widely observed



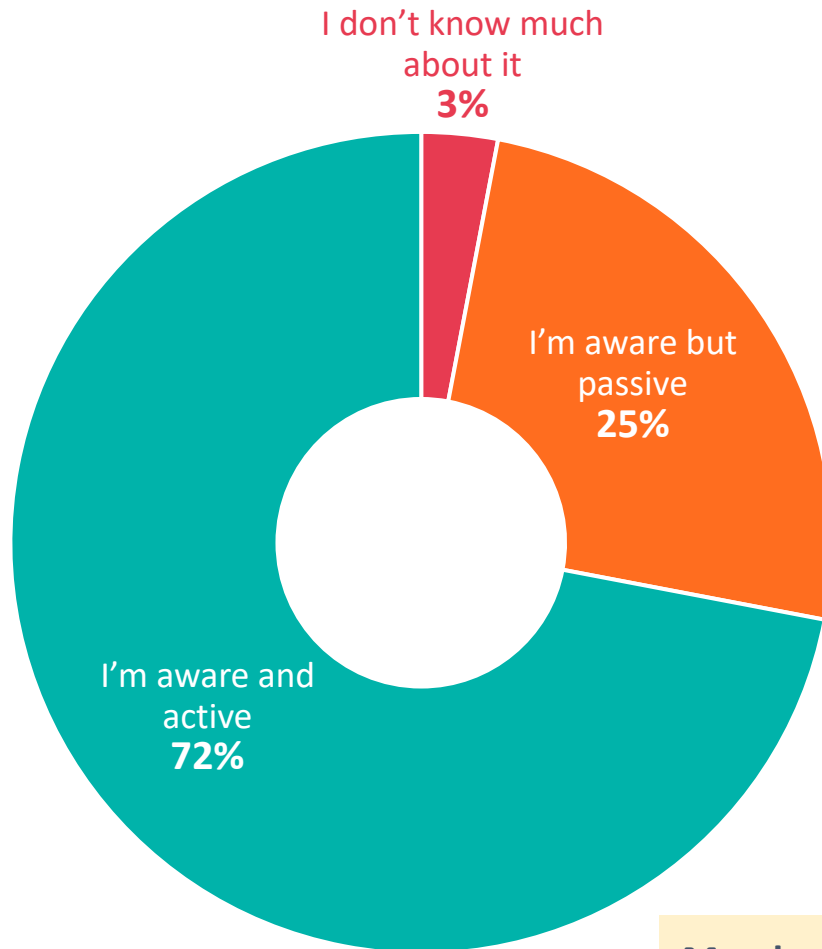
Have you ever been a **WITNESS** to sexist behaviours?

Sum of "**sometimes**" and "**often**" responses among men



Nearly ¾ of male respondents say they actively combat sexism

How do you perceive
your commitment to combating sexism?



*"I used to know nothing.
But now, I'm finally a good guy."*

*"I've learnt a lot,
and now I know how to respond."*

*"I always react
when something seems inappropriate."*

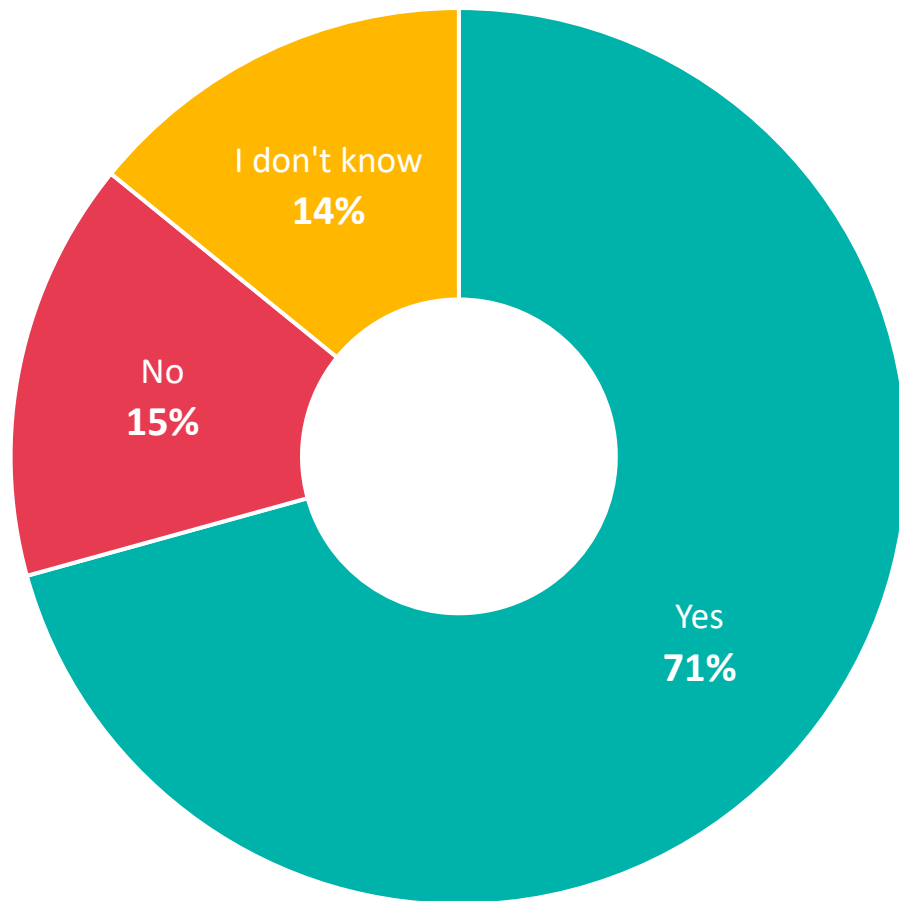
*"It seems obvious to me! As men, **we all need to be engaged** and take action."*

Men know... but too many do not feel concerned.

The French High Council for Equality (HCE) 2024: 82% of men acknowledge that women are not treated equally, but only 38% believe they have a role to play.

7 out of 10 male respondents admit to having exhibited sexist behaviours

Personally, have you become aware of certain sexist behaviours you may have exhibited in the past?



"Yes, I think we need to **look ourselves straight in the mirror.**"

"I realised that some men didn't behave with me the way they did with women, and that **helped me understand** that I must also be sexist."

"I may have been sexist at times, but I imagine it had little impact. **It wasn't intentional.**"

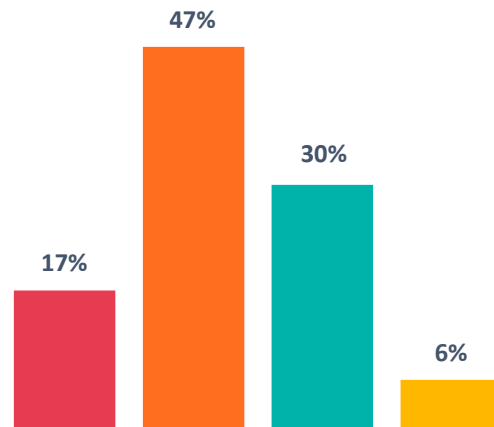
Only 1 in 3 men say they regularly react to sexism seen at work or in private settings

1 in 5 never react – even less so in public spaces

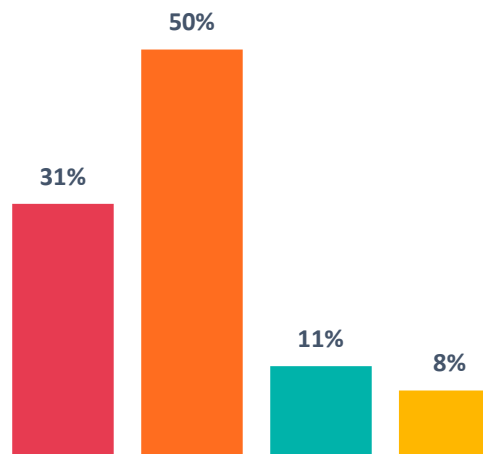
If you witnessed sexism,
did you take action to stop it or to protect the victim?



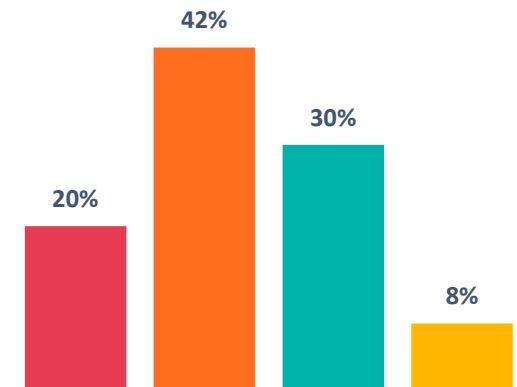
Workplace



Public area



Private area

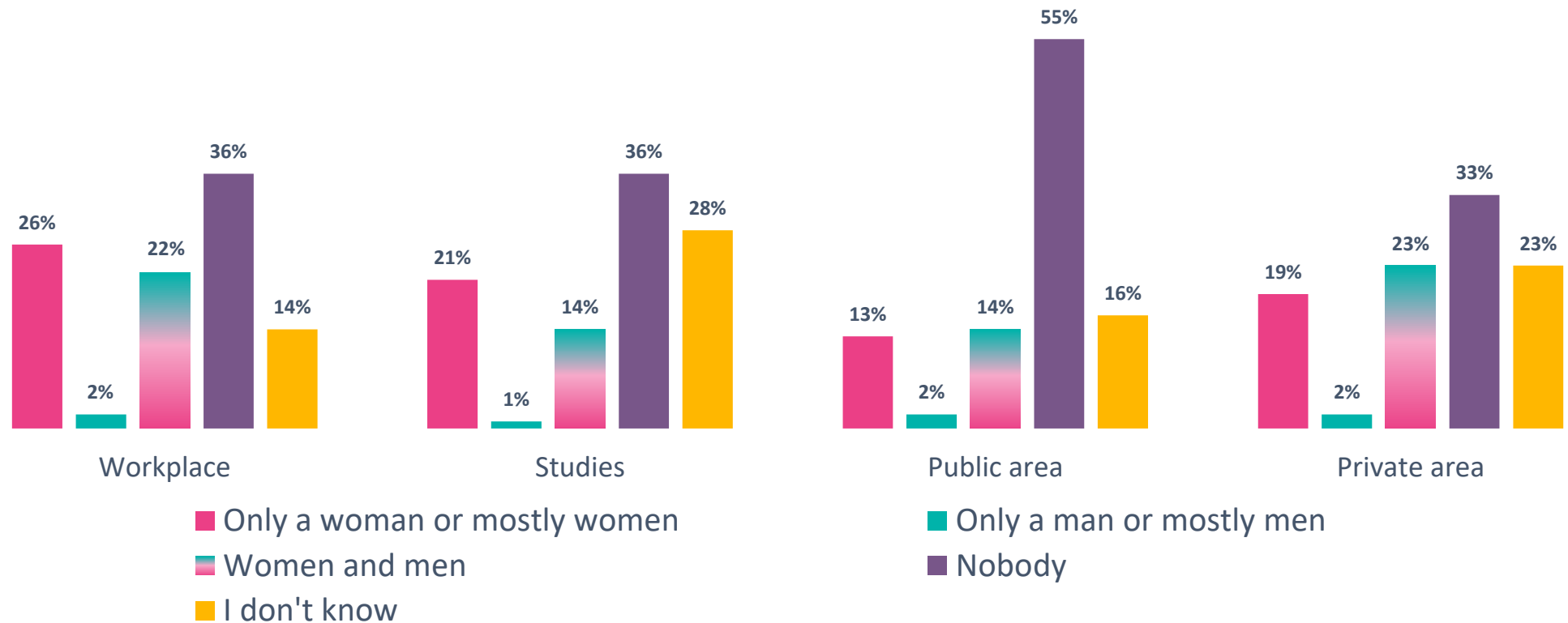


■ Never ■ Sometimes ■ Often ■ I don't know

... to be compared to women's perception

In fewer than 2% of cases, support comes from a single man or several men. It is almost always women who help other women.

During this/these experiences, did anyone support or help you?



*'No one lifted a finger. Except for **one woman who was just as terrified as I was.***

*'Women try to react, but they can't always. **Where are the men?***

*'I've lost count of how many times **men looked away** (on the metro) when I needed their help.'*

Reasons given by men for not taking action

Multiple answers possible

- 37% I didn't know what to do
- 28% I didn't feel like reacting / I felt it wasn't my role to react
- 27% I was afraid of the repercussions
- 27% Other
- 25% I don't know why I didn't react
- 23% I was afraid of doing the wrong thing

'Fear of a violent reaction.'

***"At the time, I wasn't aware
that it was sexist."***

***I often blamed myself afterwards
for not reacting. Looking back,
I should have intervened.'***

***'It seemed trivial at the time.
There was a kind of unspoken
alliance between the guys.'***

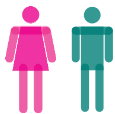
Evaluating measures in the workplace

4

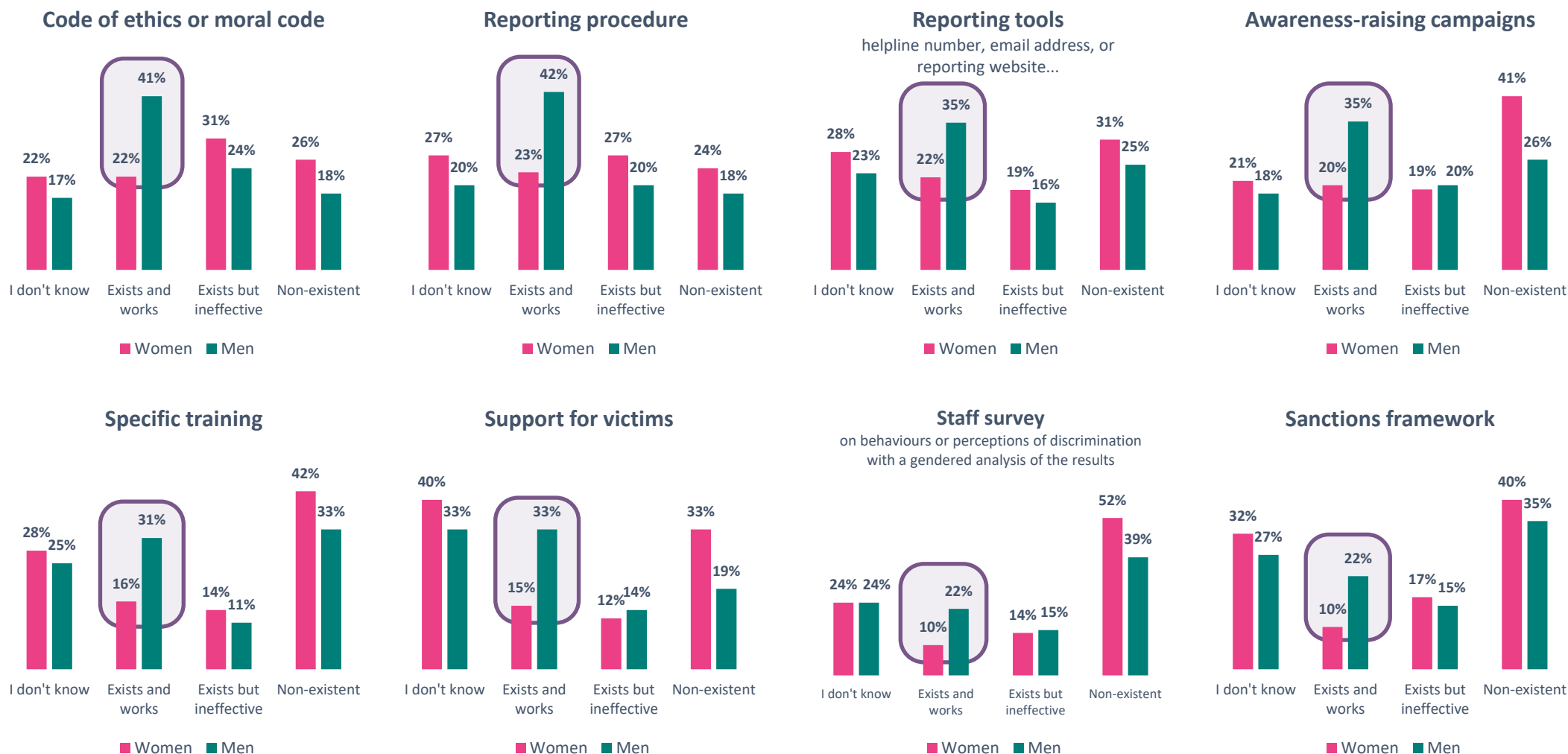


9 out of 10 women and 8 out of 10 men are calling for more action

Do you think specific measures should be put in place to tackle sexism?



Men's blind spot: their relative satisfaction with the measures implemented in their organisation



RECOMMENDATIONS

The full report is available, along with a 10-page executive summary in French, English and Dutch.

 www.jump.eu.com/resources/sexism

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Naming, measuring, changing!



5 pillars for action

“To name things wrongly is to add to the misery of the world.” — Albert Camus

NAME IT	MEASURE	COMMUNICATE	MAKE PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE	TRAIN
• Use the correct definition of sexism: a hierarchy between the sexes. • Treat sexism as a political issue, as racism is. • Clearly define it as an offence, just as racism is. • Europe should follow France’s example: everyday sexism is addressed in the Labour Code.	• Include gender-disaggregated results in all employee engagement and quality-of-working-life surveys. • Dare to ask questions about discrimination to move beyond denial. • Measure regularly, communicate the results and take action!	• A clear commitment from senior leadership against sexism, together with an expectation of exemplary behaviour. • Implement clear prevention, protection and sanction policies. • Zero tolerance in workplace policies, supported by a clear sanctions framework.	• Sexist and sexual violence are workplace safety risks. • A report should not have to be accompanied by a police complaint for an organisation to take responsibility. • Every report must be investigated promptly. • Protect victims and the organisation itself: health, reputation and social cohesion.	• Train senior leadership first, followed by management, staff and employee representatives. • Occupational Health Services and Services for Prevention and Protection at Work must understand structural inequalities (sexism, racism, ageism, etc.). • Follow France’s example, where organisations are required to appoint designated contacts for sexism.

JUMP solutions to free your company from sexism

👉 www.jump.eu.com/resources/sexism

Publication

- JUMP published a guide in French and Dutch “Free your company from sexism” to help human resources managers and leaders tackle sexism in their organisations.



Poster campaign

- Our staff awareness poster campaign can be used free of charge within your organisation and is available in French, Dutch, English and German. Each poster can be customised with your company logo or a tailored message.



Conferences & training

- Awareness-raising conference:** “Sexism at work: identifying its different forms, its impact and ways to tackle it.”
- Training for leaders and managers:** “How gender bias affects women’s position in your organisation”, “Sexism harms your organisation: how to get rid of it”, “Identifying the different forms of sexism and protecting your workplace”, “Toolbox for inclusive managers”, ...
- Workshops for employees and frontline teams:** “How to tackle sexism”, “Are we treated equally and with the same respect? What can we do to improve life at work?”,...

Diagnostic & Consulting

- Develop an action plan to tackle unacceptable behaviours and establish an effective reporting process.
- Define a charter of inclusive behaviours.
- Survey employees on their perceptions of career opportunities and their awareness of Equality and Inclusion in order to measure the inclusiveness of your corporate culture and develop an action plan tailored to your needs.

 www.jump.eu.com/resources/sexism



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