



# New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Working for a World Without Violence.

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## **The New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault Responds to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Apology Regarding Sexual Harassment**

The first priority of the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault is the safety, wellbeing, and autonomy of sexual violence survivors. We believe that, as an outside party, it is not our place to accept Governor Cuomo's apology. This must be reserved for the survivors who were harmed, who should not be pressured to accept or reject it.

We are encouraged to hear that the New York State Attorney General will conduct an independent investigation into Governor Cuomo's workplace behavior, and we are confident that her investigation will be fair and thorough.

While we wait for the investigation to conclude, we invite the Governor to seek support and identify opportunities for meaningful accountability. According to writer and educator [Mia Mingus](#), true accountability requires "apologizing, understanding the impacts your actions have caused on yourself and others, making amends or reparations to the harmed parties; [and] changing your behavior so that the harm, violence, abuse does not happen again."

We wish to reiterate the importance of [our responsibilities as leaders in the work to end gender-based violence](#). When we establish ourselves as leaders in this work, we must hold ourselves to the same—if not higher—standards to which we hold others. We must make violence prevention an everyday practice, including in our workplaces. This includes creating a culture of consent, in which we respect the dignity, autonomy, and boundaries of our peers—physically and emotionally. When we fail to meet these standards, we undermine our efforts to end violence, and we betray all who look to us for leadership and positive change.

We hope that employers and workplaces take this as a learning opportunity.

First, we must recognize that sexual harassment does not occur in a vacuum. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence. We know that it frequently happens in a workplace that exhibits a [broader culture of abuse](#). Sexual violence is also about power. [It is rooted in oppression](#), including sexism, racism, heterosexism, ableism, and many other forms of oppression.

Second, employers are responsible for preventing sexual harassment and taking it seriously when it does happen. Creating a safe and inclusive workplace means understanding the difference between

intent and impact. The intent behind what we do matters less than the impact of what we do. If our actions cause harm and further oppression, we need to take full responsibility and act accountably.

### **Resources for employers and workplaces:**

- Workplaces Respond to Domestic & Sexual Violence resources:  
<https://www.workplacesrespond.org/role/employer>

### **Resources for survivors of sexual violence, including harassment, assault, or abuse:**

- Connect with a survivor advocate. Call the New York State Hotline for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence for 24/7, free, and confidential support at 1-800-942-6906, or contact your county's rape crisis center: <https://www.nyscasa.org/get-help/find-your-local-rape-crisis-program>.
- Text or chat with a professional at the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. New Yorkers seeking help can text 1-844-997-2121 or chat on OPDV's new confidential website at [www.opdv.ny.gov](http://www.opdv.ny.gov).
- Find culturally specific support:
  - Black survivors can contact Black Women's Blueprint: 1-646-256-1242
  - Deaf and hard-of-hearing survivors can contact IGNITE: DeafIGNITE@gmail.com or 1-585-286-2713
  - Latina/o, Latinx, and Spanish-speaking survivors can contact Casa de Esperanza: 1-651-772-1611
  - LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors can contact the Anti-Violence Project: 1-212-714-1141
  - Native survivors can contact the StrongHearts Native Helpline by calling 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483), or Seven Dancers Coalition: [www.sevendancerscoalition.com/resources-in-nys](http://www.sevendancerscoalition.com/resources-in-nys)
  - Transgender and gender non-conforming survivors can contact the Trans Lifeline Peer Support Hotline: 1-877-565-8860
  - Survivors whose primary language is not English can call Womankind's 24-hour multilingual helpline: 1-888-888-7702

*The New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault is a private, non-profit coalition of community-based rape crisis programs located throughout New York State. NYSCASA's mission is to end all forms of sexual violence and exploitation, and to address the impacts of sexual assault.*