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Workplace Stress and Gender Equity for Women in the Trades

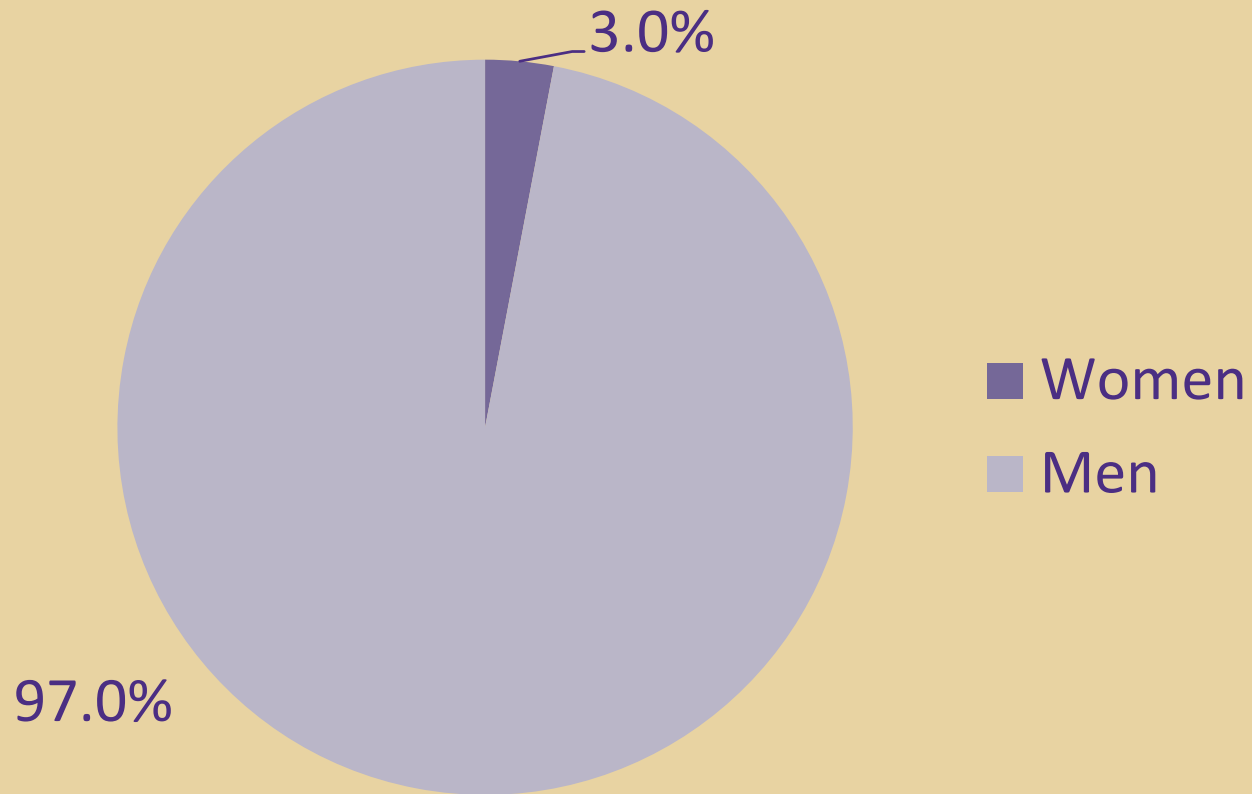
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Construction's gender imbalance



*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational employment statistics, occupational employment and wages, May 2017

Impact of Construction Culture on Worker Well-being

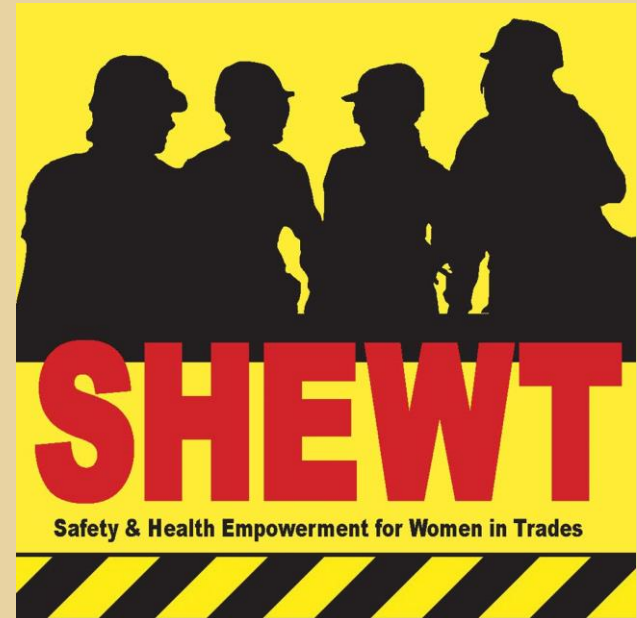
- Construction culture based on hierarchy, competition, and masculine norms
- Workers with low social standing seen as acceptable targets for harassment
- Harassment at work is associated with stress, which is a risk factor for illness and injury
- Workplace harassment also associated with lowered job satisfaction, greater absenteeism and turnover, anxiety, depression

“I have been doing this a long time. It has gotten better but so much of the stress is covert, hard to pin down. The harassment never really stops; you learn to ignore it... Men don't want us there so it is a constant, unstated hostile environment.”

Journeywoman electrician

Safety and Health Empowerment for Women in Trades

- Phase I: Research
 - Understand exposures, risks
 - Identify prevention strategies
- Phase II: Pilot Mentoring
 - Recognize risks
 - Advocate for safer work
 - Develop leadership skills
- Phase III: (now)
 - Partner with existing programs
 - Make mentorship sustainable



Focus group themes

- Physical risks
 - Dangerous work environment
 - Complacency
 - Production over safety
- Non-physical risks
 - Job insecurity
 - No paid sick leave
 - Inadequate bathrooms
 - Macho culture

Women-specific risks

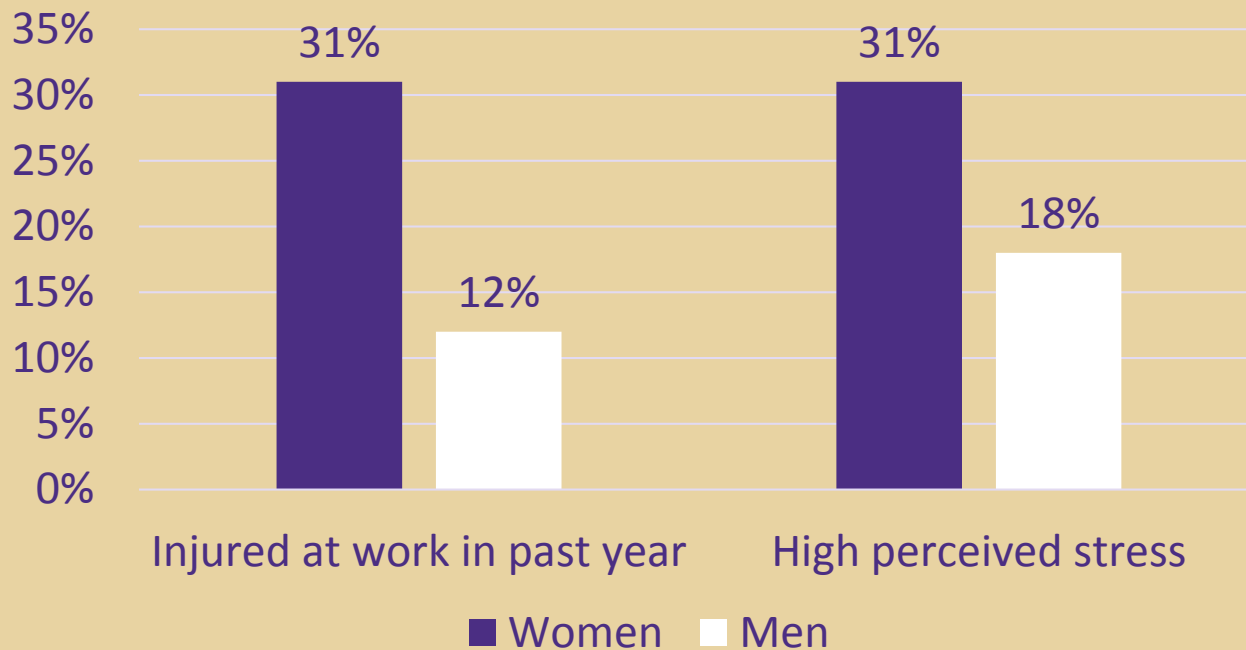
- Inadequate PPE
- Physical limitations
- Sexual harassment
- Gender discrimination
- Tokenism
- Overcompensation
- Poor work-life balance
- Fear of reporting

“It’s like being under a magnifying glass every day you go to work.”

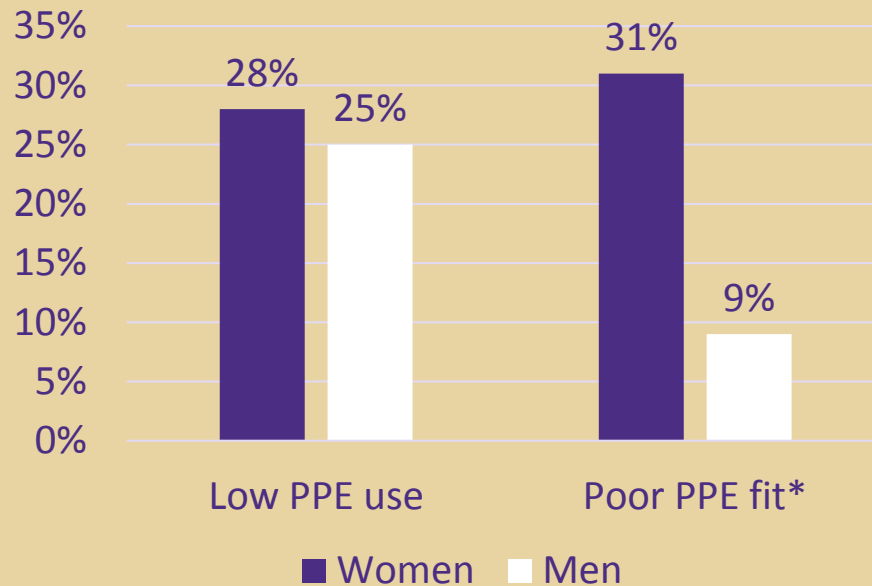
Journeywoman carpenter

Survey: key findings

Compared to men, women reported a higher risk of injury at work in the past year and high levels of stress



Survey: PPE fit



Of women who did not feel comfortable asking for better PPE, more than half listed **“fear of being labeled complainer by coworkers”** or **“fear of layoff”** as the primary reason

*Women and men are significantly different at $p < 0.05$
Women (n=198), men (n=93)

Survey: psychosocial exposures

	Women (n=198)	Men (n=93)	
	%	%	
Gender Discrimination***			
Yes	43	4	
Bullying***			
Yes	39	16	
Sexual Harassment			
High (<25 th percentile)	30	N/A	
Overcompensation			
High (<25 th percentile)	36	29	
Work/Life Balance			
Poor (<25 th percentile)	43	33	
Isolation			
High (<25 th percentile)	35	31	
Safety Climate			
Low (<25 th percentile)	27	17	
Social Support			
Low (<25 th percentile)	29	17	

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

***p<0.001

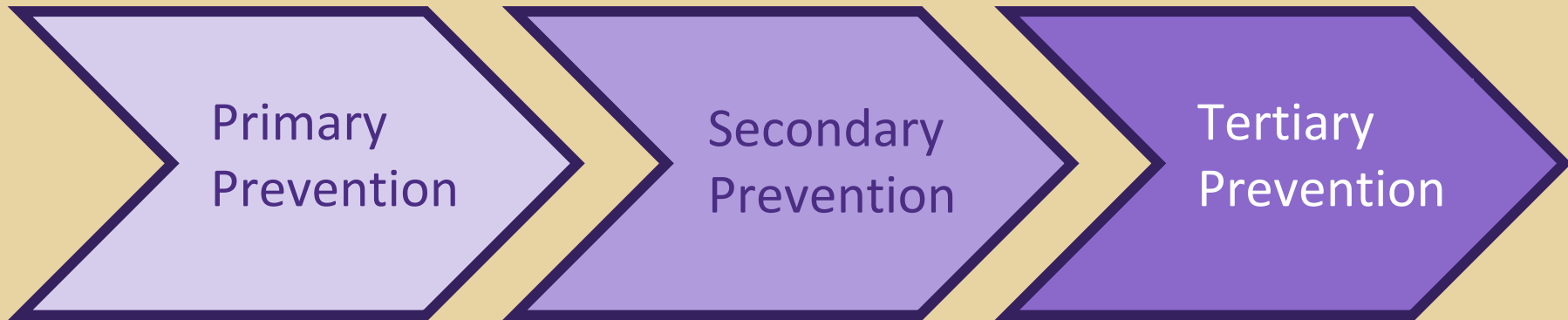
N/A questions not asked of men

Independent sample chi-square.

Key SHEWT finding: overcompensation, bullying, and gender discrimination are occupational safety and health Issues

- Injury risk more than doubled for women who reported gender discrimination or bullying
- Tradeswomen who overcompensated were more than four times as likely to report injury at work compared to those who did not

Mentoring



Primary
Prevention

Secondary
Prevention

Tertiary
Prevention

Leadership skills for women to succeed in apprenticeships

Mentor training to change cultural norms

Women's retention to shift gender imbalance

Identifying harassing and unsafe behaviors

Problem-solving skills to help address issues before they develop

Provide support for women who experience harassment and other health/safety hazards

Resources to treat stress and other mental health conditions

SHEWT pilot mentoring program

Aims:

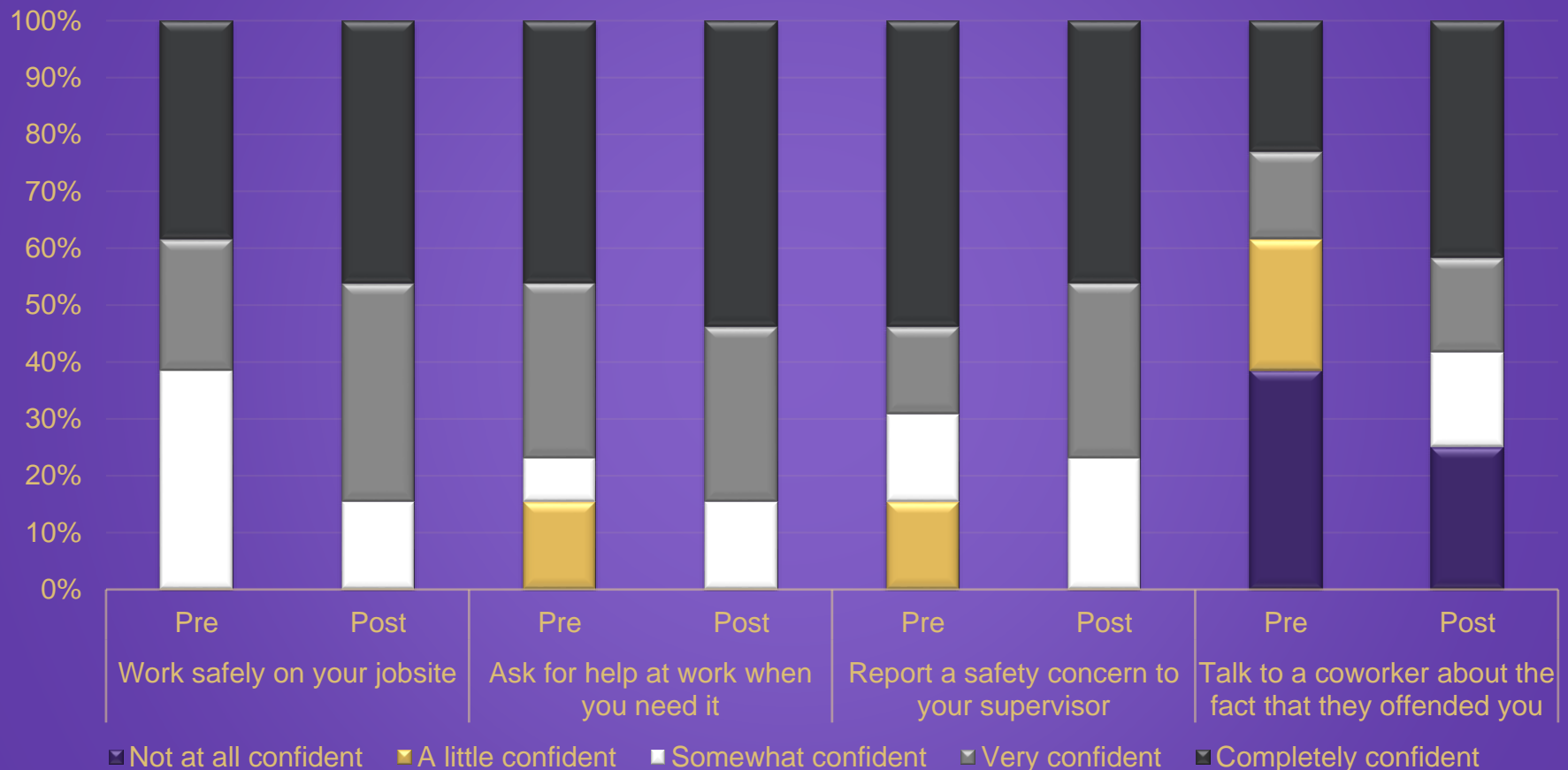
- To empower women apprentices to recognize their stressors and advocate for safe worksites
 - To increase awareness of how the male-dominated trades culture affects women's safety
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of a structured mentoring program focused on women's health and safety in the trades
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SHEWT pilot mentoring program

- 15 mentors
 - 10 journeywomen and 5 journeymen
 - Carpenters, Electricians, Ironworkers, Laborers, Pipe trades
- 24 mentees (women apprentices)
- Mentors received three trainings
 - Active listening, proactive problem solving, implicit bias, building trust, resource sharing
- Voluntary matching
- 6-months of regular check-ins
- Pre-Post Evaluation with mentees

Mentorship evaluation results: mentee self-reports

Confidence in your ability to:



SHEWT pilot mentoring program

- Lessons learned
 - Role of mentors in providing emotional support
 - Building trust takes time
 - Training for mentees
 - Mentoring as “getting ahead” not “needing help”
- Challenges with program
 - Mentee cancellations
 - Mentor/mentee communication barriers

Advocating for safety and gender equity as women workers

**“Even when I’ve just done it,
I don’t know if I can do it”**

Advocating for safety and gender equity as women workers

- Preparing to advocate for yourself (new job, promotion, safety concern, etc.)
 - Describing skills and duties
 - Journaling
 - Focusing on the positive
 - Help from other women

Acknowledgements

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 - Leaders from local unions and apprenticeship programs

