



Harold Masursky Award:

The CSWA Survey on Workplace Climate and an Uncomfortable Conversation About Harassment

Dr. Christina Richey

The CSWA Survey on Workplace Climate

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With Gracious Support from the American Astronomical Society's
Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy (AAS CSWA)



- Why am I here?
- What's this rumored problem?
- **How can you be part of the solution?**

HARASSMENT: unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetic information.

We have a problem



The Problem

HARASSMENT: unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetic information.

Why would this be a problem in this community?

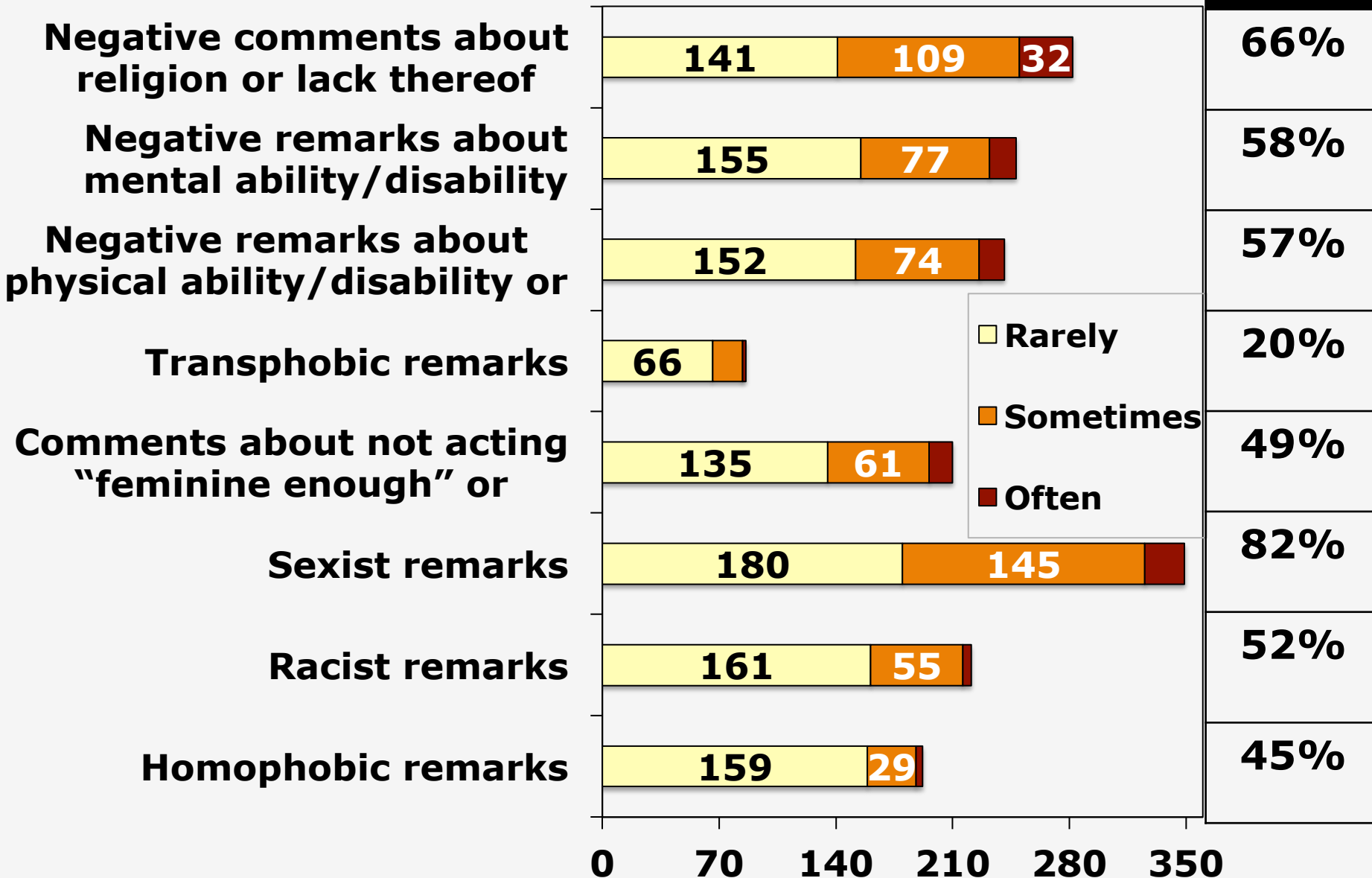
- Power Dynamics are extreme here
- The workplace is untraditional
- The current most-used system to protect those being harassed, the whisper culture, isn't working
- Our community is steeped in unconscious bias and is set such that white, cisgendered, heterosexual, able-bodied men are the dominant group by a larger percentage than the general population
- It's a difficult problem to see when you're not the one being harassed
- The evidence is anecdotal



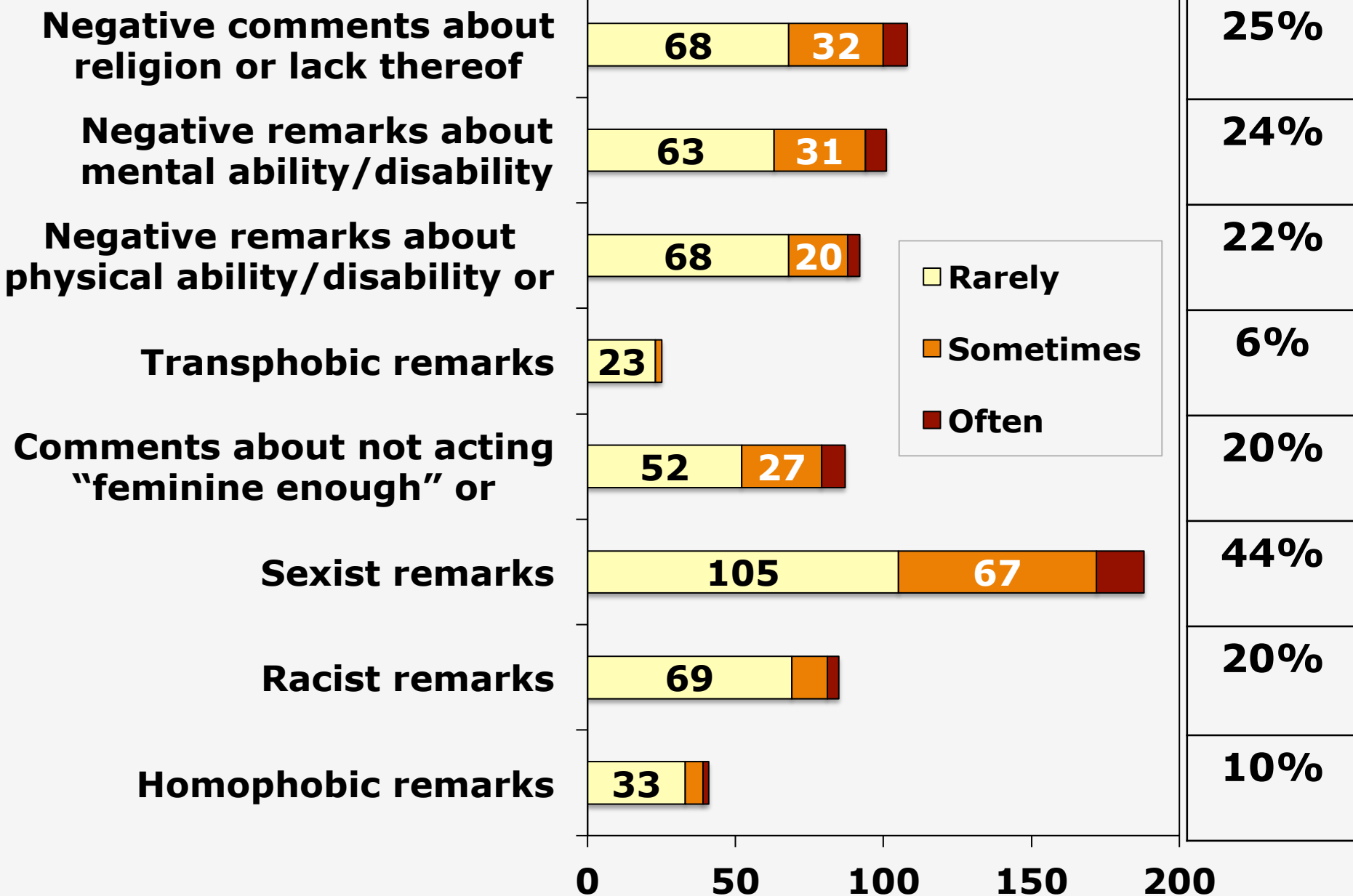
CSWA Survey on Workplace Climate

- We recruited 426 participants for an online survey
- Questions were confined to experiences in their current and previous positions within the past 5 years only
 - We obtained IRB approval (#15354, University of Illinois) for this project
 - Thank you to those who gave their time by responding to our survey
 - The CSWA also provided funding for this project

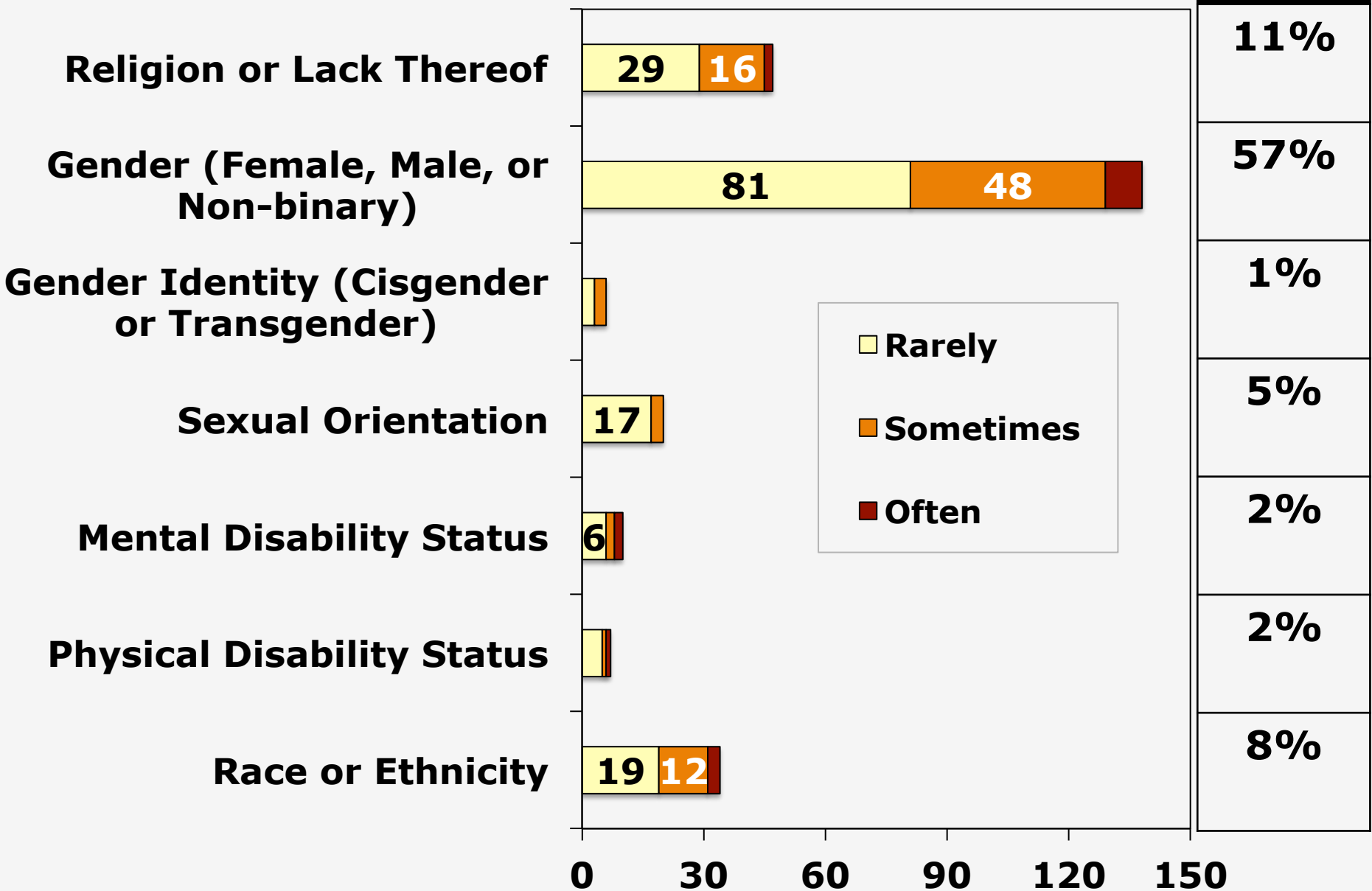
How often do you hear the following language from your PEERS?



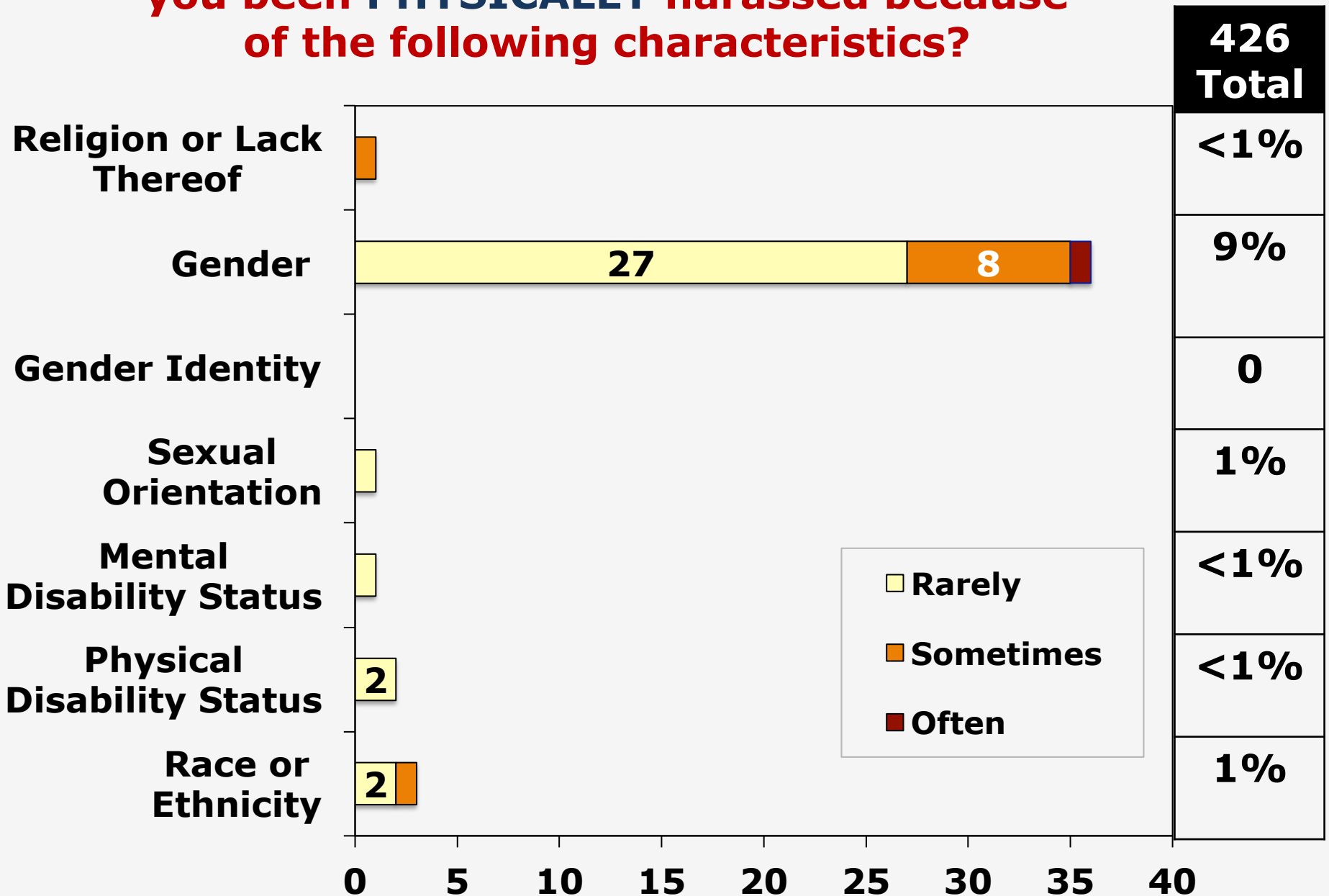
How often do you hear the following language from your SUPERVISOR?



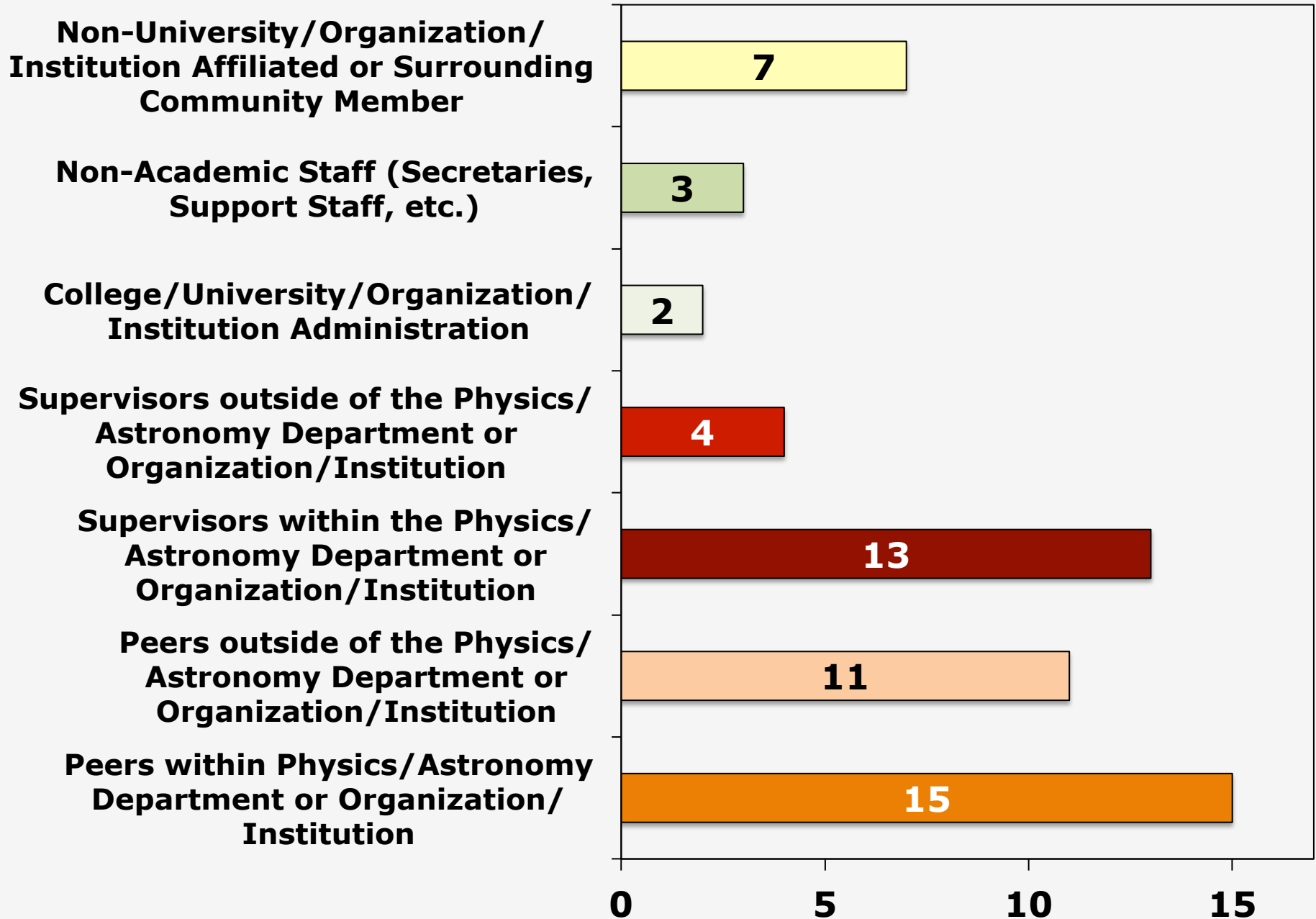
In your current position, how often have you been **VERBALLY harassed because of the following characteristics?**



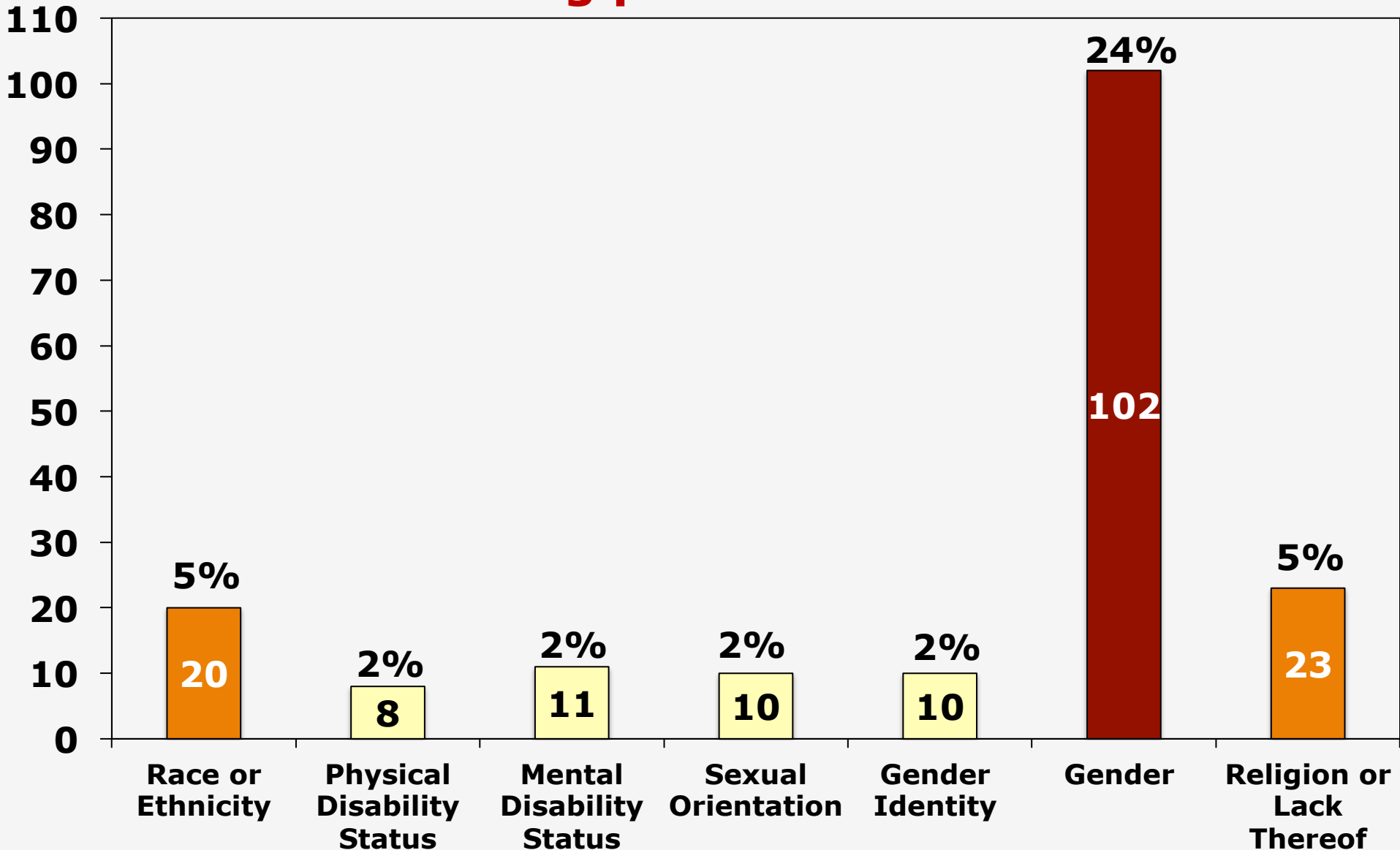
In your current position, how often have you been **PHYSICALLY harassed because of the following characteristics?**



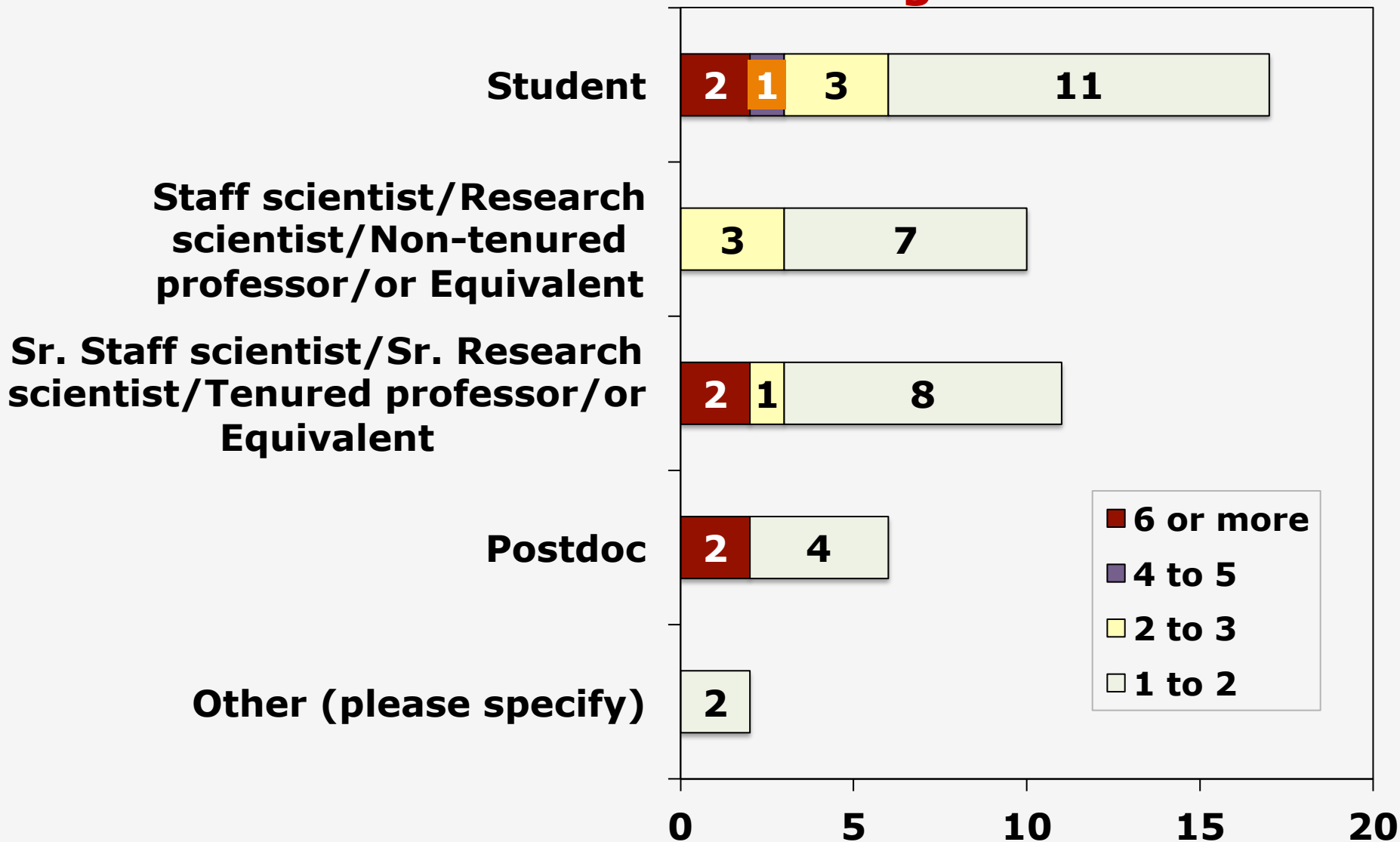
What group(s) was the individual(s) that **PHYSICALLY** harassed you a member of?



In your current position, do you feel or have you ever felt unsafe because of any of the following personal characteristics?



In your current position, how many classes/meetings/conferences/field work/opportunities/etc. have you skipped per month because of feeling unsafe?





Survey Preliminary Conclusions

- Scientists in the astronomical and planetary science communities experience and witness inappropriate language, verbal harassment, and physical assault.
- Abuses that relate to gender are those that appear in the greatest proportion in this sample.
- Inappropriate comments, harassment, and assault lead to a number of scientists feeling unsafe in their workplaces, and pursuing fewer scholarly opportunities as a direct result of these experiences.

The Solution

The problem is **HARASSMENT**

Why is a solution needed? And why should we be the community to fix this greater societal issue?

- Human Decency
- Because it's 2015
- Because we're currently in the spotlight and forefront of this issue
- Because we're some of the most intelligent people of the planet and we can do better
- Because we brag about wanting to be diverse and inclusive
- Because the science in this field is being directly impacted

HUMAN DECENCY!



How to Make it **STOP:** **Reporting**

- Read the policy for your university, facility, or business to know what to do
- Document issues
- Write a statement or give a testimony to the Office noted in policy
- Efforts will be made as much as possible to ensure privacy in the issue
- At no point is the person, university, workplace, etc. allowed to retaliate against a harassment complaint
 - If the person becomes intimidating or threatening in any way, report to the proper authorities (campus security, police)
- **Talk to someone**

While at The DPS



- The Anti-Harassment Statement of the AAS:
“Any individual covered by this policy,
<http://aas.org/policies/anti-harassment-policy>,
who believes that he or she has been subjected to
harassment should contact the AAS Executive
Officer or other Society Officer. Other Society
Officers include the President, past President or
President-elect, senior Vice Presidents, Secretary
and Treasurer. He or she is not required or
expected to discuss the concern with the alleged
offender. All complaints will be treated seriously
and be investigated promptly. Confidentiality will
be honored to the extent permitted as long as the
rights of others are not compromised.”



Kevin Marvel, AAS
Executive Officer



Andy Rivkin,
DPS Treasurer



Anne Verbiscer,
DPS Secretary



Jason Barnes,
DPS Vice-Chair



Bonnie Buratti,
DPS Chair

How to Make it STOP: Accountability

- **EVERYONE** here can work within their universities, departments, sub-fields, and professional societies to discuss what they can do to provide a safe, inclusive environment that is conducive to our scientists being able to do the best science possible, as a group of the best people possible.
- AAS Ethics Task Force to update AAS Ethics Statement:
<https://aas.org/posts/news/2015/10/aas-ethics-task-force-seeks-member-comments-suggestions>



Dara Norman



Jack Burns



Christine Jones

How to Make it STOP: Being an 'Ally'

Ally

Verb: 1. Combine or unite a resource or commodity with (another) for mutual benefit. 2. Side with or support (someone or something).

Allyship is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people.

(<https://theantioppressionnetwork.wordpress.com/allyship/>)

Allyship is about understanding that you don't know everything, have not lived every experience, and cannot fully ever understand what another person is experiencing, yet you can respect their experiences.

Additional Resources

- Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy's Anti-Harassment page:
<http://www.aas.org/cswa/harassment.html>
- Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy's Unofficial Blog:
<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com>
- Women in Planetary Science's Blog:
<http://womeninplanetaryscience.wordpress.com/blogroll/>
- Committee on the Status of Minorities in Astronomy's Unofficial Blog:
<http://astronomyincolor.blogspot.com>
- Ally Blog Post by Stephen Rinehart:
<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2014/03/guest-post-sometimes-being-good-isnt.html>
- Resources when all else fails:
<http://www.aauw.org/resource/sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace-additional-resources/>
- Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network page on Sexual Harassment:
<https://rainn.org/get-information/types-of-sexual-assault/sexual-harassment>
- 10 Things All 'Allies' Need to Know by Jamie Utt:
<http://everydayfeminism.com/2013/11/things-allies-need-to-know/>
- How to Be an Ally:
<https://theantioppressionnetwork.wordpress.com/allyship/>

Be the change