

## APPENDIX

### Esperanza: SOSH Of An Elementary School Teacher By Another Elementary School Teacher

When Miriam started working as a teacher at an elementary school, she began to be harassed by Juan. He constantly made comments of a sexual nature and even tried to touch her without her consent. Apparently, she was not the first coworker whom Juan had harassed. When Miriam explained what was happening to her female colleagues, their general reaction was to downplay the incidents and dismiss Miriam as someone who was prone to exaggeration: “it’s not that big of a deal.” Esperanza was the only person who took Miriam’s side and publicly defended her. At that moment, Esperanza began to suffer Second Order of Sexual Harassment. Juan’s harassment of Esperanza primarily focused on badmouthing her to undermine her professional reputation. His harassment included attacking every opinion Esperanza expressed during faculty meetings, making fun of her in front of her students’ families, and verbally attacking students who were Esperanza’s mentees.

Both Miriam and Esperanza were disappointed in the reaction of the rest of their colleagues. At first, none of them supported Esperanza, and some even criticized her, just as they had done with Miriam. For Esperanza, support from some of her students’ families and from other friends has played an essential role in reassuring her and giving her strength.

Esperanza emphasizes that the school did not have any policy whatsoever addressing the issue. Neither the school’s leadership nor the state education inspectorate took a clear position on the issue.

Now that time has passed, Esperanza has realized that her defense of Miriam was impulsive and improvised. She did not reflect on what would have been the most effective way to help Miriam or consider the effects of her intervention.

## Javier: A High School Professor Who Experienced SOSH From A Student

Javier, a high school teacher, became a victim of SOSH when he came to the defense of a student, Lorena, who was physically and psychologically abused by one of her classmates and harassed by other classmates.

Oscar and Lorena were in some sort of romantic relationship. Essentially from the beginning of their relationship, Oscar debased Lorena, made fun of her physical appearance by referring to her in derogatory terms such as fat, ugly, and four-eyes and at times physically assaulting her: hitting her hard enough to leave bruises, kicking her to the floor, and pulling her hair to drag her head to the ground. Javier was particularly aware of the situation because he had seen some photographs passed around the school that showed Lorena and Oscar performing sexual acts while others watched.

In light of the situation, it seemed clear to Javier that he should support Lorena. Javier would react to any abuse that Oscar would inflict upon Lorena by punishing Oscar in some way, usually suspending him. Shortly thereafter, Oscar began to retaliate against Javier by talking back, yelling, and insulting or belittling him in front of other students.

The students stood aside when Oscar attacked Javier and refused to voice an opinion. Most teachers blamed Lorena for the abuse because she was the one going out with Oscar. As for the attacks on Javier, no one intervened to support Javier. No one told him anything directly.

Javier emphasizes that the high school does not have any specific measures or an institutional policy to combat violence: "That's the main obstacle." According to Javier, the situation can only be overcome if the high school adopts a clear zero tolerance policy toward any type of violence, and that policy would have to be backed up with clear steps taken by the institution itself to intervene in the matter. "Only in such a way will the entire student body and

the faculty become aware of how to confront Oscar and anyone else in an unambiguous and uniform manner”.

### Sara: SOSH In A University Setting

Sara is a professor and researcher at a public university in Spain. She has always had very close ties to several social movements, especially women’s rights movements. Sara belongs to a research center that has also paid great attention to the fight against gender violence since it was founded in the 1990s. One of the points of its code of conduct even refers to gender violence.

Sara’s narrative focuses on the case of a male professor who systematically sexually harassed women, mainly students. Many people have admitted over the years that they knew about this professor’s predatory practices. However, people always discussed it as office gossip, and no formal complaints were ever filed.

In 2011 a student asked the individuals involved with the research center to help her file a complaint about the harassment she had experienced.

Sara has suffered greatly from SOSH. Many people have decided to distance themselves from her and cut off all ties with her research center. Some have acted in this way because they supported the harasser. Others merely wanted to avoid becoming another target of the attacks because they believed that those who were attacking Sara and her research center had more power, and they preferred to be on the “winning” side.

The SOSH that Sara has experienced has generally consisted of anonymous posts on social networks, mass emails, phone calls made to places where she was going to speak at a conference, letters to her colleagues at the university and even her students. According to Sara, the person or persons behind these defamatory messages have never signed their names to prevent Sara from taking legal action against them. Sara believes that the harassment was always intended to discredit

her, cut her academic career short, and convince her to desist in her efforts to fight violence. Sara says that these actions clearly sought to spread the message that “breaking the silence at universities can result not only in attacks targeting victims but also retaliations against people who support victims.”

#### David: SOSH From Relatives And Friends

David’s sister was sexually abused when she was a child by Raul, an adult family friend who worked as her tutor. When David learned about what had happened, he immediately supported his sister. At that moment, Raul began to attack David by spreading lies about him among his family and friends, at a foundation in which he was involved, and among David’s close friends.

According to David’s interpretation of the situation, Raul knew that David was going to expose what he did, so Raul decided to attack David before David could do anything.

At first, the people in David’s life believed Raul. David believes that people reacted in this way because they fully believed Raul, who had earned the trust and complicity of everyone around him. David emphasized that his relationships with family members and friends were insincere. These were not strong relationships where they would speak with David directly to verify the harasser’s disparaging claims against him. The only people in David’s family who supported him were his mom and his sister, who was also being savagely slandered by her abuser.

David has reached the conclusion that the role that Raul played in various settings was essential to his ability to commit SOSH. In the environments where Raul had earned trust—with the adults in the family—or where he had some degree of authority—among young people and their friends—he found people who enabled the SOSH. However, in the spaces where David had established true friendships, his friends showed their solidarity with David and helped him.

At first, the situation made him feel like he would descend into despair; however, in the end, and thanks to the support of some of his friends, he was able to stand up and put a stop to the SOSH.

#### Marina: A Worker's Experience Of SOSH From Her Boss At A Non-Profit Foundation

Marina worked at a foundation that supported women who were victims of violence and their children. One of Marina's clients informed her that she had evidence that another woman had committed several acts of violence against her own daughter, including sex abuse. Marina's observations led her to believe that what her client was saying was true; thus, Marina informed her superiors about the matter. As a result, an interview was scheduled with other professionals and the woman accused of abusing her child. During that meeting, the accused abuser tried to physically assault Marina and the other professionals in the room, and she vehemently denied the accusations that she had abused her daughter. After that incident, Marina was surprised when she and her coworkers were asked to "turn the page" and never mention the matter again. Marina even heard rumors that some sort of action might be taken against the woman who had reported the suspected abuse. Marina managed to prevent any retaliation against the other woman; however, she did not succeed in getting the foundation to investigate the case further or, at the very least, take the girl to the doctor to check on her. After that moment, Marina began to be constantly harassed by the woman who was her superior. This harassment consisted of her boss constantly questioning Marina's professionalism, mainly in the presence of the women with whom Marina worked and trying to isolate Marina from her coworkers. Marina understood her boss's actions as an attempt to pressure Marina into leaving.

Marina emphasizes that better guidance would have allowed her to take the victim's side but to do so without putting herself into such a vulnerable position. She also emphasizes that, for

her, one of the main problems was the lack of other people who took a stand. “Silence is extremely important for impunity.” Marina recommends that people who decide to take a stand and report this type of case try to develop a network with others and not act on their own. “Protecting yourself is important, and having a network of individuals, either within the institution, or a network of other people who have had similar experiences, might be key”

#### Wendy: SOSH From A Colleague In A Political Party

Wendy is an active member of a political party whose code of conduct includes a zero tolerance policy toward any type of violence. Between 2014 and 2015, Lucas began to harass his colleagues, mainly by spreading false rumors and verbally disrespecting them. His most intense harassment targeted two female members of the organization. At that time, Wendy was a member of the organization’s statutory guarantees committee, and Wendy used her position on that committee to support her colleagues who were being harassed by Lucas. The committee decided to expel Lucas from the organization. That was when Wendy began to experience SOSH from Lucas. As his first attack, he published an article in which he tried to publicly discredit her, said she was manipulative, and called her a bully. The article’s title included Wendy’s full name, and it was published alongside a personal photo that Wendy had previously asked, over email, that no one use for any political purposes due to its sentimental value for her.

Lucas published those messages through his personal accounts on social networks; however, some local newspapers were quick to give him a forum for his attacks.

Wendy has positive memories of the reactions of people around her. She asked her caucus to take a clear stand against these attacks, and her fellow party members decided to make an appearance at the trial against Lucas and asked others to do so as well. For Wendy, their presence was key to the success of her case because the party’s position led many others to take a stand, and

over time, Lucas became isolated. Wendy emphasizes two other elements that were essential to her success. First, she and her colleagues responded in a calm, measured manner, which was a clear sign of their dignity and commitment to the struggle of her political party. Second, the organization already had a policy on the matter. Wendy believes that taking action would have been impossible if there had not been protocols or policies and people who were committed to enforcing them because that would have meant that there was no legal framework to support her case.