Learning Environment Office
Fostering a Climate of Respect & Inclusion

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University of New Mexico School of Medicine (UNM SOM)

Overview

- Learner mistreatment within medical education

- History and overview of Learning Environment Office (LEO)

- Mistreatment data at UNM

- Impact of LEO's work thus far

- Expansion goals

Learner mistreatment within medical education is an ongoing national issue.

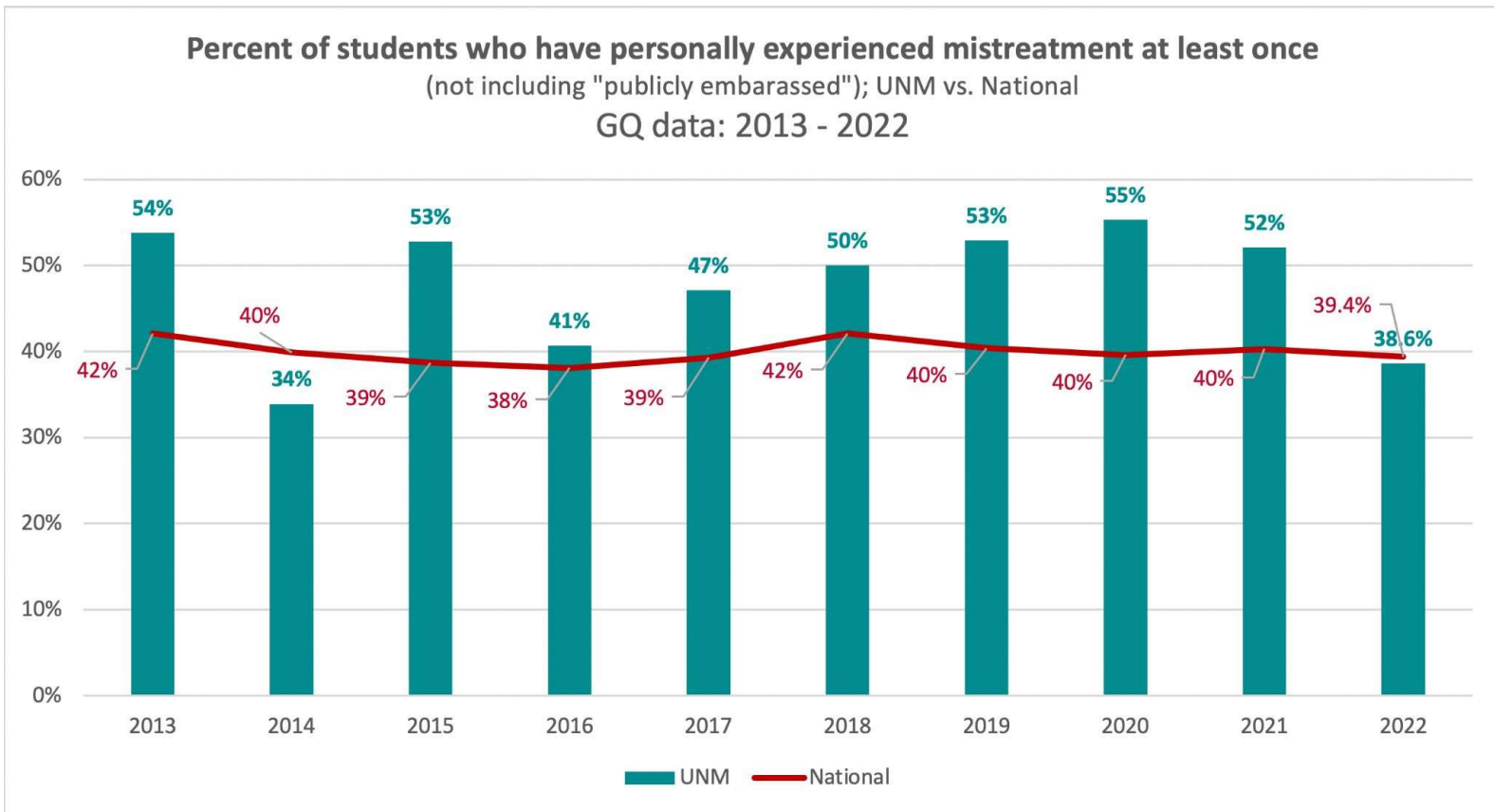In a breakthrough study from the 1980s, one physician noted that…

"There is no question whatever about the abuse the students suffer at the hands of medical schools… it occurs with great frequency and marks most of us for the rest of our professional lives."

Source: Rosenberg DA, Silver HK. Medical Student Abuse: An Unnecessary and Preventable Cause of Stress. JAMA. 1984;251(6):739-742.

This cycle of mistreatment continues within medical education today.

This is evidenced by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Graduate Questionnaire (GQ), which asks medical school graduates about experiences with mistreatment, including behaviors such as public humiliation, neglect, and discrimination.

UNM SOM has higher rates of learner mistreatment than national average

Percent of students who have personally experienced mistreatment at least once
(not including "publicly embarassed"); UNM vs. National
GQ data: 2013 - 2022

UNM values (teal bars): 2013: 54%, 2014: 34%, 2015: 53%, 2016: 41%, 2017: 47%, 2018: 50%, 2019: 53%, 2020: 55%, 2021: 52%, 2022: 38.6%

National values (red line): 2013: 42%, 2014: 40%, 2015: 39%, 2016: 38%, 2017: 39%, 2018: 42%, 2019: 40%, 2020: 40%, 2021: 40%, 2022: 39.4%

Legend: ■ UNM ── National

UNM HEALTH SCIENCES

Learner Mistreatment

Mistreatment may be either intentional or unintentional and occurs when **behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others** and **unreasonably interferes with the learning process**.
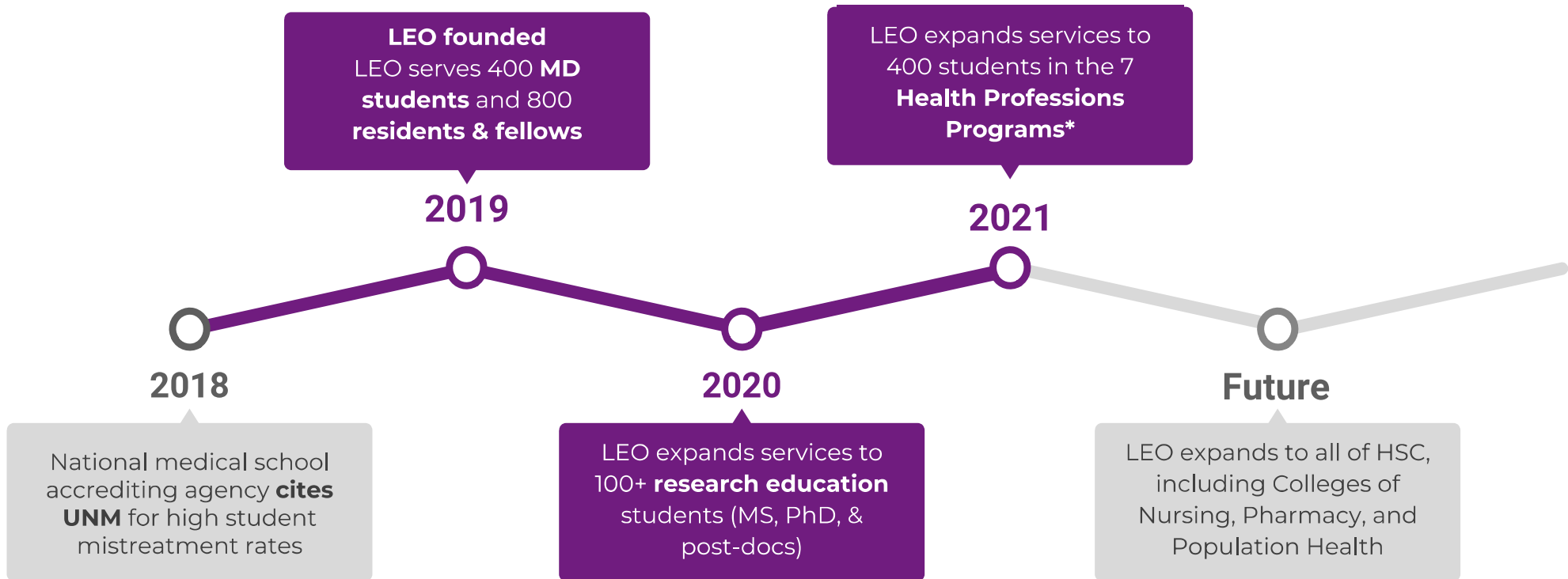
Examples of mistreatment include:

- sexual harassment
- discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation or identity
- public humiliation
- psychological or physical punishment
- the use of grading and other forms of assessment in a punitive manner

AAMC

Mistreatment is linked to health & wellbeing

- Mistreatment of medical learners is tied to **higher rates of burnout, depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders**.
- Learners who report being frequently mistreated are **nearly three times more likely to experience burnout and suicidal ideation.**
- Learner mistreatment also connects with **poorer patient outcomes:** 67% of those witnessing disruptive behavior felt this behavior contributed to adverse patient events, and 27% felt it contributed to patient mortality.
- **Thus, mistreatment impacts the health and wellbeing of our physician workforce and communities.**

HEALTH SCIENCES

LEO's Services

LEO founded
LEO serves 400 **MD students** and 800 **residents & fellows**

2019

LEO expands services to 400 students in the 7 **Health Professions Programs***

2021

2018

National medical school accrediting agency **cites UNM** for high student mistreatment rates

2020

LEO expands services to 100+ **research education** students (MS, PhD, & post-docs)

Future

LEO expands to all of HSC, including Colleges of Nursing, Pharmacy, and Population Health

*Physician Assistant, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Radiological Sciences, Emergency Medical Services, Medical Lab Science, Dental Hygiene

UNM School of Medicine Learning Environment Office

Mission

To foster an inclusive learning environment where teachers, staff, and learners thrive, and relationships are mutually respectful and beneficial to each other and to institutional climate.

Goals

- Increase and recognize exemplary behavior
- Decrease incidents of learner mistreatment

Core values

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Connection

GET TO KNOW THE LEO TEAM!

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LEO's Goals

1. Increase and recognize exemplary behavior

- Learning Environment & Professional Wellbeing Speaker Series

- iTeach acknowledgements

- Building Inclusive Environments collaboration with HSC OfDEI

- Teaching excellence and Learning Environment Champions

2. Reduce incidents of mistreatment

- Reporting system & consistent response process

- Longitudinal data tracking and trend identification

- Interventions based on trends

- Educational workshops

- Policy enhancements

HEALTH SCIENCES

The Learning Environment

The Learning Environment encompasses the **attitudes, standards, and tone** set by the instructor and the institution.

It's the **formal and informal aspects of training** such as educational atmosphere, as well as how educational policies and procedures are enacted.

Prevention

Proactive work to ensure that positive or neutral learning environments don't become negative

- 2 Speaker Series
- Workshops and trainings
  - Skill building for teaching and giving feedback
  - Conflict transformation
  - Upstander/Bystander Training
  - Responding to Microaggressions
  - Tailored Learning Environment workshops
- Anti-Racism and gender equity work
- Transparency and data reporting
- Consultations with departments/programs
- Building Inclusive Leadership
- Serving on various committees

Intervention

Intervening in negative learning environments and incidents of mistreatment

- Mistreatment reporting system with standardized response process
- Monitoring of high-incidence environments
- Mistreatment Response Committee
- Consultations with departments/audits
- Learning Environment Audits
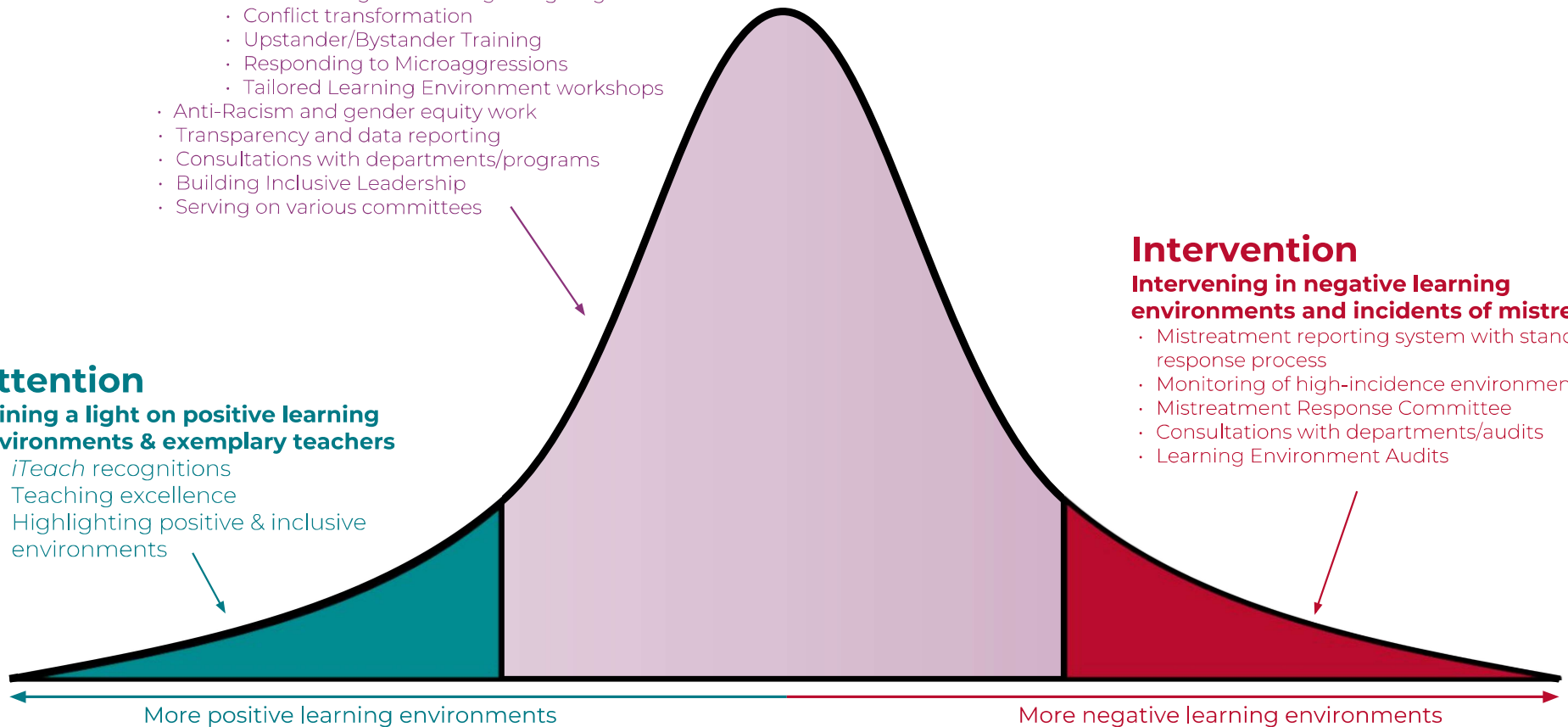
Attention

Shining a light on positive learning environments & exemplary teachers

- *iTeach* recognitions
- Teaching excellence
- Highlighting positive & inclusive environments

← More positive learning environments

More negative learning environments →

STRATEGIES → DIRECT OUTPUTS → DESIRED OUTCOMES → DESIRED IMPACTS

Attention → iTeach acknowledgements

Prevention → Education and knowledge- and skill-building to increase awareness prevent mistreatment

Intervention → Reporting system & consistent response, Trauma-informed, Equity-based approaches

- Increase in # of iTeach acknowledgments over time
- Engagement in education activities
- Improved self-reported understanding of content areas
- Increase in # of mistreatment reports over time

- Improved culture and climate of SOM
- Increase in supportive, respectful, and inclusive learning environments
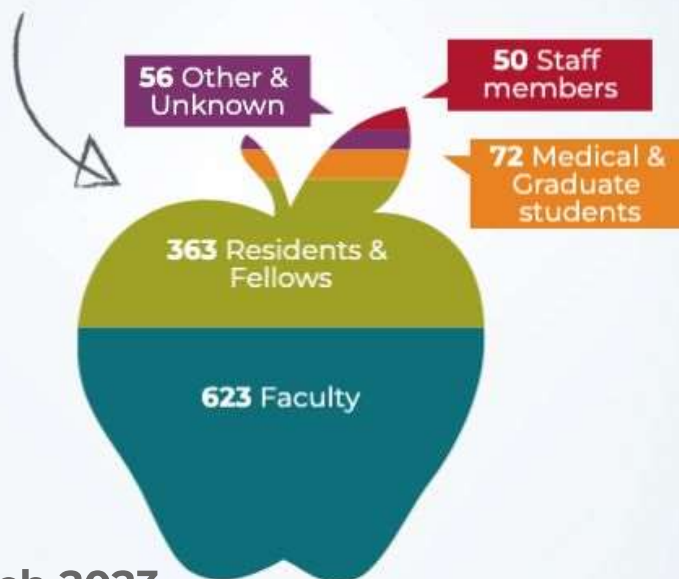- Increase in exemplary behavior
- Decrease in incidents of mistreatment

Aug 2019 - March 2023

ADDRESSING MISTREATMENT:
Data Review
July 24, 2019 - March 31, 2023

LEO shares these data to create greater transparency in the UNM SOM community about mistreatment. We use these data to inform our work to reduce and prevent mistreatment, and to most effectively respond to incidents that occur.

Since LEO began collecting reports of mistreatment in July 2019, we have received **665 reports of mistreatment**.
We can break those down this way:

Some incidents are reported more than once (for example, by a few different witnesses). When we remove these 63 duplicate reports, we have **reports of 602 separate incidents.**

We have received 37 reports of behavior that, after investigation, we have determined does not rise to the level of mistreatment. This is 5.6% of all reports made.

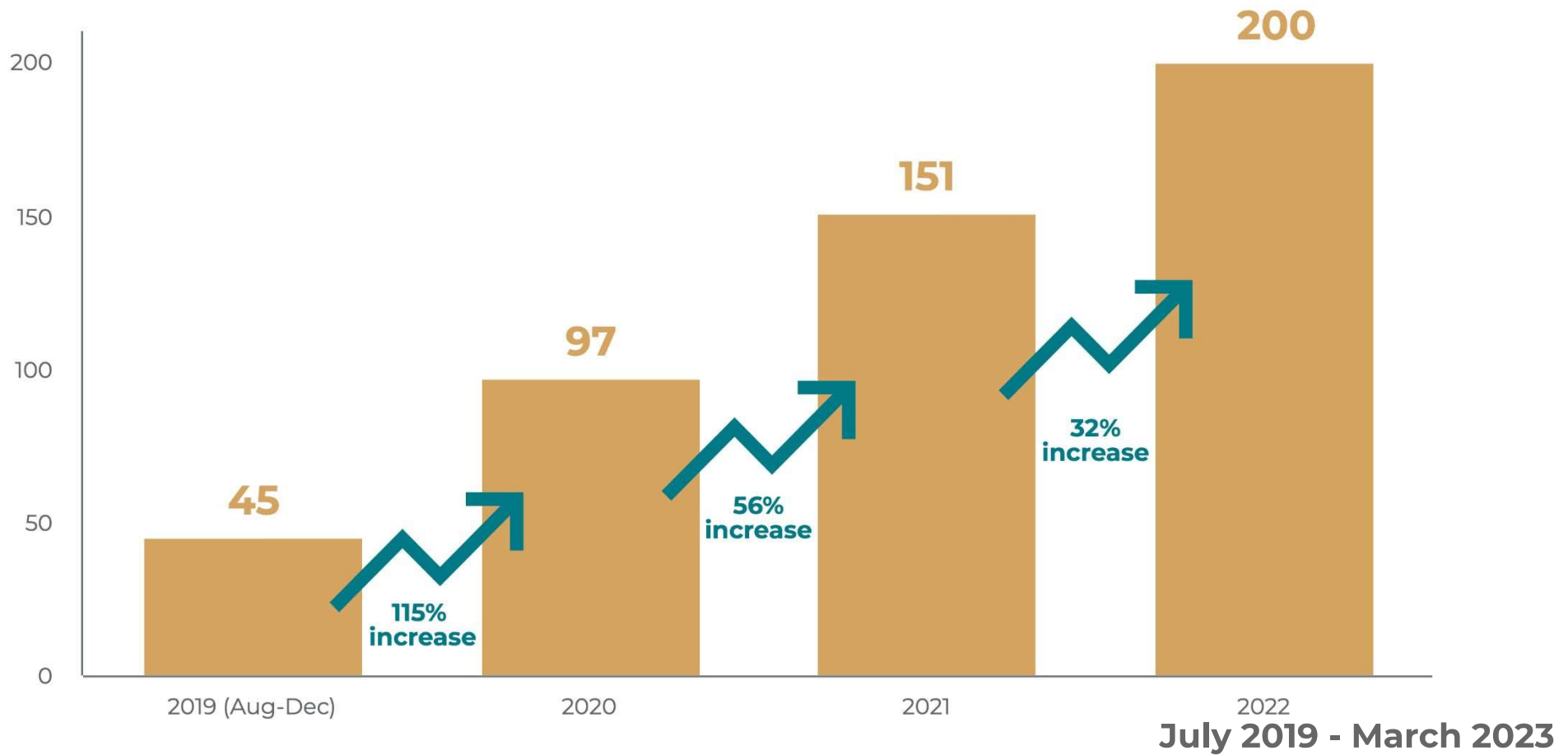Once we remove these 37, we are left with **565 unique incidents of mistreatment, which is 85% of all reports made.**

■ Unique incidents of mistreatment (84.96%)
■ Duplicate reports (9.47%)
■ Does not rise to the level of mistreatment (5.56%)

How many reports are coming to LEO each month?

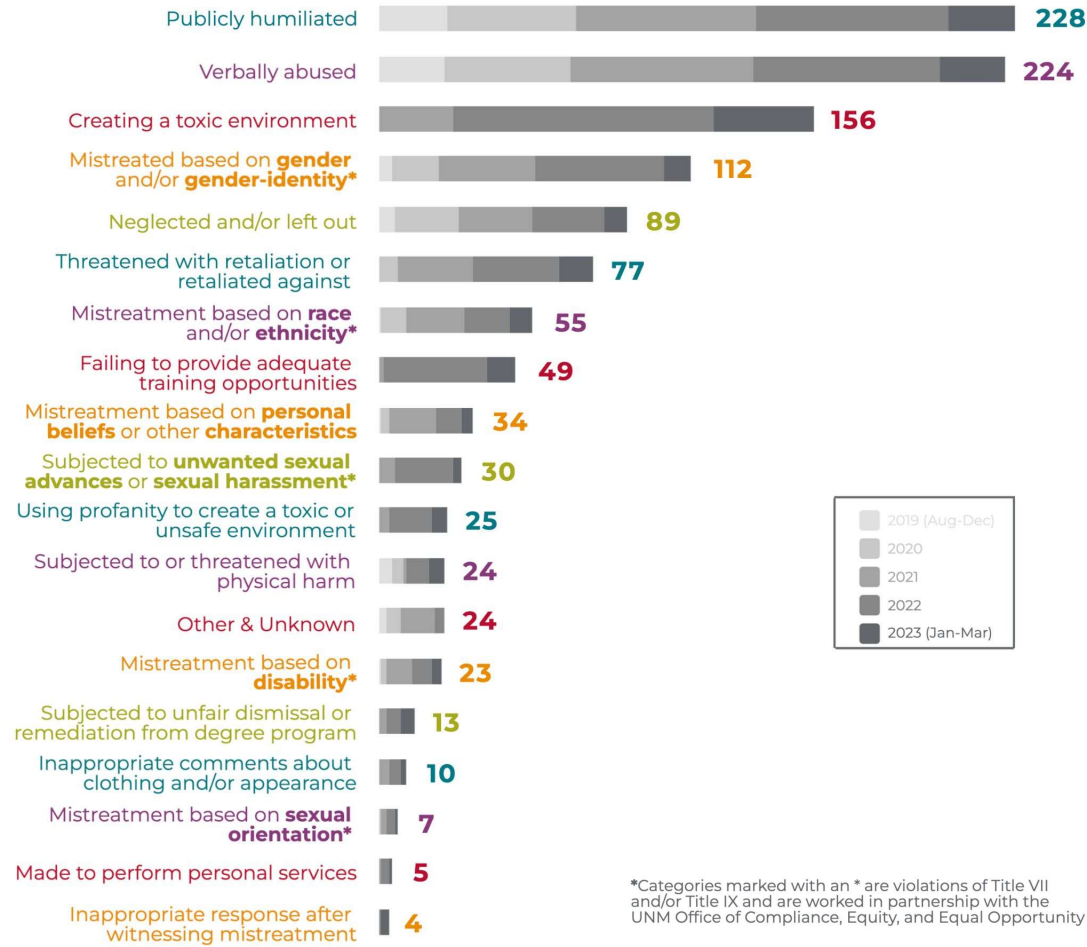n = 665, all reports filed to LEO

Average Number of Reports to LEO per Month
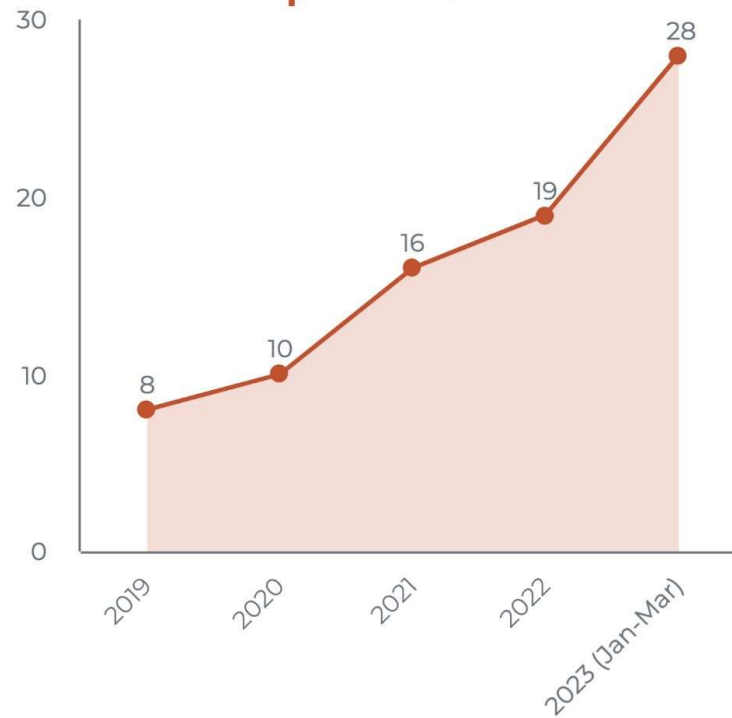
July 2019 - March 2023

Types of Mistreatment

Each incident can include multiple types of mistreatment
n = 565 unique incidents of mistreatment

Type	Value
Publicly humiliated	228
Verbally abused	224
Creating a toxic environment	156
Mistreated based on **gender** and/or **gender-identity***	112
Neglected and/or left out	89
Threatened with retaliation or retaliated against	77
Mistreatment based on **race** and/or **ethnicity***	55
Failing to provide adequate training opportunities	49
Mistreatment based on **personal beliefs** or other **characteristics**	34
Subjected to **unwanted sexual advances** or **sexual harassment***	30
Using profanity to create a toxic or unsafe environment	25
Subjected to or threatened with physical harm	24
Other & Unknown	24
Mistreatment based on **disability***	23
Subjected to unfair dismissal or remediation from degree program	13
Inappropriate comments about clothing and/or appearance	10
Mistreatment based on **sexual orientation***	7
Made to perform personal services	5
Inappropriate response after witnessing mistreatment	4

Legend:
- 2019 (Aug-Dec)
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023 (Jan-Mar)

*Categories marked with an * are violations of Title VII and/or Title IX and are worked in partnership with the UNM Office of Compliance, Equity, and Equal Opportunity

July 2019 - March 2023

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UNM SCHOOL OF MEDICINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OFFICE

FAQ: What kinds of identity-based mistreatment are being reported?

Answer: Primarily offensive language, as well as differential treatment based on identity (for example, a provider who is generally kinder to residents who are men than to residents who are women). Check out the breakdown below, and remember that incidents may fall in multiple categories.

Gender & Gender-Identity

30
50
50
23
112

Race & Ethnicity

26
29
10
55

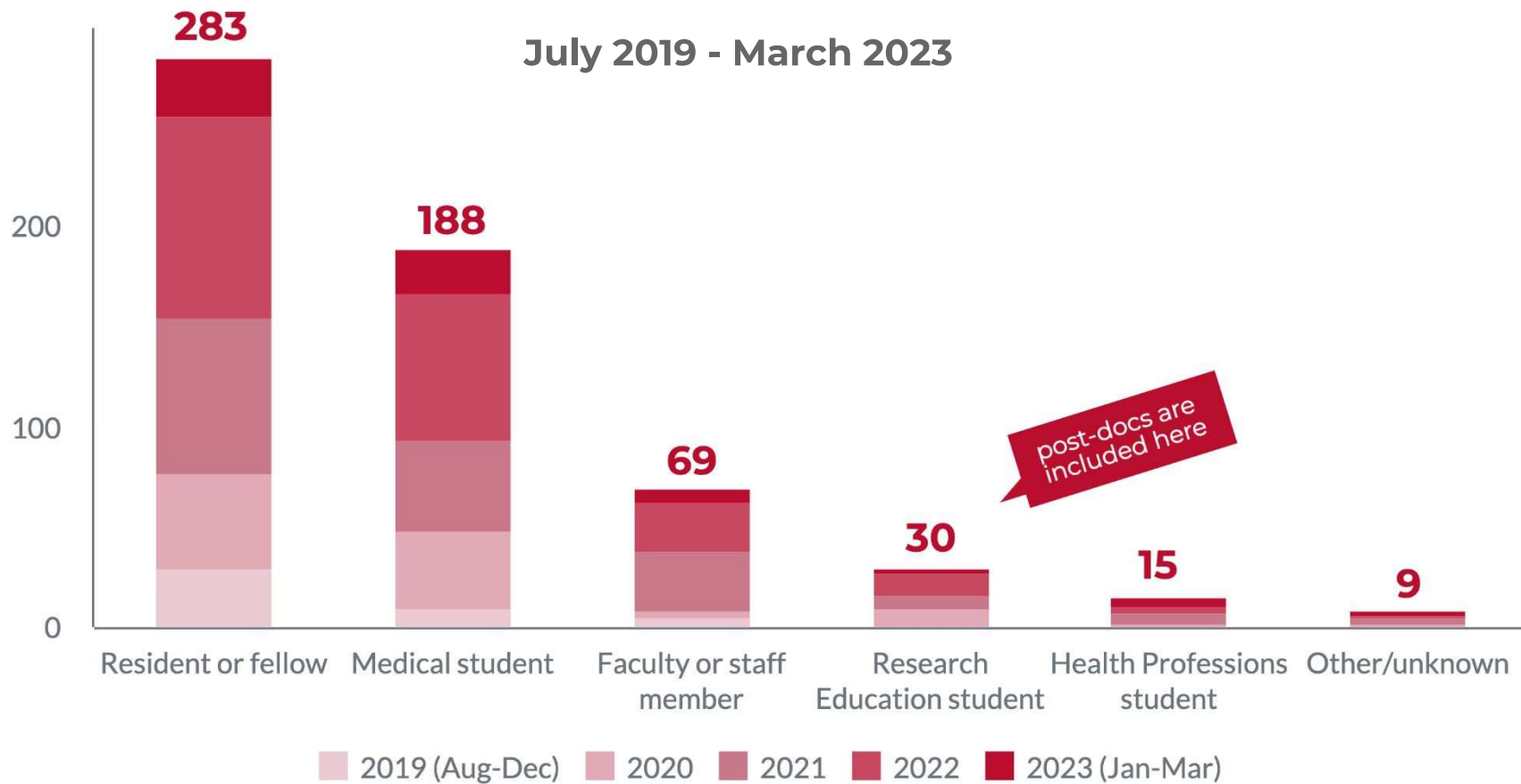### Disability

9
9
14
23
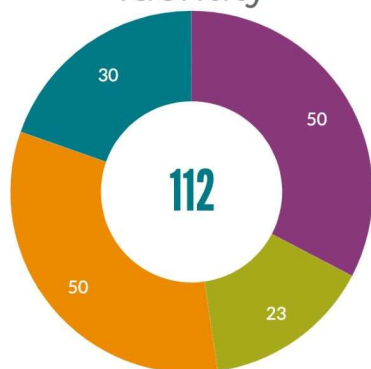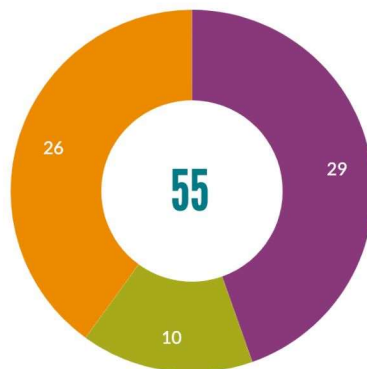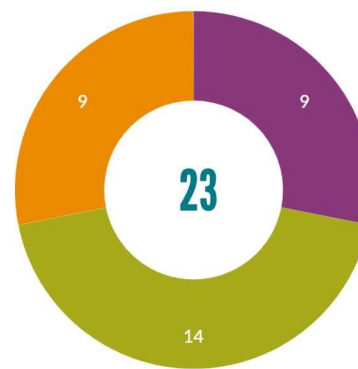
⊙ Subjected to offensive remarks or names about identity

⊙ Denied opportunities and/or received lower grades/evaluations due to identity rather than performance

⊙ Other offensive behaviors related to identity

⊙ Subjected to unwanted sexual advances

July 2019 - March 2023
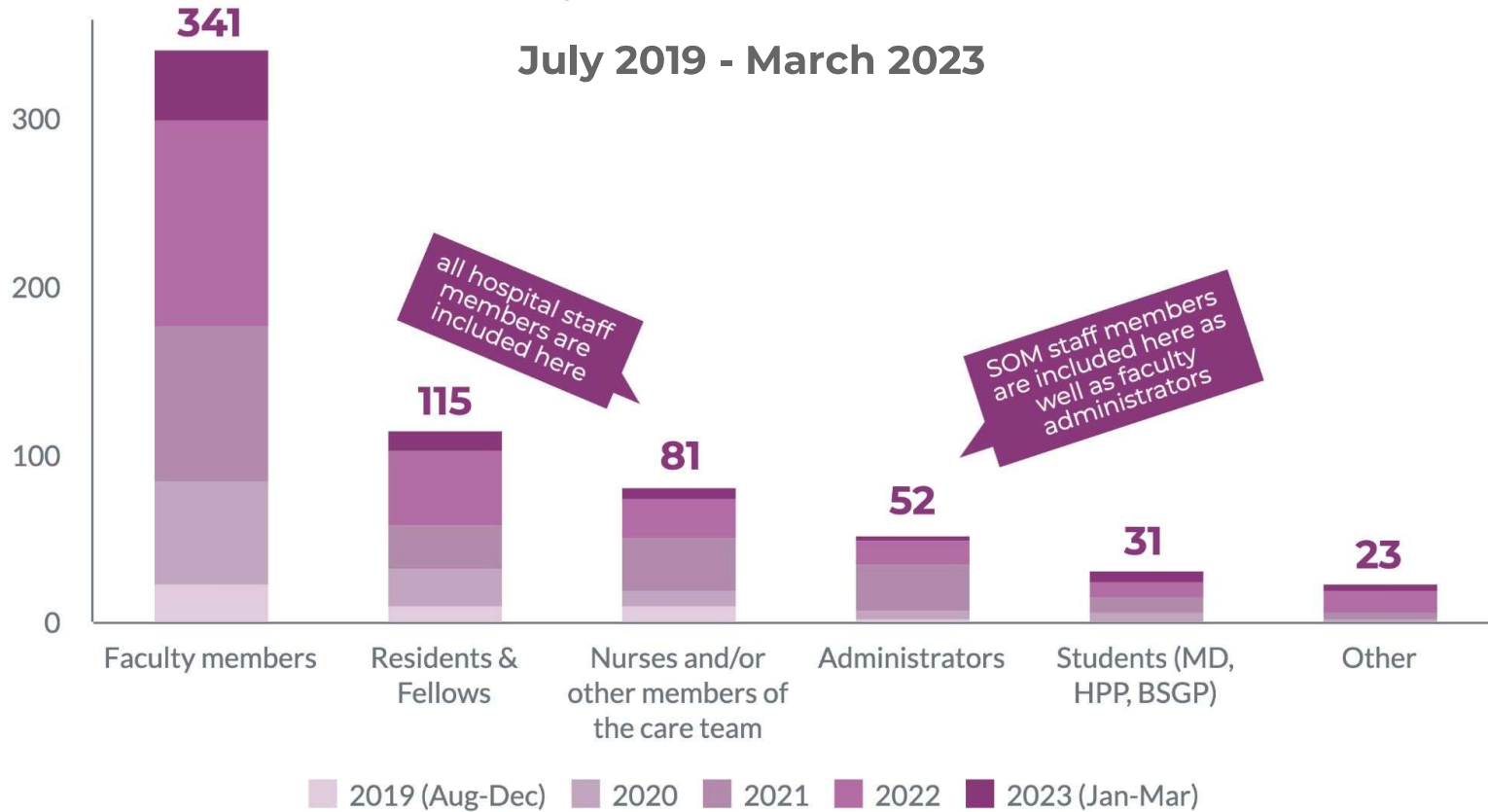
How does mistreatment impact learners?

Learners are invited to share how the mistreatment incident has negatively impacted them from a drop-down menu. Learners can select as many as apply.

N = 334 unique incidents of mistreatment

"This behavior negatively impacted my:"

Category	Percentage
Belief that UNM is a good place to learn and work	57%
Ability to work productively with the team	51%
Sense of safety in the learning environment	50%
Trust	43%
Sense of belonging at UNM	43%
Stress	40%
Ability to take care of patients	37%
Anxiety	35%
Burnout	29%
Self-esteem	27%
Ability to study or perform academically	26%
Motivation	25%
Ability to sleep	17%
Depression	16%
Physical health and/or wellness	12%
Other mental health issues	12%

July 2019 - March 2023

Being mistreated even once is correlated with significantly increased student burnout

Statistically Significant Results: Burnout Measures by Experience of Mistreatment
Scale of 1 (Never) to 7 (Every day)
Wellness & Learning Environment Survey administered Spring 2022
n = 285 UNM SOM medical students.

BO1. How often do you feel burned out from your work/studies?
- Mean: Not mistreated — 4.66
- Mean: Mistreated at least once — 5.38

BO2. How often do you feel you have become more callous toward people since you have started medical school?
- Mean: Not mistreated — 3.74
- Mean: Mistreated at least once — 4.68

BO3. How often do you feel lonely or isolated from your peers?
- Mean: Not mistreated — 3.94
- Mean: Mistreated at least once — 4.61

■ Mean: Not mistreated   ■ Mean: Mistreated at least once

Being mistreated even once is correlated with significantly decreased satisfaction at UNM

Statistically Significant Results: Learning Environment Measure by Experience of Mistreatment
Scale of 1 (Very dissatisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied)
Wellness & Learning Environment Survey administered Spring 2022
n = 285 UNM SOM medical students.

3.14   2.72

LE1a. Level of satisfaction with the learning environment and/or general culture at the SOM

■ Mean: Not mistreated   ■ Mean: Mistreated at least once

Disabled, LGBQ+, partnered, and high-debt students are significantly more likely to be mistreated than their peers

Statistically Significant Results: Percent of respondents who have been mistreated at least once in medical school
Wellness & Learning Environment Survey administered Spring 2022
n = 285 UNM SOM medical students

% of people in this category mistreated at least once

- Disabled: 57%
- Not disabled: 23%
- LGBQ+: 48%
- Straight: 21%
- Partnered: 32%
- Single: 19%
- Most debt: 38%
- No debt: 19%
- % of all respondents mistreated: 26%

Consider the 565 incidents of mistreatment received by LEO...

Considering these 565 unique incidents of mistreatment, here is the breakdown of how they have been responded to:

57
56
111
341
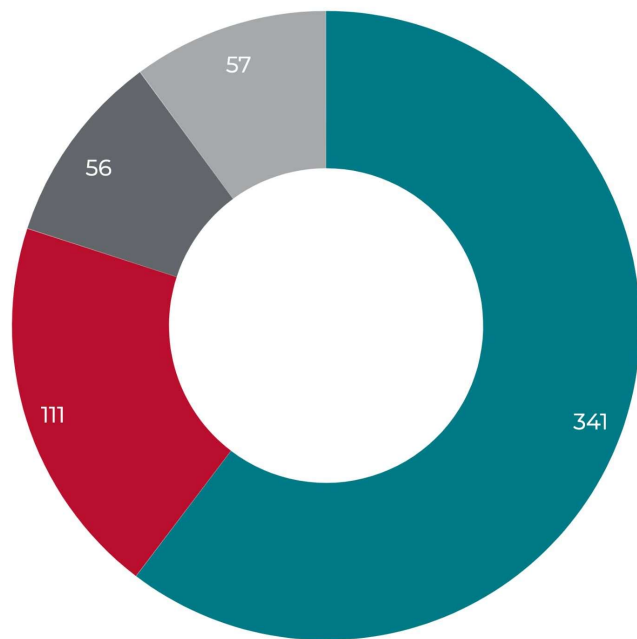
Early success: LEO's interventions are demonstrating promising successes. On average, 91% of those who have gone through LEO's interventions have not been reported again.

■ Action recommended (60.35%)   ■ Insufficient actionable information (19.65%)
■ Learner requested no action (9.91%)   ■ Remain open (10.09%)

July 2019 - March 2023

LEO is a national model

➢ LEO is the only office like this in the country

➢ LEO continues to receive calls from schools of medicine across the country looking to enhance their strategies to address mistreatment, some include

- ○ The Ohio State University
- ○ Baylor
- ○ Duke

Lessons from 3.5 years of LEO

➔ Students of color, women and non-binary folks, students with disabilities, and those who identify as LGBQ+ are more likely to be mistreated than their peers at UNM SOM

➔ Mistreatment is **more widespread** than we knew (this is not an issue of "a few bad apples")

➔ **Transformation of culture and systems takes time**

➔ Current staffing of LEO does not meet the needs of the SOM learners

➔ YET, **LEO is needed across the UNM Health Sciences Center** - to expand across UNM Health Sciences Center (HSC) to include nursing, pharmacy, and population health students

LEO Expansion

- LEO's total budget is $550k, half of which is appropriated through I&G (~$277k)

    ○ When LEO launched in 2019, $207k was from I&G

- To expand across the HSC, LEO must double its budget

Q & A

Learning Environment Office Mistreatment Response Pyramid
with Typical Actions Recommended by Level

Level 4
most severe incident(s)

Level 3
a documented pattern of behavior that has not responded to feedback or a singular severe incident

Level 2
a second documented non-severe incident or a first incident that is more severe and/or involves discrimination or harassment

Level 1
a first non-severe incident, no prior documented incidents

Levels 3 & 4: The Mistreatment Response Committee may recommend
- Level 1 & 2 actions, plus
- Clinical monitoring, such as a Level 2 Focused Professional Practice Evaluation
- Academic performance management
- Temporary removal from learners
- Delayed promotion timeline
- Removal from leadership duties
- Customized recommendations as appropriate up to and including termination

Level 2: LEO may recommend
- Level 1 actions, plus
- Individual improvement plan, such as communications coaching or relevant trainings
- No disciplinary actions can be recommended

Level 1: LEO may recommend
- Documented direct feedback from supervisor
- Reminder of relevant policies
- No disciplinary actions can be recommended

Reports of mistreatment that are out of scope for LEO are referred to UNMH, the VA, or other appropriate bodies | Reports of that do not rise to the level of mistreatment are not categorized on the pyramid
Adapted from Stanford's Mistreatment Response Pyramid and Vanderbilt's Professionalism Pyramid

UNM SOM student body diversity has increased over time

Race and ethnicity	Classes of 2011-2014	Classes of 2015-2018	Classes of 2019-2022	Classes of 2023-2026
	59% White **41% BIPOC**	44% White **56% BIPOC**	39% White **61% BIPOC**	32% White **68% BIPOC**
Gender*	Matriculating class of 2011	Matriculating class of 2015	Matriculating class of 2021	Matriculating class of 2026
	51% male **49% female**	44% male **56% female**	45% male **55% female**	36% Male **64% female**

NM HEALTH SCIENCES