



VERBAL ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

**How does it affect
undocumented, Hispanic women?**

Created by:
Naomi
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SUMMARY

My topic focuses on the verbal abuse of undocumented, Hispanic women in their places of employment, and how culture encourages this behavior.

Hispanic, immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to workplace harassment because they are often placed in positions that are low in status because of their documentation and sex/gender. This treatment can cause mental health issues like PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Many women employees feel that they have no other employment options, which makes them think that they cannot escape their situation. Verbal abuse can also be normalized, and the lines can be blurred as to what is acceptable behavior. This is a struggle that becomes internalized, and can live on from generation, to generation.

I interviewed my mother and my aunt who have a direct connection to this topic, as they have experienced this behavior in their workplaces. I created two illustrations that display their emotions and thoughts. Each illustration includes a short description of their story.

SUMMARY

I choose this topic because it is something I can relate to and clearly understand. I want people to be exposed to this issue, and to have a better understanding of it, which can lead to more conversations.

While exploring this topic I learned that verbal abuse is very common in the workplace and it can stem from issues like Machismo (male sense of masculinity dominated by sexual prowess and power), as well as discrimination over an employee's immigration status, and/or temporary contracts. Both of these reasons are used by harassers to incite fear in their employees.

This topic is connected to the publication of the ERA because this amendment guarantees equal rights to all sexes and genders. For many women, the ERA will give them the confidence to leave their abusive situations, and seek legal action. I am curious to see if, and how, this amendment will help women who are undocumented, or not legal citizens of the United States.

INTERVIEW

This first interview is with my mother. She is a 50 year old Hispanic woman who is undocumented. She has experienced verbal abuse from both her employers, and personal relationships.

"The verbal abuse affects everything because it stays with you. It makes you frustrated with your family, friends, etc. It makes you not want to do better because of the fear."

"They use the excuse that you are undocumented to make you do more labor. They threaten you knowing it is hard to find another job because of your legal status."

"My culture made it so parents teach their kids to stay quiet, and not be able to express themselves."

"They hurt you psychologically."

****Responses are translated from Spanish***

PAINTING



The painting's colors signify the people and the words that have stayed with my mom, that have consumed her, that have turned a blind eye to the abuse she has experienced. This causes her to direct the negativity back at herself.

INTERVIEW

This second interview is with my aunt, who is a 52 year old Hispanic woman who is undocumented.

My aunt has dealt with verbal abuse from customers and employees at her job, as well as from close friends.

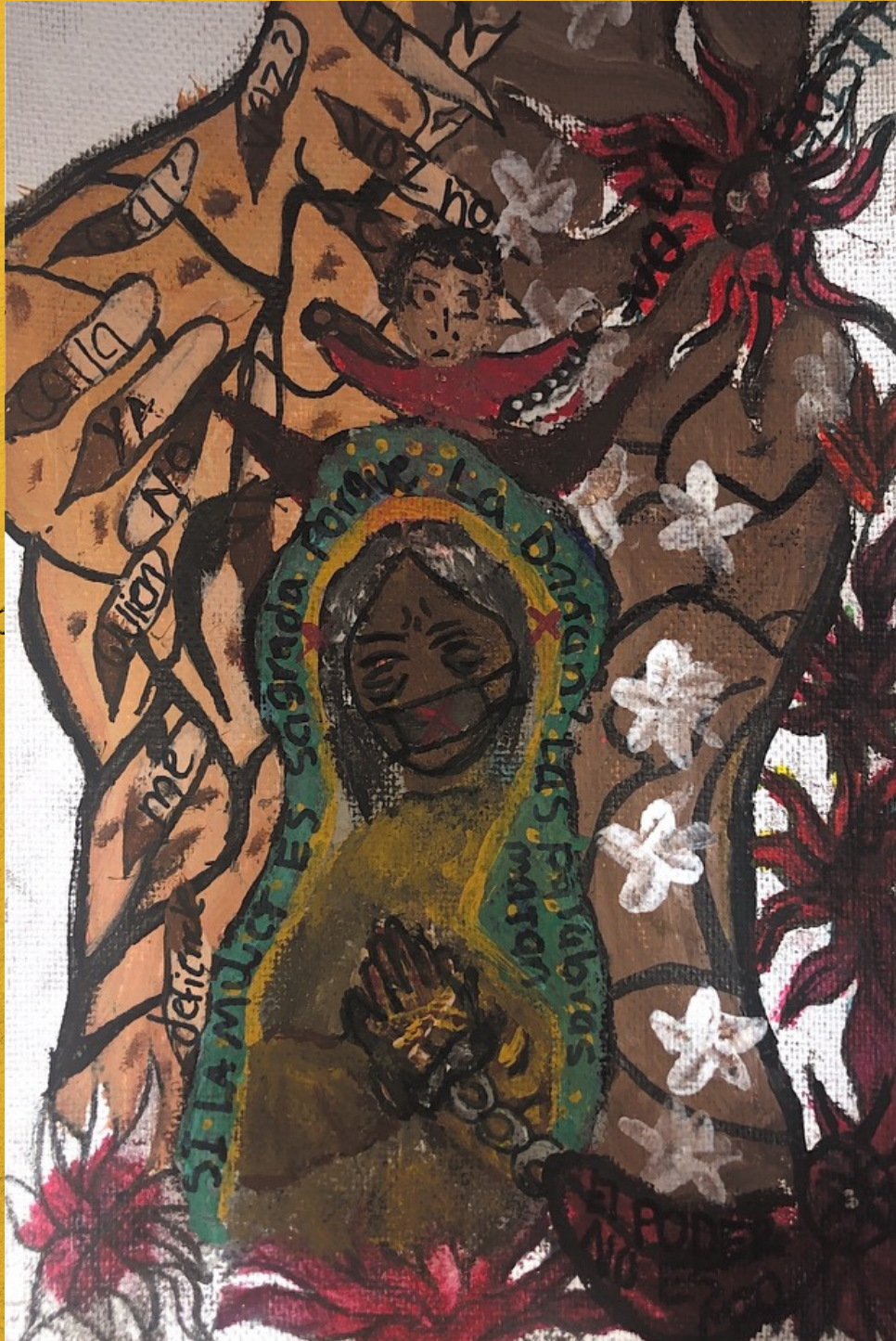
"The people who once were undocumented treat you the worst when they obtain their papers. They use it against you, to humiliate you, to rub it in your face."

"People in my culture see it like it is normal."

"I don't know where I would get help."

****Responses are translated from Spanish***

PAINTING



The Virgin Mary represents the irony of how in Hispanic culture women are supposed to represent purity, and hope, yet many are mistreated. They are screamed at to keep them in line, and "tied up" to benefit others. Women are constantly kept at war between themselves and the society around them.

LEARN MORE

Some potential solutions to this issue would be: listening to your emotions, and checking in with yourself to see if you are okay, also finding someone you trust to talk to (like a friend, a therapist, etc.)

Here are some place where undocumented women are welcomed and given help:

1. <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=124289>
2. <https://www.womenslaw.org/find-help/federal/immigration>
3. <https://optimumjoy.com/chicago-location/>
4. <http://dayoneservices.org/verbal-abuse/>

WORKS CITED

1. Youth Cast media group
(<https://urbanhealthmedia.org/hispanic-tradition-of-el-machismo/>)
2. One in four black/Hispanic workers report suffering workplace discrimination in the last year
(<https://www.amglaw.com/blog/2021/02/one-in-four-black-hispanic-workers-report-suffering-workplace-discrimination-in-the-last-year/>)
3. Workplace Sexual Harassment Among Low-Income Latinas (Latinas TRASH Violence at Work)
<https://www.uml.edu/Research/CPH-NEW/News/emerging-topics/Issue-63.aspx>

**"This project was made in collaboration with
Global Girl Media-Chicago, The Fund for Women's
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



My name is Naomi and I am a 18 year old high-school graduate planning on attending UIC in the fall. I am a blunt and funny person, that can come off as sarcastic. I live on the south-east side of Chicago and I am the proud daughter of immigrant parents. I am also the eldest sibling of three. I enjoy staying at home and getting lost in my own world. I like to be involved with issues that deal with my community, so we may find peace and comfortability in the future.