

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

Unwanted and unwelcome sexual advances, demands for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical behaviors with a sexual connotation are considered sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such behavior is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of a person's employment, academic achievement, or living circumstances;
- Submission to or rejection of such behavior by a person constitutes the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting that person;
- Such behavior has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with work, academic performance, or living conditions by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

GENDER HARASSMENT

- Generalized sexist statements
- Behavior that convey degrading or insulting attitudes about women

SEDUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

- Sexual advances that are unwanted, inappropriate and offensive
- Examples include repeated unwelcome sexual invitations

SEXUAL BRIBERY

- Solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-linked behavior by promising a reward
- Such propositions are either overt or subtle

SEXUAL COERCION

- Coercion of sexual activity or other sex-linked behavior by threat of punishment
- Examples include withholding promotion, threat of termination

SEXUAL IMPOSITION

- Gross sexual imposition such as forceful touching or grabbing
- Sexual assault or rape

Gender harassment is by far the most common type followed by seductive behavior where 99% of sexual harassment victims are female.

PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGNS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Skin disorders
- Weight change
- Sleep disturbances
- Panic reactions, phobias
- Sexual problems

PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- Feelings of powerlessness, confusion
- Shock, denial, fear, frustration, feelings of betrayal, anger
- Shame, guilt, self-blame, low self-esteem
- Isolation, anxiety, depression

CAREER-RELATED EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- Drop in academic or job performance because of stress
- Decreased work satisfaction
- Unfavorable evaluations
- Withdrawal from school or work, absenteeism
- Loss of job or promotion
- Change in career direction

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE HARASSED?

Research has shown that harassers generally will not stop on their own, so ignoring the behavior is ineffective. The most important rule is **DO NOT BLAME YOURSELF**.

Some effective strategies are:

- Be direct and say **NO** to the harasser
- Write a letter to the harasser, send it by certified mail, and keep a copy
- Keep a detailed record of what happened and when
- Tell someone because speaking up can be helpful in finding support and preventing others from being victims.
- Find out who is responsible for dealing with sexual harassment cases in your organization. It is your organization's responsibility to provide you with help, support and advice.
- Consult with a psychologist or other mental health professionals if you are experiencing severe psychological symptoms

PLEASE NOTE: YOU CAN GET HELP

If you are concerned about someone that is presenting these symptoms or behaviors, be aware that many facilities and counselors are available to help individuals deal with sexual harassment. If you are a University of Louisiana at Lafayette student seeking help with sexual harassment, please contact the Counseling and Testing center at 337 482-6480 for more information. The center offers unlimited confidential sessions free or charge to all university students and staff.