

Sexual Harassment

Definition:

Any sexually oriented behavior, such as ogling, teasing, or touching, that is unwelcome by the recipient and creates a hostile work environment. It includes behavior by supervisors, co-workers and non-employees.

How the Harasser Sees the World

Part of the problem of sexual harassment is the way harassers see the world. Their values, needs and insecurities can cause a gross misinterpretation of even the most basic everyday behavior on the job. The following "distortion chart" for male harassers illustrates the point.

Victim's Action	How the Harasser Sees It
Smiling	Flirting
Wearing stylish clothing	Looking for sex
Wearing conservative clothing	Looking for sex
Making eye contact	Giving a seductive glance
Rejecting overture	Showing interest
Responding to overture with silence	Silence equals acceptance
Going to lunch with male	Asking for involvement
Refusing to go to lunch	Playing hard to get
Working late	Seeking an affair
Saying "no"	Saying "Yes"
Seeking promotion	Threatening male ego, economic status, and masculinity



Patriarchal Values

Sexual harassment is actually caused by a combination of three factors: patriarchal values, dominance needs, and insecurity.

Some experts contend that sexual harassment of females is an outgrowth of the patriarchal values. The basic tenet of this value system is male superiority over females. This belief can be heard in such statements as:

- A woman's place is in the home.
- This job has too much pressure for a woman.
- She's taking a job away from a man who needs it.
- No woman should be making that much money.
- She's only working to find herself a husband.

What can you do to prevent Sexual Harassment.

1. Evaluate the clothing you wear to work.
2. Do not participate in conversations that include sexual connections.
3. Do not put yourself in a situation where you are left alone with another male(s) in a building, office or store on a regular basis.
4. If you are the type of person who likes to be "very friendly", be careful who you choose to be very friendly with.
5. Say "NO" to any words or suggested actions with assertion.

"No, I am not interested in any after work activity, Mr. Jones. I enjoy my job and wish to keep this a platonic relationship

"Please keep your hands to yourself. I am not trying to be cute, or playing hard to get" I want this to be a platonic relationship. Nothing else."

6. Do not put yourself in a position where you are asked to look at pornographic materials.
7. If some one asks you to engage in a sexual activity, repeat the same words back to that individual, loudly. Ask them if they would like to put that request in writing or would they like to repeat it to a tape recorder.
8. Do not accept gifts or invitations from people who have no reason to reward you for your good performance. A gift from a non-superior may have a hook at the end of the offer.
9. Report any sexual remark, act, or innuendo to your boss immediately. Keep a diary - time, date, person, act, witnesses. It is going to be your word against the harasser.
10. In drastic measures, carry a tape recorder.

