

Sexual Harassment Lecture Guide and Teacher Background Information

The law defines Sexual Harassment as Sexual harassment is harassment or unwelcome attention of a sexual nature.

Sexual Harassment is Illegal and NEVER OK.

It unfortunately happens too often in schools and workplaces, and there are important state and federal laws to protect against it.

Define Each Word Unwelcome, Sexual, Activity (Touch or words etc.)

Ask students for examples of both Non-Touch and Touch Examples of Sexual Harassment

Include these below

Non-Touch

Verbal-Name Calling
Threats
Jokes
Rumors
Comments about Bodies
Gestures
Looks
Leers
Written notes
Bathroom walls

Touch

Grabbing
Tickling
Pushing
Cornering
Unwanted kissing
Rape
Rubbing up against someone

Sometimes Sexual Harassment could happen because someone likes someone, or is attracted to someone and may think they are flirting.

What are some of the differences you can think of between Harassment and Flirting?

Have students come up with their own ideas, write them down, be sure to include these.

Sexual Harassment

Illegal
Never OK
Unwanted
Put Down
Feels Bad
One-Way

Flirting

Legal
OK
Wanted
Compliment
Feels Good
Two-Way

Who Gets to Decide if it's Sexual Harassment or Flirting?

The Person getting the attention always gets to decide.

What should you do if you flirt with someone and they ignore you?
Stop

What do you do with your hurt feelings if that happens?

No one likes being rejected and your feelings will be hurt, but it's not OK to make the other person feel bad or harass them because you feel bad or rejected. Discuss positive ways to handle this.

What can you do if you are harassed?

1. Try ignoring them. Sometimes this is enough to let someone know that they have offended you, or that you are not interested in them.
2. If it continues, tell them to stop, warn them that if it continues, you will have to report the harassment. Ask students if this would be easy to do? If not, discuss how they could get some support with this.
3. If it continues, or they have been unable to confront the harasser, then they need to report. Identify school policy and support personnel.
4. If it happens in a workplace, there are policies in place to report to supervisors or others in authority.

Activity:

Tell students that sexual harassment is very common in schools. Incidents at every level, even elementary school, have been reported. To better understand what sexual harassment is and what students can do about it, tell students that they are going to work in small groups to brainstorm examples of sexual harassment. Then they will write a script for a scenario dramatizing the incident, how the students responded to it, and what they can do to prevent such an incident from happening again.

Divide students into small groups and have them begin brainstorming their ideas. If they are having trouble getting started, you may want to suggest a few of the following incidents as examples of sexual harassment:

- Touching a student's private parts
- Drawing sexually explicit pictures and passing them around
- Rubbing up against someone in a provocative way
- Telling sexual jokes
- Spreading rumors about a person's sexual behavior
- Calling other students names with sexual connotations

Sometimes it is hard to tell if someone is flirting with you, or if they are sexually harassing you. The main idea is how it makes you feel. If you are hurt or want it to stop, it is probably harassment.

Girls need to be especially careful of the signal they give boys. Their posture, tone of voice, clothing, gestures, or eye contact may make the boys think they are behaving sexually even though the girls did not mean their behavior to be sexual.

What are personal examples or experiences the students have had regarding sexual harassment?

SEXUAL HARASSMENT—THE LAW

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct or communication of a sexual nature that adversely affects a person's employment opportunities, relationships, or environment.

It is illegal for any male or female employee to:

1. Make unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
2. Make submission to or rejection of sexual advances the basis for employment opportunities affecting employees.
3. Create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment through unwanted conduct or communication of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment may include:

1. Sex role stereotyping which is demeaning and involves unequal treatment of an individual on the basis of that person's gender.
2. Gender abuse; which can be either visual or verbal, such as the display of demeaning posters, cartoons, nudity or offensive sexual jokes about gender.
3. Visual or verbal expressions about an individual which are sexual in nature.
4. Criminal touching or actions not involving touching but which are offensive to the extent that they visually or emotionally shock the conscience of a reasonable person.
5. Asking for sexual favors in exchange for job benefits.
6. Any unwelcome sexual behavior initiated by a supervisor, employee, volunteer or non-employee.

DEALING WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Victims of sexual harassment usually feel helpless. They are not sure what to do, especially if the person doing the harassing is an adult. They feel anger, fear, shame, guilt, confusion, embarrassment, and depression. They feel out of control.

What would you do if someone was sexually harassing you?

Why don't more people file suits against those who harass?

Is there a sexual harassment policy in your school? If so, share it with the students.

Some suggestions for preventing sexual harassment are:

1. Talk to someone, such as a friend, parent, or trusted adult. It is important to confide in someone.
2. Avoid being alone with the harasser.
3. Say no so that others around you know what is happening.
4. Know your rights. Under the Civil Rights Act, sexual harassment is against the law.
5. Keep a dated, written record of all incidents.

6. Find out if others have been harassed and might be willing to come forward to confront the harasser.