
*Sexual Harassment:
It Can Happen Here*

S e l f - S t u d y W o r k b o o k

FOR
PREVIEW
ONLY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	4
How to Use This Program	5
Key Training Points	5
View Video	6
Frequently Asked Questions About Sexual Harassment	8
Identifying Sexual Harassment	9
Being Proactive to Sexual Harassment Situations	12
Posttraining Assessment	14
Answers to Exercises	15

Introduction

Sexual Harassment—it seems as though we hear about it everywhere. Newspapers, magazines, and television have all reported on the costly sexual harassment cases. Despite all of the news coverage, many people and organizations still believe that sexual harassment is something that happens to someone else, to some other organization. The truth is ... no person or organization is immune to sexual harassment. Not only can it happen to you; it can happen to anyone, anywhere.

So, what are we going to do about it? The best thing we can do is to become fully informed of, and professionally sensitive to, the policies regarding sexual harassment. This self-study training course is designed to help you become more aware of the issues surrounding sexual harassment and to help you identify what you should do if you experience or witness a sexual harassment situation.

How to Use This Program

This program was designed as a self-study tool. Follow the instructions chronologically through this workbook and you will successfully obtain the necessary tools to be fully informed of, and professionally sensitive to, the policies regarding sexual harassment. Do the exercises in the order that they appear, then check your answers in the back.

Key Training Points

Upon completion of this self-study video training program, you will be able to do the following:

- Identify sexual harassment situations
- Demonstrate understanding of company policies regarding sexual harassment
- Take responsibility for your own actions
- Take proactive steps to resolve situations involving sexual harassment

View Video

- View the video, *Sexual Harassment: It Can Happen Here*.
 - While viewing the video, respond to the following questions.
1. What do we need to remember about touching in the workplace?
 2. How should you respond if someone does or says something that makes you uncomfortable?
 3. What is the best way to determine if a joke or e-mail might be inappropriate?
 4. What did the narrator mean when he said “sexual harassment knows no boundaries”?
 5. What do you do if you don’t feel comfortable confronting the harasser?
 6. What should supervisor’s do if an employee comes to them with a sexual harassment claim?

Answers can be found on page 15.

Frequently Asked Questions About Sexual Harassment

1. What behavior is harassing?

Sexual harassment behavior falls into four main groups—verbal, visual, physical, and written. The behavior can be blatant or very subtle. Any behavior in any of the categories listed is considered sexual harassment if the behavior is unwelcome.

2. Why do people sexually harass others?

The majority of people who harass do so as a conscious or unconscious way of expressing dominance or power. It may be used as a method for organizational or social control over someone else. Sometimes people harass others in an attempt to keep them in their place. Others harass in front of their peers in an attempt to seek peer approval. Sexual harassment is a bullying tactic used by some to get what they want. Very little harassment is based on sexual desire.

3. Who harasses, and how can they be identified?

There is really no typical abuser. Some sources give characteristics of typical or potential harassers, but there can be no positive identification until the harassing is committed. Anyone can harass, just as anyone can be a target of harassment, regardless of sex, sexual preference, age, or professional position.

4. What is the difference between sexual attraction and sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and may have nothing to do with one person's physical attraction to another. It is a misuse of power. From the beginning, the harasser is out to prove his or her dominance over the victim. The harasser's goals are usually intimidation and control, not the pursuit of a mutually satisfying relationship.

Frequently Asked Questions About Sexual Harassment, continued

5. **Who are the most frequent victims of sexual harassment?**

Early statistics on sexual harassment indicated that this was a problem of working women. Additional studies, conducted as a result of increased interest in the subject, indicate that it is becoming a growing problem for men as well. There is also an increase of homosexual harassment incidents reported.

6. **Can a sexual harassment claim be made by an employee even if that employee consented to the sexual activity?**

Yes. Submission to the sexual activity by the employee citing harassment is not a defense an employer can use to avoid liability in a sexual harassment suit. The employee may have consented to the sexual activity only after pressure from the harasser.

7. **What do most people want as a result of filing a sexual harassment claim?**

Studies show that the majority of these people just want the harassment to stop. More and more people are filing complaints with employee-rights agencies like the EEOC because employers fail to take action. It's interesting to note that the majority of people who have been harassed quit or transfer out of the offensive work environment.

8. **How can sexual harassment be prevented?**

Of course, the best method to stop harassment is to prevent it from happening. Prevention begins with an attitude that sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated.

Identifying Sexual Harassment

There are two different kinds of sexual harassment. Quid pro Quo sexual harassment occurs when employment decisions or expectations—hiring decisions, promotions, salary increases, work assignments, or performance evaluations—are based on an employee’s willingness to grant or deny sexual favors.

Hostile work environment sexual harassment occurs when verbal or nonverbal behavior in the workplace:

- Focuses on the sexuality of another person or occurs because of the person’s gender.
- Is unwanted or unwelcome.
- Is severe and pervasive enough to affect the person’s work environment.

There are situations that can be considered inappropriate or unprofessional behavior that do not constitute sexual harassment. These situations may not be identified as sexual harassment but may be in violation of company policies or considered inappropriate for the work environment.

Instructions: Review each situation and determine if the situation is a hostile work environment (HWE), quid pro quo (QPQ), or not a sexual harassment situation (NSH). Circle the appropriate answer.

1. You and Chris have been good friends for three years. You have dated on several occasions. Last week, Chris was promoted to division head of your region. Chris is not your direct supervisor, but is the head of your division. Chris stops by your office and asks you to dinner. Concerned about how having dinner with the new division head may look, you decline. Chris leans over your desk and in a whisper makes it very clear that if you want to be promoted to team leader, it is in your best interest to go to dinner.

HWE

QPQ

NSH

Identifying Sexual Harassment, continued

2. Alice, Jana, and Jeff make up a very tight-spaced three-person department. Alice, Jana, and Jeff work very well together and are friends outside of work. They have gone out after-work on several occasions. Jeff is usually the first one to leave the after work festivities. Alice and Jana stay out late flirting with various men they meet in the bar. The next morning Alice and Jana come in very tired and hung over. Jeff knows that on those days he is going to have to pick up some extra work because the women are too out-of-it to handle their fair share.

HWE

QPQ

NSH

3. You have to work with Amanda on most projects. Amanda is a very free-spirited woman with a great sense of humor. She has a habit of telling off-color jokes to her friends while at work. She never shares these jokes with you directly because she knows that they would offend you. Unfortunately, Amanda is in the cubicle right next to yours, and she has such a loud voice that it carries into your cubicle. You have asked her to stop and she told you not to eavesdrop on her conversations with other people. She also told you to loosen up a bit. You are very offended by her response and have a hard time concentrating on your work when she is in one of her storytelling moods.

HWE

QPQ

NSH

Identifying Sexual Harassment, continued

4. You went to your supervisor to request some vacation time so that you could go with your spouse on a trip to the Bahamas. Your supervisor agreed to let you take your vacation if you go on an overnight business trip. You and your supervisor would be the only employees on this business trip. Your supervisor places a hand on your shoulder and insinuates that if you can't go on the business trip, your vacation request could get lost and not approved.

HWE QPQ NSH

5. Every time you have to go into the art department to work with Lee he comments on what you're wearing. Lee has a real eye for color and likes the way you dress. On several occasions Lee has come up to you and placed his hand on your clothes, claiming to want to feel the fabric or get a closer look at an accessory. Lee doesn't treat everyone like this. Lee also has a habit of looking at you from head to toe before listening to you. You have asked Lee to stop checking you out on several occasions, but the behavior continues. You're not sure whether Lee is conscious of the elevator eyes, but the behavior makes you very uncomfortable.

HWE QPQ NSH

Answers can be found on page 15.

Being Proactive to Sexual Harassment Situations

There are several things that you can do to prevent sexual harassment from occurring. You can:

- Conduct yourself in a businesslike manner.
- Dress appropriately for your job.
- Take a few minutes to plan what kind of action you would take if you were harassed.

Planning how you respond is an important step in proactively dealing with sexual harassment. Immediately responding to the harasser and letting him or her know that the behavior is unwelcome is key to stopping the behavior and preventing the situation from recurring.

Instructions:

Review each situation, and determine how you would proactively respond to the situation. Write your response in the space provided.

1. You are standing by the watercooler in the break room. You hear Bob and Dan talking about Brenda. They are talking more specifically about how Brenda dresses and how great her legs look in her new suit. Their conversation is inappropriate for such a public place and you are embarrassed by their comments.

Possible proactive response:

Being Proactive to Sexual Harassment Situations, continued

2. You and Pat have been working together for two years. Pat sits in the same cubicle space you do. Pat asked you out last week, and you made it very clear that you don't date people at work. When you get to work this morning, there is a bouquet of flowers on your desk. The card reads, "Please say yes. Thoughtfully, Your Cubicle Mate." Pat is pretending to read a document, but is obviously waiting for your reaction.

Possible proactive response:

3. In the last week, you have bumped into Carol on several occasions in the copier room. The room is very congested and people are always bumping into one another. Your hand accidentally hit her backside on several occasions. At the time, you didn't say anything because it was just an accident. Now Carol is avoiding you and won't make eye contact with you.

Possible proactive response:

4. Every time you discuss something with Jo, you walk away feeling really strange. Jo has a tendency not to look you in the eyes but instead looks up and down your body. You know Jo is a little shy, but this staring at your body makes you feel really uncomfortable.

Possible proactive response:

Answers can be found on page 16.

Posttraining Assessment

Instructions: Consider the following questions based on the video, *Sexual Harassment: It Can Happen Here* and write your answers in the space provided.

1. **True or False.** All touching in the workplace is illegal.
2. **True or False.** A man asking a woman for repeated dates after she has made it clear that she doesn't want to date is an example of hostile work environment.
3. **True or False.** Humor in the workplace is acceptable as long as it is used appropriately and not hurting or offending anyone.
4. **True or False.** Once you have been harassed, there is no way you would ever harass someone else.
5. **True or False.** Unwelcome sexual behavior when it becomes a condition of employment or career advancement is sexual harassment. This type of harassment is called quid pro quo.
6. **True or False.** Everyone has a right to work in an environment free from sexual harassment.
7. **True or False.** If you are a manager and someone comes to you with a sexual harassment claim it is acceptable to let the person work the situation out for him or herself.
8. **True or False.** As a supervisor, you must also inform the employee what actions may occur as a result of the inquiry.
9. **True or False.** Sexual harassment prevention is strictly a manager's responsibility.
10. **True or False.** If you see sexual harassment taking place—don't walk away; do something about it.

Answers can be found on page 16.

Answers to Exercises

Video Discussion Questions, page 6

1. Since appropriate touching varies so much between different people, the best advice is to keep close personal contact to a minimum and always on a professional level. For example, a handshake. Beyond that, unless you are absolutely sure that your contact is welcomed by the other person, it is probably best not to touch them at all.
2. You should say something right away. Be proactive. Sometimes it takes voicing your objections to people more than once before they get the message. Be consistent. Each time their behavior crosses the line you must confront them. If you do not feel comfortable confronting them, document each incident and talk, in a timely fashion, to their supervisor or to human resources about the situation.
3. Before sending an e-mail or telling a joke, it might be best to imagine how a parent or a child might interpret your message. In other words, if there's any doubt in your mind—play it safe—don't say it; don't send it.
4. It means that men can harass women, women can harass men. It also means that same-sex harassment is recognized by the courts and is in violation of the law.
5. Let someone know what is going on and ask for help.
6. It is the supervisor's responsibility to listen objectively to the employee's concerns, and ensure the employee that an inquiry will be conducted quickly, impartially, and as discreetly as possible. You must also inform the employee what actions may occur as a result of the inquiry, including the potential for appropriate disciplinary action against the alleged harasser, as well as what may occur if the allegations cannot be substantiated.

Identifying Sexual Harassment, page 9-11

1. QPQ 2. NSH 3. HWE 4. QPQ 5. HWE

Answers to Exercises, continued

Being Proactive, page 12-13

1. **Possible proactive response:** Gentleman, your topic of conversation is really inappropriate for the break room. Not to mention the fact that you are talking about someone who works here that everyone knows. Locker-room conversation is not appropriate for the work environment. Keep those types of comments out of the workplace.
2. **Possible proactive response:** Pat, I want to make myself very clear. I don't date people I work with. You sending these flowers makes me very uncomfortable, and I would like you to take them back. Please do not approach me about dating again, or I will ask management to put me in another cubicle.
3. **Possible proactive response:** Carol, I get the feeling that you are avoiding me. I just want to make it perfectly clear that when I bumped you the other day in the copier room it was an accident. I will be very conscious about watching where I'm going in the future. Sorry if I made you uncomfortable in any way.
4. **Possible proactive response:** Jo, I'm not always sure that you are hearing what I am saying because I have a difficult time making eye contact with you. I would appreciate it if, in the future, you would look me directly in the eyes when you speak to me and not stare at my body.

Posttraining Assessment, page 14

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|----------|----------|
| 1. False | 7. False |
| 2. True | 8. True |
| 3. True | 9. False |
| 4. False | 10. True |
| 5. True | |
| 6. True | |