

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

What employees need to know

Every employee is responsible for helping to create a fair, safe, and respectful workplace.

Positive cultural change can only happen when all employees recognize and interrupt harassing and bullying behaviors, support coworkers, and affirm coworker experiences. Take the following actions to help build a sexual harassment-free environment at your workplace.



Trust yourself.

Sexual misconduct is often disguised with “just kidding” or “lighten up!”¹ If you think it’s harassment—patronizing, taunting, or predatory behavior²—chances are it’s worth taking seriously.



Speak up.

Prudent employers will have common-sense and effective processes in place so you can confidentially report sexual harassment without fear of retribution.³



Know your options.

Know your company’s sexual harassment policy and, more importantly, exactly what protocols and channels exist to report misconduct.



Be thoughtful.

What you do and say matters. Your actions can help create a fair, safe, and respectful work culture free from sexual harassment.





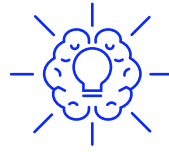
Stand up for yourself and others.

Personal boundaries should never be crossed. Call out harassing, bullying, or shaming behavior by saying it makes you, or someone else, uncomfortable.



Make no excuses.

Alcohol increases the likelihood of sexual misconduct.⁴ It should never be used as an excuse or a source of blame. Know and stick to your limits.



Be curious.

You might find it surprising what some people find okay and others find discomfiting. Ask questions. Learn to listen closely and educate yourself on the real-life consequences of sexual harassment.



Don't make assumptions.

Never force a conversation or try to badger a colleague into a different viewpoint on what is acceptable behavior—especially when it relates to their body or sex.



Embrace a deep appreciation of equality.

Treat everybody with the same level of respect, curiosity, and engagement. Aside from personal friendships, maintain a constant standard of how casual or friendly you are, applied to everyone.



Be authentic.

Maintain genuine relationships with colleagues. A hug or light physical contact can be okay as long as it stays appropriate and consensual.⁵ We can be professional **and** human.



Be inclusive.

Don't give into the notion that people will get the wrong idea if you meet with certain colleagues. Shutting people out hurts their careers and your work.



Respect everyone's story.

Work may be the only place in your life where you interact daily with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Learn from the varied experiences, perspectives, and attitudes of your colleagues.

SOURCES:

1 Stanford University, Sexual Harassment Policy Office, "Myths and Misconceptions."

2 Lindsey Joyce Chamberlain, Martha Crowley, Daniel Tope, and Randy Hodson, "Sexual Harassment in Organizational Context," *Work and Occupations*, vol. 35, no. 3 (August 2008): p. 262-295.

3 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Harassment Policy Tips."

4 Antonia Abbey, Tina Zawacki, Philip O. Buck, A. Monique Clinton, and Pam McAuslan, "Alcohol and Sexual Assault," *Alcohol Research & Health*, vol. 25, no. 1 (2001): p. 43-51.

5 Jeffrey D. Polsky, "6 Things Sexual Harassment Lawyers Want You to Know About Hugging," *California Employment Law*, September 17, 2015.

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