

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

*What is it?*

*What should you do if it happens to you?*

**I. Definition:** Unwelcome sexual approaches, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- A. Submission to such conduct either explicitly or implicitly becomes a term or condition of employment/instruction.
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual becomes a basis for evaluation; or
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

## II. Some Examples

- A. Verbal
  - Referring to an adult as a girl, boy, hunk, babe, chick, or honey, etc.
  - Whistling at someone, cat calls
  - Making sexual comments about a person's body
  - Turning work discussions to sexual topics
  - Telling sexual jokes or stories
  - Asking personal questions about social or sexual life
  - Repeatedly asking a person out who is not interested
- B. Non-Verbal
  - Looking a person up and down
  - Blocking a person's path
  - Giving personal gifts
  - Making sexual gestures with hands or through body movements (e.g. throwing kisses, winking, or licking lips)
- C. Physical
  - Giving unsolicited body massage including the neck or shoulders
  - Touching the person's clothing, hair, or body
  - Unsolicited hugging, kissing, patting, or stroking
  - Standing close to or rubbing up against a person

### III. Can Friendly Behavior Be Sexual Harassment?

To determine if your behavior could be unwelcome to another person, remember that "unwelcome" is decided by the recipient of the behavior, not the person doing the behavior. Therefore, it is the impact of behavior, not the intent of the person who did the behavior, which determines if sexual harassment has occurred.

### IV. What To Do In Case Of Sexual Harassment

- A. Know your rights- Sexual harassment is illegal. You have the right to study and work in an atmosphere free from sexual harassment.
- B. Speak up at the time- Be sure to tell the harasser that the conduct is not acceptable. Speak clearly, firmly and without smiling.
- C. Keep Records- Write down what was said or done and how you responded. Note date, time, names of witnesses and the nature of harassment.
- D. Tell someone- It is not your fault. You have the right to get help and support. Sexual harassment incidents are usually not isolated; most sexual harassers typically harass other people.
- E. Write a Letter-

**Part I**— a factual account of what has happened, without any evaluation, as seen by the writer. Clearly identify behaviors surrounding complaint.

**Part II**— how the writer feels about what happened.

**Part III**— what the writer wants to happen next.

**Sexual harassment becomes an invisible issue when treated jokingly or when the victim is made to feel shamed or humiliated.**