

## Who is the harasser?

Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances:

- The harasser can be anyone, such as a boss, a supervisor, a client, a co-worker, a teacher or a student, a friend, or a stranger.
- The victim can be male or female. The harasser can be male or female.
- The harasser does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- The harasser may be completely unaware that his or her behavior is offensive or constitutes sexual harassment or may be completely unaware that his or her actions could be illegal.

## How does Sexual Harassment affect the Victim?

Some of the psychological and health effects that can occur in someone who has been sexually harassed: anxiety and or depression, sleeplessness, shame and guilt, difficulty concentrating, headaches, lack of motivation, lack of appetite or comfort eating (weight loss or gain), feeling let

down or violated, feeling angry or violent towards the perpetrator, feeling powerless or out of control, loss of confidence and self esteem, withdrawal and loss of trust in people and colleagues, and even suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts.

## Why people do not report Sexual Harassment

Many incidents of sexual harassment occur in the work place and some victims are afraid they will lose their jobs if they report the matter.

They also feel that others might place the blame on them if they make a report, that they will be accused of "coming on to the perpetrator".

They may also feel that nothing will be done about the harassment.

If it is a friend of the family or relative, there may be a fear that the victim will not be believed.

**REMEMBER—Sexual Harassment is not acceptable and you should not have to endure unwanted advances from anyone.**



# Sexual Harassment



## The Crisis Centre

P.O.Box EE-17910  
Nassau Bahamas

24-Hour Hotline: 328-0922  
Family Violence Unit: 322-4999  
Fax: 328-7824  
email: bahamascrisiscentre@yahoo.com  
www.bahamascrisiscentre.org

## What is Sexual Harassment?

**Sexual harassment**, taken literally, is harassment or unwanted attention of a sexual nature. It includes a range of behavior from mild annoyances to serious abuse, which can even involve forced sexual activity.

Sexual harassment is considered to be illegal in many countries, and is a form of abuse. It is also considered to be a form of bullying.

Sexual harassment does not only occur in the workplace but also happens at social gatherings, in public areas such as at bus stops, in the street and in clubs.

The offence occurs when a person assaults another in a manner which grossly offends public morality e.g. touching breasts or other parts of the body, unwelcome kissing, etc.

Actual touching may not be involved. Rude or suggestive language can also be considered sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in the work place happens to men as well as women. It is a criminal offence for an employer to seek any form of sexual favour as a condition for hiring a person. It is also an offence to threaten dismissal if the sexual favour is not granted.

The law works both ways - it is an offence to offer sexual inducement in return for benefit at work.

Sexual harassment also occurs in schools and colleges. Everybody has a right to feel safe and comfortable in the work place and at school.



## The following are some examples of sexual harassment:

- *spreading sexual rumours*
- *repeatedly asking out someone who has said no*
- *questioning or commenting on someone's sexuality*
- *telling sexually offensive jokes*
- *displaying sexual pictures*
- *making comments about someone's clothing or body*
- *making rude gestures or noises*
- *touching or rubbing against a person*
- *pressuring someone for a date*
- *giving suggestive looks*

Anyone experiencing sexual harassment can:

- ◆ Firmly tell the harasser that the behaviour is not acceptable
- ◆ Report the incident to someone in authority
- ◆ Report the matter to the police

*If you would like to talk to someone about sexual harassment, please call:*

**The Crisis Centre on  
328-0922**