

Workplace Scenario A: Abby's Story

Abby is 17 and has worked as a stock handler in a hardware store for 8 months. She recently asked her supervisor for a small raise.



She is one of the only female employees at the store and younger than most of the men who work there. Her male co-workers often call her “honey” or “sweetheart,” or joke about her doing “men’s work.” She keeps quiet about it because she wants to fit in and feels nervous about how they would react if she ever said something.

Since Abby asked for a raise, her supervisor has been behaving differently. Sometimes he blocks her way and gets very close when she tries to pass; other times he tells her she’s a “good worker” and rubs her back or shoulders. This makes Abby feel very anxious and some days she does not want to go to work.

One day, he pulls Abby into his office and tells her that she isn't due for a promotion yet. However, if she agrees to go out on a date with him, he could pull a few strings and get her a raise anyway.

Workplace Scenario B: Beth's Story

Beth, 16, works part-time early evenings as an office assistant. She takes over after the full-time assistant, Karen, leaves for the day. Beth and Karen share the same desk and computer.



Karen usually leaves work when Beth arrives, but lately has been staying in the office after her shift is over. She has been asking Beth about her personal life: Does she have a boyfriend? Has she ever thought about dating women? Karen told Beth she is “really pretty” and “her type.” Beth feels very uncomfortable and distracted, and has a hard time getting her work done when Karen hangs around the office.

Last week, Karen put rude pictures of women as the wallpaper on the computer they share. When Beth went to change the wallpaper, Karen told Beth to leave the computer settings the way they are, since she is the main office assistant and Beth is only part-time.

Karen also tried to give Beth a back massage and when Beth tried to stop her, Karen told her “she was too stressed out” and “should just relax.”

Workplace Scenario C: Kylie's Story

Kylie is 16-years-old and recently started a summer job at a hamburger/hotdog take-out restaurant. She works mostly with other teens, and her manager, Jason, is 23-years-old.



During her first week of work, Jason would sometimes wink or smile at Kylie, and she found it exciting to be noticed by someone attractive and older. Now, into Kylie's second week, Jason whistles at her when she arrives for her shift every day and regularly jokes that she must get a lot of dates with a mature body like hers. He also tells her that she should consider going on a date with *him* because "older guys are more experienced than high school boys."

Even though Kylie has no interest in dating Jason, and these comments make her uncomfortable, she has noticed him saying similar things to other female workers who go along with it, so she worries she is overreacting. Kylie is also afraid to say something because Jason is the manager, and she needs the work to save money over the summer.

Workplace Scenario D: Dave's Story

Dave is 17-years-old and works at a cell-phone retailer after school. He usually works with Kristen, the Assistant Manager of the store, and another female sales assistant. Kristen is often overly friendly to Dave, but has never made him feel uncomfortable before.



This changed the other day when Kristen asked Dave to lift her up by her waist to reach a product on the top shelf in the store. Dave politely refused because there was a step-stool nearby, and he felt the request was inappropriate. Kristen got upset when Dave said no and called him a “wimp.” She told him that he “shouldn’t disobey the manager.” The other female sales assistant overheard the conversation and laughed it off.

Dave feels very uncomfortable now because he doesn’t think that Kristen was joking about him disobeying her, even though he feels what she asked him was wrong.



You Be the Judge!

Group Activity: Analyzing Workplace Scenarios

Discuss and evaluate each workplace scenario with your group to answer the following questions. If you need to, refer back to the definitions and examples of sexual harassment provided in the lesson.

Workplace Scenario # 1

1. Is this sexual harassment? Yes No

2. If yes, is it an example of *quid pro quo* or *hostile work environment*? _____

3. What behaviors tell you that it is or isn't sexual harassment? _____

4. a) Who is the harasser? _____ b) Who is the target? _____

5. What can or should the target do? _____

6. How would you feel if you were the target in this situation? _____

Workplace Scenario # 2

1. Is this sexual harassment? Yes No

2. If yes, is it an example of *quid pro quo* or *hostile work environment*? _____

3. What behaviors tell you that it is or isn't sexual harassment? _____

4. a) Who is the harasser? _____ b) Who is the target? _____

5. What can or should the target do? _____

6. How would you feel if you were the target in this situation? _____

Workplace Scenario # 3

1. Is this sexual harassment? Yes No

2. If yes, is it an example of *quid pro quo* or *hostile work environment*? _____

3. What behaviors tell you that it is or isn't sexual harassment? _____

4. a) Who is the harasser? _____ b) Who is the target? _____

5. What can or should the target do? _____

6. How would you feel if you were the target in this situation? _____

Workplace Scenario # 4

1. Is this sexual harassment? Yes No

2. If yes, is it an example of *quid pro quo* or *hostile work environment*? _____

3. What behaviors tell you that it is or isn't sexual harassment? _____

4. a) Who is the harasser? _____ b) Who is the target? _____

5. What can or should the target do? _____

6. How would you feel if you were the target in this situation? _____

WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

What is sexual harassment in the workplace?

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It is considered harassment when:

- submission to the conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment,
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions, or
- the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.*
- Unwelcome and unwanted sexual conduct that either happens repeatedly or is of serious nature (e.g. sexual assault)

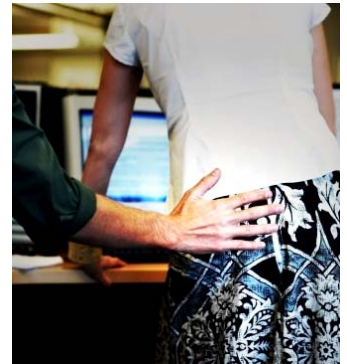
If you have been a victim of sexual harassment:

Tell someone.

Tell the harasser to stop. If you feel uncomfortable talking to your harasser, tell your supervisor. Tell a parent, teacher, co-workers or trusted adult for support. If you or your employer tell the harasser to stop and the behavior continues, inform your supervisor or contact a Human Resources representative at your employer.

Document the harassment.

Keep a written record of the incidents that occurred including the dates or times, what happened, other witnesses or co-workers that may have been present, and how it made you feel.



Report it.

Find out your employer's sexual harassment policy and identify who is responsible for handling complaints. If there is no policy, report it to a manager in the company for appropriate action. Once your employer knows harassment is occurring, it is their responsibility to stop it.

Act promptly.

You can also file a formal claim through EEOC or MCAD (see below) or contact the agencies for advice. There are time limits to filing a formal claim through the EEOC or MCAD. Taking action could prevent harassment from happening to others and make your workplace safer and more comfortable.

You have a right to file a complaint!

Sexual harassment is ILLEGAL. In Massachusetts you can file a complaint or receive more information at:

The United States Equal Employment
Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203
1-800-669-4000
www.eeoc.gov/

The Massachusetts Commission Against
Discrimination (MCAD)
Boston (617) 994-6000
Springfield (413) 739-2145
Worcester (508) 799-8010
New Bedford (508) 990-2390
www.mass.gov/mcad/

* United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), 1980.