

Is harassment ever OK?

Sexual harassment is never OK. A person has the right to say "no" even if they accepted a date, dinner, or agreed to a kiss. No one has the right to force anyone into any situation they are not comfortable with.

Do not go along with harassment to try to fit in. Sometimes the most serious forms of harassment involve groups of people. We often do things in groups we would not do alone. We may get carried away with a situation without thinking about what is really going on.

What should I do if I'm accused of sexual harassment?

Immediately stop the behavior.

Contact the Affirmative Action Officer at 487-3310 for information and advice.

What can happen to me if I'm accused of sexual harassment?

In worst case scenarios, you could lose your job, be expelled from school. You could even be charged with a crime. However, most cases can be resolved without formal action or discipline, especially if it's addressed right away.

Retaliation

Retaliation against individuals who report and/or file complaints of discrimination or harassment, who cooperate in investigations, or who participate in hearings will not be tolerated. Acts of retaliation should also be reported to the Affirmative Action Officer.

Where do I report sexual harassment?

Michigan Tech has a policy on discrimination/harassment. If you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against, you are encouraged to file a complaint with the Affirmative Action Officer at 487-3310. The Affirmative Programs Office is located in the Administration Building room 207.

All discussions are confidential. Even if you don't intend to file a complaint, we strongly recommend discussing the situation and getting advice for options.

The Affirmative Action Officer is available for individual consultations and/or group presentations about harassment and other relevant gender issues. Call the Affirmative Programs Office at 487-3310 to schedule an appointment.

Michigan Tech Training

Online sexual harassment training:
admin.mtu.edu/aao/SH/?p=introduction

The AA Office has a variety of books and videos available for use. If you are interested in checking them out call 487-3310 or visit our website:
admin.mtu.edu/aao/library.htm.

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10/09

Sexual Harassment

Michigan Technological University

Affirmative Programs Office

906-487-3310

Sexual Harassment violates the law as well as Michigan Tech policy.

Hostile environment is the most common Form of Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment has occurred when the following conditions exist:

1. The behavior is sexual in nature.
2. The behavior is unwelcome.
3. The behavior has the effect of creating a hostile or intimidating environment.

Quid pro quo harassment occurs when a faculty member or supervisor causes a student or employee to believe that he or she must submit to unwelcome sexual conduct in order to participate in a program or activity. It can also occur when a faculty member causes a student to believe that they will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to unwelcome sexual conduct.

Sexual harassment includes, but not limited to:

- Displaying sexually explicit pictures
- Repeated requests for dates
- Sexual bantering, jokes or teasing
- Demands or requests for sex
- Unwanted email or letters
- Spreading rumors
- Forcing a kiss
- Sexual assault
- Using unprofessional terms like: doll, honey, babe, and hottie
- Bashing due to sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Stalking a person

Is it flirting or sexual harassment?

If the behavior is welcome and makes you feel flattered, good, comfortable, it is not sexual harassment. If the behavior is unwanted and makes you feel degraded, upset, uncomfortable, it most likely is sexual harassment.

Could my actions be taken as harassing?

Harassment is not about intentions; it's about effects on others. The receiver decides what is welcome or unwelcome. Pay attention to signs that may show someone is feeling uncomfortable.

These signs may include:

- Clenched fist or trembling hands
- Silence or withdrawal from conversation
- Tension in one's face or biting lower lip
- Variations of voice tone
- Lack of eye contact
- Attempting to hide hands
- Attempts to avoid contact with you

Additional advice:

- Do not assume your partners' desire for affection is the same as their desire for sex.
- You are responsible for your actions, whether drunk or sober.
- If you have any doubts about what your partner wants, stop and ask.
- It's never ok to assume if you've had sex before that it's OK now.
- Remember "NO" means "NO".
- If you're not sure if a comment or behavior is appropriate, don't do it.

How can I prevent sexual harassment?

Don't laugh at jokes that are degrading or hurtful.

Take a stand against behavior that is threatening, intimidating or offensive to you or others.

Don't take part in harassing another person. Take responsibility for your own actions. Be sensitive and aware of what you say and do.

Look for feedback that might suggest another person's discomfort.

Think first. Consider how someone else would feel in response to what you say before saying it.

Get the facts

Myth: Sexual harassment is just a natural way for men and women to express friendship and affection.

Fact: No. There is nothing natural about degrading another person. Harassment is offensive and often frightening.

Myth: Sexual harassment doesn't hurt anyone. Those that object have no sense of humor.

Fact: Harassment hurts self-esteem, dignity and produces long lasting effects on a person. It creates a climate of fear and distrust.

Myth: People who are sexually harassed, ask for it by being seductive, careless, drunk, etc.

Fact: No one asks to be abused or humiliated. This line of thought blames the victim instead of the assailant.