

Respect in the Workplace for Employees: Preventing Harassment

Presented by
CIGNA Employee Assistance Program



Seminar Goals

- Promote a workplace free of sexual and other forms of harassment
- Create an awareness of what constitutes harassment, including sexual harassment
- Understand the impact of sexual harassment
- Know what steps to take if you are being harassed at work
- Learn the benefits of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



What is Harassment?

- Unwelcome or unwanted conduct by an employee, which disrupts or substantially interferes with another's work performance or emotional well-being
- Harassment can be sexual, racial, ethnic or aimed at other personal differences
- Harassment can be verbal, physical or environmental



The Importance of Respect

- Employee populations are more diverse
- Employees need to value different races, cultures, ethnic groups and genders
- Businesses rely on teamwork to meet goals



Definition of Sexual Harassment

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Source: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Sexual Harassment.



Did You Know?

- Victim and/or harasser may be a man or a woman.
- Victim does not have to be of the opposite sex
- Harasser can be anyone you work with or are in contact with as part of your employment
- Victim can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct in the workplace
- Sexual harassment victim does not have to lose their job or have psychological injury before they can file a complaint
- Sexual harassment can be intentional or unintentional



Sexual Harassment: The Problem

- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission received 11,717 complaints in 2010
- 16.4% of those were filed by men
- EEOC sexual harassment case settlements rose to \$48.4 million in 2010, not including monetary benefits gained through litigation

Source: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Sexual Harassment Charges...



Types of Sexual Harassment

- *Quid pro quo* harassment occurs when receiving something (e.g., promotion, raise, etc.) is contingent upon sexual favors.
- *Hostile environment* harassment occurs when the behavior of another creates a hostile, offensive, and/or intimidating environment, interfering with an individual's ability to work.



Intent vs. Impact

Harassment is based on the *victim's experience*, not the intent of the harasser.



Behaviors That Could Cause Problems

Verbal

- Derogatory comments based on gender
- Repeated requests for dates
- Sexual or gender-based jokes or teasing
- Whistles or catcalls
- Terms of endearment such as “babe” or “sweetheart”
- Turning work discussions into sexual topics (e.g. using puns))

Non – Verbal

- Staring, leering
- Looking up and down (elevator eyes)
- Sexually suggestive looks
- Facial expressions of a sexual nature (e.g. winking)



Behaviors That Could Cause Problems (continued)

Physical

- Invading someone's personal space
- "Accidentally" brushing sexual parts of the body
- Grabbing
- Uninvited neck massage

Visual

- Posters, cartoons, drawings, calendars, pinups or pictures of a sexual nature
- Knick-knacks and other objects of sexual nature

Electronic

- Computer graphics of a sexual nature
- Email with sexual content or derogatory jokes
- "Sexting"- text or picture messages of a sexual nature
- Inappropriate contact with coworkers on social networking sites



Costs of Harassment

- Financial
- Physical Health
- Emotional Well-being
- Job and Career Loss



If You Think You're Being Harassed...

- Know your rights
- Say "No" clearly
- Report it
- Keep records



Avoiding Harassment

- Remember, a person's friendliness does not equal sexual interest
- Don't assume your behavior is okay just because no one has objected to it
- Stop immediately when someone indicates your behavior is unwanted.
- If in doubt, don't say it/don't do it



A Matter of Respect

Ask yourself:

*“Would I do or say this if my
_____ were present?”*



Benefits of the EAP

- Face to Face Sessions
- Confidential
- Prepaid
- Unlimited Telephonic consultation
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Household benefit
- Work/Life Support such as eldercare, childcare and pet care.
- Financial Services
- Legal Services



References

- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). [n.d.] Sexual Harassment Charges EEOC & FEPAs Combined: FY 1997 - FY 2010. Retrieved from http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/sexual_harassment.cfm
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). [n.d.] Sexual Harassment. Retrieved from http://archive.eeoc.gov/types/sexual_harassment.html

