

Your voice.



Your view.

# Sexual Harassment: What's the Big Deal?

## It is unwanted behavior.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. The legal definition includes “**unwelcome** verbal, visual, or physical **conduct of a sexual nature** that is **severe or pervasive** and **affects working conditions or creates a hostile work environment.**” Regardless of the form or nature of the sexual harassment, it is the school’s or employer’s (legal) responsibility to prevent and stop any sexual harassment.

## It happens a lot.

In a national study, **83% of girls and 60% of the boys** reported experiencing sexual harassment in school. LGBT teens have to deal with harassment, threats, and violence directed at them on a daily basis. They hear anti-gay slurs such as “homo,” “faggot” and “sissy” about 26 times a day or once every 14 minutes.

## It's impact:

Students experiencing sexual harassment reported negative psychosocial effects such as depression, loss of appetite, nightmares or disturbed sleep, low self-esteem, and feelings of being sad, afraid, scared, or embarrassed. Studies indicate that girls report being more upset about the behavior than boys. Research supports the idea that the impact of sexual harassment on its victims can, in some cases, be as severe as that of rape.

## It's way different than flirting.

### Flirting is:

wanted  
fun  
flattering  
two-sided

### Sexual Harassment is:

unwanted  
uncomfortable/embarrassing  
degrading  
one-sided

### Examples of peer sexual harassment include:

Sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks  
Sexual messages or graffiti on bathroom walls or locker rooms  
Sexual rumors, messages or notes  
Having clothing pulled in a sexual way or clothing pulled down or off  
Being “flashed,” or “mooned”  
Brushed up against in a sexual way  
Called gay or lesbian with derogatory terms like “fag”  
Forced to kiss or forcing other unwelcoming sexual behavior other than kissing  
Unwanted touching, grabbing or pinching  
Shown sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations  
Blocked or cornered in a sexual way  
Having names listed in slam books with derogatory sexual comments

### Think before you speak or act!

- Don't make comments about other people's bodies, their sexuality, or sexual behavior
- Don't make sexual jokes that might make people feel embarrassed or uncomfortable
- Remember that anything that is offensive/ embarrassing to the opposite sex can and might be considered sexual harassment.

### Think about it!

Is what you are about to do or say....

- something you would say in front of your mother, grandmother, teacher?
- something you would want said/done to your mother, girlfriend, or sister?
- something you would want to appear on TV, the internet, or in the newspaper?