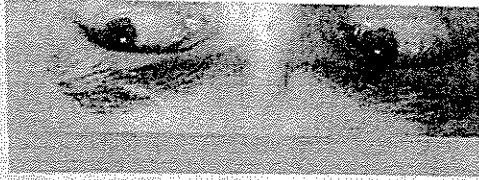


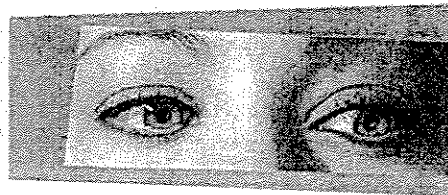
SEXUAL HARASSMENT



NEW



PERSPECTIVES



SEXUAL

HARASSMENT

NEW PERSPECTIVES

This handbook is one of a series of handbooks, desk references, posters, videos, DVDs and CD-ROMs produced by Coastal Human Resources, a division of Coastal Training Technologies Corp. Each product is the result of painstaking analysis, design, development and production by the instructional designers and technical specialists on our staff.

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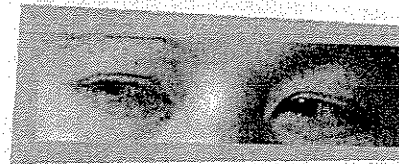
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INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention that harms the victim and often the general morale of the victim's workplace.

Unfortunately, sexual harassment is a common occurrence, and claims are on the rise. The cost of sexual harassment cuts across all aspects of an organization, from employee retention to expensive litigation.

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Perception plays a large part in deciding whether or not harassment has taken place. Often, an offender has no idea he or she has been perceived as a harasser, and defends his or her actions with a hapless, "But, I didn't mean to!" The fact is, intention is irrelevant. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines confirm that it is the victim's perception that counts.

Reducing sexual harassment requires a heightened sensitivity to the people around you: to their perceptions, their viewpoints and their right to work in an environment free of sexual hostility.



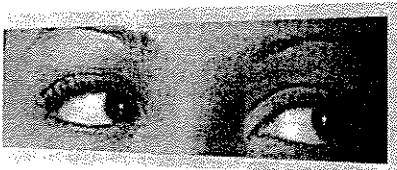
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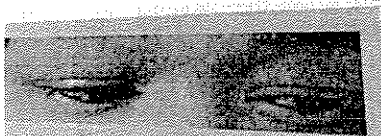
This handbook reminds you to:

- Think before you speak.
- Respect the workplace.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Learn to speak up.

The concepts are simple. The challenge is looking at these concepts with a new perspective.

Using this handbook will help you to create a respectful and harassment-free environment for everyone in your organization.





THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

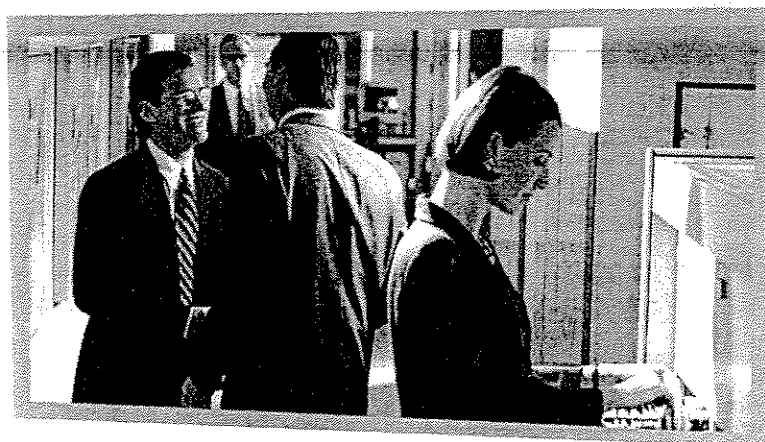
Have you ever been shocked to find that someone took a comment you made the wrong way? Even though you meant no harm, did the recipient express feelings of being offended? In other words, did he or she "perceive" your comment to be negative?

To measure the validity of a victim's claim of sexual harassment courts apply the "reasonable person standard." They consider:

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- Would a reasonable person consider the cited behavior as undesirable or inappropriate sexual attention at work?
- Does this attention interfere with work?
- Would a reasonable person consider it out of bounds?

If the answer is "yes," to any of these questions, the complaint warrants investigation.



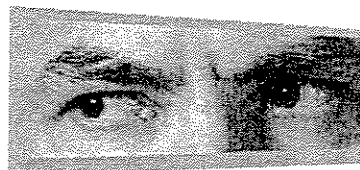
In today's workplace, you must filter your comments through a screen of heightened sensitivity. You cannot assume that your behavior is acceptable to everyone with whom you come in contact.

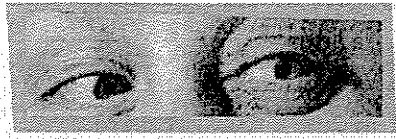
Think about how many water cooler conversations would be cut short if a supervisor were to walk by. It may be common for risqué jokes and sexist remarks to creep into social conversations but the excuse, "Everybody does it!" is no excuse at all if someone complains.

You have to think before you speak. If you have any doubt about the appropriateness of what you want to say, don't say it. Save the locker room talk for the locker room. Discuss favorite racy TV shows elsewhere. Rely on your judgment to know when to walk away from a situation that has "disrespect" written all over it.



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RESPECT THE WORKPLACE

Let's face it, the workplace has also become a place for socializing. When the lines between work and socialization begin to blur, confusion results. What is acceptable in one situation may very well be inappropriate in another. In order to create a respectful workplace, each person must demonstrate respect for his or her job, surroundings and co-workers.

Remember:

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- Your workplace is not your home.
- Comments appropriate at home or in another social environment may not be appropriate at work.
- Filter your language and behavior to reflect your respect for your job and your co-workers.



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KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF

Physical expression often has its roots in culture.

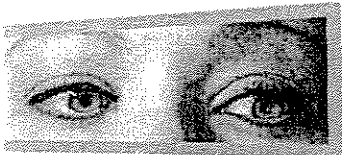
For instance, in many Italian families, hugging, back-slapping and kissing are acceptable forms of nonverbal communication between opposite and same sexes alike.

The same nonverbal communication in Japan might be regarded as invasive, or socially perverse.

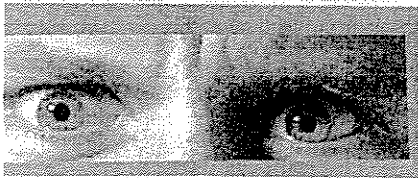
Our personal space is just that: personal. Few things signal sexual harassment faster than inappropriate touching. Intentions are irrelevant.

You should avoid:

- Touching
- Grabbing
- Holding
- Hugging
- Kissing
- Other physical contact.



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Other nonverbal behaviors that can be regarded as sexual harassment include:

- Staring at a person's body
- Leaning over someone at a desk
- Offensive gestures or motions

Even if the touching seems welcome or reciprocated, workplace policy is clear: **hands off.**



Touching is intimate, and when you touch someone, you open the door to his or her personal space and let yourself in. You never know someone's personal history. You don't know his or her fears, experiences or thoughts. Without an explicit invitation, touching can be invasive.

Enjoy your working relationships, but **keep your hands to yourself.**

LEARN TO SPEAK UP

When confronted with unwanted or offensive sexual attention, the recipient has two obligations:

- Voice an objection.
- If the behavior continues, make a formal complaint.

Some people find it difficult to speak up. Their reasons include fear of being perceived as:

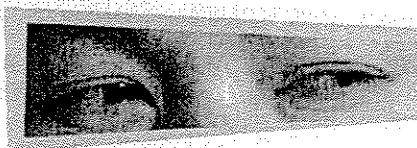
- Prudish
- Oversensitive
- Silly.

Comfort levels vary. If the fear of being perceived as prudish, oversensitive or silly outweighs the discomfort felt each time the harassing behavior occurs, then the choice is clear:

- Endure the unwanted attention and risk that it will grow in frequency and/or intensity.
- Speak up for yourself and share your feelings.



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Trust your instincts. If you are changing your work habits to avoid contact with the harasser, then you are allowing the situation to take control. It is more effective to take the offensive and express your disapproval.

Fear of "making waves."

Sometimes it seems easier to ignore the harassment. If everything else is going well, confronting the harasser might upset the forward momentum.

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Chances are, the harasser doesn't know you find his or her behavior offensive. Without enlightenment, the harasser will probably continue the behavior. What kind of "waves" will that make?

By speaking up, you are on your way to resolution. Keep the encounter calm and factual. Chances are good it will be smooth sailing from there on in.



Fear of "ruining" the working relationship.

If the behavior causes discomfort, the working relationship is already eroding. Trust the person to possess reasonable sensitivity, and a willingness to listen to what you have to say. The person doesn't want to "ruin" the working relationship either, and will typically change the behavior.

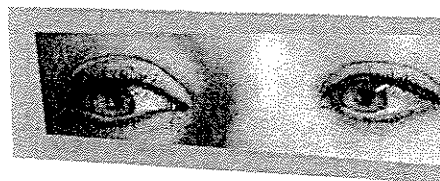
Fear of recrimination or loss of job status.

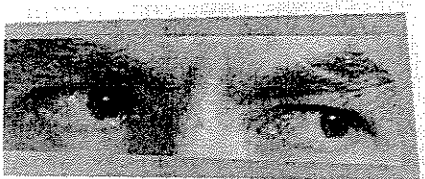
If the harassing behavior is coming from a person of "rank," follow the company's complaint procedure carefully. Law prohibits retaliatory action against the victim. Don't endure a hostile work environment in order to stay employed.

I wouldn't know what to say.

The message should have at least three parts:

- Identify the behavior.
- Tell the person how that behavior makes you feel and why.
- Ask for the behavior to stop.





Such a message is structured so as to avoid a defensive response from the receiver. When the parts are put together, it reads like this:

"When you (keep asking me out), it makes me (uncomfortable), because (I've already told you I'm dating someone). Will you please (stop asking me)?"

Here's another example:

"I find the things you send me via e-mail offensive. I know you're not trying to offend me, but it does. From now on, please leave me off your forwarding list for that stuff, okay?"

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This example contains an element of validation. "I know you're not trying to offend me," lets the person know that you understand his or her intentions are not meant to be hurtful. It makes it easier for the person to listen openly to the rest of your message.



Good! Getting feedback and feedback is a key to effective communication.

Other validation phrases are:

"I value our relationship, and that's why I need to speak up about something that's been bothering me. I don't like being called 'your girl.'"

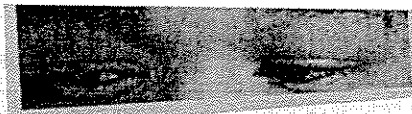
"I like you, and I know you like me, but what happened just now concerns me. When you sit on my desk and lean in to me like that, I feel...."

"With all due respect, I have to object to what you just said. Jokes like that are demeaning to me."

These messages are starting points for the give and take that is sure to follow. Always be respectful, stick to the facts and tell the harasser that you want the behavior to stop.

Obviously, a frank conversation will not resolve every incident of sexual harassment, but it will certainly help. It is possible to ask someone to cease and desist without ruining a working relationship or endangering your job. If the behavior persists after speaking up, follow your company's complaint procedures.





SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Labor has estimated that American business loses about \$1 billion annually in absenteeism, low morale, and new employee training and replacement costs as a result of sexual harassment.

While most of us have no trouble recognizing overt harassment, the more subtle behaviors and situations can be confusing. Most harassers don't intend to offend; they simply don't understand some simple but crucial behavioral guidelines. They are:

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- Think before you speak.
- Respect the workplace.
- Keep your hands to yourself.

Recipients of unwanted sexual attention have an obligation as well. They should learn to speak up.

Heighten your sensitivity to others. Be aware of how people respond to what you do and say. If an individual objects to your behavior, listen and heed the objection.

And, when in doubt, turn it around. Look at the situation from the other person's point of view. Who knows? The view from the other side may provide a whole new perspective.



Quiz

1. True False EEOC guidelines affirm that the victim's perception of sexual harassment, rather than the intent of the behavior, is the determining factor.
2. True False Due to training and education, claims of sexual harassment are on the decline.
3. True False Law prohibits sexual relationships in the workplace.
4. True False It is necessary to filter your comments and behavior at work to reflect your respect for your job and fellow workers.
5. True False Sexual jokes or comments in the workplace can create a hostile working environment.
6. True False A "reasonable person standard" is applied to measure the validity of a harasser's defense.
7. True False Socializing in the workplace is inappropriate, and should be saved for after business hours.

DETACH HERE

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QUIZ CONTINUED

8. True False When confronting harassing behavior, it is important to identify the behavior, describe how the behavior makes you feel, and ask for the behavior to stop.
9. True False More often than not, sexual harassment is obvious.
10. True False Touching others in the workplace should be tolerated as long as the physical contact is of a non-sexual nature.

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DETAIL HERE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRAINING

I have read and understand the training handbook, *Sexual Harassment: New Perspectives*. I have also completed and passed the comprehensive quiz at the conclusion of this handbook.

Employee's Signature

Date

Trainer's Name

Date

NOTE: This record may be included in the employee's personnel or training file.

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT NEW PERSPECTIVES

Answers to Quiz

1. True
2. False Claims of sexual harassment are still on the rise.
3. False Law prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace.
4. True
5. True
6. False The "reasonable person standard" is applied to measure the validity of a victim's claim.
7. False Social interaction in the workplace can build morale and improve teamwork.
8. True
9. False The most common forms of sexual harassment are subtle.
10. False In the workplace a "hands-off" policy is most appropriate.

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