SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Western’s policy on Non-discrimination/harassment defines Sexual Harassment as:

engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct of a sexual nature including sexual assault, verbal abuse or threats, unwelcome sexual invitations or requests, demands for sexual favours or unwelcome innuendo or taunting about a person’s body, physical appearance or sexual orientation.

EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT...

Sexual Harassment can have devastating effects on the target person. These include:

1. destruction of self-esteem
2. sleeplessness and anxiety
3. inability to focus on work
4. irritability, withdrawal, depression
5. a drastic change in life patterns
6. inability to trust
7. fear, anger, resentment
8. loss of job, failure in school
9. suicide

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT INCLUDE...

- demeaning remarks, jokes or other types of verbal abuse of a sexual or sexist nature directed at an individual or group
- inappropriate and uncalled for comments about an individual’s dress or body
- inappropriate and uncalled for display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures
- unnecessary touching, offensive gestures
- compromising invitations
- demands for sexual favours
- sexual assault (an offense under the Criminal Code).
IMPACT MATTERS – INTENT DOES NOT...

When assessing whether or not your own behavior could be considered to be harassment, consider the following:

- If your behavior is sexual in nature and it is unwelcome, it is harassment no matter what your intentions are
- It is no defense to an allegation of sexual harassment to say “It was only a joke!” or “I never meant to hurt anyone”
- A person does not have to object verbally to harassing behavior – be aware of non-verbal cues that your behavior is not welcome; cues such as a refusal to meet your eyes, nervousness, agitation, a rapid exit
- Ask yourself the following questions:
  1. Would I want my behavior to be shown on the evening news or written about in the local paper?
  2. Would I behave this way if my significant other/my parent were standing next to me?
  3. Would I want someone to act this way toward my significant other or my parent?
- If you answer any of those questions in the negative, then you should not be behaving that way.

If you or anyone you know at Western is experiencing sexual harassment, Equity and Human Rights Services is here to help.

EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS SERVICES

Equity and Human Rights Services is here to support the University in its goal to provide an environment free of discrimination or harassment for all its students, staff and faculty. For individuals who feel they have experienced discrimination or harassment, we can provide advice and assistance in resolving complaints. We are also available to provide training or presentations on a variety of equity-related issues.

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday
Evening and Weekends by appointment

Location: Rms 330-335, Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario N6A 5B9

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