

Sexual Harassment and Bullying

Project Prevent and Address Bullying (PPAB)

for students with disabilities

For Students

Northern Illinois University | School Psychology Program

Sexual harassment is a form of bullying. It can involve comments, gestures, actions, or attention of a sexual nature. Some of these behaviors are criminal acts, such as assault. Sexual harassment can occur in person or through technology.

Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Making sexual jokes, comments, or gestures about someone's body.
- Spreading sexual rumors.
- Grabbing someone inappropriately.
- Touching or pinching in a sexual way.
- Display of naked pictures.
- Continuous flirting when someone has asked it to stop.
- Asking someone to go out over and over again after they have said no.
- Requests for sexual acts or favors.
- Sending or receiving inappropriate text messages, pictures or videos.

If you are not sure if a behavior is sexual harassment, talk to a parent, teacher, counselor or another trusted adult.

Sexual harassment can make others feel threatened, scared and stressed. It interferes with your ability to learn in school. It is important to recognize when sexual harassment is happening, respond appropriately to make it stop, and report it to an adult.

Myths about sexual harassment:

MYTH: Sexual harassment is a joke; it doesn't hurt anyone.

FACT: Sexual harassment is degrading to the victim and can lead to long-term negative effects.

MYTH: Some people ask to be sexually harassed because of the way they dress.

FACT: No one ever asks to be sexually harassed, regardless of the way they dress or act.

MYTH: Men cannot be sexually harassed.

FACT: Both men and women can be sexually harassed.

MYTH: Sexual harassment is a way of complimenting someone.

FACT: You can compliment someone without making them feel uncomfortable.

MYTH: Sexual harassment is the same thing as flirting.

FACT: Sexual harassment is degrading and unwanted, while mutual flirting is typically welcomed attention.

How to prevent sexual harassment and bullying:

- Recognize that everyone has control over their own body. Do not touch other people without their consent (permission).
- If you are angry at a person, talk to them or to a trusted adult to resolve the issue. Do not resort to mean behaviors.
- If you feel like you have bullied someone in the past or invaded their personal space, apologize.
- Stay away from places where you know sexual harassment happens.
- If you see sexual harassment happening to a friend or classmate, tell an adult right away.
- If you see another student doing these behaviors, do not laugh or support them.
- Be kind to one another to help make school a safe and comfortable place for all students.

What should I do if I am being sexual harassed?

- Do NOT blame yourself.
- If you feel like you are being sexually harassed, tell an adult right away.
- If you feel it is safe to do so, tell the person who is sexually harassing you to stop. Say "no" clearly and firmly to let him or her know that the behavior is NOT okay with you.
- Write down what happened: Who was involved? What were they doing? How often were they doing it? Where were they doing it?
- Report the harassment to a teacher, principal, school psychologist, social worker, counselor, parent or another adult you trust.

