

What should I do if I know someone who is being sexually harassed?

1. Be supportive. Listen and validate their experiences.
2. Help them by learning more about sexual harassment yourself: review the online tutorial.
3. Tell them about the Human Rights Office.

For more detailed information, ask them to join you in taking the sexual harassment online tutorial.

For source citations including campus and community resources, visit our website at:

www.uwindsor.ca/humanrights

or contact:

The University of Windsor Human Rights Office

**310 Sunset Avenue
Windsor, Ontario
N9B 3P4**

Tel: (519) 253-3000 ext. 3400

Email: ohre@uwindsor.ca

Website: www.uwindsor.ca/humanrights

Sexual Harassment online tutorial:

www.uwindsor.ca/hrotraining



Does it really happen here at the University of Windsor?

Sexual harassment can happen anywhere, at any time. It can happen at work, while walking down the street or in a public setting.

Findings from a 2008 survey conducted by researchers in the Psychology Department found that 73% of U of W students experienced at least one form of verbal or non-verbal sexual harassment; 41% reported experiencing sexual harassment involving physical contact.¹⁸ The most frequently reported types of sexual harassment were intentionally brushing up against the body, touching and grabbing or pinching in a sexual way.¹⁹

What is the University of Windsor's policy on sexual harassment?

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* prohibits sexual harassment in a number of social settings, including education and employment.²⁰ The University of Windsor's Human Rights Policy also expressly prohibits sexual harassment. This policy applies to students, faculty and staff, and to the forms of harassment explained below.²¹ In other words, sexual harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the University of Windsor.

What Should I do if I am being Sexually Harassed?

Experiencing sexual harassment is **never** the victim's fault. There are actions that can be taken against it.

If you are being sexually harassed you have the right to take action:

1. Do not ignore it. It might not end.
2. Say "no" to the harasser firmly and clearly.
3. Name 'it' as unwanted sexual harassment.
4. Write a letter/email to the harasser asking them to stop if you do not feel safe or comfortable enough to speak to them directly.
5. Keep a record of what happened and when it happened.
6. Seek advice from a friend, professor or supervisor.
7. Report it to whoever is in charge: if they don't listen or take action, report it to someone else.
8. Talk to someone at the Human Rights Office.
9. File a complaint or a grievance.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment can be broadly defined as any unwanted sexual attention or behaviour that negatively affects a person's work or learning environment ¹

Sexual harassment can include:

- Inappropriate touching ²
- Gender-based harassment: making offensive jokes or remarks about women or men ³
- Making sexual requests or suggestions ⁴
- Staring at or making unwelcome comments about a person's body ⁵
- Displaying sexually offensive pictures ⁶
- Being verbally or physically abusive to someone because of their gender or sexual orientation ⁷

What is the difference between positive interactions and sexual harassment?

- While positive interactions are based on mutual consent, are pressure-free and pleasant for both parties involved, being on the receiving end of sexual harassment is often uncomfortable, unwanted, embarrassing and non-consensual.⁸
- A hug between friends, mutual flirtation or a relationship of mutual consent does not constitute sexual harassment. ⁹

Many harassers will say that what they are doing is not sexual harassment. Harassers will use the excuse that their intentions are innocent, and that their sexual advances are welcome... But "NO" **ALWAYS MEANS "NO"**. Persistent advances constitute harassment.¹⁰

Note:

Be alert and look for subtle cues such as silence (when a person does not respond to another person's request), and negative body language (when a person pulls away or is upset). The presence of these cues indicates that an interaction is not positive, that the behaviour is unwelcomed, and that the behaviour should stop.¹¹

Who are the harassers? Who are the targets?

Sexual harassment is not about sex and fulfilling sexual desires. It is, in fact, about power. Sexual harassment is used as a tool to gain power.¹²

Anyone can be a harasser and anyone can be a target, but studies show that generally, women are harassed by men.¹³

There are three different forms of sexual harassment:

Traditional Sexual Harassment When the harasser is in a position of organizational power over the target, e.g. professor/student; employer/employee.¹⁴

Peer to Peer Sexual Harassment When the harasser and target are peers who may share equal amounts of power in one area, (i.e. student to student) but not in other areas (e.g. gender, physical, or social).¹⁵

Contrapower Sexual Harassment When a person who is not in a position of power sexually harasses a person who is in a position of power, e.g. male student to female course instructor.¹⁶

Regardless of the form of harassment, issues of power and control are **always** involved. By using sexual harassment tactics, harassers seek to gain power over targets.¹⁷ An example is when an instructor (professor/GA/TA) asks a student for a date. The instructor is in a position of power over the student as he/she has control over the student's final grade and this puts the student in an uncomfortable position of not knowing if there will be academic consequences for saying "yes" or "no".

