



SPEAK UP!

Discussing sexual harassment - material for upper-secondary school teachers

Photo: Alexander Krivitskiy / Pexels

Know what you're talking about

Sexual harassment is verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct done in a sexual manner that is unwanted.

It can look like

- name calling (slut, whore etc.) or catcalling ("hey honey/handsome", whistling, honking)
- discussing someone's looks or genitals, or asking questions of a sexual nature
- jokes referring to sexual orientation or sexual acts, or discussing sexual relations inappropriately
- unwelcome sexual advances, sending unwanted nudes, porn or sexually explicit messages
- grabbing, forceful hugging, touching, sexual assault.

Keep your eyes and ears open

Sexual harassment might not happen right under your watchful eye. Sexual harassment can happen anywhere, yet there are places it is more common to happen - these are called hot spots.

Your schools' own hot spots might include **hallways, bathrooms, libraries, the school yard**. Usually these are public places yet secluded enough for them to feel private. A school isn't the only place where sexual harassment might occur. **Bus stops, shopping centers, streets and public transportation** are some reported areas for sexual harassment.

Listening is just as important as having the courage to speak up. Being aware of what is being said and how by students will give you valuable insight into your students' wellbeing.

Use your platform

Making the school environment feel safe starts with you. Make use of **news articles, books, historical events and songs** for opening the discussion publicly on sexual harassment in your class.

But not every conversation can be public...

If you notice a student being sexually harassed, step in. Turning a blind eye will normalize sexual harassment. Have a calm private discussion with the perpetrator(s) about the harm that sexual harassment causes. To prevent it from happening again, find out why the harasser acted in such a way.

Pull the harassed student aside later and tell them what you saw. Ask them how they feel about it. Offer them support. If a student is a victim of a crime, report it forwards.

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Do you have a plan in place?

Do you know what resources your school has? Do you have a shared policy for dealing with sexual harassment?

Having a common policy that was created in partner with the school staff, students and families will offer you support in preventing, recognizing and discussing sexual harassment.

Utilize your local health care-, social- and youth workers, police and other resources when planning your school's policy.

Our school's resources



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