

Quiz When does a joke or flirting become sexual harassment?

	True	False
1) Anyone who is offended by a dirty joke has a poor sense of humour.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) It's okay for a supervisor to flirt with the workers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) Staring at somebody's body shows that you really like them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) It's no big deal to ask a LGBTQ2S person in your workplace whether they have had any surgeries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Patting somebody on the bottom is a way of flirting with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) If nobody complains when someone wears clothing with a sexual message, it means you haven't offended anybody.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) It shouldn't bother you to be teased about your body and appearance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) If someone in your workplace continually makes staff feel uneasy, they should be told to stop even if no one complains.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Answers to Quiz

1) **False.** Some jokes are sexually offensive because the point of the joke is to make someone feel worthless or humiliated. If someone feels less valuable than others when they hear a joke, then it's no joking matter.

2) **False.** Compliments about a person such as "You look really cool!" are usually appreciated. Sexual comments about the body are less likely to be received as compliments. As well, flirting happens between peers - it is not appropriate between people in authority and somebody they have power over in the workplace.

3) **False.** Although eye contact usually happens without making anyone uncomfortable, it can cross the line. A quick glance or a smile is usually considered flirting; constant staring at your body is not.

4) **False.** It's not just curiosity to ask questions about someone's genitals is - it is inappropriate and a form of harassment.

5) **False.** Flirting is not patting, grabbing, pinching, or groping. Such unwelcome behaviour may be categorized as sexual assault.

6) **False.** Just because nobody complains, doesn't mean it's okay. There are lots of reasons why workers don't speak out about sexual harassment. They may not want to attract attention or be blamed or fired for reporting.

7) **False.** Although teasing and good-natured joking are part of life, constant teasing is hurtful. No matter their gender preference or identity, every employee can be affected by harassment.

8) **True.** If an employee worries that a co-worker or supervisor will purposefully say things that embarrass them, it is not just a form of teasing. Check your workplace sexual harassment policy for information on your options. Employers are obligated to address sexual harassment.

... How do you feel about it?

Lots of people being harassed choose to ignore it. But ignoring it doesn't make it go away. Past behaviour often predicts future behaviour. The more you ignore it, the worse it could become over time.

You have the right to go to work in an environment that is emotionally and physically safe and nonthreatening. If you are being harassed, it can reduce your ability to concentrate and do your job.

What if the employee making sexually offensive comments says they didn't intend to upset or offend anyone?

That doesn't matter. Whether a particular behaviour is harassment depends on the effect it has rather than the intent of the harasser. For example, if an employee tells a joke which degrades other employees, it is still harassment even if no offense was intended.

Sometimes it's hard to know if your remarks will upset other employees. Since some actions and comments may not reasonably be known to be offensive, employees who are upset should make their discomfort known, if they feel safe to do so. A person who is told that their behaviour is offensive must stop immediately.

SAFER PLACES



Positive Conversations that Create Safer Work Places

Is sexual harassment harmful?

Yes it is.

Sexual harassment in the workplace can affect your health, safety and well-being and sometimes the well-being of the entire workplace.

Here are some of the ways it could affect you:

- You might feel angry, confused, uncomfortable and frightened.
- You might feel sick.
- You might feel powerless.
- You might lose your concentration.
- You might feel numb and unable to respond.
- You might feel like avoiding certain places like the bathroom or lunchroom.
- You might feel like calling in sick or quitting your job.

Sexual Harassment is no laughing matter

For more information please visit our website www.SaferPlacesNB.ca

Sexual harassment in the workplace is common. It can cause enormous harm to employees and poison the entire workplace.

It often goes unchecked. When the offensive behaviour affects employees with different sexual orientations, gender identities or gender expressions, it may not even be recognized as sexual harassment. That's because it may not fit the behavior or attitudes associated with traditional male or female gender roles.

Everyone in the workplace has the right to work without being sexually harassed. We can all be part of the positive conversation on how to prevent and address sexual harassment. This will help to create safer workplaces.

Let's start the conversation by asking, "Do these kinds of situations make you feel uncomfortable?"

- Comments about your body or physical appearance;
- derogatory comments about your physical appearance, gender or sexual identity;
- questions about your sex life;
- unwanted touching, hugging or kissing;
- hearing sexually suggestive jokes or comments;
- seeing graffiti or t-shirts with sexual messages or pictures;
- being whistled at or cat calls;
- being followed or watched;
- being asked repeatedly for dates after you said no;
- comments about your sexual preference or sexual orientation?

Sexual comments and behaviour that humiliate, demean or upset an employee or group of employees are sexual harassment!



Exactly what is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is any **unwelcome** behaviours, actions or words which:

- are sexual in nature;
- are likely to offend or humiliate;
- relate to a person's gender, sexuality or body parts;
- are known or ought to be known to be inappropriate by the person saying them;
- are typically repeated, although there could be a single serious action.



What if the harassment happens outside the workplace, like when employees go out for lunch?

A workplace is not limited to a physical workspace. Workers can experience sexual harassment anywhere - including travelling to a worksite, at a staff party, or going out for training. It may occur in the lunchroom, the locker room, or on a field trip. It can even happen on social media where employees share information or make plans.

Is sexual harassment against the law?

Sexual harassment is a violation of the New Brunswick Human Rights Code.

The Code also protects against discrimination and harassment based on characteristics such as race, colour, sex, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, and disability. Sexual harassment is also addressed in legislation governed by WorkSafe New Brunswick.

Where the conduct or behaviour includes inappropriate sexual touching, it may also be a criminal offence such as sexual assault. In such cases, the employee may want to report the incident(s) to the police.

All forms of harassment show a lack of respect for the rights of others. When sexual harassment takes place in a workplace, the people in authority are responsible for preventing or discouraging it.

What if the harassment was a one-time occurrence? Does it have to happen repeatedly?

It depends on the circumstances. It may be behaviour that happens over and over. Or it can be a single incidence that someone finds serious and upsetting. Sexually demeaning and offensive behaviour often starts with bullying. It may escalate over time. Sometimes it takes the form of micro-aggressions – which are brief, common-place comments used repeatedly to create a hostile social climate, for example, stigmatizing LGBTQ2S employees with slights and insults (verbal or behavior).

Who gets sexually harassed at work?

Research shows us that the majority of individuals who experience sexual harassment are females; but anybody can be a victim. Some employees are more vulnerable and may be targeted, including:

- members of the LGBTQ2S+ community,
- immigrants and newcomers,
- employees of colour,
- persons with a disability, and so on.

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Who might sexually harass an employee?

In a workplace, it could be:

- A co-worker harassing other workers – of the opposite or same sex;
- A supervisor or boss who makes comments to one or all the workers that are sexual in nature.
- A customer or client, volunteer or even an intimate partner who harasses an employee in their workplace;
- Other workplace personnel.

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