

# Harassment Prevention - The Basics

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

*Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

## **NSES ALIGNMENT:**

**IV.8.SM.1** – Describe strategies a person could use, when it is safe to do so, to intervene when someone is being sexually harassed or someone they know is perpetuating unhealthy or coercive behaviors

**TARGET GRADES:** Grade 6–12

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Laptop
- LCD Projector
- Screen
- Speakers
- Sexual Harassment Note Catcher (one copy for each student)
- Sexual Harassment Note Catcher Answer Key
- Sexual Harassment Scenarios (one copy for each student)

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define sexual harassment [Knowledge]
2. Describe at least one strategy a person can safely use to intervene if someone is being sexually harassed [Knowledge]
3. Describe at least one strategy a person can safely use if they are being sexually harassed [Knowledge]
4. Describe at least one strategy a person can use if someone they know is sexually harassing others [Knowledge]

## **LESSON RATIONALE:**

Sexual harassment is pervasive and is experienced far too frequently by people in multiple settings. This lesson provides a clear explanation of what sexual harassment is and how a person could safely intervene as a bystander, when possible. By amplifying a system of accountability, we can directly combat a culture that does not provide safety to all of its people.

## **ADVANCE PREPARATION:**

Prior to the lesson please communicate with the social services support staff at the school to 1) provide advanced warning of the topic to be covered in the lesson and subsequent access of services by students and 2) invite the staff to join the lesson by sitting in the back of the class to offer immediate support if needed. Additionally, it is helpful to have a plan B option for students who opt out of the lesson for personal reasons. Please print copies of the note catcher for each student and scenarios for each student as well as a note catcher answer key for yourself. Also, it can be helpful to add local hotline contact information to your email signature so that any future email communication further links these resources to your students.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **NOTE TO THE TEACHER:**

The lesson will cover topics that might bring up past trauma for students and the need for additional support. It is important to share a warning with the class before starting to teach in order to ensure that those who need to take care of their health and well being are able to do so. Additionally, it would best serve the students to connect with the school counselor and invite them to sit in for the class or at least be aware that it is being taught and students might be seeking out their services.

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### STEP 1:

Begin the class with a warning by saying, **“Today we are going to talk about a difficult topic, sexual harassment. This topic might be particularly challenging to hear about or discuss which is normal. If at any point you feel like you need to excuse yourself to talk with the school counselor please let me know. I also want to remind everyone of our group agreements regarding respecting others and keeping information private. Just to remind you, I am both a trusted adult and a mandatory reporter so if you share that you are being harmed or might harm others I am required by law to report this to the appropriate adults in order to get you help. Does anyone have any questions before we begin?”**

(3 minutes)

### STEP 2:

Distribute copies of What is Sexual Harassment note catcher to students and explain that you will play a short video on sexual harassment. Prior to starting the video, have the students identify an elbow partner with whom they can work for the class. Ask the students to review the questions on the note catcher for thirty seconds prior to starting the video so they are aware of what content they should be listening for. Play the Amaze video [“What is Sexual Harassment”](#) and once the video is over, ask students to complete the note catcher. Students should work with their elbow partner to compare their answers for approximately three minutes. As a class, review the entire note catcher using the provided answer key to ensure that all students have the correct answers. Further enforce these key points during your discussion of the note catcher:

- Harassment is not acceptable and never the fault of the person being harassed
- Tell the aggressor to stop – if you are being harassed you do not need to explain why you want the behavior to stop and you do not have to be polite
- Don't ignore the behavior if someone is harassing you. You can identify a trusted adult to help as soon as possible to stop the harassment and reduce the likelihood of it continuing

(10 minutes)

### STEP 3:

Say something like, **“Now that we have a clear understanding of what sexual harassment is, it is important to figure out what we could do when we encounter harassment whether we are the person being harassed, witnessing harassment, or know someone who is harassing other people. Unfortunately, sexual harassment is common but it is difficult to really know how common because so often people do not report harassment. Why do you think reporting of sexual harassment is low?”**

Probe your students to identify that survivors of harassment can sometimes be ignored, not believed, or unsupported. Say something like, **“It takes courage to report sexual harassment and we should support those who report harassment because all people**

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**deserve to be believed. So, let's figure out how we can offer support. Remember, if you need to pass on the activity if you are not feeling comfortable or talk with a trusted adult I am available after class and the counselor is available as well. Also, you will be selecting a role in the next activity and Person A in the scenario is being harassed, so if that could be a triggering experience for you please select person B or C."**

Place the students into groups of three and ask each student to determine who will be person A, B, and C. Once the decisions have been made ask the students to quietly read the scenario as a group. Person A will respond to the scenario as the person being harassed, Person B will respond to the scenario as someone witnessing the scenario and needing to intervene safely, and Person C will respond to the scenario because they will act as if they know the person doing the harassing. You will have about 15 minutes to work together as a group and figure out how you could respond as your respective characters. Assure that there is clarity on the task and then allow the students to get to work while circulating the room and offering support as needed.

(20 minutes)

### STEP 4:

As the students are working write the three characters on separate portions of the board (Person being harassed, Person witnessing the harassment, and Person who knows the harasser). After the students have prepared their responses and completed the activity ask for volunteers from each of the three characters to share their strategies for responding and intervening to the harassment. For example, say something like, **"can anyone who responded as person A share their strategies to respond to the harassment in the scenario?"** As students respond, write their answers on the board under the designated heading. Then replicate the process with the other two characters. Once each character has had a chance to share their strategies ask the full class if there are any additional strategies that should be added to the lists. Please ensure that the following are included on each list:

***NOTE TO EDUCATOR:** If you have a student who suggests responding with violence gently remind them that violence could result in negative attention and consequences for that person which could take the attention away from the true problem, the person sexually harassing another person. Say something like, "While violence might be a natural response when you see someone you care about being harmed it can then become the focus or the problem that others will try to address instead of the true problem which is sexual harassment."*

### PERSON A:

- tell the harasser to stop
- communicate to the harasser that what they are doing is making you uncomfortable
- loudly say no so that other people nearby can hear you and offer support
- reach out to a trusted adult for support
- make a formal complaint to the school, employer, or proper authorities

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### PERSON B:

- tell the harasser to stop
- stand close to the person being harassed
- find other people who can intervene with you
- confront the harasser and explain that their actions are unacceptable
- meet the needs of the person being harassed (offer to sit with them, accompany them to make a complaint, listen to them, etc.)

### PERSON C:

- call out the actions immediately
- explain why their actions are harmful
- help them practice how to respectfully communicate with others
- Be consistent – if you see that their actions are harmful always talk with them about it
- celebrate when changes are made
- identify a trusted adult for support just in case the harasser begins to retaliate

Say something like, **“Raise your hand if you assumed the character’s gender in the scenarios? Think to yourself about why you assumed the genders that you did? So how would it change if it were the opposite gender? Would your response be different?”** Ask one or two volunteers to share their thoughts with the full group.

Say something like, **“A large number of reported cases of sexual harassment target girls, women, LGBTQIA+ people of all genders, or gender non-conforming people; however, anyone of any gender can be the target of sexual harassment, any anyone of any gender can be the perpetrator of sexual harassment. Many cases of sexual harassment go unreported and therefore we don’t have a clear understanding of how often and who are most likely targeted. Gender doesn’t impact harassment in that it will always be wrong for any person to sexually harass another person and our response should not be influenced by the gender of any person involved. Every single person deserves to be treated with respect and if we can support that in any way that is a positive thing.”**

***NOTE TO EDUCATOR:*** *If you find that you are running out of time or your students enjoy journaling this could be used as an opportunity to journal at the end of class to allow for processing of the activity.*

(15 minutes)

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### **STEP 4:**

In closing ask students to share one word to describe how they would feel if they were to encounter sexual harassment. After each student shares their word thank the students for their hard work. Remind students that the topic worked on today can be challenging and bring up some difficult feelings so make a friendly reminder that the counselor and you are available to talk with any student following class.

(3 minutes)

### **RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:**

Objective 1 is completed Step 2, Objectives 2-4 are completed in Steps 3, 4, and the homework.

### **OPTIONAL HOMEWORK:**

Create a PSA graphic to post in the school explaining how to respond to sexual harassment. The graphic should be visually interesting to get the attention of as many students as possible and include short but impactful suggestions for bystanders to intervene safely when they witness harassment. The graphic can be a poster, flyer, or digital visual.

Or

Share a second scenario with the students and ask them to identify how they would respond in all three roles as done during the lesson.

# Sexual Harassment Note Catcher

After watching the Amaze video What is Sexual Harassment fill in the blanks of the following statements.

1. Sexual harassment is a type of \_\_\_\_\_ intended to hurt or intimidate someone.

2. Sexual harassment can include: making sexual jokes, comments, or \_\_\_\_\_ to or about someone.

3. The idea that someone was asking for sexual harassment because of something they did, said, or were wearing is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ sexual harassment won't make it stop usually.

5. Telling a trusted adult sooner leads to \_\_\_\_\_ results.

# Sexual Harassment Note Catcher Answer Key

After watching the Amaze video What is Sexual Harassment fill in the blanks of the following statements.

1. Sexual harassment is a type of BULLYING intended to hurt or intimidate someone.
2. Sexual harassment can include: making sexual jokes, comments, or GESTURES to or about someone.
3. The idea that someone was asking for sexual harassment because of something they did, said, or were wearing is FALSE and UNACCEPTABLE.
4. IGNORING sexual harassment won't make it stop usually.
5. Telling a trusted adult sooner leads to FASTER results.

# Sexual Harassment Scenario #1

Determine who will be Person A, B, or C.

## ROLES:

Person A will respond to the scenario as the person being harassed.

Person B will respond to the scenario as someone witnessing the scenario and needing to intervene safely.

Person C will respond to the scenario because they will act as if they know the person doing the harassing.

You and your best friend are at the school basketball game. The person you have a crush on keeps looking at you which is very exciting. Your crush's friend starts making fun of them for looking at you and loudly tells them to walk over and kiss you if they like you. You and your crush are uncomfortable and embarrassed. Your crush's friend then starts talking loudly about what they should do with your body sexually and making motions to simulate sexual acts.

Person A would respond by:

Person B would respond by:

Person C would respond by:



# Sexual Harassment Scenario #2 – Homework

## ROLES:

Person A will respond to the scenario as the person being harassed.

Person B will respond to the scenario as someone witnessing the scenario and needing to intervene safely.

Person C will respond to the scenario because they will act as if they know the person doing the harassing.

You and your two best friends are eating lunch. One of your friends quietly whispers to you that a person they were attracted to was sexting them. Your other friend hears and begs that person to send them a screenshot but they are private texts. For the rest of the day the person sends nude photos to your group of friends asking, "Was it like this?"

Person A would respond by:

Person B would respond by:

Person C would respond by: