

sexual harassment

tips for young adults



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sexual harassment is

- Whistling
- Staring intently at another's body
- Unwelcome kissing, hugging and touching (brushing against another's body)
- Invading another's privacy and personal space, making the woman feel uncomfortable (standing very close to her or breathing down her neck)
- Passing lewd remarks or commenting on another's appearance or sexuality
- Making obscene telephone calls or sending obscene messages (including e-mails, letters, SMSes or MMSes)
- Inappropriately giving gifts of a sexual nature
- Stalking (repeatedly keeping a watch on or following someone)
- Exposing someone (against their will) to pornographic films, pictures, poems or stories
- Exposing another to sexist and insulting graffiti, jokes and cartoons, often demeaning to women
- Soliciting sexual services

TIPS FOR GIRLS

Reduce your vulnerability

DO'S

- ♀ **Learn to recognise harassment.** Anything that makes you feel ashamed, humiliated or frightened is harassment. It is not what the other person *intends* but what you *feel* that matters. If you feel harassed, you have the right to protest.
- ♀ **Say 'no' loudly and clearly.** Prepare a stock sentence (like "This is pathetic – don't be silly!"). Practise saying it to yourself until it becomes a reflex.
- ♀ **Communicate confidence in yourself.** Look straight at people who threaten you in any way and speak clearly and calmly in response. Show that you are aware of who you are and that you have a right to be where you are.
- ♀ **Make friends.** Isolation increases vulnerability. There are more chances of people coming to your aid if you ask for help. Similarly, be ready to respond in case anyone is being harassed in your presence.

- ♀ **Report the incident and make a formal request for action if the harassment persists.** Sexual harassment is a crime and should not be overlooked. It must be reported to the authorities and treated as a serious violation of University norms.
- ♀ **Be willing to respect boys who respect you.** Every boy is not a harasser. Being scornful or dismissive of boys because of their background, dress code or language, sends out a message about your own prejudices. Such behaviour can even invite retaliatory harassment from the objects of your dislike.

DON'T'S

- ♀ **Don't advertise your vulnerability.** When you are in a public space, don't look nervous, don't walk with your head bowed and don't refuse to answer if someone asks you a valid question.
- ♀ **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Calling out loudly for help is itself a deterrent to most harassers. Often, people are not sure if you need help unless you ask for it.

TIPS FOR BOYS

Avoid mindless 'macho'ism

DO'S

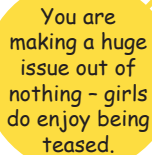
- ♂ **Be aware of how you appear to girls.** Make sure you look, speak and behave like a person who respects others and expects respect in return. Learn to speak without using sexist slang and swear words. Avoid unnecessary display of muscle-power. Equally, avoid pushy familiarity.
- ♂ **Learn to treat girls as human beings, friends and colleagues.** Girls are often taught to avoid boys — over-friendliness in boys can seem threatening or aggressive. Practise ways of talking and behaving that are friendly, but not over-familiar. Ask a female friend to tell you about what girls find offensive or threatening about typical 'male' behaviour.
- ♂ **Wait to be asked before rushing in to help or protect girls from harassment.** Not all girls are helpless people needing your protection; in fact, some may even feel harassed by your unwanted 'help'. Be alert to possible harassment in your vicinity and be ready to help, but only if your help is needed. Often, your offer of help will be enough to deter the harasser.

DON'TS


- ♂ **Don't assume that girls like being harassed.** Girls despise and avoid harassers. When they say "no", don't assume that they mean "yes". If you are not sure they are saying "yes" or "no", take the safe route and back off.
- ♂ **Don't assume that girls who dress "daringly" deserve to be harassed.** Boys and girls both have the right to dress as they want. You may not like what a girl is wearing, but that does not give you the right to show your anger or disapproval. Harassment is an offence and cannot be justified on any account.
- ♂ **Don't trivialise harassment.** Don't call it "eve teasing" or "joking". Sexual harassment is an aggressive and abusive act that causes hurt, trauma and pain. Calling it by another name doesn't change the fact that it is abuse.
- ♂ **Don't become a harasser just because other boys do it.** Following the herd might be the right thing for sheep and goats, but standing apart from the herd will earn you respect from people who are important to you.



When someone harasses me, first I feel scared. Slowly, this changes to irritation. Irritation then becomes anger.



You are making a huge issue out of nothing - girls do enjoy being teased.



The best way is to just ignore it. One day, they will stop it.



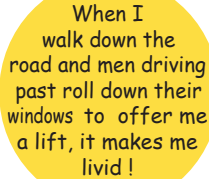
If girls wear clothes that show off their bodies, they have to be ready to face comments.



I don't touch girls, only pass comments about them. It feels good!



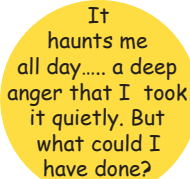
I respect my female friends, but we do tease them. What's the big harm in that?



When I walk down the road and men driving past roll down their windows to offer me a lift, it makes me livid!



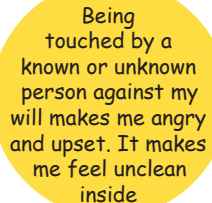
I tried telling my friends I don't enjoy harassing girls, but they just call me names.



It haunts me all day..... a deep anger that I took it quietly. But what could I have done?



Women create a big fuss about eve-teasing by calling it sexual harassment. They should just keep their opinions to themselves.



Being touched by a known or unknown person against my will makes me angry and upset. It makes me feel unclean inside

A FINAL WORD FOR GIRLS

Don't fool yourself that "covering up" will protect you from harassment, or that Indian dress is safer than Western dress.

You have a right to wear what you want to wear; harassment is a crime regardless of what you are wearing.

Don't choose clothes you are not comfortable with just because everyone else is wearing them. Think through what you will do if other people react negatively to your attire.

If you are confident of handling unpleasant situations without harm to yourself, go ahead. If not, don't take the risk - wear something else.



A FINAL WORD FOR BOYS

A simple "harassment detector"

Before cracking a joke, passing a comment, playing a prank or making an advance to a girl, ask yourself these questions:

"How would I feel if this action was filmed and shown on reality TV?"

"How would my mother, sister or girlfriend react to this action?"

"Am I forcing my attention on her?"

If the answers make you uncomfortable
– don't do it!

If she does not respond – it's time to
stop NOW!





SEXUAL HARASSMENT \neq FLIRTING

SEXUAL HARASSMENT	FLIRTING
Unwanted and unwelcome	Wanted and welcome
Happens between people in a position of "inequality"	Happens between people in a position of "equality"
Makes you feel "bad"	Makes you feel "good"
One-sided – you are unable to respond	Two-way – you are able to respond in the same tone
Feels degrading and demeaning	Feels flattering
Makes you feel powerless	Makes you feel empowered
Produces feelings of shame and low self-esteem	Produces positive feelings and high self-esteem

THE LAW SAYS...

Sexual harassment is not only a social offence, but is also a crime in the eyes of the law.

Harassers could face punishment under the following Sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC):

- ❖ **Section 294:** Obscene gestures or songs
- ❖ **Section 354:** Outraging the modesty of a woman by using criminal force
- ❖ **Section 509:** Outraging a woman's modesty through obscene words or gestures

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you face harassment, you can:

- ♀ Take help from people around you (friends or strangers)
- ♀ Complain to the College Complaints Committee, or any such statutory body, if the harassment takes place in college or at the University
- ♀ Complain immediately to the police, if it happens in a public place
- ♀ Register a complaint with a women's organisation

The JAGORI Safe Delhi Campaign seeks to mobilise diverse sections of society to ensure women's safety in public places.

This information booklet on Sexual Harassment is a small attempt to make the public aware about the seriousness of this issue and how it affects women and girls. Getting a deeper understanding of the term could help young adults learn to respect members of the opposite sex, and help change aggressive behaviours.

You could carry this handy guide in your bag and share it with friends and colleagues. You can also join the Safe Delhi Campaign and help us disseminate this booklet in your college or your neighbourhood.

For more information or copies, contact us at safedelhi@jagori.org



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