

What Constitutes Sexual Harassment:  
Assessing Your Understanding

Select True (T) , False (F) or Maybe (M) for the following statements. You may find that it is difficult to respond to some of these situations as sexual harassment is not easy to define - and is often a very personal matter.

- T F M 1. Physical acts by one employee against another constitute sexual harassment.
- T F M 2. A suggestive cartoon hanging over an employee's desk constitutes sexual harassment.
- T F M 3. Ignoring another employee constitutes sexual harassment.
- T F M 4. People in some cultures are more physical and openly affectionate than others and co-workers should understand their actions are not meant as sexual harassment.
- T F M 5. Staring is sexual harassment.
- T F M 6. Sexual innuendoes made at an office party are not sexual harassment.
- T F M 7. Touching of one employee by another is sexual harassment.
- T F M 8. The promotion of an unqualified willing participant in an office romance can be considered sexual harassment.
- T F M 9. Failure to promote an employee because he/she will not date you is sexual harassment.
- T F M 10. Inviting a coworker to go out on a date even though he/she has refused to go out with you in the past is sexual harassment.

© New York State Governor's Office of Employee Relations  
[http://goer.state.ny.us/train/onlinelearning/SH/21a\\_1.asp](http://goer.state.ny.us/train/onlinelearning/SH/21a_1.asp)

## What Constitutes Sexual Harassment: Assessing Your Understanding Feedback

It is not always easy to distinguish sexually harassing behaviors. Often, whether a behavior is sexual harassment, depends on the context of the behavior and the interpretation and perceptions of the recipient. Indeed, depending on the circumstances, if any of these behaviors were reported and unwanted and occurred over an extended period of time, they may be deemed a pattern of sexual harassment. The statements in this activity were a way to get you to think about the complexities of sexual harassment.

As a supervisor in your agency, it is your responsibility to be sensitive and respectful of other employees and to model appropriate behavior in the workplace.

© New York State Governor's Office of Employee Relations  
[http://goer.state.ny.us/train/onlinelearning/SH/21a\\_1fbk1.asp](http://goer.state.ny.us/train/onlinelearning/SH/21a_1fbk1.asp)

## What Constitutes Sexual Harassment: Modeling Preventative Behavior

Be serious about stopping and preventing sexual harassment. Don't let negative attitudes about people come out at work. Remember it is your responsibility to do your work and follow the policies and procedures of your employer. In the case of sexual harassment, it could cost your employer a great deal of money in a court case. And, it could cost you your job!

When you are at work remember to:

- Avoid behavior that has sexual overtones, including:
  - Complimenting a person's body.
  - Asking questions about a person's sex life.
  - Asking to date someone who has repeatedly said no.
- Keep your work area decorated appropriately. There should not be posters, pictures or other items that some people could find offensive.
- Don't use sexual humor.
- Don't go overboard at office parties, picnics, or after work socializing - especially when alcohol is involved. You still have to work with these people. Your agency could be liable for damages even outside of work. Don't take the risk.
- Remember the rules of proper conduct to your agency's customers, vendors, suppliers, etc. Don't harass any of them or let them harass you.

© New York State Governor's Office of Employee Relations  
[http://goer.state.ny.us/train/onlinelearning/SH/21a\\_2.html](http://goer.state.ny.us/train/onlinelearning/SH/21a_2.html)