



Video: Sexual Harassment Subtle Behaviors 2024

Sexual Harassment Subtle Behaviors: Facilitation Guide



Overview

This facilitation guide and accompanying video have been developed to assist equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) professionals and practitioners in discussing *Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces*.

Additional information on how to conduct a facilitation can be found in *The Leader's Conversation* guide available at deomi.mil.

This guided discussion is focused on the *Sexual Harassment Subtle Behaviors* video. The video demonstrates potential behaviors one could see or hear in many environments. The facilitator can use the video and guide to discuss the demonstrated problematic behaviors and how the unit members and leaders can prevent, mitigate, or address them. Adherence to this facilitation guide is encouraged to ensure consistency in training delivery.

However, this guide is not all-inclusive and may be expanded based on the facilitator's experience. Throughout this guide, questions are framed to stimulate the facilitator's thoughts on areas to explore and consider in this process and the specific topic. Users should provide a controlled, safe, and non-attributional environment where individuals will be willing to share their perspectives. EO and EEO professionals, practitioners, and leaders can use this event to review and educate their members on policy and acceptable and unacceptable



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behaviors. Sexual harassment is covered in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1020.03, *Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces*.

Purpose

The objectives for this discussion:

- Define sexual harassment and what subtle sexually harassing behaviors can look like.
- Discuss the video and the behaviors seen within it.
- Grasp how sexual harassment can affect the individual and the organization.
- Understand the escalation sexual harassment behaviors can take if not addressed.
- Discuss sexual harassment prevention strategies.

Preparation

This guide has been developed assuming that users have some basic facilitation skills and understand the facilitation process. Users should also review *The Leader's Conversation* guide for additional parameters, techniques, and information on facilitation (available at deomi.mil). *The Leader's Conversation* guide provides areas to consider, including the following:

- Site selection
- Ground rules the facilitation may use
- Question development
- How to conduct the discussion

Definitions

DoDI 1020.03 defines these terms as the following:

- Harassment is defined as behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to a reasonable person, whether oral, written, or physical, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and deliberate or repeated offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature when:
 - Submission to such conduct is, either explicitly or implicitly, made a term or condition of a person's job, pay, or career.
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person.
 - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
 - Such conduct is so severe or pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the victim does perceive, the environment as hostile or offensive.
 - Such conduct is used or condoned by any person in a supervisory or command position, of any form of sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, pay, or job of a member of the Armed Forces or a civilian employee of the Department of Defense.
 - Such conduct includes any deliberate or repeated unwelcome verbal comments or gesture of a sexual nature by any member of the Armed Forces or a civilian employee of the Department of Defense.



What Is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and deliberate or repeated offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature. Behavior is sufficient to constitute sexual harassment if it is so severe or pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the complainant does perceive, the environment as hostile or offensive. Unreported sexual harassment can affect the individual and the organization in multiple ways:

Individual	Organization
Fear of reporting	Passive bystanders
Low self-esteem	Lack of trust and morale
Depression or anxiety	Hostile work environment
Social exclusion	Culture of exclusion
Low productivity	Decreased readiness

Strategies to Prevent Sexual Harassment

As leaders, it is critical to be aware of our surroundings whether in the office or out in the field. Being able to create a healthy command climate where Service members feel heard and understood can make a great impact when it comes to reporting harassment. Some principles of prevention/strategies include the following:

- Discuss avenues (including anonymous ones) for reporting inappropriate behaviors.
- Discourage social media that constitute harassment and other inappropriate behavior.
- Clearly post policies and reporting procedures.
- Hold members accountable for leading/participating in inappropriate behaviors.

Notes:



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Process

Before the participants' arrival, determine and prepare the setting for the guided discussion. Ensure the video is prepared to view (direct from the Cultural Portal at: <https://www.deomi.mil/Center-of-Excellence-Portal/Harassment-Prevention-and-Response/#sexual-harassment>) or may be predownloaded.

Video Description

Sexual Harassment Subtle Behaviors

FOR FACILITATOR USE ONLY: The video opens with a male Service member discussing another male, SFC Murphy, who has been making things uncomfortable for him. He says SFC Murphy started messaging him on social media about work, but then it got “weird” when he started “liking” all his pictures from the gym. SFC Murphy also commented on the Service member’s social media account that he enjoyed watching his gym routine, which made him uncomfortable. The Service member says he feels like he should say something but is not sure who he should go to because SFC Murphy is close with the commanding officer, and he doesn’t want to cause any issues. The conclusion of the video shows the Service member questioning if he is being “irrational” or if this is something that should be addressed.

Video Participants

- **Target:** Male Service member
- **Perpetrator:** Other male (SFC Murphy)
- **Bystanders:** None



Directions

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Validate: explain the purpose or objective of the discussion/training.
3. Set expectations and establish ground rules.
4. Introduce the topic (using the notes you created based on the topic).
5. Explain how sexual harassment is defined.
6. Provide the handout (if used) to the participants.
7. **Read instructions:** You are about to watch a video that is made for awareness purposes only.
8. **Read instructions:** Answer the questions in your handout individually after watching the video. Then later, we will share your answers with the group.
9. Show the video.
10. Have participants answer the handout questions (5–10 minutes). Please encourage them to use critical thinking as they view the questions.
11. Lead a discussion based on the questions used.

Facilitator Notes

Suggestions: Display the questions on a bulletin board, butcher paper, or PowerPoint, or prepare them in a handout. Explain to the participants that they will need a pen and paper (or handout) to answer the questions you will use during the guided discussion. The anticipated responses (ARs) after each question can assist the EO professional in identifying potential discussion points.

**Facilitator Note:* The facilitator should be prepared to discuss the questions (or similar questions) with the participants.

**Give students ample time to answer the questions.*

Reflection Questions

Think about questions you may wish to ask the participants.

Question and AR:

Question and AR:



Facilitator- Developed Questions

Below are potential questions and ARs for use in guiding the discussion. Before the session, the facilitator should review them and may develop their own. The provided handout matches the questions provided below. If you modify or add additional questions, modify the handout accordingly.

**Facilitator Note:* The facilitator should be prepared to discuss the questions (or similar questions) with the participants.

- **What did you observe in the video?**

AR: The targeted male Service member in the video stated that he was uncomfortable with another Service member, SFC Murphy. SFC Murphy messaged the target on his social media about work. SFC Murphy then started making comments about the target's photos at the gym, which made him uncomfortable. The targeted Service member is hesitant to report the SFC Murphy's behavior to his commanding officer because SFC Murphy and the commanding officer are perceived friends.

- **Based on the behavior shown in the scenario, can the comments be perceived as sexual harassment?**

AR: The comments made could be considered sexual harassment, according to the definition of sexual harassment in the Department of Defense (DoDI 1020.03). Harassment is behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to a reasonable person. Sexual harassment includes conduct that is deliberate or repeated such as unwelcome verbal comments or sexual gestures by any member of the Armed Forces or a civilian employee of the Department of Defense. While the SFC Murphy comments might seem harmless to some people, the Service member in the video is clearly uncomfortable with them. Thus, these repeated actions can be perceived as sex harassment.

- **If the Service member came to you about what has happened on social media, what could you do as a bystander?**

AR: You could talk to the target and inform him that these behaviors could be construed as sexual harassment. Inform him that he has the option to talk to the EO advisor and others if he desires. If he is concerned about the relationship between SFC Murphy and the commanding officer, he can report his issue anonymously.

- **What are risk or protective factors are seen in this scenario?**

AR: Risk factors:

- One risk factor in this scenario is that this encounter happened over social media. Sexual harassment can occur in many forms. If the unit does not conduct training and express on how sexual harassment can occur over social media, the offender may not understand this type of behavior is unacceptable.
- Another risk factor could be a general permissive environment. Perpetrators may demonstrate inappropriate behaviors if their past incidents were not addressed or if they observed similar interactions by other members that were not addressed.

Protective factors:

- One protective factor could be a friend who provides support or advice to the Service member. Organizations should ensure Service members understand that all allegations of sexual harassment, including instances from social media, will be taken seriously and will not be tolerated.
- Another protective factor can be a climate that supports a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and other unwanted behaviors. If leadership takes reports of sexual harassment seriously when Service members report them, they will be seen as unacceptable in the environment. Also, taking these



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complaints seriously and following through with appropriate action can prevent perpetrators from harassing other targets.

- **As a leader, how can you empower your team to intervene if they witness someone being sexually harassed?**

AR: Leaders can provide training to team members on ways to identify sexual harassment and to understand that harassing behaviors can be overt or subtle and can even come in the form of electronic means. They can also ensure Service members understand strategies they may use to respond to sexual harassment incidents. Leaders can foster climates where individuals feel supported when reporting sexual harassment claims and confident that reports will be taken seriously. Leaders should also model positive behaviors for their unit as an example.

Lead the Discussion

Open the discussion by asking volunteers to share their responses with the group based on the questions used. As you do so, keep in mind:

General Considerations

- Ensure all participants have an opportunity to share their thoughts.
- Encourage open communication among participants.
- When applicable, ask clarifying questions.
- Use anticipated responses to help the group when needed.
- Avoid “why” and closed-ended questions.
- Remind participants of the ground rules when necessary.
- Remember to let participants know that you are listening.
- Take notes for your summary and conclusion.
- Paraphrase when participants are unclear with their answers/assist them in reaching the objectives.
- Let the discussion be fluid with little to no disruptions or corrections.

Examples of Other Questions That Can Be Asked

- In your own words, how would you describe the difference between overt and subtle sexual harassing behaviors?

- What are some ways your organization can support individuals who report harassment?
- Where can a Service member go to report sexual harassment?
- As a leader, what behaviors can you show to create an environment where others feel open to report harassment?

Close the Session

***Facilitator Note:** During the conclusion, paraphrase participant comments to show that they were heard. The provided conclusion is an example on how to close out the guided discussion.

End your discussion by restating the objectives covered at the beginning and provide closing comments.

Summary:

Restate the initial objectives:

- Define sexual harassment and what sexually harassing subtle behaviors can look like.
- Discuss the video and the behaviors seen within it.
- Grasp how sexual harassment can affect the individual and the organization.
- Understand the escalation sexual harassment behaviors can take if not addressed.
- Discuss sexual harassment prevention strategies.



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Potential Closing Comments

Some might consider the behaviors exhibited in this scenario as harmless or simply dating-type (approach) behaviors, but they are not. Service members should feel comfortable enough to report sexual harassment regardless of workplace friendships. As this scenario involved social media, leaders must educate members to understand that sexual harassment can occur across social media platforms and that violations are punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

If allowed to continue, these behaviors have the potential to escalate (e.g., sexual assault) and foster a variety of negative organizational climate changes, such as a hostile work environment, a lack of trust in leadership, low unit cohesion, and low morale. Identifying inappropriate behaviors and intervening early are crucial to developing and maintaining positive, cohesive, and professional environments.



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Handout

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1. What did you observe in the video?
2. Based on the behavior shown in the scenario, how can the comments made be perceived as sexual harassment?
3. If the Service member came to you about what has happened on social media, what could you do as a bystander?
4. What are risk or protective factors are seen in this scenario?
5. As a leader, how can you empower your team to intervene if they witness someone being sexually harassed?