

Sexual Harassment Prevention

Consider:

1. Do you feel this poster depicts sexual harassment? What makes you believe this is/is not sexual harassment?
2. Is this a harmless flirting or does it create a sexually hostile environment?
3. How can you prevent sexual harassment?



Discussion:

This poster depicts **non-verbal sexual harassment**. Non-verbal sexual harassment refers to an individual's unspoken behavior, or actions taken, that create a hostile environment. The phone is receiving deliberate texts that show repeated, unsolicited, and unwanted messages that create a sexually harassing environment. Sending or displaying sexually oriented or disparaging material (the emoji in the texts) to an unwilling participant is not acceptable.

When determining if sexual harassment has occurred, one must ask whether a reasonable person would perceive an individual's deliberate or repeating actions as creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

The reasonable person standard has two components: the objective test and the subjective test. The objective test requires a hypothetical exposure of a "reasonable person" to the same sets of facts and circumstances – how would a reasonable person under similar circumstances react or be affected by the behavior? The subjective test requires that a person perceives the harassing behavior as so severe or pervasive as to be intimidating, hostile, offensive, or creates an abusive environment.

People should not be subjected to unwanted, unsolicited, or inappropriate comments, texts, emails, and the like. Members must know, recognize, and understand what types of non-verbal behaviors can be viewed as sexual harassment. Don't ignore it if you see it, or if it is brought to your attention. And, be sure you understand what the recipient desires, and then think, before you hit the send button.

All members must ensure they remain professional and vigilant. Watch for signs that team members are being sexually harassed. Address inappropriate behaviors promptly to eliminate sexual harassment.

This poster, related animation, and discussion page are available for download at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) website at: <https://www.deomi.org>, then select the Human Relations Toolkit tab, then Harassment Prevention.