

## What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwanted and uninvited behaviors, gestures, looks, comments, or touching of a sexual nature. It is usually done on purpose to make someone feel uncomfortable, intimidated or threatened. It may even result in physical injury.

- Sexual comments, gestures, noises, whistles or stares that make the other person uncomfortable
- Teasing or commenting about someone's private parts
- Saying sexual things to someone without their consent
- Telling dirty jokes another person doesn't want to hear
- Showing dirty pictures another person doesn't want to see
- Touching, grabbing or brushing up against someone in a sexual way

## Why Talk About It? Because...

- Anyone can be harassed. One in three students are sexually harassed for the first time during the 6th through 8th grades. (Source: PUSH: NJ SCHOOLS, Nobody Should Joke Around Like That)
- Anyone can be a harasser, including other students, team members, leaders and teachers.
- It is illegal, and anyone over the age of 8 may be subject to criminal prosecution and civil penalties.

## Can Your Behavior be Considered Sexual Harassment?

Take this test:

- Q** Would you say or do the same thing in front of your parent, teacher or other respected adult?
- A** **No?** Then don't say it or do it at all! This behavior may very well be considered sexual harassment.

## A Message From the Department of Community Affairs' Division on Women

Sexual harassment can happen to anyone of any age. That is why it is important that you know what sexual harassment is and what to do if it happens to you or someone you know.

This brochure provides you with important information about sexual harassment. It gives you examples of things that can be considered sexual harassment - things you may not have thought of as sexual harassment, but maybe weren't comfortable with. It outlines the thoughts, feelings and reactions you may have to a situation and offers options regarding what to do if you are being sexually harassed.

If you are being sexually harassed, it is important for you to ask for help from a trusted adult, like a parent, teacher, school nurse or a counselor. Additionally, every county in New Jersey has a rape care center that can offer you free and confidential help if you are being sexually harassed.

If you think someone has crossed the line, don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help.

DO NOT CROSS

## County Rape Crisis Program Numbers:

<b>Atlantic</b>	800-286-4184 609-645-2909 (TTY)	<b>Middlesex</b>	877-665-7273
<b>Bergen</b>	800-221-5168 201-487-0916 (TTY)	<b>Monmouth</b>	888-264-7273 732-264-3089 (TTY)
<b>Burlington</b>	856-234-8888 856-234-3451 800-852-7899 (TTY)	<b>Morris</b>	973-829-0587
<b>Camden</b>	866-295-7378 800-852-7897 (TTY)	<b>Ocean</b>	609-494-0441 (TTY) <i>Southern Ocean County</i> 609-494-1090 <i>Northern Ocean County</i> 732-370-4010
<b>Cape May</b>	877-294-2272 609-463-0818 (TTY)	<b>Passaic</b>	973-881-1450 973-993-0183 (TTY) 973-993-0186 (TTY)
<b>Cumberland</b>	856-455-5555	<b>Salem</b>	888-632-9511 856-935-7118 (TTY)
<b>Essex</b>	877-733-2273	<b>Somerset</b>	908-526-7444 908-809-1597 (TTY)
<b>Gloucester</b>	866-295-7378 856-428-8373 (TTY)	<b>Sussex</b>	973-875-1211 973-875-6369 (TTY)
<b>Hudson</b>	201-795-5757	<b>Union</b>	908-233-7273 908-518-0183 (TTY)
<b>Hunterdon</b>	888-988-4033 908-788-4044 (TTY) 866-954-0100 (TTY)	<b>Warren</b>	866-623-7233 908-453-2553 (TTY)
<b>Mercer</b>	609-394-9000 888-252-7233 (TTY)		

Copies of this brochure may be obtained by contacting:



**NJ Department of Community Affairs**  
**Division on Women**  
101 South Broad Street  
PO Box 801  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0801

609-292-8840 • TTY: 609-777-0799  
dow@dca.state.nj.us • www.nj.gov/dca/dow

# Crossing the Line

## Sexual Harassment In Middle Schools

## How Can Sexual Harassment Affect You?

### Common Feelings:

- Uncomfortable
- Embarrassed
- Self-conscious
- Ashamed
- Confused
- Afraid
- Helpless
- Alone

### Common Thoughts:

- I can't believe this is happening to me.
- I don't like it, I don't want it, and I'm not interested.
- I wish I could make this stop.
- I wish I could get away.
- I wish they would just leave me alone.

### Common Reactions:

- Loss of confidence
- Not wanting to go to school
- Avoiding people and places
- Finding it hard to concentrate or study
- Having trouble sleeping
- Change in eating habits

## What Can I do if I'm Being Harassed?

- Talk or write to the harasser telling them you don't like what they are doing and asking them to stop.
- Keep a journal of each time something happens, including dates, times, witnesses and if you were able to stop it. Include how the situation made you feel.
- Talk to a trusted adult who would understand the way you feel. Have them help you find out about and follow your school's sexual harassment policy.
- Report the offensive behavior to a teacher, counselor or school administrator.
- If your school does not correct the problem, ask a trusted adult to contact:  
U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights  
800-421-3481, TDD: 877-521-2172  
NY Office: 646-428-3900  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>  
OCR@ed.gov
- You can also call the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault at 800-601-7200. A recorded message will list the local hotline in your county. When you call the local hotline, you may need to leave a name and a phone number for a counselor to return your call.

## What Can I do if I Witness Someone Else Being Harassed?

- Say that you don't think it's funny.
- Tell the harasser to stop.
- Encourage the person being harassed to seek the help of a teacher, counselor, school administrator or hotline.