

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. You will be connected with the hotline in your area to speak to a counselor. 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.

For Help

Call the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) Hotline

1 (800) 601-7200

24 hours a day/7 days a week

NJCASA is the collective voice for victims of sexual violence, their loved ones and Sexual Violence Programs across New Jersey. Its member agencies represent each of New Jersey's 21 counties. NJCASA's toll-free hotline will connect individuals affected by sexual violence with professionals that provide assistance and referrals.

Calls to NJCASA's hotline will be routed to the individual's closest Sexual Violence Program.

Copies of this brochure may be obtained by contacting:



Division on Women
50 East State Street
7th Floor, PO Box 717
Trenton, NJ 08625-0717
609-888-7164
www.nj.gov/dcf

**crossing
the Line**

Sexual Harassment In Middle Schools

A Message From the Department of Children and Families' 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 Sexual Violence Program 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.

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 harassment can take the form of:

- 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.

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

