

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, where it is reasonable to expect that the other person would be offended, afraid or humiliated.

Examples of sexual harassment

- Staring, leering or making gestures of a sexual nature
- Unwelcome touching, kissing, brushing against someone, or invading personal space
- Comments, jokes or remarks of a sexual or suggestive nature
- Whistling at or making comments about someone's body, appearance or clothing
- Intrusive questions about a person's intimate relationships, sexual history or sexual activities
- Unwanted requests for dates or sexual contact
- Requests for sexual favours, particularly where linked to work outcomes
- Sending or sharing sexually explicit messages, images, objects or videos
- Accessing or displaying pornographic or sexually explicit material at work



1 in 5 women and 1 in 20 men have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace at some point

Sex-based harassment

Involves unwelcome conduct based on a person's sex that is seriously demeaning and that a reasonable person would find offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

Unlike sexual harassment, the behaviour does not need to be sexual in nature. Examples include treating someone as less capable because of their sex or assuming certain roles or tasks are more suitable for someone based on their sex.

Impacts of sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can cause harm not only to the person experiencing it, but also to those who witness it as well as family members. The impacts can include stress, anxiety, depression, loss of confidence and self esteem as well as ongoing health conditions, post-traumatic stress, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

What should I do if I feel I am being sexually harassed at work?

You deserve to feel safe and respected in the workplace. Speaking up can be difficult but you are not alone and help is available at any stage before, during or after the behaviour occurs. Your options include:

- If you feel safe to do so, tell the person their behaviour is unwelcome
- Raise the issue internally (where safe) by speaking confidently with your manager or a person you trust in the workplace who is in a position to help
- Document what has been happening including dates, times, locations and what occurred
- If you wish to lodge an external complaint about sexual harassment, you may contact Equal Opportunity SA or the Fair Work Commission for confidential advice or to make a formal complaint.