

# YOU CAN HELP COMBAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

## LOOKS LIKE:

- **Any verbal or physical interaction that is sexual and that you do not want.**
  - Verbal abuse, jokes, or conversations about sex.
  - Physical contact that you do not want, including physical assault
- **A sexual suggestion or explicit language about sex that you do not want.**
  - Pressure for sex and/or demanding sexual favors. For example, flirting, or asking for sex.
  - Showing sexually explicit or degrading materials, like posters, calendars, signs, emails, or clothing with offensive messages.
  - Sexually oriented entertainment at a work-related event.
- **A pattern of sexually discriminatory remarks.**
  - Comments on a person's appearance that make the person feel uncomfortable because of their sex.
- **An employer making decisions about you depending on whether you submit to sexual demands.**

Employers are responsible for addressing sexual harassment, and the law holds your employer responsible if you are sexually harassed; if your submission to or rejection of sexual advances is used as the basis for employment decisions about you; and/or the harassment creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

- To speak with someone at the Illinois Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Helpline, call **1-877-236-7703**
- To request legal assistance, you can go to TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund at <https://nwlc.org/legal-assistance/>
- To file a complaint with the EEOC, visit [bit.ly/eeoc-online](http://bit.ly/eeoc-online) or call **1-800-669-4000**

For more information, visit  
[womenemployed.org/sexual-harassment](http://womenemployed.org/sexual-harassment)

Learn more about your rights on the job at  
[womenemployed.org/your-rights-job](http://womenemployed.org/your-rights-job)

## IF YOU SEE SEXUAL HARASSMENT HAPPENING:\*

- **Interpret it as a problem.** Do I recognize that someone needs help? Does this look like sexual harassment?
- **Feel responsible to act.** Help should always be given. See yourself as being part of the solution. Interventions initiated by men may be particularly effective.
- **Educate yourself on what to do.** What is your workplace harassment policy?
- **Intervene safely.** You can disrupt the situation by getting the person out of it, or distracting the harasser. Take action but be sure to keep yourself safe.
- **Ask the person being harassed if they are okay.** Provide options for support. For example, ask them if they want to make a report through formal complaint procedures and support their decision.

## IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU

- **Speak directly at the time the harassment occurs.** If it is safe to do so, make it clear that you do not like the behavior.
- **Keep a record of what is being done to you** in a bound book in which sheets of paper cannot be added. Write down what is said and done. Include dates, time, and places. If the harassment is happening over email or social media, print it out or take screenshots in addition to recording it in the journal.
- **Talk to your co-workers** to learn if anyone else saw the harassment, or has been harassed.
- **Use formal complaint procedures where you work.** Review your employer's sexual harassment policy and procedure for making complaints about sexual harassment. In many cases, you can also file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Retaliation for filing a complaint is illegal. If you file a complaint and, as a result, are transferred to a lower-paying job, passed over for promotion, or fired, you can report it to the EEOC.
- **Remember that it is not your fault.** The person harassing is the one responsible for their behavior, not you.
- **Get support.** Sexual harassment can have a significant impact. Tell supportive friends, family, or colleagues. Counseling may also be helpful.

\*Bystander tips based on guidelines developed by the University of New Hampshire through bystander intervention research.