

Workplace Harassment: What It Is and What To Do About It

In 2009 alone, the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ordered that \$294,200,000 (that's 294.2 million dollars!) be paid out for discrimination and harassment charges. (<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/all.cfm>) No wonder companies are working to be more proactive in preventing harassment.

But how do you prevent harassment from occurring? What sorts of policies should be in place? What should managers do to protect their employees? And if a complaint is filed, what will we do? All of these questions (and more!) will be answered in this two-day workshop.

This two-day workshop will help you teach participants how to:

- Understand what is acceptable behavior in the workplace and what is not, and why
- Understand the benefits of harassment training
- Define the various types of harassment, including sexual harassment
- Help their organization create a harassment policy
- Prevent harassment
- Protect themselves from harassment
- Act if they are harassed or accused of harassment
- Understand the complaint process, from the complaint to the reply, to mediation or investigation, to a solution
- Identify situations where mediation is appropriate, and understand how mediation works in those situations
- Identify appropriate solutions for a harassment incident
- Act if a complaint is false
- Help their workplace return to normal after a harassment incident

Introduction and Course Overview

You will spend the first part of the day getting to know participants and discussing what will take place during the workshop. Students will also have an opportunity to identify their personal learning objectives.

Defining Harassment

This session will look at legal, literary, and reasonable man/woman definitions of harassment.

The Purpose of Training

We will discuss what kind of harassment training can benefit an organization.

Sexual Harassment

This session will discuss sexual harassment in a lecture and small group work. Topics covered include the definition of sexual harassment, the components of harassment, and common scenarios that could be construed as harassment.

Creating a Harassment Policy

The best way to prevent harassment from occurring is by setting a clear policy, educating employees about it, and enforcing it. We will discuss some basics of creating, implementing, and monitoring a policy, plus some training points.

Other Prevention Strategies

Participants will explore some other ways of preventing harassment in groups.

Nipping it in the Bud

One of the most important prevention strategies is for managers to carefully monitor their workplace. During this session we will use a lecture and a role play to talk about how managers can do this.

Protecting Yourself

There are many things that you can do to minimize your risk of being harassed or of being perceived as a harasser. We will discuss six of them.

What if it Happens to Me?

During this session we will discuss what you can do if someone is harassing you, including techniques for saying no. Participants will then practice these techniques during a role play.

What if it's Happening to Someone Else?

There will often be situations where a manager thinks or knows that harassment is occurring, but a complaint has not been filed. We will discuss what to do in this situation.

Someone has Filed a Complaint Against Me!

If you are in the situation where someone has filed a complaint against you, do not panic. There are several steps that you can take to deal with the situation appropriately, all of which will be discussed in detail during this session.

Addressing a Complaint

No matter how proactive you are, most employers receive a harassment complaint at some point in time. We will discuss the four key components of dealing with a complaint fairly and appropriately.

False Complaints

If you suspect that a harassment complaint is false, you must be very careful when dealing with it. This session will discuss some things that you can do in this situation.

Mediation

When the claimant decides to file a complaint, mediation may be offered as an alternative. We will discuss what mediation is, when it is and isn't appropriate, and how the process may work. Participants will also have an opportunity to role play mediation.

Investigating a Complaint

Investigating harassment complaints often requires special training and skills. During this session, we will cover some basics of investigation, including when a complaint should and should not be investigated, who should be involved, what the investigation process should look like, and how results can be reported.

Making the Decision

During this session we will talk about who should make the final decision about the complaint. We will also discuss when you should involve legal counsel.

Solutions

There are three possible solutions to a harassment complaint: solutions for the complainant, solutions for the respondent, and solutions for the organization. We will explore possibilities for each case during this session.

After It's Over

Once the harassment complaint has been resolved, everyone should try to get back to normal life. This session will discuss how managers and the organization as a whole can help employees make this transition.

Role Play

The afternoon of day two will be spent role playing four stages of the harassment process: the initial consultation with an advisor, the filing of a formal complaint, an investigation, and the decision. Detailed case files are provided with the course.

Workshop Wrap-Up

At the end of the day, students will have an opportunity to ask questions and fill out an action plan.