



MNCASA
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Making a Change Together: Sexual Harassment within Secondary Schools Resource Package

The prevalence of sexual harassment gained attention this past year due to the #metoo movement. We know sexual harassment in the workplace is an issue. To prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, we need to start early by addressing these issues in elementary and primary schools. This resource package is a great place to start! Whether you are a school administrator, parent, or student you can play a role in prevention of sexual harassment within schools. Below is information and resources we hope you find helpful.

Sexual Harassment 101

Sexual harassment is unwanted verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. This includes any form of unwanted sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors. Sexual harassment can happen anywhere such as schools, public transportation, shopping malls, community events, places of worship, health care facilities, and other settings. Sexual harassment can create an intimidating or hostile environment for the victim. The victim's perception determines whether particular words or actions are harassing, not the intent of the harasser.

Prevention Tips

“Nothing about us without us is for us,” Involving students in prevention

No one knows better what youth are experiencing and how they want issues addressed than youth themselves. If adults want to address sexual harassment in school settings, then they need to bring the perspectives and the voices of those experiencing it (and even perpetrating it) to the table. Host listening sessions where students can bring their own concerns and solutions to you. Start a youth-led workgroup or committee focused on preventing sexual harassment. Let the students take the lead in their own prevention efforts. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center has a best practice resource for engaging in youth partnership (<http://bit.ly/2I3YKY0>).

Sexual health and healthy relationships education

Education on healthy relationships and sexual health can reduce sexual violence, including sexual harassment. Teaching about healthy relationships and sexual health provides a wide range of knowledge and skills, such as healthy communication, conflict resolution, empowerment, emotional regulation, and consent. Learning these skills early helps people develop and maintain them throughout their lifetimes. MNCASA has a list of evidence-based and informed curricula (<http://bit.ly/2m8pgFu>) that focuses on healthy relationships, sexual health, and bystander intervention that can be implemented within schools.

Change and uphold policies

Policy goes hand in hand with prevention. School policy around sexual harassment and violence should be stated clearly, and be inclusive of sexual orientation, gender, age, race, religion, ability, etc. Having more than one way for students to report harassment is encouraged. Policies should be evaluated and tested often. Once policies are in place, they need to be upheld and enforced. Each school may have their own responses to harassment, but there must be follow up and actions taken once a report is made. Here are two resources for developing school wide policies: School Policy Kit (<http://bit.ly/2H66kjq>) and Start Strong’s Policy Change (<http://bit.ly/2oRSjhK>).

Healthy and safe environments

Healthy and safe environments can look many different ways. In a healthy environment, students and staff feel comfortable and respected in school. This involves making reporting sexual harassment easier, ensuring victims and survivors feel validated and heard, and assuring that people will be held accountable for their actions. Start by surveying students and staff on how safe they feel in the school and at school-related activities. Improving the health and safety of the school environment is possible.

Resources

General

- Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships 4 Elements of Success (<http://startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/4-elements-of-success/>)
- Stop Sexual Assault in Schools (<http://stopsexualassaultinschools.org/>)
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center - 10 Facts Everyone Should Know About Title IX (<https://www.nsvrc.org/blogs/10-facts-everyone-should-know-about-title-ix>)
- Find Your Title IX Coordinator (<https://ww2.aauw.org/TitleIX/>) or check your school's website

For Schools

- National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments - Prevent, Intercede, Respond, to Sexual Harassment of K-12 Students (<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/safe-place-to-learn-k12>)
- Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships School and District Policies to Increase Student Safety and Improve School Climate (http://startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/FWV_StartStrongPolicies_R4.pdf)
- The Guardian: *Sexual Harassment in Schools: A Guide for Teachers* article (<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2016/sep/13/sexual-harassment-in-schools-a-guide-for-teachers>)

For Youth

- Speak Up Speak Out (<http://www.stepupsspeakout.org/youth/sexual-harassment>)
- Sutter Health Palo Alto Medical Foundation - Sexual Harassment Issues (http://www.pamf.org/teen/sex/rape_assault/sexualharass.html)
- Becoming an Agent of Social Change: A Guide for Youth Activists (https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/saam_2014_becoming-an-agent-of-social-change_0.pdf)

For Parents/Guardians

- The Talk: How Adults Can Promote Young People's Healthy Relationships and Prevent Misogyny and Sexual Harassment (https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/files/gse-mcc/files/mcc_the_talk_final.pdf)
- The Washington Post: *Sexual Harassment Among Teens is Pervasive. Here's How Parents can Change That* article https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2017/10/16/sexual-harassment-among-teens-is-pervasive-heres-how-parents-can-help-change-it/?utm_term=.d3246899f0dd