

# Model Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

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OCTOBER 2019 EDITION



Combating  
Sexual Harassment

## **Purpose of this Model Training**

Under the law, every employer in New York State is **now required to establish a sexual harassment prevention policy** pursuant to Section 201-g of the Labor Law. The Department of Labor in consultation with the Division of Human Rights has established a model sexual harassment prevention policy for employers to adopt, available at [www.ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace](http://www.ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace). Or, employers may adopt a similar policy that meets or exceeds the minimum standards of the model policy.

In addition, every employer in New York State is **now required to provide employees with sexual harassment prevention training** pursuant to Section 201-g of the Labor Law. The Department of Labor in consultation with the Division of Human Rights has established this model training for employers to use. Or, employers may use a training program that meets or exceeds the minimum standards of the model training.

These documents must be provided to each employee (both at the time of hiring and during every subsequent annual training) as part of a required notice.

An employer's sexual harassment prevention training **must be interactive**, meaning it requires some level of feedback by those being trained.

**The training, which may be presented to employees individually or in groups; in person, via phone or online; via webinar or recorded presentation, should include as many of the following elements as possible:**

- Ask questions of employees as part of the program;
- Accommodate questions asked by employees, with answers provided in a timely manner;
- Require feedback from employees about the training and the materials presented.

## **How to Use This Training**

This model training is presented in a variety of formats, giving employers maximum flexibility to deliver the training across a variety of worksite settings, while still maintaining a core curriculum.

Available training elements include:

1. **Script** for in-person group training, available in PDF and editable Word formats
2. **PowerPoint** to accompany the script, available online and for download, also in PDF
3. **Video** presentation, viewable online and for download
4. **FAQs**, available online to accompany the training, answering additional questions that arise

## **Instructions for Employers**

- This training is meant to be a model that can be used as is, or adapted to meet the specific needs of each organization.
- Training may include additional interactive activities, including an opening activity, role playing or group discussion.
- If specific employer policies or practices differ from the content in this training, the training should be modified to reflect those nuances, while still including all of the minimum elements required by New York State law (shown on Page 4).
- The training should detail any internal process employees are encouraged to use to complain and include the contact information for the specific name(s) and office(s) with which employees alleging harassment should file their complaints.
- It should also be modified to reflect the work of the organization by including, for example, industry specific scenarios.
- To every extent possible, this training should be given consistently (using the same delivery method) across each organization's workforce to ensure understanding at every level and at every location.
- It is every employer's responsibility to ensure all employees are trained to employer's standards and familiar with the organization's practices.
- All employees must complete sexual harassment prevention training at least once per year. This may be based on calendar year, anniversary of each employee's start date or any other date the employer chooses.
- All new employees should complete sexual harassment prevention training as quickly as possible.
- Employers must provide employees with training materials in English and in an employee's primary language if it is Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Polish, Russian, Haitian-Creole, Bengali, or Italian. Model templates are available online in these languages. For other languages, employers are strongly encouraged to provide materials in the language spoken by the employee.
- On occasion, a participant may share a personal or confidential experience during the training. If this happens, the trainer should interrupt and recommend the story be discussed privately and with the appropriate office contact. After the training, follow up with this individual to ensure they are aware of the proper reporting steps. Managers and supervisors must report all incidents of harassment.

## Minimum Training Standards Checklist

An employer that does not use this model training -- developed by the State Department of Labor and State Division of Human Rights -- must ensure their training meets or exceeds the following minimum standards.

The training **must**:

- Be interactive;
- Include an explanation of sexual harassment consistent with guidance issued by the Department of Labor in consultation with the Division of Human Rights;
- Include examples of unlawful sexual harassment;
- Include information concerning the federal and state statutory provisions concerning sexual harassment and remedies available to targets of sexual harassment;
- Include information concerning employees' rights of redress and all available forums for adjudicating complaints; and
- Include information addressing conduct by supervisors and additional responsibilities for supervisors.

Every employee must receive sexual harassment prevention training annually. During this annual training, **employers must also provide employees a notice** that contains:

- (i) the employer's sexual harassment policy; and
- (ii) a copy of the information presented at the sexual harassment prevention training.

Employers must provide employees with this notice, policy and training information in English and in an employee's primary language if it is Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Polish, Russian, Haitian-Creole, Bengali, or Italian. Model templates are available online.

NEW YORK STATE  
**Sexual Harassment  
Prevention Training**

**ELEMENT 1: TRAINING SCRIPT**

OCTOBER 2019 EDITION



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## Trainer Introduction

- Welcome to our annual training on sexual harassment prevention.
- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ **[name]** \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the \_\_\_\_\_ **[title]** \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ **[organization]** \_\_\_\_\_.
- In recent years, the topic of sexual harassment in the workplace has been brought into the national spotlight, bringing with it renewed awareness about the serious and unacceptable nature of these actions and the severe consequences that follow.
- The term “sexual harassment” may mean different things to different people, depending on your life experience.
- Certain conduct may seem acceptable or have seemed acceptable in the past. That does not mean it is acceptable to the people we work with.
- The purpose of this training is to set forth a common understanding about what is and what is not acceptable in our workplace.

## Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

- New York State has long been committed to ensuring that all individuals have an equal opportunity to enjoy a fair, safe and productive work environment.
- Laws and policies help ensure that diversity is respected and that everyone can enjoy the privileges of working in New York State.
- Preventing sexual harassment is critical to our continued success. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- This means any harassing behavior will be investigated and the perpetrator or perpetrators will be told to stop.
- It also means that disciplinary action may be taken, if appropriate. If the behavior is sufficiently serious, disciplinary action may include termination.
- Repeated behavior, especially after an employee has been told to stop, is particularly serious and will be dealt with accordingly.
- This interactive training will help you better understand what is considered sexual harassment.
- It will also show you how to report sexual harassment in our workplace, as well as your options for reporting workplace sexual harassment to external state and federal agencies that enforce anti-discrimination laws.
- These reports will be taken seriously and promptly investigated, with effective remedial action taken where appropriate.

## What is Sexual Harassment?

- Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law.
- Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, self-identified or perceived sex, gender expression, gender identity and the status of being transgender.
- Sexual harassment is unlawful when it subjects an individual to inferior terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual's sex when:
  1. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, even if the reporting individual is not the intended target of the sexual harassment;
  2. Such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
  3. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual's employment.
- Under New York State law, harassment need not be "severe or pervasive" to be unlawful. Any of the harassing conduct described in this training can be unlawful unless it is shown to be no more than "petty slights or trivial inconveniences."
- There are two main types of sexual harassment:

### Hostile Environment

- A hostile environment on the basis of sex may be created by any action previously described, in addition to unwanted words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical actions or violence, either of a sexual nature or not of a sexual nature, directed at an individual because of that individual's sex.
- Hostile environment sexual harassment includes:
  - Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace, such as displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic.
    - This includes such sexual displays on workplace computers or cell phones and sharing such displays while in the workplace.
    - This also includes sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience.
  - Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual's sex, such as:
    - Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults;

- Physical acts of a sexual nature (including, but not limited to, touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, kissing, hugging, brushing against another employee's body or poking another employee's body);
- Interfering with, destroying or damaging a person's workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual's ability to perform the job;
- Sabotaging an individual's work;
- Bullying, yelling, name-calling.

### **Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment**

- Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when a person in authority trades, or tries to trade, job benefits for sexual favors.
- Quid pro quo is a legal term meaning a trade.
- This type of harassment occurs between an employee and someone with authority, like a supervisor, who has the ability to grant or withhold job benefits.
- Quid pro quo sexual harassment includes:
  - Offering or granting better working conditions or opportunities in exchange for a sexual relationship
  - Threatening adverse working conditions (like demotions, shift alterations or work location changes) or denial of opportunities if a sexual relationship is refused
  - Using pressure, threats or physical acts to force a sexual relationship
  - Retaliating for refusing to engage in a sexual relationship

### **Who can be the Target of Sexual Harassment?**

- Sexual harassment can occur between any individuals, regardless of their sex or gender.
- New York Law protects employees, paid or unpaid interns, and non-employees, including independent contractors, and those employed by companies contracting to provide services in the workplace.

## Who can be the Perpetrator of Sexual Harassment?

- The perpetrator of sexual harassment can be anyone in the workplace:
- The harasser can be a **coworker** of the recipient
- The harasser can be a **supervisor** or **manager**
- The harasser can be any third-party, including: a **non-employee, intern, vendor, building security, client, customer** or **visitor**.

## Where Can Workplace Sexual Harassment Occur?

- Harassment can occur **whenever and wherever** employees are fulfilling their work responsibilities, including in the field, at any employer-sponsored event, trainings, conferences open to the public and office parties.
- Employee interactions during non-work hours, such as at a hotel while traveling or at events after work can have an impact in the workplace.
- Locations off site and off-hour activities can be considered extensions of the work environment.
- Employees can be the target of sexual harassment through calls, texts, email and social media.
- Harassing behavior that in any way affects the work environment is rightly the concern of management.

## Sex Stereotyping

- Sex stereotyping occurs when conduct or personality traits are considered inappropriate simply because they may not conform to other people's ideas or perceptions about how individuals of either sex should act or look.
- Harassing a person because that person does not conform to gender stereotypes as to "appropriate" looks, speech, personality, or lifestyle is sexual harassment.
- Harassment because someone is performing a job that is usually performed, or was performed in the past, mostly by persons of a different sex, is sex discrimination.

## **Retaliation**

- Any employee who has engaged in “protected activity” is protected by law from being retaliated against because of that “protected activity.”
- “Protected activities” with regard to harassment include:
  - Making a complaint to a supervisor, manager or another person designated by your employer to receive complaints about harassment
  - Making a report of suspected harassment, even if you are not the target of the harassment
  - Filing a formal complaint about harassment
  - Opposing discrimination
  - Assisting another employee who is complaining of harassment
  - Providing information during a workplace investigation of harassment, or testifying in connection with a complaint of harassment filed with a government agency or in court

### **What is Retaliation?**

- Retaliation is any action taken to alter an employee’s terms and conditions of employment (such as a demotion or harmful work schedule or location change) because that individual engaged in any of the above protected activities. Such individuals should expect to be free from any negative actions by supervisors, managers or the employer motivated by these protected activities.
- Retaliation can be any such adverse action taken by the employer against the employee, that could have the effect of discouraging a reasonable worker from making a complaint about harassment or discrimination.
- The negative action need not be job-related or occur in the workplace, and may occur after the end of employment, such as an unwarranted negative reference.

### **What is Not Retaliation**

- A negative employment action is not retaliatory merely because it occurs after the employee engages in protected activity.
- Employees continue to be subject to all job requirements and disciplinary rules after having engaged in such activity.

## The Supervisor's Responsibility

- Supervisors and managers are held to a high standard of behavior. This is because:
  - They are placed in a position of authority by the employer and must not abuse that authority.
  - Their actions can create liability for the employer without the employer having any opportunity to correct the harassment.
  - They are required to report any harassment that is reported to them or which they observe.
  - They are responsible for any harassment or discrimination that they should have known of with reasonable care and attention to the workplace for which they are responsible.
  - They are expected to model appropriate workplace behavior.

## Mandatory Reporting

- Supervisors **must report any harassment** that they observe or know of, even if no one is objecting to the harassment.
- If a supervisor or manager receives a report of harassment, or is otherwise aware of harassment, it must be promptly reported to the employer, without exception,
  - Even if the supervisor or manager thinks the conduct is trivial
  - Even if the harassed individual asks that it not be reported
- Supervisors and managers will be subject to discipline for failing to report suspected sexual harassment or otherwise knowingly allowing sexual harassment to continue.
- Supervisors and managers will also be subject to discipline for engaging in any retaliation.

## What Should I Do If I Am Harassed?

- We cannot stop harassment in the workplace unless management knows about the harassment. It is everyone's responsibility.
- You are encouraged to report harassment to a supervisor, manager or other another person designated by your employer to receive complaints (as outlined in the sexual harassment prevention policy) so the employer can take action.
- Behavior does not need to be a violation of law in order to be in violation of the policy.

- We will provide you with a complaint form to report harassment and file complaints, but if you are more comfortable reporting verbally or in another manner, we are still required to follow the sexual harassment prevention policy by investigating the claims.
- If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you are encouraged to complete the Complaint Form and submit it to:
  - *[Person or office designated]*
  - *[Contact information for designee or office]*
  - *[How the Complaint Form can be submitted]*
- You may also make reports verbally.
- Once you submit this form or otherwise report harassment, our organization must follow its sexual harassment prevention policy and investigate any claims.
- You should report any behavior you experience or know about that is inappropriate, as described in this training, without worrying about whether or not it is unlawful harassment.
- Individuals who report or experience harassment should cooperate with management so a full and fair investigation can be conducted and any necessary corrective action can be taken.
- If you report harassment to a manager or supervisor and receive an inappropriate response, such as being told to “just ignore it,” you may take your complaint to the next level as outlined in our policy under “Legal Protections And External Remedies.”
- Finally, if you are not sure you want to pursue a complaint at the time of potential harassment, document the incident to ensure it stays fresh in your mind.

### **What Should I Do If I Witness Sexual Harassment?**

- Anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of potential instances of sexual harassment should report it to a supervisor, manager or designee.
- It can be uncomfortable and scary, but it is important to tell coworkers "that's not okay" when you are uncomfortable about harassment happening in front of you.
- It is unlawful for an employer to retaliate against you for reporting suspected sexual harassment or assisting in any investigation.

## Investigation and Corrective Action

- Anyone who engages in sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- **[Name of Company]** will investigate all reports of harassment, whether information was reported in verbal or written form.
- An investigation of any complaint should be commenced immediately and completed as soon as possible.
- The investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible.
- Any employee may be required to cooperate as needed in an investigation of suspected sexual harassment.
  - It is illegal for employees who participate in any investigation to be retaliated against.

## Investigation Process

- Our organization also has a duty to take appropriate steps to ensure that harassment will not occur in the future. Here is how we will investigate claims.
- **[Person or office designated]** will conduct an immediate review of the allegations, and take any interim actions, as appropriate
- Relevant documents, emails or phone records will be requested, preserved and obtained.
- Interviews will be conducted with parties involved and witnesses
- Investigation is documented as outlined in the sexual harassment policy
- The individual who complained and the individual(s) accused of sexual harassment are notified of final determination and that appropriate administrative action has been taken.

## Additional Protections and Remedies

- In addition to what we've already outlined, employees may also choose to pursue outside legal remedies as suggested below.
- An individual is not required to make an internal complaint in order to pursue any of these additional outside options.

### New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR)

- A complaint alleging violation of the Human Rights Law may be filed either with DHR or in New York State Supreme Court.
- Complaints may be filed with DHR any time **within one year (three years beginning Aug. 12 2020)** of the alleged sexual harassment. You do not need to have an attorney to file.
- If an individual did not file at DHR, they can sue directly in state court under the Human Rights Law, **within three years** of the alleged sexual harassment.
- An individual may not file with DHR if they have already filed a Human Rights Law complaint in state court.
- For more information, visit: [www.dhr.ny.gov](http://www.dhr.ny.gov).

### United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

- An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC anytime **within 300 days** from the alleged sexual harassment. You do not need to have an attorney to file.
- A complaint must be filed with the EEOC before you can file in federal court.
- For more information, visit: [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).
- *NOTE: If an individual files an administrative complaint with DHR, DHR will automatically file the complaint with the EEOC to preserve the right to proceed in federal court.*

### Local Protections

- Many localities enforce laws protecting individuals from sexual harassment and discrimination.
- You should contact the county, city or town in which you live to find out if such a law exists.
- Harassment may constitute a crime if it involves things like physical touching, coerced physical confinement or coerced sex acts. **You should also contact the local police department.**

## Other Types of Workplace Harassment

- Workplace harassment can be based on other things and is not just about gender or inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace.
- Any harassment or discrimination based on a protected characteristic is prohibited in the workplace and may lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator.
  - Protected characteristics include age, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, sex, disability, marital status, domestic violence victim status, gender identity or expression, familial status, predisposing genetic characteristics and criminal history.
- Much of the information presented in this training applies to all types of workplace harassment.

## Summary

- After this training, all employees are should understand what we have discussed, including:
  - How to recognize harassment as inappropriate workplace behavior
  - The nature of sexual harassment
  - That harassment because of any protected characteristic is prohibited
  - The reasons why workplace harassment is employment discrimination
  - That all harassment should be reported
  - That supervisors and managers have a special responsibility to report harassment.
- With this knowledge, all employees can achieve appropriate workplace behavior, avoid disciplinary action, know their rights and feel secure that they are entitled to and can work in an atmosphere of respect for all people.
- Find the Complaint Form **[insert information here]**.
- For additional information, visit: **[ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace](https://www.ny.gov/programs/combating-sexual-harassment-workplace)**

## Sexual Harassment Case Studies

- Let's take a look at a few scenarios that help explain the kind of behaviors that can constitute sexual harassment.
- Remember, it is up to **all employees** to report inappropriate behavior in the workplace.
- Please note that as an employee, it is not up to you to determine if something is sexual harassment and you should report anything you suspect may be sexual harassment. A manager **MUST** report suspect sexual harassment.

### Example 1: Not Taking “No” for an Answer

Li Yan's coworker Ralph has just been through a divorce. He drops comments on a few occasions that he is lonely and needs to find a new girlfriend. Li Yan and Ralph have been friendly in the past and have had lunch together in local restaurants on many occasions. Ralph asks Li Yan to go on a date with him—dinner and a movie. Li Yan likes Ralph and agrees to go out with him. She enjoys her date with Ralph but decides that a relationship is not a good idea. She thanks Ralph for a nice time, but explains that she does not want to have a relationship with him. Ralph waits two weeks and then starts pressuring Li Yan for more dates. She refuses, but Ralph does not stop. He keeps asking her to go out with him.

**Question 1.** When Ralph first asked Li Yan for a date, this was sexual harassment. True or False?

FALSE: Ralph's initial comments about looking for a girlfriend and asking Li Yan, a coworker, for a date are not sexual harassment. Even if Li Yan had turned Ralph down for the first date, Ralph had done nothing wrong by asking for a date and by making occasional comments that are not sexually explicit about his personal life.

**Question 2.** Li Yan cannot complain of sexual harassment because she went on a date with Ralph. True or False?

FALSE: Being friendly, going on a date, or even having a prior relationship with a coworker does not mean that a coworker has a right to behave as Ralph did toward Li Yan. She has to continue working with Ralph, and he must respect her wishes and not engage in behavior that has now become inappropriate for the workplace.

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Li Yan complains to her supervisor, and the supervisor (as required) reports her complaint to the person designated by her employer to receive complaints. Ralph is questioned about his behavior and he apologizes. He is instructed by the designated person to stop. Ralph stops for a while but then starts leaving little gifts for Li Yan on her desk with accompanying love notes. The love notes are not overtly offensive, but Ralph's behavior is starting to make Li Yan nervous, as she is afraid he may start stalking her.

**Question 3.** Ralph's subsequent behavior with gifts and love notes is not sexual harassment because he has stopped asking Li Yan for dates as instructed. He is just being nice to Li Yan because he likes her. True or False?

FALSE: Li Yan should report Ralph's behavior. She was entitled to have effective assistance in getting Ralph to stop his inappropriate workplace behavior. Because Ralph has returned to pestering Li Yan after being told to stop, he could be subject to serious disciplinary action for his behavior.

### **Example 2: The Boss with a Bad Attitude**

Sharon transfers to a new location with her employer. Her new supervisor, Paul, is friendly and helps her get familiar with her new job duties. After a few days, when no one else is around, Paul comes over to Sharon's work area to chat. Paul talks about what he did last night, which was to go to a strip club. Sharon is shocked that Paul would bring up such a topic in the workplace and says nothing in response. Paul continues talking and says that all the women in the office are so unattractive that he needs to get out and "see some hot chicks" once in a while. He tells Sharon he is glad she joined the staff because, unlike the others, she is "easy on the eyes." Sharon feels very offended and demeaned that she and the other women in her workplace are being evaluated on their looks by their supervisor.

**Question 1.** Because Paul did not tell Sharon that she is unattractive, he has not harassed her. True or False?

FALSE: Paul has made sexually explicit statements to Sharon, which are derogatory and demeaning to Sharon and her female coworkers. It does not matter that Paul supposedly paid Sharon a "compliment." The discussion is still highly offensive to Sharon, as it would be to most reasonable persons in her situation.

**Question 2.** By bringing up his visit to the strip club, Paul is engaging in inappropriate workplace behavior. True or False?

TRUE: Simply bringing up the visit to the strip club is inappropriate in the workplace, especially by a supervisor, and it would be appropriate for Sharon to report this conduct. A one-time comment about going to a strip club is behavior that Paul would be told to stop. This is more than petty or trivial and need not be repeated to be unlawful.

**Question 3.** Paul should be instructed to stop making these types of comments, but this is not a serious matter. True or False?

FALSE: Paul's comments about the female employees are a serious matter and show his contempt for women in the workplace. Paul is required to model appropriate behavior, and must not exhibit contempt for employees on the basis of sex or any protected characteristic. Sharon should not have to continue to work for someone she knows harbors such contempt for women, nor should the other employees have to work for such a supervisor. Management should be aware of this, even if the other employees are not, and Paul should be disciplined and, most likely, removed from his current position.

### **Example 3: No Job for a Woman?**

Carla works as a licensed heavy equipment operator. Some of her male coworkers think it is fun to tease her. Carla often hears comments like “Watch out, here she comes—that crazy woman driver!” in a joking manner. Also, someone keeps putting a handmade sign on the only port-a-potty at the worksite that says, “Men only.”

**Question 1.** Women in traditionally male jobs should expect teasing and should not take the joking comments too seriously. True or False?

FALSE: Whether Carla is being harassed depends in part on Carla's opinion of the situation; that is, whether she finds the behavior offensive. However, if at any point Carla does feel harassed, she is entitled to complain of the behavior and have it stopped, regardless of whether and for how long she has endured the behavior without complaint. Carla can always say when enough is enough. Unwelcome and continued teasing subjects Carla to inferior terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, and cannot be considered petty or trivial.

**Question 2.** Carla cannot complain, because the site supervisor sometimes joins in with the joking behavior, so she has nowhere to go. True or False?

FALSE: Carla can still complain to the supervisor who is then on notice that the behavior bothers Carla and must be stopped. The supervisor's failure to take Carla's complaint seriously, constitutes serious misconduct on his or her part. Carla can also complain directly to the person designated by her employer to receive complaints, either instead of going to the supervisor, or after doing so. The employer is responsible for assuring that all employees are aware of its anti-harassment policies and procedures.

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Some of Carla's other coworkers are strongly opposed to her presence in the traditionally all-male profession. These coworkers have sometimes said things to her like, “You're taking a job away from a man who deserves it,” “You should be home with your kids,” and “What kind of a mother are you?” Also, someone scratched the word “bitch” on Carla's toolbox.

**Question 3.** These behaviors, while rude, are not sexual harassment because they are not sexual in nature. True or False?

FALSE: The behaviors are directed at her because she is a woman and appear to be intended to intimidate her and cause her to quit her job. While not sexual in nature, this harassment is because of her sex and creates a hostile work environment.

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Carla complains about the jokes and other behaviors, and an investigation is conducted. It cannot be determined who defaced Carla's toolbox. Her coworkers are told to stop their behavior or face disciplinary charges. The supervisor speaks with Carla and tells her to come to him immediately if she has any further problems. Carla then finds that someone has urinated in her toolbox.

**Question 4.** There is nothing Carla can do because she can't prove who vandalized her toolbox. True or False?

FALSE: Carla should speak to her supervisor immediately, or contact any other person designated by her employer to receive complaints directly. Although the situation has become very difficult, it is the employer's responsibility to support Carla and seek a solution. An appropriate investigation must be promptly undertaken and appropriate remedial action must follow.

#### **Example 4: Too Close for Comfort**

Keisha has noticed that her new boss, Sarah, leans extremely close to her when they are going over the reports that she prepares. She touches her hand or shoulder frequently as they discuss work. Keisha tries to move away from her in these situations, but she doesn't seem to get the message.

**Question 1.** Keisha should just ignore Sarah's behavior. True or False?

FALSE: If Keisha is uncomfortable with Sarah's behavior, she has options. If she feels comfortable doing so, she should tell Sarah to please back off because her closeness and touching make her uncomfortable. Another option is to complain directly to a person designated by her employer to receive complaints, who will speak with Sarah. There is no valid reason for Sarah to engage in this behavior.

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Before Keisha gets around to complaining, Sarah brushes up against her back in the conference room before a meeting. She is now getting really annoyed but still puts off doing anything about it. Later Sarah "traps" Keisha in her office after they finish discussing work by standing between her and the door of the small office. Keisha doesn't know what to do, so she moves past her to get out. As she does so, Sarah runs her hand over Keisha's breast.

**Question 2.** Sarah's brushing up against Keisha in the conference room could just be inadvertent and does not give Keisha any additional grounds to complain about Sarah. True or False?

FALSE: Sarah is now engaging in a pattern of escalating behavior. Given the pattern of her "too close" and "touching" behavior, it is unlikely that this was inadvertent. Even before being "trapped" in Sarah's office, Keisha should have reported all of the behaviors she had experienced that had made her uncomfortable.

**Question 3.** Sarah touching Keisha's breast is inappropriate but is probably not unlawful harassment because it only happened once. True or False?

FALSE: Any type of sexual touching is very serious and Keisha should immediately report it without waiting for it to be repeated. Sarah can expect to receive formal discipline, including possible firing.

### **Example 5: A Distasteful Trade**

The following scenario will explain many aspects of quid pro quo sexual harassment.

Tatiana is hoping for a promotion to a position that she knows will become vacant soon. She knows that her boss, David, will be involved in deciding who will be promoted. She tells David that she will be applying for the position, and that she is very interested in receiving the promotion. David says, "We'll see. There will be a lot of others interested in the position."

A week later, Tatiana and David travel together on state business, including an overnight hotel stay. Over dinner, David tells Tatiana that he hopes he will be able to promote her, because he has always really enjoyed working with her. He tells her that some other candidates "look better on paper" but that she is the one he wants. He tells her that he can "pull some strings" to get her into the job and Tatiana thanks David. Later David suggests that they go to his hotel room for "drinks and some relaxation." Tatiana declines his "offer."

**Question 1.** David's behavior could be harassment of Tatiana. True or False?

TRUE: David's behavior as Tatiana's boss is inappropriate, and Tatiana should feel free to report the behavior if it made her uncomfortable. It is irrelevant that this behavior occurs away from the workplace. Their relationship is that of supervisor and supervisee, and all their interactions will tend to impact the workplace.

David's behavior, at this point, may or may not constitute quid pro quo harassment; David has made no threat that if Tatiana refuses his advance he will handle her promotion any differently. However, his offer to "pull some strings" followed by a request that they go to his hotel room for drinks and relaxation might be considered potentially coercive. Certainly, if David persists in his advances—even if he never makes or carries out any threat or promise about job benefits—then this could create a hostile environment for Tatiana, for which the employer could be strictly liable because David is her supervisor.

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After they return from the trip, Tatiana asks David if he knows when the job will be posted so that she can apply. He says that he is not sure, but there is still time for her to "make it worth his while" to pull strings for her. He then asks, "How about going out to dinner this Friday and then coming over to my place?"

**Question 2.** David engaged in sexual harassment. True or False?

TRUE: It is now evident that David has offered to help Tatiana with her promotion in exchange for sexual favors.

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Tatiana, who really wants the position, decides to go out with David. Almost every Friday they go out at David's insistence and engage in sexual activity. Tatiana does not want to be in a relationship with David and is only going out with him because she believes that he will otherwise block her promotion.

**Question 3.** Tatiana cannot complain of harassment because she voluntarily engaged in sexual activity with David. True or False?

FALSE: Because the sexual activity is unwelcome to Tatiana, she is a target of sexual harassment. Equally, if she had refused David's advances, she would still be a target of sexual harassment. The offer to Tatiana to trade job benefits for sexual favors by someone with authority over her in the workplace is quid pro quo sexual harassment, and the employer is exposed to liability because of its supervisor's actions.

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Tatiana receives the promotion.

**Question 4.** Tatiana cannot complain of harassment because she got the job, so there is no discrimination against her. True or False?

FALSE: Tatiana can be the recipient of sexual harassment whether or not she receives the benefit that was used as an inducement.

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Tatiana breaks off the sexual activities with David. He then gives her a bad evaluation, and she is removed from her new position at the end of the probationary period and returns to her old job.

**Question 5.** It is now "too late" for Tatiana to complain. Losing a place of favor due to the break up of the voluntary relationship does not create a claim for sexual harassment. True or False?

FALSE: It is true that the breakup of a relationship, if truly consensual and welcomed at the time, usually does not create a claim for sexual harassment. However, the "relationship" in this case was never welcomed by Tatiana. David's behavior has at all times been inappropriate and a serious violation of the employer's policy. As the person who abused the power and authority of a management position, David has engaged in sexual harassment.

### **Example 6: An Issue about Appearances**

Leonard works as a clerk typist for a large employer. He likes to wear jewelry, and his attire frequently includes earrings and necklaces. His boss, Margaret, thinks it's "weird" that, as a man, Leonard wears jewelry and wants to be a clerical worker. She frequently makes sarcastic comments to him about his appearance and refers to him "jokingly" as her office boy. Leonard, who hopes to develop his career in the area of customer relations, applies for an open promotional position that would involve working in a "front desk" area, where he would interact with the public. Margaret tells Leonard that if he wants that job, he had better look "more normal" or else wait for a promotion to mailroom supervisor.

**Question 1.** Leonard's boss is correct to tell him wearing jewelry is inappropriate for customer service positions. True or False?

FALSE: Leonard's jewelry is only an issue because Margaret considers it unusual for a man to wear such jewelry. Therefore, her comments to Leonard constitute sex stereotyping.

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Margaret also is "suspicious" that Leonard is gay, which she says she "doesn't mind," but she thinks Leonard is "secretive." She starts asking him questions about his private life, such as "Are you married?" "Do you have a partner?" "Do you have kids?" Leonard tries to respond politely "No" to all her questions but is becoming annoyed. Margaret starts gossiping with Leonard's coworkers about his supposed sexual orientation.

**Question 2.** Leonard is the recipient of harassment on the basis of sex and sexual orientation. True or False?

TRUE: Leonard is harassed on the basis of sex because he is being harassed for failure to adhere to Margaret's sex stereotypes.

Leonard is also harassed on the basis of his perceived sexual orientation. It does not matter whether or not Leonard is a gay man in order for him to have a claim for sexual orientation harassment.

Leonard might also be considered a target of harassment on the basis of gender identity, which is a form of sex and/or disability discrimination prohibited by the Human Rights Law. Leonard should report Margaret's conduct, which is clearly a violation of the sexual harassment policy, to a person designated by his employer to receive complaints (i.e. his employer's "designee").

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Leonard decides that he is not going to get a fair chance at the promotion under these circumstances, and he complains to the employer's designee about Margaret's behavior. The designee does an investigation and tells Margaret that Leonard's jewelry is not in violation of any workplace rule, that she is to consider him for the position without regard for his gender, and that she must stop making harassing comments, asking Leonard intrusive questions, and gossiping about his personal life. Margaret stops her comments, questions, and gossiping, but she then recommends a woman be promoted to the open position. The woman promoted has much less experience than Leonard and lacks his two-year degree in customer relations from a community college.

**Question 3.** Leonard has likely been the target of discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation and/or retaliation. True or False?

TRUE: We don't know Margaret's reason for not recommending Leonard for the promotion, but it is not looking good for Margaret. It appears that she is either biased against Leonard for the same reasons she harassed him, or she is retaliating because he complained, or both.

Leonard should speak further with the employer's designee, and the circumstances of the promotion should be investigated. If it is found that Margaret had abused her supervisory authority by failing to fairly consider Leonard for the promotion, she should be subject to disciplinary action. This scenario shows that sometimes more severe action is needed in response to harassment complaints, in order to prevent discrimination in the future.