

# Anti-Sexual Harassment

## Myths and Facts



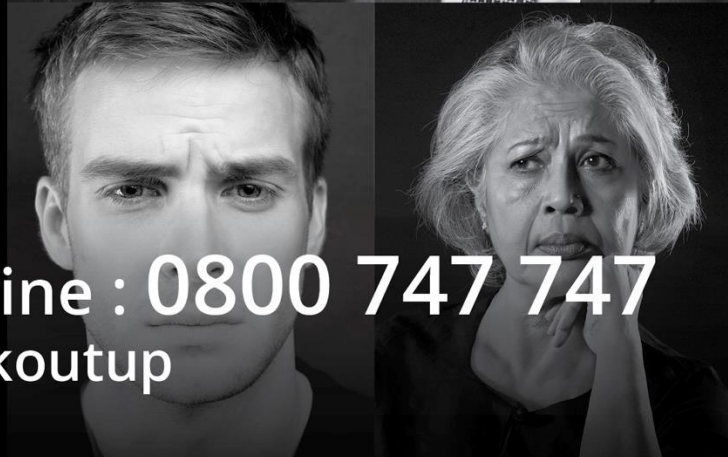
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**Myth 1:**

*Sexual harassment is harmless to the victim.*

**Fact:**

Sexual harassment causes significant psychological, physical and economic harm. Psychological and physical consequences include depression, helplessness and decreased work and study performance. Economic consequences can lead to job loss or dropping out.

**Myth 2:**

*It's not a big deal if a person is harassed, it's all done in good fun.*

**Fact:**

Sexual harassment is abusive. It is not done in good fun- it is done to intimidate and hurt others. It is also an inappropriate and unacceptable way to control others through degradation and intimidation. Sexual harassment affects us all.

**Myth 3:**

*There is a profile of a typical harasser.*

**Fact:**

Harassers can be any age, gender, race and sexual orientation. They are found in all types of occupations, at all organisational levels.

**Myth 4:**

*Perpetrators are monsters or strangers.*

**Fact:**

Sometimes, but not all the time. While many people will never be perpetrators (and many are less likely than others to be perpetrators), sexual harassment does not have one face.

**Myth 5:**

*Victims are to blame in some way for being harassed (What were you wearing? What were you doing there? Were you drinking?).*

**Fact:**

The harasser is always responsible for having committed the harassment, regardless of the victim's appearance or behavior – the victim is not responsible for the harassment.

**Myth 6:**

*Only women are sexually harassed.*

**Fact:**

Both men and women may be targets or perpetrators of sexual harassment. Many more women than men are harassed. Male victims rarely seek help because of embarrassment and fear that they will not be taken seriously.

**Myth 7:**

Older people are not considered sexually attractive by others, so they don't experience sexual harassment.

**Fact:**

Sexual harassment is unrelated to physical attractiveness and sexual desire. It is used to coerce, bully and intimidate.

**Myth 8:**

People with disabilities are not sexual, so they can't be sexually harassed or be harassers.

**Fact:**

Despite societal attitudes and stereotypes about people with disabilities, they can be victims, or perpetrators. Some people (e.g. those who are disempowered, or disabled) are at greater risk of being sexually harassed.

**Myth 9:**

Straight people do not harass gay people.

**Fact:**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer/questioning and asexual (LGBTIQA+) people have been targets of harassment by other people because of myths and stereotypes generated out of ignorance.

**Myth 10:**

*Real rape victims lay charges with the police.*

**Fact:**

Rape victims rarely find the courage and time to face the disciplinary, police and legal systems. These also usually not victim-friendly.

**Myth 11:** *If you fight your attacker when being sexually assaulted, you are playing hard to get. If you don't fight back, it means you wanted it.*

**Fact:**

There is no 'proper' way to respond to sexual assault or rape. There are no specific marks to prove that you are a victim or not.

**Myth 12:**

Some people can't be raped, only taken. If you are dating someone or married to them, forced sex with them is not rape.

**Fact:**

Without consent, it is rape. It doesn't matter who the victim is, or who the perpetrator is.