

Flirting or Harassment?

GOALS

Affective

To identify feelings and values about sexual harassment

Behavioral

To learn the definitions of sexual harassment

To learn and practice choosing ways to deal with situations in a group that is being harassing

Cognitive

To identify the difference between flirting and harassment

To determine what to do if you believe you are being harassed

To become aware of how flirting “works” and how it affects self and others

MATERIALS

Flirting or Harassment Situations (Handout 2)

Healthy snacks

GROUP SESSION

Opening Time (¼ session time)

1. Welcome the girls back to group and remind them that this is the next-to-last session, so today will be the last time a new topic will be discussed. The very last session will be a review, planning for future goals, and a celebration of what’s been learned. Ask what concerns about confidentiality the group has at this time. How are the ground rules—are any changes necessary?
2. Ask who would like to share what they experienced since the last session related to the topic of being pressured or feeling pressured to give up, change, or hide part of your identity or values in order to be accepted by someone or a group. Encourage sharing.

Working Time (½ session time)

1. Define sexual harassment as words or behaviors of a sexual nature that cause the receiver to feel uncomfortable.
2. Restate the following in your own words:

Have you ever been in a situation where one or more girls were hanging out and one or more guys came by and started teasing and commenting about their being cool, funny, sexy, great bods, and so on? Suppose the girls just loved it and kept teasing the guys, too, making them laugh and hang around more. Would that be sexual harassment? (The answer is no.)

Now suppose one of the guys in this group starts pressuring one of the girls in the group to come for a ride in his car and smoke some joints and get something going. The girl doesn’t want to, but he keeps pressuring her and teasing her in front of the other girls, and she feels angry and embarrassed by what he is saying he wants to do. Would that be sexual harassment? (The answer is yes.)

3. Hand out copies of the Flirting or Harassment Situations (Handout 2) and have the group form dyads to discuss what is going on in and how they might handle the situations. Assign two or three situations to each dyad and give them a time limit for discussion and brainstorming.
4. Reassemble the group. Ask the dyads to share their situations and what they think is going on. Encourage the others in the group to comment; let them work through their thoughts and feelings.
5. Ask: "What do you think about these situations—are they ones you might find yourself in? What would you do if you found yourself in a situation where you know what's going on is harassment and not flirting?" Let the group explore ways to deal with such a situation and discuss how to follow up by reporting it to an adult who could intervene.
6. Discuss the following questions:
 - What if you are with a group of friends and they start harassing some other guys or girls? What would you do? How would you handle it if they began teasing you for being a wuss because you won't go along with them?
 - What if you find yourself in a situation where you think you are just teasing, flirting, and having fun because the other person is laughing, too? Then later you hear from friends or even the principal that the person didn't like it and is accusing you of harassment. How can you prevent this situation from happening?
 - What are some of the negative consequences of harassing someone else? (You could be suspended or expelled from school, or a lawsuit could be brought against you, your family, or your school by another youth's parents.)
 - What can you do in the future to be more aware of others' rights and your own rights in this area?
 - How can you help your friends and have your friends look out for you when sexual harassment might be the issue?

Processing Time (¼ session time)

1. Ask and discuss at least one question from each of the four processing levels:

INTRAPERSONAL

What feelings came over you as we discussed harassing others and being harassed yourself?

INTERPERSONAL

On a scale of 1 to 10—1 means low and 10 means high—how do you feel you are working together and helping one another in this group?

NEW LEARNING

What did you learn today about flirting and harassment that was surprising to you?

APPLICATION

Before our last session, what would you be willing to make a commitment to doing to help yourself and your friends deal with harassment in better ways?

2. Thank the girls generously for coming to group and give them a hope statement. Ask what special thing they would like to do or have next time to celebrate their achievements (for example, a pizza or popcorn party). Try to schedule a longer period of time for the last session so you can review *and* celebrate!

Flirting or Harassment Situations

SITUATION 1

Sherone, age 13, is sitting on the front steps of her apartment waiting for her friend Anya to come so they can go to the mall. Three guys Sherone knows from school are approaching her along the sidewalk. One of them, Raul, starts whistling and hollering, "What a babe!" as the three keep walking closer. Sherone rolls her eyes and looks away. The other guys laugh among themselves—they know Raul likes Sherone, and they don't want to make him mad. Raul keeps making eyes at Sherone, saying, "Man, she's a hot mama" and dancing along the street. Sherone giggles and says, "You want one up-side the head?" She likes Raul, too, and thinks it is cool that he is paying attention to her in front of the other guys. The guys pass by Sherone, laughing and joking with each other, and Raul keeps on shouting, "Cool Mama, ya wanna come wi' me?" to Sherone as they go around the corner. Is this flirting or harassment?

SITUATION 2

Wang and his girlfriend, Kwan, are sitting on the grass in the park drinking milkshakes. They have been going together since sixth grade and are now ninth graders. Wang leaves to find a restroom. Jeremy, a senior from the high school, comes along and starts talking to Kwan. Kwan is very friendly and outgoing, and she participates in several sports, is cheerleading squad leader, and is in honors classes, so she knows a lot of other guys and girls. Jeremy is telling Kwan her hair is gorgeous and she is the best cheerleader he's ever seen. He asks her if she would ever like to go to the varsity kick-off parties because he would love to have her company. She is laughing and feeling flattered and delighted. Wang comes back and gets very angry when he sees her laughing and joking with Jeremy. He tells Jeremy to quit harassing Kwan and get out of there. Is the situation between Kwan and Jeremy flirting or harassment?

SITUATION 3

The hall is packed with kids between classes. Krissi is at her locker trying to put her books away and get her gym things out. Paul comes along and starts talking to Krissi, saying that he would like to take her out after the game Saturday afternoon. She is excited and says, "Sure, but I'll have to ask my mom if we're going in cars and tell her where I'll be." Paul says that Krissi's mom just doesn't trust him and that Krissi should go anyway without asking. He pinches Krissi's backside and smears her lipstick with his fingers, then hurries off. Krissi is ticked because of what he said and irritated about the pinching. Is this flirting or harassment?

SITUATION 4

Five fifth- and sixth-grade boys are kicking a soccer ball around on the blacktop behind the school. They come into the school to get drinks of water, passing by the girls' restroom. Janika and Rashell are coming out of the restroom, and Janika is crying. The boys start saying, "Ya get on the rag, girl? Bet ya got the cramps real bad! Ha, ha!" One of the boys starts bending over at the waist, holding his abdomen and moaning, "Oh, I got it bad," then laughing and pointing at Janika. They won't let the girls out of the restroom and keep laughing at them. Is this flirting or harassment?

SITUATION 5

Make up your own situation and discuss. It can be a real situation one of you has been in recently, or it can be completely made up.

Teeter-Totter: Balancing Family, Friends, School, and Other Responsibilities

Many young people have not lived long enough to have experienced the negative effects of “overdoing it.” When they are involved in reinforcing activities, it is difficult for them to believe in giving up something for the sake of balance. This activity uses physical laws of nature to illustrate that things, machines, and bodies need balance to “work right” and that if we overload ourselves we won’t function well and can break down.

GOALS

Affective

To discuss feelings relating to balancing the increasing responsibilities of the teen years

To share a lighter moment during the group by having a fun activity

Behavioral

To work out and help others work out how to balance their stressful activities

Cognitive

To increase awareness of self and others as users of family resources and participants in family responsibilities

MATERIALS

For each group member, a dowel rod or section of quarter-round molding about 20 inches long. (I found rods of clear plastic for about 10 cents each at a plastics manufacturer.)

Yarn or string

Cardboard or posterboard

Marking pen and a pair of scissors for each group member

A paper punch

Clothespins (about 30)

Healthy snacks

GROUP SESSION

Opening Time (¼ session time)

1. Welcome the members back to group. Inquire what concerns they might have about the issue of confidentiality. Ask whether the ground rules need any adjustment.
2. Ask what changes in their behavior they were able to make because of the editorials they wrote during the last session. What new ideas do they have for dealing with conflicts about use of technology/electronics?

Working Time (½ session time)

1. Invite the group members to discuss some of their frustrations with balancing all of the things they do and want to do in the following areas:

School: Homework, long-term projects, keeping lockers in order, managing books and other materials, getting help when needed

Home: Household jobs, baby-sitting younger siblings, yard work, keeping bedrooms in order, doing laundry, helping parents do extra things, going to and helping with family get-togethers, buying and caring for clothes

Friends: Where to go, when to go, what friends to go with, and how to get there; money to spend with and on friends; managing problems with friends and ex-friends; doing things you want to do and dealing with pressure to do things you don't want to do

Work: Finding a job, working more or less, problems at work with bosses or other workers. (If your group is underage for work, discuss baby-sitting, lawn mowing, dog walking, and so on.)

Sports or hobbies: Horseback riding, golf, football, tennis, cross-country, baseball, hockey, music lessons and performances, art lessons and shows, and so forth (finding time to do enjoyable things and still meet your responsibilities, becoming swamped by adding more and more sports/activities to an overloaded schedule)

Discuss the fact that our bodies, minds, and spirits can take only so much, and if we push ourselves beyond what we can deal with we can become ill in many different ways: exhaustion, depression, physical ailments, psychological problems, burnout.

2. Pass out the balancing rods and pieces of cardboard or posterboard, scissors, and marking pens. Instruct group members to cut out several different geometric shapes (circles, squares, triangles, rectangles, polygons, and so forth). You can have some models to show them. Each person should cut out a total of about 10. On each shape have them write one major area: school, home, friends, work, sports, or other (whatever other categories you come up with) and a couple words describing the exact issue relating to that area. They then write one number representing where they are on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, to indicate how important the topic is in terms of time, energy, and personal resources. For example:

Home: Chores for allowance—6

Sports: Working my horses—9

School: Math classes—10

Work: Baby-sitting—4

Friends: Hanging out at the mall—7

Home: Doing stuff with family—6

Sports: Basketball practice and games—10

School: Working on school newspaper—7

Friends: Bringing cards or hobby items to school to look at and trade—8

Have group members punch a hole at the top of each of their shapes, then thread a piece of string or yarn about 8 inches long through each hole. (They will tie each shape to the balancing rod so the shape hangs down 3 or 4 inches.)

3. After they get their shapes cut out, written on, punched, and tied, instruct them to form pairs. One at a time, each person in the pair attaches a clothespin to the bottom of any cardboard shapes numbered 9 or 10. Then the person must decide how he or she is going to tie all of the shapes on either end of the rod so the rod stays evenly balanced when the person balances it on a single finger. When added, the numbers on each side must be nearly equal—for example, there can't be a total of 98 points on one side and 37 on the other. If the rod tips to one side or the other, the person must figure out how to subtract or add points to the shapes to make the rod balance.
4. When both members of the pair have attempted this procedure, stop and discuss the idea that the rod represents the physical and mental self. If a person's self is out of balance, physical or psychological distress will result. What this tells the person is to review and

adjust his or her investment of energy and resources to keep from getting frustrated and burned out. Ask the following questions:

What did you like least about having to get your life “in balance”?

What did you like most about working out your balance?

What does “working it out” mean to you?

What changes do you think you might need to make?

How about your partner—what changes did you notice that he or she didn’t notice or mention that you think that person needs to work on?

What is the first step you need to take to get going on making things balance better in your life?

How frustrating is it for you to think about giving up things you like to do because you can’t handle everything?

Processing Time (¼ session time)

1. Ask at least one question from each of the four levels of processing:

INTRAPERSONAL

What were you thinking and feeling today as you worked on getting in touch with the important issues in your life and getting them “in balance”?

INTERPERSONAL

What did you notice about other group members as they were trying to get the idea of balance going for them?

NEW LEARNING

What new ideas might you have from being involved in this activity?

APPLICATION

What would you be willing to do between now and the next session to reduce a little stress in your life and give yourself the gift of more balance?

2. Thank group members for coming and remind them that the next session is the last “working session” of the group. The last session will be a review of learning and goal setting for the future. Give them hope statement, remind them of the day and time for the next session, and share the snacks.