

Sexual harassment case studies

Give a scenario to a small group of students and ask them to discuss and note down the responses to the case study. You may wish to ask groups to move around to view each scenario and add further feedback.

Ask students to discuss their answers and talk about the advice they would give in the case study of focus.

Case study 1

As a male I don't know if my story counts but I want to get this off my chest. I was a very shy person and I didn't really know anyone until I met this girl who I thought was amazing. We met regularly and kissed each time we met. One night when we met up, she asked if we could have sex. I wasn't ready and felt confident enough to tell her that as I felt I trusted her. The next day I hadn't heard from her despite messaging her. After logging in to Instagram I saw that she had tagged me on Instagram and labelled me 'inadequate down there'. There were over 65 comments about me from people at school and following this I suffered bullying from others who made fun of me because they said I couldn't physically have sex because of my penis size. That reputation stayed with me throughout school and I felt so distressed and hurt.

- Do you think that sexual harassment is different for males?
- Do you think it is more difficult for males to report this kind of harassment? Explain your answer
- What advice would you give to this young person?
- What could be done to prevent this situation?

Case study 2

At 13 I had a very best friend; we did everything together and spent lots of time at each other's houses. My friend had an older brother and every time I went to the house, he would take the time to chat to me and ask about my day. One day he was at the house with a group of friends and his personality completely changed. All of the lads were calling me 'Hot' and that I was a 'Hottie' in my school uniform. Each time I went to see my friend it got worse and one of the lads said I shouldn't look so sexy in my 'little skirt'. This behaviour was so embarrassing and it left me feeling really vulnerable. My friend just said I should take it as a compliment and not to worry.

- Do you think this behaviour is sexual harassment?
- The lads in the scenario didn't ever touch her so why would she be offended?
- Would this situation be easy to report? Explain your answer
- Her friend suggested she take the comments as a compliment. What would be your response to that?

Case study 3

I love school, seeing my friends every day. I have always been quite shy and reserved and when I met my boyfriend, he really made me feel super confident. We had decided to become sexually active and planned to have sex safely. Every time we started to have sex, he asked me to give him oral sex. I really didn't want to. Mainly because I wasn't sure how to do it but also the thought of it made me feel funny. One night while we were kissing he pushed my head down towards his genitals and told me just to get it out the way and that surely I'd love it once I tried it. I said 'No' but he kept pushing my head down there. I wasn't going to give in so I managed to get away and ran out really upset.

Since then, we haven't spoken but every time I walk past him and his friends, they make noises which from what I can gather represent oral sex. This abuse is constant and I try to find other routes around school to avoid them.

- Is this sexual harassment?
- What advice would you give to this young person?
- What could be done to change this situation?

Case study 4

I went to a school party with some friends. I was standing talking to them and a guy came up behind me and put his hands on my bottom and groped me and when I turned around he was miming having sex with me from behind and laughing to all his mates who were watching. I felt so humiliated and objectified. I didn't know what to say. Afterwards I felt angry with myself that I stayed silent. As I'd been wearing a short skirt and a low-cut top I felt I brought it on myself. Years have gone by but I still remember that sense of shame and that he had felt entitled to touch my body that way.

- Is this sexual harassment?
- Does what someone wears entitle others to touch or grope them?
- What more could be done in school to educate young people around respect and appropriate behaviour?

Case study 5

I keep being sent nude images from a girl in my class. She sends me graphic shots of herself and writes some really graphic messages. I feel really uncomfortable with this but all my mates say I am lucky to have the attention and access to so many images. I feel like I can't report this as I don't want her to get in trouble and also I can't face the shame of admitting I am just not into this at all.

- Is this sexual harassment?
- Is there a law around sending out nudes?
- What could be done to prevent this situation?

Case study 6

I identify as a Trans male and I have received so much support and care from my family, friends and school. Sadly, there is a group of year 11's who feel the need to grope me when I walk by. The other day one of the lads grabbed my private parts, asking have I got a 'big one'. This is soul destroying for me as it has nothing to do with anyone else and I feel really embarrassed and I am verging on depression.

- Is this sexual harassment?
- What could be done to change this situation?
- What advice would you give to this young person?