

**GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING WELCOMENESS:  
HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BEHAVIOR IS INAPPROPRIATE, UNWELCOME OR UNWANTED?**

Occasionally, faculty, staff, and students have a difficult time identifying when their behavior may be inappropriate or “unwelcome” in the eyes of the recipient. Sometimes, people will tell you if your behavior is offensive, but that does not always happen, and you cannot assume that your behavior is appropriate simply because no one has told you to stop. To help you become more aware of your behavior and its impact on others, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is there an educational or work-related purpose for your comments or behavior?
2. How would you feel if you were in the other person’s shoes? Be aware that sexual remarks may be offensive or make others uncomfortable even if you wouldn’t feel the same way yourself.
3. Would your behavior change if your partner or spouse were standing next to you?
4. Would you want someone to act the same way toward your child, parent, or partner?
5. Do you frequently find yourself saying, “lighten up,” “have a sense of humor,” or “I’m just joking?” If so, others may not appreciate your comedic attempts.
6. Does the recipient show any non-verbal signs that your behavior is not welcome, such as:
  - Avoiding you;
  - Avoiding being alone with you;
  - Rolling his or her eyes;
  - Shaking his or her head;
  - Crossing his or her arms;
  - Walking away or distancing himself or herself from you;
  - Changing the subject of the conversation; or
  - Not laughing at your jokes?
7. Do you initiate the behavior more than the other person? For example:
  - Do you make the majority of sexual innuendoes or jokes in meetings or in class?
  - Do you frequently reach out to hug or touch people in ways that they do not initiate?
  - Have you asked someone out multiple times and the person has never asked you out in return?
8. Would you want your behavior to be made completely public?
9. Would you act the same way if the person was not a member of the sex that you are attracted to?
10. Is there equal power between you and the other person or do you have the ability to control the person’s work or educational life?

*For additional guidance, please contact the Sexual Harassment Prevention Office at (847) 491-3745. All inquiries will be handled as confidentially as possible, pursuant to University policy.*