



NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION

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, consider asking 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?
3. Would your behavior change if your partner, spouse, or mother 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," or "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 along with you;
 - Rolling his or her eyes;
 - Crossing his or her arms;
 - Walking away from you;
 - Physically distancing himself or herself from you;
 - Changing the subject of the conversation; or
 - Not laughing at your jokes; or
 - Blushing?
7. Do you find that you are always the person who:
 - Makes the majority of jokes in meetings or in class?
 - Reaches out to hug or touch people?
 - Asks someone out and is rejected more than once?

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. Could the person feel intimidated by your behavior because 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.*