

Guidelines for Confronting Someone Who is Harassing You

Adapted from *Back Off! How To Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment and Harassers*, by Martha Langelan and the Feminist Majority Foundation website, www.feminist.org/911/harasswhatdo.html#prevent.

An effective way to stop harassment is to confront it. This can be done either in person or in writing, such as in a letter or via e-mail. Below are some suggestions for what to include when telling someone that you want their offensive behavior to stop:

- Name the behavior and be specific. For example, “You make me uncomfortable when you touch my face and call me ‘sweetheart.’”
- Hold the person accountable for his or her actions. Do not make excuses and do not pretend that the behavior did not really happen. Take charge of the encounter and let the person know that what he or she did is unwanted and unwelcome. For example, “I do not find your jokes about religion funny, and I get the impression that you do not care for people who are of a certain religion. I would appreciate it if you would stop making those jokes.”
- Make honest, direct statements and speak the truth. Do not engage in insults, obscenities, or appeasing language. Be serious and straightforward.
- State that you want the harassment to stop. “I find your comments about my race offensive, and I would like for you to stop making those types of comments.”
- Stick to your goal of making sure the person knows that you find their behavior offensive, unwanted and unwelcome. Do not respond to any excuses or diversionary tactics.
- Reinforce your statements with congruent non-verbals such as direct eye contact, head up, and a strong, serious stance. Do not smile. Timid, submissive body language will undermine your message.
- Respond at an appropriate level. Use a combined verbal and physical response to harassment.
- Let the person know that if the harassment does not stop, you will report it to the Office for Equal Opportunity, Human Resources, or an appropriate supervisor.

For additional assistance, contact the Office for Equal Opportunity at 919-515-1234 or 919-515-3148. You may also review the Office for Equal Opportunity website at: http://www.ncsu.edu/equal_op/.