

# Harassment and the Slippery Slope of Disrespect



Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission

# Two general types of sexual harassment in the workplace:

1. “Quid Pro Quo”

2. “Hostile Environment”

Hostile Environment can be for any protected class, not just for sex.



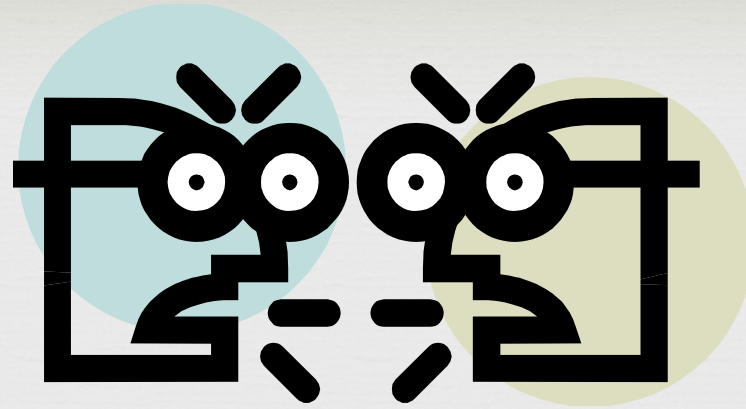


# “Quid Pro Quo”

1. A person with power.  
(Usually a manager or supervisor)
2. That person wants something. (Sex)
3. That person uses their power to threaten or promise, in exchange for getting what they want.

**The promise/threat is something that impacts tangible terms and conditions of employment:**

**hiring, promotion, demotion, discipline/termination, compensation, work assignments, etc.**



## “Hostile Environment”

Verbal or non-verbal conduct in the workplace that:

- ❧ Is focused on or occurs because of a person’s protected class. (i.e. sex)
- ❧ Is unwanted or unwelcome
- ❧ Is **Severe or Pervasive** to a level where it affects the work environment



# Preventing Harassment and Unhappiness in the Workplace



Nebraska Equal Opportunity  
Commission

# Three Questions for employees...



- ❧1. Do I feel respected at work?
- ❧2. Does my employer value me?
- ❧3. Does my work matter?



# Respect



What do people at  
your work do and say  
to demonstrate  
Respect?

# Respectful Cues



- œ “please”
- œ “thank you”
- œ Asking opinion
- œ Showing interest
- œ Listening
- œ Acknowledging/Greeting
- œ Praising or Compliments
- œ Smiling (but not creepy)
- œ Sharing information people need
- œ Being mindful of time and space
- œ Offering help
- œ Letting people participate in decisions when appropriate



# Disrespect



What might people in a workplace do or say that indicates a lack of respect?

# Disrespectful Cues



- ❧ Unwarranted and excessive sarcasm
- ❧ Giving unwanted nicknames
- ❧ Inappropriate jokes and stories
- ❧ Eye rolling
- ❧ Withholding info
- ❧ Criticizing people publicly
- ❧ Interrupting or denying floor time
- ❧ Ignoring
- ❧ Teasing
- ❧ Baiting
- ❧ Being intentionally unavailable
- ❧ “Forgetting” to include people



# Slippery Slope of Disrespect

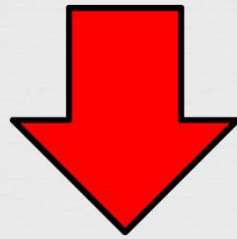


- œ Disrespectful behavior can affect the work culture, environment, and the experience of employees.
- œ These actions might not be illegal or discriminatory BUT:
  - œ A culture that allows disrespectful behavior can lead to dissatisfaction, conflict, and eventually inequalities that can lead to discrimination or harassment.
  - œ A culture that allows disrespectful behavior gives perpetrators the idea that “anything goes,” and they may gradually escalate their behavior to actual discrimination.
  - œ Rude and disrespectful behavior is a PERFORMANCE issue.

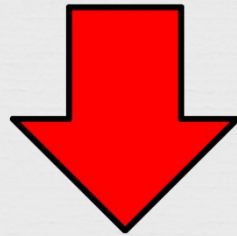
# Slippery Slope of Disrespect



Disrespectful Behavior



Abusive Behavior



Illegal Harassment



# Retaliation



Treating somebody poorly  
because they have opposed an  
illegal practice or participated  
in an investigation

# Who is Protected from Retaliation?

The law prohibits retaliation against someone who complains or has participated in an investigation, and covers:

- ❧ Current workplace contact
- ❧ A prospective workplace contact
- ❧ A former workplace contact





# Types of Retaliation by Employers

1. Threat to file a counterclaim in court
2. Suspension with pay
3. Changing the qualifications for an open position sought
4. Selective strict enforcement of a policy
5. Harassment
6. Reprimands
7. Extending Probation or Training periods
8. Transfer to a lower grade or salary
9. Intimidation of witnesses during an internal investigation of a complaint
10. False negative references

# Contact



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