

Sexual Harassment

I do not believe a parent, facilitator, or mentor wants any young person to be abused, threatened or even slightly victimized, nor do they want a young person to get themselves in trouble because of unresolved emotional traumas caused by out of control hormones. In many cases adults tend to miss dysfunctional behaviors in young people because we dismiss the behaviors of the perpetrators as "Growing Pains". Many of us have out grown our abnormal behaviors. But some do not.

We need a better way of identifying the adolescents going through "Growing Pains" and the ones who are "PREDATORS". Sexual harassment is an action of manipulation, intimidation, and exploitation. It is a damaging action of selfishness. Moreover, because sexual harassment can masquerade behind many indistinct interpretations, a predator can claim innocence through ignorance. It all boils down to a predator is caring more about how they want to feel, using their target or victim as vehicle for their emotional, psychological, and physical satisfaction, by forcing or manipulating another person. There is a unique and identifying difference between making an innocent poor judgment or stupid comment verses being a predator. A predator knowingly and consistently repeats their behavior.

With this being said, while developing training tools for a number of Florida school districts I repeatedly heard about the "Problem of Sexual Harassment" being one of all their training issues. And I was even more surprised to hear that it was a problem within the student body. During one of these development meetings Dr. Melinda Jackson, grievance counselor for the Leon County School District was curious to know if I could create an interactive training tool to teach the students implication involved when they sexually harass one

another. I started researching the problem. I reviewed over 100 cases of student and adult complaints throughout five school districts. Some cases were court cases, so I had legal transcripts, but the majorities were school documents of review boards of testimonials from the accused, the target, and any witnesses. What caught my attention with the student body documents was that many of their sexual harassment behaviors weren't those of a predator. But in some cases when you repeatedly touch girls inappropriately while changing classes, you are a predator. But most cases are isolated and kept very quiet. Innocent jokes gone bad, doing something stupid on a dare, spreading rumors, etc. Being that school districts are not anxious to get bad publicity or sued, student sexual harassment has become another area of concern. Especially since school district will be found liable if they take no actions. So when they receive a student complaint they conduct an investigation. If they find merit in the complaint they usually address the harasser as if it was just an isolated behavior. Once that predator has been identified they receive some form of punishment with the hopes that student gets scared and stops their selfishness. Sometimes this solves the problem.

However, does a slap on the wrist prevent a potential predator from allowing their selfishness to reappear? I thought I could do better.

Since sexual harassment can take many forms, if you are going to train and educate someone every form had to be identified. Since sexual harassment affects the victims, you have to hear how the situation affected them. And if sexual harassment is an act of selfishness you have to hear how the predators were being selfish.

Now, it stands to reason, with very little wiggle room that once you go through a training that accomplishes all the above, you have no excuse other than being out of control selfish. What changes is the degree of punishment. If the punishment changes because there are no excuses, predators are now exposed as selfish thinkers who do not care or respect others. You can't really identify or punish any one who doesn't get educated or trained in all three areas. They can always claim they didn't know. "Once they are trained and educated

a predator has no excuses, and should be identified in a way that lets all their peers and teachers know what they did and who they are. ENFORCEMENT is the most effective incentive for prevention.

The interactive "Preventing Sexual Harassment" technology puts a trainee in a ten realistic every day school setting situations. They are challenged in each to determine whether the scenario between the students is sexual harassment or not. Every possible definition of sexual harassment is reviewed. After they determine if the scenario is sexual harassment, they get to hear why the PREDATOR acted the way they did. The PREDATOR'S ignorance, manipulation skills, and selfishness are exposed. It becomes obvious that they acted with their own self interests and without respect for others. The trainee gets to hear how the TARGET was affected, how it affected their interactions with classmates, and school. Overall this identifies the act of sexual harassment as the actions of an individual who acts without understanding the consequences or is selfish and a manipulative individual. But above all sexual harassment predators should not be forgiven or tolerated. Their selfishness should be exposed.

Again, ENFORCEMENT is the key to stopping sexual harassment.

For more information go directly to www.motint.org
or Email Dr. Friedman DrFriedman@motint.org