

Wednesday, June 21 Harassment Workshop

Harassment Workshop with DeNise Johnson, Employee Relations

On Wednesday, June 21, interns attended a mandatory workshop on workplace harassment. DeNise Johnson, the Director of Employee Relations and Staffing, ran the workshop. She took interns through an online tutorial and reviewed NPR's policy on harassment.

Interns were given NPR's Harassment Policy and Information form as well as the EEO's (Equal Employment Opportunity) policy and complaint procedure. An online tutorial followed.

The tutorial included an introduction to harassment, which is defined as a form of discrimination legally protected by law. Sex, race, national origin, religious beliefs, age and pregnancy are all items that are protected under harassment law. There are also two types of harassment; "quid pro quo" meaning this for that, which involves a supervisor receiving or withholding benefits in return for favors, and the hostile working environment which involves anything from racial slurs to pornography or anti-religious graffiti.

Verbal harassment was reviewed first. Harassment law prohibits only *unwelcome* verbal conduct. It reminded interns that jokes that are derogatory or sexually explicit could contribute to a hostile working environment. If you are unsure whether your verbal actions are harassment ask yourself whether the joke is appropriate, whether you know the people you are telling the joke to and whether it can be overheard and make others uncomfortable.

Physical harassment, discussed next, is applied to ALL workplace settings including company parties, business trips, etc. Harassment law covers only unwelcome touching and includes sexual gestures. When coming in contact with co-workers remind yourself, how sexual is the interaction, how well do you know the person, and beware of bystanders who may find your actions inappropriate.

The third category of harassment is visual. Ask yourself whether you think your personal desk items, calendars, emails, photographs, etc. is appropriate. Think about the content of the item and whether or not it is work-related. If it is inappropriate, it can lead to a hostile working environment.

Office romance was discussed as well. It reminded interns that harassment law protects direct and implied threats as well as punishment and rewards for romantic advancements. It allows for a polite, non-threatening advance between co-workers. If the question of romance becomes unwanted or leads to punishment or threat by a supervisor, it is considered harassment.

If you feel like you've been harassed it is your duty to report it right away. Law does not require you to confront the harasser first. On the harassment policy handed out there is a list of NPR internal counselors trained to handle harassment. If you feel like you have been harassed, you can call any of them to help you out with your situation.

DeNise Johnson wrapped up by reminding interns that retaliation by any person who was complained about is illegal. She also reminded interns that there would never be any disciplinary action taken against you for filing a complaint.

For further information on harassment please call DeNise at x2914. The harassment policy can also be reviewed online on the [Human Resources Policies](#) website.