

How to Respond to Inappropriate Behaviour

Everyone has the right to work in an environment that is free from harassment

Ignoring or avoiding a harasser is often viewed as the easier option. Learning how to respond in the moment to harassment is important as it is the most effective way for holding the person accountable for their actions, explaining how their actions impacted you, and deterring future harassment.

Here are some steps for responding to harassers in a way that is clear, concise, respectful, and non-confrontational.



Ensure your own physical safety

If you are not in a safe space, get to one first before responding.



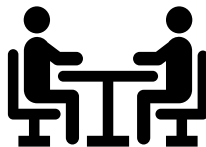
Collect your thoughts and prepare

Think about the facts and behaviours that are upsetting you.



Use "I" Statements

To avoid blame and defensiveness, speak from your perspective only.



Arrange a meeting

Ask to meet in a common area to have a quick conversation.



Remain calm, assertive, and respectful

Say your piece and document the conversation.



Bring Questions or Concerns to a trusted supervisor or HR

Remember:

- ✓ *Do not make excuses, apologize, or ask questions. Just state your facts.*
- ✓ *Do not respond to their questions, diversions, or guilt-trips.*
- ✓ *Leave the conversation whenever you feel it's necessary.*
- ✓ *Provide solutions – tell them what you would like to see change.*
- ✓ *Attack the behaviour, not the person.*
- ✓ *Remain polite and respectful, avoid yelling.*
- ✓ *Review the "Say This Instead of That" Chart to prepare for your conversation with confidence!*

How to Use “I” Statements

If you are in conflict, you may have difficulty clearly communicating your feelings without escalating the conflict. Using “I” **Statements** help you to state your concerns, feelings, and needs in a manner that is easier for the listener to hear and understand. An “I” **Statement** focuses stating the facts and behaviours of a situation based on your own feelings and experiences. **When you express your experience in a way that does not attack, criticize, or blame others, you are less likely to provoke defensiveness and hostility.**



Use this formula for developing your “I” Statement:

I feel _____, when you _____, so please, _____
(describe your feelings) *(state the facts and behaviours)* *(state what you would like to see change)*

I feel uncomfortable when you stand too close, so please stay on the other side of my desk.

You make me uncomfortable when you stand too close.

I feel uncomfortable when you call me “sweetie”, so please call me by my name if you would like to get my attention.

I don't like the way you call me “sweetie”.

I feel embarrassed when you make inappropriate comments about my clothes, so please do not make comments about my appearance.

You make inappropriate comments that are embarrassing.

I feel uncomfortable when you talk about the way co-workers dress or wear makeup, please do not make comments about people's appearance or gender expression.

You are making inappropriate comments about people's appearance or gender expression.

I feel hurt and embarrassed when you spread rumours about me and my coworker going out for lunch together.

I heard you are spreading inappropriate rumours about me and my coworker going out for lunch together.

I feel like I cannot trust you because I have heard you telling others my business that I told you in trust.

You talk behind my back, and I don't like it.

I feel disrespected when you do not use my preferred pronouns or mis-gender me, please call me by my preferred pronouns.

You are mis-gendering me.