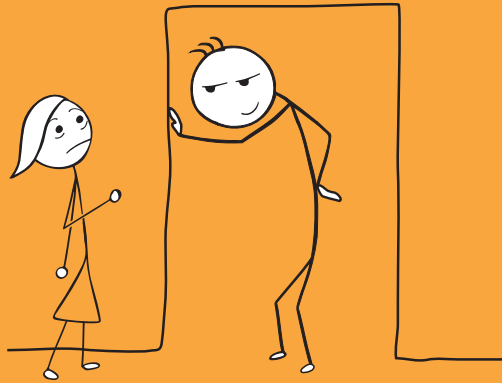


Exploring Sexual Harassment + The Bystander Effect

A workshop series for youth groups

TOPIC FOUR: SEXUAL HARASSMENT



PURPOSE OF TOPIC FOUR

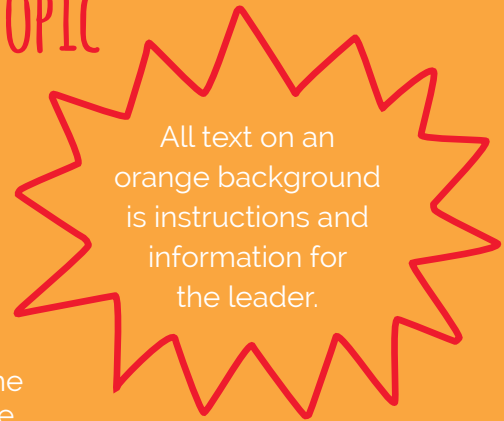
To identify both subtle and explicit forms of sexual harassment and to think about constructive responses based on Topics One and Two (**The Bystander Effect** and **From Bystander to Samaritan**).



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THIS TOPIC

- Definition cards
- "What's in a Compliment?" cards
- Blank paper and markers

} Provided in
Appendix



STEP BY STEP

1. Leader to pre-read material, and familiarise themselves with the definitions of sexual harassment, consent and power imbalance.
2. Based on Definition cards, plan responses to the modifiers in Activity 2 - Scenarios
3. Re-read Leaders Handbook and have a plan in place for disclosure and/or distress
4. Work through the activities

INFORMATION FOR THE LEADER



Sexual Harassment can be a difficult topic and a trigger for some people. Unfortunately it is common, and rarely talked about. Ensure you have read through the Leader's Handbook and have a plan in place for disclosure or people becoming upset.

This booklet is not a resource for teaching on sex and theology, sex before marriage, or identity. All those resources exist elsewhere. This resource is to help people in our youth groups gain skills to engage with a serious issue in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As you prepare this topic do not assume that those in your church or youth group have not experienced sexual harassment or rape. Of 1400 respondents to a recent survey, 53% had experienced sexual assault and 83% had experienced sexual harassment during high school or tertiary education years. There are many reasons for non-disclosure. Many youth will know someone who has been impacted. Remember that part of this series is about learning to become Samaritans rather than Bystanders in other settings of our lives.

This topic has a large variety of activities and content. You may decide not to do all the activities, but we recommend reading through the entire booklet to help your planning.

The majority of the time in this session is given to discussion of scenarios. A primary goal is to create a safe setting for people to have this discussion. Reading through the Appendix and Definition cards will help you to gain as much background information as possible.

BIBLE READING: 2 SAMUEL 11:1-4



¹In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the King's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

²One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

⁴Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home.⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

2 SAMUEL DISCUSSION



- Q what impression do we get of David in this story?
- Q If you had to pick a title for this scene what would it be?
- Q why do you think David felt able to make such an advance?
- Q what other things in life give people power?
- Q There is a famous quote that power tends to corrupt. Do you think that's true?
- Q Did Bathsheba make a free choice when she went to David?
- Q what do we learn about Bathsheba?

The text reveals almost nothing about Bathsheba. The only references to her in the story are how she looks to men and the names of the men in her life. In vs 4-5 when Bathsheba's husband is not being mentioned she is not even named, called only 'the woman.' In the following chapter Bathsheba is depicted as a stolen possession of Uriah. As we saw last week this is not an unusual depiction in media, movies and history. This is perhaps another lesson about power worth reflecting on throughout this topic.

RECAP: THE BYSTANDER EFFECT



For the following recap questions it might be useful to have the Topic One booklet and associated resources on hand to serve as reminders.

- Q what is the Bystander Effect?
- Q what are some ways to overcome the Bystander Effect?
- Q what are some good ways to de-escalate a situation?
- Q Asking if someone is alright might be embarrassing if nothing is wrong. Why would you ask anyway?
- Q what are some things to do if you want to help combat sexism?

Tonight we are going to talk more about sexual harassment, and identify some ways we can help keep each other safe.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT'S IN A COMPLIMENT?



The aims of this activity are:

- To have an open discussion about some subtle areas of sexual harassment,
- To help people see from the perspective of others
- To set the scene for how seemingly harmless but pervasive behaviour can have serious consequences

When someone takes offense at a comment, it is common for the person who made the comment to say "I meant it as a compliment." Often they are just making excuses, but can a comment be interpreted in entirely different ways?

1. Divide the room into small groups and give each group a set of "What's in a Compliment?" cards.
2. Have the groups or individuals categorise the compliments as to whether they are "safe compliments"; "problematic/false compliments" or "ambiguous" (context-dependent).
3. Have each group lay out their choices and see if everyone agrees. Discuss any differences.
4. Use the debrief comments on the next page to discuss each card.

WHAT'S IN A COMPLIMENT? (CONT'D)



Possible debrief comments for each card:

Whistling at someone. Usually directed at women and strangers. What is the objective of the person 'catcalling?' It's for their own pleasure, sense of power, or to get a reaction. It is sexualised and overtly about the body with no room for consent. Some men respond by saying they take it as a compliment when it happens to them. Against the background of the high statistic for violence against women, the level of sexual harassment experienced by women, and the physical power imbalance between most men and women, wolf whistling is a different experience for most women.

N.B. Some people might take this as a compliment, but this doesn't make it ok to assume that everyone does

You look great in that top. There are subtle pressures on both boys and girls; but from a young age, girls are taught their value is in unrealistic versions of beauty. Many take away the message that their bodies are for public viewing. To stop a comment being creepy, or explicitly about body, depersonalise the compliment e.g. "That's a great shirt," instead of "you look great in that shirt."

You're beautiful. Context is everything. Saying this to a boyfriend or girlfriend is very different than a comment being made in a public place.

WHAT'S IN A COMPLIMENT? (CONT'D)



Looks like you've been working out! While it may be taken as a compliment by some, this comment says you have explicitly noticed their body, both in the past, and now. In a society that constantly pushes people towards the unattainable photoshopped bodies of magazines and advertisements this can be harmful. In a public space, comments about people's bodies are just unnecessary.

You did great work on that assignment.

This is a safe compliment. It's for the benefit of the person receiving the compliment, and is about values unrelated to the body.

I'm impressed by how creative you are.

Also fits the definition of compliment.

Some of the above "compliments" are actually examples of low-level sexual harassment. If you don't experience these things constantly, it's difficult to understand - or even recognise - their cumulative effect. As we talk more about sexual harassment, the serious nature of this will hopefully become clearer.

Broken Window theory is a criminological theory where visible signs of crime such as broken windows, graffiti etc create an urban environment that encourages further crime and disorder, including serious crimes.

ACTIVITY 2: SCENARIOS



1. Set up a continuum in the space: Designate a spot in the room to represent "yes" and across the room another spot which represents "no". In the middle is "I don't know".
2. Explain that you will read out some scenarios and people are to move to the corresponding spot based on whether you think that scenario is harassment or not. The further towards each end someone goes, the more certain they are of their answer.
3. Explain that you will give people a chance to say why they are where they are, and people can move position in response to what is said. Explain that you might also add some modifying statements to the initial scenario and people can move as a result.

Scenario 1: *At work, someone greets you by giving your shoulders a light squeeze, leaves their hand on your shoulder and asks "hey how are you?"*

Ask a couple of people to share why they are standing where they are. Then read the additional modifiers on the next page one at a time and see if people move. Allow time for people to explain why they moved if they want to.

SCENARIOS (CONT'D)



Modifiers:

- The person is a good friend of yours outside of work.

Given the definition of sexual harassment, it is unlikely to imply threat or promise if it is from a friend. But it may still **feel** like a threat. How comfortable are you talking about consent with friends?

- The person is a colleague you don't know very well.

This should be done with consent. Without consent it is inappropriate, but may not be sexual harassment. It is easier to express discomfort with a friend than with a colleague.

- You have expressed in the past that that you are uncomfortable with the contact

Repeat behaviour **without consent** becomes harassment.

SCENARIOS (CONT'D)



Modifiers:

- The person is your boss.

The definition of power imbalance changes someone's ability to withhold consent, and adds the implied promise or implied threat from the definition of sexual harassment. Greater power imbalance means that - even if there is no bad intention - the ability for someone to express their discomfort changes. It's harder to give consent freely.

- You are female and the person putting their hand on your shoulder is male.

In most cases, there is an automatic power imbalance between men and women (men hold more power).

Scenario 2: You're at a party and you see someone you don't know well, Rae, slap your friend on the butt as they walk past.

SCENARIOS (CONT'D)



Modifiers

- Your friend made out with Rae last time you were all at a party together

Under the definition of consent, previous activity does not imply consent to any other activity.

- Rae and your friend have both been drinking

Drinking does not make your friend at fault, and it doesn't give the offender an excuse.

- Your friend frowns but does not complain

There are many reasons why someone might not complain. A lack of complaint never implies consent.

- Your friend is wearing a short dress and revealing top

It does not matter what your friend was wearing. Although this comment is the most explicit, Modifiers 2, 3 and 4 are all typical of victim blaming (see definitions).

SCENARIOS (CONT'D)



For many groups this will be the first time they have openly had this conversation. Start the same way with a continuum, and then bring the group back for a more frank conversation about sexual harassment and consent (using the questions as prompts).

Scenario 3: Kerry and Casey are at a party making out on the sofa.

Modifiers

- Casey stops being so interactive. It's clear that Casey is really drunk.
- Kerry asks if they should go to the bedroom. Casey doesn't say anything, but lets Kerry leads them into the bedroom. The door closes.

Q Is this situation ok? why or why not?

Q Was Casey consenting to making out?

Q What action might you take? How would this change if...

- The active instigator is a friend?
- You enter the room and Kerry yells at you to get out?
- You got it wrong, and Casey was just drinking soda?
- You don't know either person?

At the beginning of the night before Casey was drunk, consent was possible. Later, consent was not possible, as Casey was drunk and therefore may not have understood what they were consenting to.

ACTIVITY 3: PLAIN CONVERSATION



For some groups a plain conversation will be as helpful as any staged activity.

Lay out and read the Definition Cards in a way that is useful for your group. You may like to use some of the conversation starters below for a discussion either in a large group, or smaller groups to include more voices.

Conversation Starters

- New Zealand has one of the worst rates of violence against women in the developed world. Can anyone think of any reasons for why we are doing so badly in this area?
- There is often disagreement and online trolling when there is a public claim of sexual harassment. Do you think there really are grey areas where people might genuinely disagree? Or are the disagreements usually about power, blame, or avoiding responsibility?
- What are the most common situations in your school or social groups that would call for you to step in and say or something? (Refer back to Topics One and Two)
- Look at the definition of consent, and the rights and responsibilities. Is there anything on these lists that seem unrealistic, or anything that should be added?

ACTIVITY 4: IDENTIFYING SEXUAL HARASSMENT



1. Break up into small groups and brainstorm on paper:

- What sexual harassment looks and sounds like
- What they've seen
- Who it happens to
- Who does it
- Why it happens

Some ideas might be:

- Wolf whistles
- Sexual or sexist jokes
- Posters with people in a sexualised manner
- Photos people send such as nudes
- Movies
- Porn and the ease of access
- Comments such as being "frigid", or games to test out how 'frigid' someone is

2. Bring everyone back together and for each question, get someone to share from their page. Compare notes - is there agreement? Are there any grey areas?

3. If it hasn't already come up, discuss what bullying and sexual harassment looks like when it happens online, via apps or people's personal devices. Remember the definitions. An explicit text is a sexually graphic act happening without consent. It also probably involves a power imbalance.

IDENTIFYING SEXUAL HARASSMENT (CONT'D)

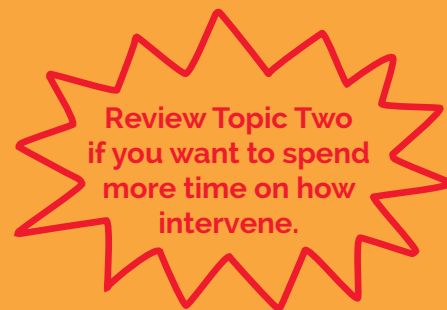


4. Ask the group for suggestions about responding to harassment or offensive online content and comments. Write up constructive one-liners and good responses.

Mention if needed: It's important that any response we make isn't one which is offensive or puts the other person down, but highlights the stupidity, offensiveness, or plain wrongness of what they have just said. If we put someone else down, no matter how funny we think our remark is, we have just done exactly what we are trying to combat, which in turn, makes us a hypocrite.

Remember: If someone is being subject to harassment whether sexual or otherwise, there is no single right way to respond; but responding in some way is better than not responding at all. At least let someone know what has happened. If you speak directly to the person responsible:

- Use strong body language
- Look them in the eyes
- Speak in a clear voice
- Appear calm and confidence (even if you don't feel it)
- Don't apologise
- Let someone someone know what has happened.



CLOSING PRAYER



God be in our head...
God be in our eyes...
God be in our mouth...
God be in our heart...
God help us to love ourselves as you love us...
Help us to be kind to ourselves...
Help us to set good boundaries...

and in our understanding
and in our looking
and in our speaking
and in our thinking
and to love others as ourselves.
and look out for those around us
and respect the boundaries of others

Koroia ki te Matua, ki te Tama,
Ki te Wairua Tapu;
Mai i te timatanga, ki tenei wa,
A, haere ake nei.
Amine.

DEFINITION: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment is sexual behaviour that:

- Is unwelcome or offensive
- Is repeated, or bad enough to have a harmful effect
- Carries promise of favouritism or a threat
- Can be physical, written, spoken, visual or digital.



SEXUAL HARASSMENT (CONT'D)

The Human Rights Act 1993 defines sexual harassment as: "Any unwelcome or offensive sexual behaviour that is repeated, or is serious enough to have a harmful effect, or which contains an implied or overt promise of preferential treatment or an implied or overt threat of detrimental treatment.

"Sexual harassment can involve spoken or written material, images, digital material or a physical act."

NZ has some pretty shocking statistics when it comes to violence against women:

- One in three girls are subject to an unwanted sexual experience by the age of 16 years. (Rpe.co.nz)
- One in three women will experience physical and/or sexual violence from a partner during their lifetime. (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011)
- Ninety percent of sexual violence is committed by someone known to the victim. (Rpe.co.nz)



DEFINITION: CONSENT

Consent is simply permission for something to happen in a way that is:

- **Freely given:** Without pressure, manipulation, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- **Reversible:** Anyone can change their mind, about anything, anytime.
- **Informed:** You can only consent to something if you have the full story.
- **Specific:** Saying yes to one thing never implies consent to the next thing.



CONSENT (CONT'D)

Consent is about more than sex. There are lots of small, everyday actions that we have the right to consent, or not to consent to. When people do not feel free to express consent in common situations, it can be harder to do so in harder situations. Because many people feel constrained in their ability to express when they are uncomfortable with something, we must learn to talk about and practice consent regardless of your church's teaching on sex.

You have the right to:

- Say 'No', no matter what you've said or done before.
- Change your mind, even after you've said 'Yes' and not be pressured or persuaded to continue.
- Decide what your own values are about sex and to make decisions about your own sexual experiences based on those values.
- Decide what your own boundaries are and have them respected by others.

You have the responsibility to:

- Respect 'no means no' in all circumstances.
- Check with the other person to ensure they are OK, and still want to continue.
- Check with the other person's decisions, boundaries and values.
- Make no assumptions - if the other person is passed out or sleeping, they cannot consent.
- If someone isn't saying 'No' this doesn't automatically mean 'Yes'.



POWER IMBALANCE

Power is the the ability to act, exert control over, or influence others.

Power imbalance describes a gap between different people's ability to act, control or influence others. E.g. having the ability to fire people from a job causes an imbalance in ability to influence others.



POWER IMBALANCE (CONT'D)

Among other things, physical strength, social capital, threat of violence, wealth, gender, experience, status or spiritual authority can create a power imbalance.

Power imbalance limits peoples actions and the things they feel free to do and say. It is not something we can avoid, it is simply something we must be aware of.

Power imbalance is also one reason we cannot assume that someone is happy about a situation just because they do not object.



VICTIM BLAMING

Victim blaming occurs when the victim of a crime or wrongful act is said to be at fault in some way for what happened to them.



VICTIM BLAMING (CONT'D)

It is way more common to blame victims of sexual assault than victims of robbery.

You regularly hear people ask if the victim had been drinking, what they were wearing, or what they did to encourage the assailant.



Wolf whistling at someone

You look great in that top

You're beautiful

Looks like you've been working out!

You did great work on that assignment

I'm impressed by how creative you are

