

Harassment definition

Harassment and bullying are any unwelcome behaviours that hurt, shame, offend or scare another person and may affect their health, safety and wellbeing. This may include physical violence, emotional violence, isolation and ganging up. This behaviour is usually, but not always repeated.

Harassment scenarios

Amy and Jess

Amy and Jess are in year 9 and are best friends. They don't like another year 9 girl, Kate though she would like to be their friend. They both tease her a lot by laughing at her and whispering about her behind her back. One day they decide to tease her more by inviting her to meet them in town on the weekend. They don't turn up and don't call her beforehand. Kate is hurt, angry and confused and doesn't know what to do.

Sylvie and Marie

Sylvie is in year 9 and has been harassed for years about her weight. The final straw comes when another girl, Marie, hands out flyers with her head photoshopped on a pig, with the headline "Winner of the Food Eating Contest – soon to go to the National Competition". Sylvie is very upset about this and attacks Marie physically.

Alex and Rob

A year 9 guy, Alex, is in the soccer team and is really popular. Another guy, Rob, who wants his position in the team starts telling everyone that Alex is saying stuff about people behind their backs. Friends start avoiding Alex. Alex tells no one, asks no one for help. His grades begin to suffer and he loses focus on the team. The Coach replaces him with Rob. Alex finds out about Rob spreading the rumours and trashes Rob's locker. Alex is suspended for this.

Michelle and Eva

A year 10 girl, Michelle, is in the netball team and is really popular. Another girl, Eva, who wants her position in the team starts telling everyone that she is saying stuff about people behind their backs. Friends start to avoid her. Michelle tells no one and asks no one for help. Her grades begin to suffer and she loses focus on the team. The Coach replaces her with Eva. Michelle finds out about Eva spreading the rumours and steals Eva's mobile phone. Michelle is suspended for this.

Omar

Omar is a year 9 student who has recently moved to a new school. At the end of his first week, he's become friends with the popular group of year 9 boys. They include Omar and he plays soccer with them most lunchtimes. All the boys joke around with one another and they start making jokes about Omar being a terrorist. Omar feels really uncomfortable with the jokes but when he says something the boys get annoyed and tell him to 'take a joke.' Omar doesn't want to lose his new friends, but he also doesn't like the jokes.

Harassment scenarios

Jane

Jane has always loved socialising and hanging out with her friends. She was the life of the party and never seemed to want to go home. Recently, she seems really down for no apparent reason. Jane has also started dressing differently from her friends. She used to wear bright colours and now almost always wears black.

At first her friends seem concerned about what's going through her head. But when Jane just says she's having a few dramas at home and that they can't help, they feel helpless and shut out. At first, they talk among themselves about how to help her, what they think could be going on with her. Gradually over the year, when her friends have no success, this leads to gossiping and talking behind her back. One of them notices that Jane has some cuts on her hands and wrists. Jane covers them quickly when asked about them and mumbles there's nothing going on. This change in Jane became more and more noticeable and eventually her friends stopped hanging out with her as they didn't want to be seen with the 'emo girl'. When they see Jane now, she is lost in her headphones, hanging around the older crowd, smoking and ditching school.

Nada

Shortly after Nada begins at a new school she is invited to a party where everyone will be drinking. Her new friends have done a booze run before-hand and have stocked up for the night. Nada is Muslim and therefore doesn't drink and since this is her first party her parents are worried and have said that the only way she can go to the party is if they pick her up at 12.30am.

She arrives at the party about 10pm and Nada is keen to get in with a new group of friends. While chatting to them, they ask what type of alcohol she likes, they don't know about her religion and Nada is too nervous to explain the whole 'not allowed to drink' thing. She lies and says she drinks vodka raspberry and one of the other girls hands her one. One of the guys points out that Nada is too sober and starts telling her to skull. The rest of the group joins in.

Feeling pressured into it, wanting to fit in, Nada downs the drink and grabs another. After a few drinks, Nada feels that she is fitting in with this new group and starts having a good time. Before she knows it, 12.30 comes around and her dad arrives to pick her up. She goes out and gets in the car, slightly stumbling. Her dad notices that she has been drinking and asks her how she's feeling because he's worried about her. She snaps at him telling him to 'leave me alone!' He seems very disappointed with her. The next day she has to face up to a massive hangover and is too ashamed to look her parents in the eye.

Harassment scenarios

Kiana

Kiana started a new job 2 months ago. At first she got along well with everyone and she thought her boss really liked her. Her boss was always saying positive things about her work, commenting that she was a really good person to have around, that she was always smiling and great with the customers.

Her boss was so enthusiastic about her work that sometimes Kiana felt a bit uncomfortable, especially when it was just the two of them on late shifts. One day, Kiana's boss asked her to go to the pub after work for a few drinks. She asked who else from work was going. The boss said it would give the two of them a chance to get to know each other better and that all the other employees had done it before. Kiana was embarrassed and made an excuse that she had to be home early after work to babysit her little sister. The mood at work changed when Kiana's boyfriend dropped her off at work one Sunday and her boss saw her kissing him goodbye. Since then, her boss has been giving her the crappy jobs like cleaning the toilets and has cut her Sunday shifts.

Nick and Amy

Nick and Amy are both 17 and have been in a relationship since year 9. They see each other every day and speak on the phone at night. Just before the beginning of Year 12, Amy's parents decide to move her to a private school on the other side of town. Nick and Amy see less and less of each other and communicate mostly by SMS and Facebook.

One night, Nick logs onto Facebook and notices that Amy's profile pic has changed. Instead of her face, he sees a pic of new bellybutton ring. Nick comments, saying 'love the pic, I wanna see more!' Later on, Nick receives a picture message on his phone of Amy in her bikini. Nick responds with 'hot stuff! Take it all off!' Amy sends Nick a photo of her breasts with the text 'Just for your eyes only – don't show anyone'.

After she sends it Amy starts to freak out a bit, she gets really worried that someone might accidentally see it. She calls Nick and asks him to delete it straight away. He says he will but sounds really disappointed and Amy wonders whether he actually did delete the photo or if he just said he did. Amy doesn't want to sound like she doesn't trust Nick so she doesn't say anything else but the thought of the photo continues to distract her.

Alex and Dan

Alex and Dan are in the same group of mates at school but are not very close. Dan had been seeing Georgie for 2 months but last week she broke up with him. Dan came with another group of mates to a party on Saturday and had been drinking. Georgie turned up halfway through the night with some girlfriends and seemed to be a bit unsteady on her feet. Alex asked her if she was OK and she burst into tears. He invited her outside away from the noise of the party to calm down and talk. Dan saw them leave and followed them outside only to see Georgie and Alex hugging on a bench. He saw red and reeled around to hit Alex, who was caught off guard and hit his head on the bench. Bleeding, Alex staggered to his feet and hit Dan back, breaking his nose.

Harassment scenarios

Shaun

Shaun was a popular year 11 student who just made it to the school football team. His goal was to impress the cheerleaders. One of the cheerleaders, Hannah, paid him out excessively, saying he was way too scrawny to make the team, that he would just get knocked over by a dirty look. Hannah's boyfriend, Johnny, who is the captain of the football team, came out of the change rooms just in time to hear this comment, laughed and said 'Go easy on him, Hannah, he'll toughen up just fine. Welcome to the team, Scrawny Shauny'.

Hannah and Johnny's teasing caught on and before too long, whenever he got the ball in football games, the girls would yell 'Scrawny'. Johnny pretended it didn't bug him but decided to take on a new exercise regime to tone up, put himself on a protein shake diet and skipped a few meals to make his body look ripped. After months on this routine, he was very fatigued and his performance on the football team decreased greatly. He became weak and his hair started to fall out. People started whispering about him.

Emma

Emma started going out with Dylan, who is a couple of years older, in the summer holidays. Dylan is really popular and has a large group of friends who go out to a local café every week after soccer. One of Dylan's best friends is Amber. Emma thinks that Amber is tall, thin and really pretty and sometimes gets jealous when Dylan and Amber hang out by themselves.

Dylan says there's nothing going on between them but Emma still feels a bit insecure around Amber. At first, when they all went out for lunch together, Emma just ordered small serves. But in the last two weeks, she's started pretending to have "eaten earlier" at meal times with friends and family. Whenever anyone asks her about it, she says she's 'Detoxing' and is only allowed to drink orange juice.

Yanni and Amir

Yanni is a popular, good looking guy in Year 12 who struggled in his early years of high school with bullying from older kids. Amir is new to the school from Sydney, is quietly spoken and gets good marks. He's aiming to be a doctor. Yanni is in the same English class. Often after class, Yanni finds a way to either trip Amir going out the door, or knock him to force him to drop his books. At lunch or after school, he calls out to Amir and makes jokes while Yanni's friends laugh. One day, Amir comes to school with a knife and when Yanni pays him out at recess, he pulls the knife and threatens him with it. A teacher sees this, breaks them up and sends them to the principal. Yanni's dad storms in later in the day saying he will press charges against Amir. Amir is devastated and knows that with a criminal record, he will never be a doctor.

Dispute resolution Guiding Principles

Equality respect for diversity.

The person isn't the problem; **the problem is the problem.**

Work together rather than to win.

Power with – not power over.

Strength **without violence.**

It takes **courage** to face shame.

How should you react?

Respect – can you respect friends' differing values and beliefs?

Emphasis on understandings – can you find shared understandings of problems rather than finding 'the truth' and giving advice?

Acceptance – can you accept that there may be a number of different truths in a problem?

Take time – is there enough time to listen and explore friends' versions of their problems towards common understandings?

Fighting problems fairly

A problem is an opportunity to change what's not working for you

How you can all win

- > Work together against the problem
- > Say what the problem is for you
- > Listen to what the problem is for them
- > Ask questions – How? When? Where? What? Why?
- > Look for common understandings
- > Allow enough time so everyone feels heard.

Fouls

- > Physical violence
- > Revenge
- > Threats
- > Insults
- > Bringing up the past
- > Choosing not to listen
- > Making excuses
- > Blaming others