

FIRELANDS
SOCCER
REFEREE
ASSOCIATION
inc.



OHSAA - 99

PREFACE

According to Webster's Dictionary, an attitude is "An individual's prevailing tendency to an object, person, or group of people, institutions, or events. A negative attitude toward a racial, ethnic, or religious group is also called a prejudice."

An individual's beliefs about an object or group determine his or her attitude toward the object or group. It is particularly interesting to look at how attitudes are formed or changed. Generally, if most of an individual's beliefs about something are positive, then a positive attitude will develop. Beliefs may originate from a combination of direct experience, second hand information and inference.

Many attitudes and beliefs arise early in life and tend to persist or be influential throughout life. They are first learned from one's family, adapted based upon the later input of friends and idols, and they usually persist into adulthood. For example, if your parents were prejudiced against a certain race or religion, it is quite likely that you grew up with the same prejudices.

The media too can have a significant impact upon our beliefs and attitudes. TV and movies, for example, can bring all ethnic groups and religions into our homes, sometimes with the built in prejudices of the producers or scriptwriters. Similarly, newspapers and magazines, which often faithfully portray the particular beliefs of their publishers, can sway our opinion one way or the other.

Valuing individual differences means looking beyond the opinions of others and the influence of the media, and making your decisions, based upon real knowledge and personal assessment.

Introduction

Firelands Soccer Referee Association is committed to opposing prejudice, working diligently in support of equal opportunity and respecting and valuing an individuals, diversity, all in the context of providing excellence in refereeing soccer.

FSRA's determined to maintain a non-discriminatory environment, free of any harassment that interferes with an individual's performance on the field or in training. This handbook is to reinforce that determination, and provide you with a valuable tool for continuing to make FSRA's commitment a reality. While no document of this size could possibly cover all of the complexities involved in the issues of gender based harassment and diversity, we believe that the contents of this booklet can serve as a valuable ready reference in many important areas.

Sexual Harassment

So called sexual harassment is a form of gender based discrimination that constitutes a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (as amended). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines sexual harassment as follows;

Unwelcome, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or of creating a hostile, intimidating, or offensive working environment.

To be unlawful sexual conduct must be unwelcome. Unwelcome is measured by whether the person subjected to the conduct either solicited or incited it, the person must regard the conduct as undesirable or offensive. Just because a victim does not strongly say "NO" or "STOP" to such behavior, it does not mean that the behavior is welcome. Indeed, frequently the opposite is true.

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A “*hostile environment*” arises when a person or persons is subjected to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature intended to or which actually unreasonably interferes with an individual’s job performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment in the field or in the classroom. For example, if several people are constantly making sexually based comments or jokes within earshot of a person who finds such comments or humor as distasteful and/or uncomfortable to work around, such an environment could be deemed “hostile” and constitutes a violation of laws and regulation

SEXUALLY HARASSING

BEHAVIOR

Court decisions have identified the following as potentially sexually harassing behavior:

- Offensive or prying questions about a persons private life,
- Explicit propositions after the target has indicated a wish that they cease,
- Ridicule or insults which have a gender or sexual tone, content or overture,
- Allusions to or threat of rape, or attempted, or actual sexual assault,
- Offensive motions or gestures suggesting sexual acts, status or physical traits,
- Sexually explicit comments or obscene and/or suggestive remarks that the recipient deems objectionable or uncomfortable.
- Offers of benefits or advantages in exchange for sexual favors, or threats of reprisals for negative responses to sexual advances.
- Off color jokes typically constitute sexual harassment and are the single most common factor contributing to a hostile environment.

VERBAL SEXUAL
HARASSMENT

The use of demeaning gender-based terms like “honey”, “sexy”, “little girl”, “hunk”, “toots”, “broad”, “sweetie”, “darling”, etc. poses not only the possibility of constituting sexual harassment but can make an individual feel that they are not valued and can contribute to a hostile environment.

PHYSICAL SEXUAL
HARASSMENT

Some people will say that they are affectionate by nature and that some people respond positively to a hug or a pat. This may be true, but not all people welcome this type of behavior. But if you wouldn't hug or pat member of your own gender, don't do it for a member of the opposite gender. **Remember**, if you're not certain whether or not touching in any particular way would bother someone ... ***don't touch.***

HAZING SEXUAL
HARASSMENT

This type of harassment typically crops up when men or women enter an environment traditionally dominated by the opposite gender. Incidents of crude or inappropriate behavior initiated because of a person's gender, such as stealing the person's property, using gender based abusive and derogatory language, and in some cases, violence could constitute unlawful sexual harassment.

FINE LINE BETWEEN
ATTRACTION AND HARASSMENT

What about compliments? Compliments about work quality having no gender-bias, and criticism of work having no gender bias or retaliatory content are generally appropriate. Gender related comments about appearance are another matter. Harassment has little to do with sexual attraction. Rather, sexual

harassment is about the misuse of power or the abuse of working relationships, and is a form of discrimination and is illegal.

If someone responds to your compliment on their appearance by telling you that they have little or no interest in hearing your comments on how they look...don't! They may be sensitive about such remarks. The same applies if you ask a person for a date. If they say **no** drop the subject and don't revisit it! Repeated, unwelcome advances may constitute sexual harassment. And remember, retaliation against people who have declined your request for a date, rebuffed your compliments or filed complaints is unlawful and will not be tolerated by FSRA.

F.S.R.A.inc. POSITION ON **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

F.S.R.A. inc. has a long standing concern about fair and equal treatment of referees, coaches, players and administrators. Harassment or discrimination or retaliation against any individual in the soccer environment because of race, religion color, age, gender, national origin, or disability is considered contrary to the spirit and intent of FSRA's non-discrimination policies.

As with the other forms of harassment noted above, FSRA regards sexual harassment as serious misconduct which will not be tolerated.

Persons who believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment are encouraged to bring their concerns or complaints to the attention of the President or Vice-President of FSRA. Complaints alleging gender-based harassment will be reviewed promptly.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The best way to prevent gender-based harassment or any other harassment or discriminatory acts is simply not to engage in conduct that others may deem disrespectful.

- communicate with the opposite sex as equals, rather than as inferiors or potential sexual conquests,

- never refer to a person by sexual pet names, but by his or her given name, or match-common titles such as “center” or “assistant referee”,
- listen when a person verbally or physically objects to your comments or request for a date. If he/she says **no**, don’t continue to ask them out, or wait for them after work, etc. This type of conduct can easily constitute gender-based harassment.
- If you see harassment by another person, speak up and let him/her know that such conduct should cease.
- When it comes to sexually related conduct, always ask yourself if you would want someone close to you subjected to such behavior.
- Show respect for people and treat them as you would want your loved ones to be treated.

DIVERSITY

Some characteristics which might make you different from other people around you;

- SEXUAL PREFERENCE
- GENDER
- AGE
- RELIGION
- ETHNIC ORIGIN
- EDUCATION LEVEL
- RACE
- MARITAL STATUS
- WEIGHT
- HEIGHT
- JOB EXPERIENCE
- EYE COLOR

Diversity in the workplace extends beyond racial differences to include a variety of factors. If we all thought alike, looked alike, and had the same education and experience we might quickly become bored and uninspired.

When we acknowledge that differences do exist between us, and when we embrace the unique qualities that each of us has to offer, we build a stronger and more stable environment built upon a foundation of individual contributions. Differences that exist between one person and another should be regarded as sources of additional strengths and knowledge that help us to do a better job.

Appreciate and value differences amongst people. Those differences are, after all, what makes each of us unique.

Diversity also provides the seed for discussion, for different points of view, and for creativity, which in turn creates a stronger more competitive organization.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WHO ASSISTED ME IN THIS ENDEAVOR WHO WITHOUT THEIR HELP THIS BOOKLET WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE,

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FSRA SECRETARY (1999)

