

## **Examples of Behaviour constituting harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority**

### **Harassment**

Harassment may be verbal or non-verbal and may be physical in nature. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another person or persons or which create an intimidating, hostile and/or offensive work environment. Harassment does not have to be intentional or deliberate; rather it exists when it is perceived as offensive by a reasonable individual.

### **Examples of verbal harassment include**

- Verbal abuse, insults and name-calling;
- Using unwelcome 'pet' names, such as "honey", "doll", "babe", "princess", etc.;
- Shouting and aggressive behavior;
- Using a person as the constant or repeated target of jokes;
- Derogatory or offensive nicknames;
- Innuendo or other suggestive, offensive or derogatory comments or jokes about a person's gender identity or sexual orientation;
- Unwanted and/or demeaning comments on dress, appearance, or physical characteristics;
- Slandering or maligning another person's reputation by gossip, rumour and ridicule;
- Persistently making unwarranted critical or patronizing remarks in front of others or 'behind a person's back';
- Unwarranted, intrusive or persistent questioning about a person's ethnic or racial origin including their culture or religion;
- Repeated and unwanted notes, messages or calls;
- Notes, messages or calls that are abusive, threaten, insult, attempt to coerce, humiliate or intimidate;
- Leaving an abusive, insulting or threatening message in workspaces;
- Putting pressure on a person to participate in political or religious discussions of groups;
- Suggestive remarks about a person's clothing, body, hairstyle, appearance or any aspect of their person or personal possessions.

**Examples of non-verbal harassment include:**

- Social exclusion, isolation or non-cooperation at work;
- Hostility demonstrated through sustained unfriendly contact or exclusion;
- Repeated use of offensive gestures;
- Displays of offensive material including posters, photographs, cartoons, graffiti, objects, or messages left on notice boards, desks or common areas;
- Repeated giving of unwanted gifts or invitations;
- Repeated staring or aggressive facial expressions;
- Keeping or sending inappropriate screensavers that may cause offence to others;
- Spreading malicious rumors;
- Using e-mail, instant messaging or social media platforms to send abusive, threatening or insulting images to, or about, another employee or employees;
- Repeatedly isolating, ignoring or excluding someone.

**Examples of physical harassment include:**

- Unwanted, uninvited or inappropriate touching, patting, hugging or other physical contact (e.g. massaging a person without invitation or deliberately brushing up against them);
- Punching, hitting, pushing, slapping, kicking, or biting another person.
- Tripping another person;
- Throwing an object at another person or attacking a person with an object.

**Sexual harassment**

While sexual harassment typically involves a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Individuals regardless of gender identity can be complainants or alleged offenders.

**Examples of sexual harassment include:**

- Repeated requests or other forms of pressure for a sexual or other personal — rather than professional — relationship (e.g. repeated requests for ‘a date’);
- Unwarranted, intrusive or persistent questioning about a person's marital status or sexual interests, history or orientation;

- Obscene messages sent by text message, email, video chat, social media platform or left on an answering machine or voice mail;
- Open or implied threat that submission to sexual advances will be a condition of some form of commendation, work status or access to promotion or development opportunity or positive performance evaluation;
- Remarks speculating about a person's sexual activities or history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or history;
- Displays of material of a sexual nature (including pornography) including posters, pinups, cartoons, graffiti, objects, or messages left on notice boards, desks or common areas;
- A pattern of conduct, which can be subtle in nature, that has sexual overtones and is intended to create or has the effect of creating distress and/or humiliation in another person;
- Using unwelcome 'pet' names, such as "honey", "doll", "babe", "princess", etc.;
- Innuendo or other suggestive, offensive or derogatory comments or jokes about a person's gender identity or sexual orientation;
- Unwanted, uninvited or inappropriate touching, patting, hugging or other physical contact (e.g. massaging a person without invitation or deliberately brushing up against them).

Rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, or any sexual act committed using coercion or without consent are criminal offences and should be dealt with in line with para 38.

#### Abuse of authority

Examples of abuse of authority include:

- Unfair delegation of duties or request that an employee undertake personal services unrelated to their official duties;
- Excessive supervision and over-checking of a person's work;
- (Mis)Use of power or personal authority to force an individual not to exercise her/his right to complain, or raise concerns, about potential breaches of standards of conduct or ethical obligations;
- Regularly 'putting down' or singling out an individual and treating him/her differently, typically in a demeaning way;
- Regularly picking on an individual and/or group of people and making them the target of offensive language or gratuitous personal remarks, and/or offensive teasing;
- Regularly taunting, humiliating or embarrassing someone, or a group of people, especially in front of others;
- Forced or offensive or humiliating initiation rites or practical jokes, any or all of which may cause physical or psychological distress;
- Imposing sanctions or other forms of punishment without reasonable justification;

- Preventing an individual's progress by intentionally blocking or interfering with promotion for unjustifiable reasons;
- Reacting to a minor problem or issue with the same severity as a major one;
- Inappropriately disclosing or threatening to disclose confidential information about an individual, whether relating to personal or professional matters;
- Changing the duties or responsibilities of employees without reasonable justification;
- Over-monitoring an employee with malicious intent, such as deliberately focusing on 'tripping them up';
- Manipulating the nature of the work to undermine the person being bullied, such as by unfairly and unjustifiably overloading an employee with work, inappropriately withholding information, or repeatedly setting meaningless or trivial tasks;
- Inconsistent management style where some individuals are unfairly favoured over others;
- Persistently and inappropriately finding fault with a person's work and using this as an excuse to humiliate the person rather than trying to improve performance;
- Constantly picking on a person when things go wrong even when he/she is not solely or primarily responsible for any perceived shortfall in performance;
- Persistently making negative attacks on personal or professional performance or competence without good reason or legitimate authority;
- Persistently setting objectives with unreasonable or impossible deadlines or unachievable tasks;
- Asserting a position of intellectual superiority in an aggressive, abusive or offensive manner.

## **Discrimination**

Discrimination may be an isolated event affecting one person or a group of persons similarly situated, or may manifest itself through harassment or abuse of authority.

Any of the examples of harassment and abuse of authority above, when based on the person's race, sex, gender identity, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, age, language, social origin or other status, also constitute discrimination.

### **Examples of discrimination include:**

- Not recommending or considering an employee for promotion or other advancement, or treating someone differently for any other purpose, e.g., development opportunities, working overtime, vacation, hours of work, exclusion from meetings, etc. because of race, sex, gender identity, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, age, language, social origin or other status;

- Derogatory or offensive nicknames based on a person's race, sex, gender identity, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, age, language, social origin or other status;
- Demeaning comments about a person's language, dress, or physical characteristics. This also includes criticizing people for items worn for religious or cultural reasons;
- Denigrating specific cultural or religious festivals, or making derisory comments against an individual's beliefs;
- Social exclusion on the basis of a person's race, sex, gender identity, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, age, language, social origin or other status;
- Jokes or inappropriate comments and questioning about a person's abilities;
- Unwarranted, intrusive or persistent questioning about a person's ethnic or racial origin including their culture or religion.

***Reference: Annex 3: UNDP Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse of Authority***