

Standard Lead Harassment

The definition of sexual harassment is “behavior characterized by the making of unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks or physical advances in a workplace or other professional or social situation.” Have you ever been a victim of this type of harassment, or have you ever been the initiator in a situation like this? Nationwide, 81% of women report being harassed in some form in their lifetime. Society holds such pressures on women when it comes to beauty standards and even their placement in gender hierarchy. While thinking back on my life, and other stories I've heard, I started to wonder why women get harassed for simply being themselves, or being who society has always told them to be.

Women are taught from a young age that they must act and look a certain way to find a wealthy and handsome husband, and that the picture perfect life is the life they must achieve. Women are also viewed as the “second gender” when it comes to men, in situations where the man must be the breadwinner and the woman must stay home, take care of the kids, and hold the perfect household together. Women choose to portray their gender everyday with choices like what to wear in regard to clothes, makeup, and accessories, and how to act. Men also make choices to portray their genders everyday, so why are women being punished?

Sexual harassment or catcalling has become such a common thing for women to experience nowadays. Many of these harassments take place in public spaces, such as clubs, parties, stores, work environments, schools, and even in the middle of the street. While many workplaces and schools have policies to stop and control harassment, these policies, sadly, don't always hold up. Many workplaces and schools are required to take anti-harassment learning

are also many nonprofit organizations and telephone helplines for those in need of them.

As a woman who was raised with the beauty standards that society has taught me from a young age, I actively choose to wear makeup, wear my hair nicely, and portray myself in a feminine manner. While I don't always care about men's thoughts on my appearance, it has been drilled into my mind that their thoughts are important and matter for my overall success. Sexual harassment, in my experience, have been related to the appearance of a woman and the sexual veil that men have put on women's bodies.

Most examples of harassment, from my experience, have occurred inside my workplace, with either coworkers, management, or even customers/clients. I have experienced harassment with a member of my management team while I was working at Zaxby's back in my hometown. This manager would often make sexual comments about my body, initiate unwanted physical contact, and he would often do the same to other female employees. We all hated when he was on shift; he made everyone feel uncomfortable, but this was such a common thing for him that no action for punishment was ever forced.

Most forms of harassment I have received have all been rude sexual comments; as a waitress I've received so many nasty comments from men that, as a young adult, are very awful to hear. Just today as I was working, I had a man comment on my appearance and say that he was hoping that I was his waitress so he could look at me up close for a little longer while he was in the restaurant. I've had a man ask me what was in the back pocket of my jeans, and when I responded, "Why were you paying attention to my back pockets?" he replied, "Well you were

tables and wearing a work appropriate uniform.

Sexual harassment doesn't just come in one form, but consists of many lines that are crossed; one example of harassment can be this story I heard from a friend: She was walking down the sidewalk and a man ran up behind her and groped her breasts and crotch. Another example could be a girl hanging out with a friend who reads their situation wrong, and there is unwanted kissing or physical contact. Another story from a friend: She was twelve years old at a Dollar General, when an older man came up to her making rude sexual comments regarding her appearance, age, and innocence. My last story is that a woman was dancing in the club with her girlfriends, when a man came behind her, grabbed her by her wrist and started feeling up on her body. When this woman freed herself from this man's grasp and told him to back off, the man made comments such as, "You were ugly as fuck anyway" and "I feel sorry for any man who ends up with you."

Naomi Wolf explains the unrealistic standards that are set for women, such as how to dress, how to act, and how we are supposed to portray ourselves. Wolf describes this as the beauty myth. *The Beauty Myth* is standards that were created by men for women. In this myth, women are supposed to look like the perfect woman, and if not they have failed. Why do men get to choose how we are supposed to look and portray ourselves, then harass us for it? The beauty myth already keeps women subordinate to men, why must men keep us down by harassing us as well?

In society it is known that women are the second gender compared to men. In Simone de Beauvoir's words, woman as other, is the theory that the man is obsolete while the women's main

be in control? Why do some men feel the need to hold gender hierarchy over women's heads and harass them because they have more power or are the ones on top? Don H. Zimmerman describes doing gender as the theory that we all wake up everyday and choose to do the gender of our choosing. Girls choose to wear makeup and dress up, while guys put on their tough face and slick back their hair. In society, women make these choices everyday and sometimes get punished because they are choosing to represent the female gender.

Sociological theories like the beauty myth, woman as other, and doing gender all describe the societal standards and stresses that are placed on women. These theories outline what it is like to be a woman, compared to men. While men have the ultimate power, these unrealistic standards are holding women back. Men have always been the dominant gender and we see this in many sexual harassment's. While it is true that men also are victims of sexual harassment, it is statistically proven that harassment happens more to women. Men have created these ridiculous standards for women, and we are being punished for it. Women are harassed for their beauty, sexual appeal, and many other things. These theories outline the reasons/facts that women are the lesser gender, and I believe that is why many of us are taken advantage of. Men are the superior gender, and a terrible way that they can show this hierarchy is through sexual harassment. Men have laid the foundation for our society, and they still are controlling it.

Wolf, Naomi. *The beauty myth: How images of beauty are used against women*. London, Vintage Classic, 2015.

De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex: Woman as other*. London :Jonathan Cape, 1949.

H. Zimmerman, Don and Candance West. *Doing Gender*. California, University of California, 1987.