



Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter

It's September now! They say autumn is good for appetites, sports, arts... how are all of you spending your autumn? We are happy to present to you the third issue of the Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter.



Series

Is this harassment? (3)

Osaka University defines "harassment" in three ways. Let's examine each. In this issue, we will briefly explain "power harassment."

While academic harassment occurs in relation to research and education, power harassment typically occurs in relation to work.

Power harassment means any inappropriate and unfair comments or behavior concerning work (regardless of when or where such comments or behavior take place) by faculty or staff, unfairly taking advantage of their official position, authority, or various personal relationships with other faculty, staff, or relevant persons.

In addition to refusing supervision without reason or withholding work, this includes personally hurtful actions, intentional disregard, or contemptuous actions outside the boundaries of work instruction. For further detailed information on what other kinds of actions constitute harassment, please refer to the "Reference Materials for Academic Harassment and Power Harassment Guidelines" document which can be found on the Osaka University website.



News Workshop for Faculty/Staff counselors held

On Wednesday, June 24th, the work shop for faculty/staff counselors was held with Mr. Negishi Kazumasa of the Graduate School of Engineering Continuing Professional Development Center as the speaker. Full of helpful information for the counselors and laughter, the four-hour workshop seemed to end quickly. In this issue, we would like to include some of Mr. Negishi's responses to questions raised during the workshop.

■ What types of people become harassers?

Harassers (harassment offenders) are not aware of what they are doing. However, it is possible to raise their awareness. Try discussing the question, "If someone important to me was treated the same way, how would I feel?" in your workplace or research laboratory. For example, if your child was ignored, or scolded loudly in front of everyone, naturally you would be very angry with the person responsible. We must stop doing the same things ourselves. Through discussions and giving examples of actions against our loved ones that would make us angry, we can help harassers to become aware of their own actions.

■ Are the counselors known by everyone?

At Osaka University, in addition to counselors, there are also faculty/staff counselors, and departmental faculty/staff counselors. Counselors and faculty/staff counselors are listed publicly on the Osaka University home page, so if you would like to talk to a counselor please feel free to contact them directly. Departmental faculty/staff counselors are selected and work based on each department's rules (some departments do not nominate a departmental faculty/staff counselor). Departmental faculty/staff counselors for some departments are made public, while others may remain confidential. Accordingly, if you want to consult with a departmental faculty/staff counselor in your particular department, you may need to first contact your departmental office for specific information. If you have a problem, you are free to consult any of these three types of counselors.

Osaka University Harassment Counseling Office
Toyonaka campus 06-6850-5029 (sexual harassment)
06-6850-6006 (academic and power harassment)
Suita campus 06-6879-7169 (sexual, academic and power harassment)
Minoh campus 072-730-5112 (sexual, academic and power harassment)
http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/ja/guide/student/prevention_sh/



Column

Message from a counselor



A young woman working part-time at the restaurant chain committed suicide after being sexually harassed by her supervisor, and her family subsequently sued the supervisor and the company. This news has been widely covered, so many of you may already be familiar with it.

Reportedly, the married assistant manager repeatedly touched the woman at work, went to her house, and wrote, "I like you" on her pay slips. She was subject to power harassment, being ignored at times, or being told to die. Over a period of four months of being demanded sex, with the assistant manager suggesting a double suicide saying, "Let's die together," the woman committed suicide.

Unfortunately, I believe that this type of harassment is on the rise. Many of the offenders in this type of harassment actually believe themselves that they are in a romantic relationship with the victim. While the victims hesitate due to the friendliness and goodwill of the offender, they are caught up in the offender's wrong impression of a romantic relationship. Even if they said "no," the offender would not take them seriously. Unable to communicate, act, or even run away, the victims are in a position of incredible fear.

On the other hand, this fear may not be obvious from the outside. In many cases, it goes unnoticed by others, and even when it is noticed it may be misunderstood as love troubles. With no one who understands them, the victims may feel completely isolated and without escape. In this particular case, although the manager knew about the situation, the company did nothing to interfere.

I was extremely shocked to see the response on the Internet, with many people saying "She should have just rejected him," or "She should have just quit." If she had been able to reject him, or quit, surely she would have. When the victim does something that makes you think "huh?" think to yourself why, what kind of circumstances there may be? This simple action may help resolve the isolation of the victim. This allows the victim encouragement to find a way out. Lastly, I believe that places that do not let victims feel isolated are surely places where harassment does not occur.

Feature

Sexual Harassment : Out? Safe?

In comparison to other forms of harassment, sexual harassment is relatively well known in society, and most people are aware and careful with their words and actions. However, there are still many consultations concerning sexual harassment.

Here, we would like to reexamine our daily actions and words, and consider whether or not they are considered sexual harassment.

1. "Are you married?" "You don't have children yet?" Are these questions okay?

When asking someone a personal question, you must always consider what kind of relationship you have with the other person. Remember, however, that even if you think you are close, the other person may not feel the same way. If the other person feels uncomfortable, then it is sexual harassment. Keep in mind that each person may have his/her unique circumstances, so always be considerate when communicating.

2. The academic staff touches the student's body. Is this okay?

Even if the academic staff touches a student thoughtlessly, if the student feels uncomfortable, they may be unable to express their discomfort due to the teacher's position of authority. Let us act accordingly. As a general rule, avoid any kind of physical touch, and use other forms of communication.

3. Private research advisement in a closed room with a student of the opposite sex. Is this okay?

For work or research, sometimes it is unavoidable to meet alone with the opposite sex, but in those cases it is necessary to leave the exit door open. Furthermore, study or work-related trips alone with the opposite sex should be avoided. When it is unavoidable, always stay in separate rooms, and try not to do anything that may cause a misunderstanding.

4. Do I still need to worry about sexual harassment if we are both the same sex?

Although there are different kinds of sexual orientation, many people choose to keep it private. Remember that another person may not have the same sexual orientation as you, so be considerate with your actions and words. Forcibly asking about one's past sexual experiences is also sexual harassment, so be aware that sexual harassment between people of the same sex is also common.

"I feel uncomfortable..." or "What should I do?" If you feel this way, please come and talk to us at the Harassment Counseling Office.

