



Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter

At the end of the first three months of the new academic year we hope that all newcomers to the university are settling in comfortably. The Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter has some articles for you this time.

Feature article



Harassment and Social Networking Sites (SNS)

The first few months of the new academic year are behind us. Some of you are sure many people are feeling a bit tired after beginning a new life in a new environment, meeting new friends and colleagues, and being involved in new projects. In particular, it can be difficult to express your opinions to seniors, teachers, and supervisors.

You may consider it easier to use email or messaging rather than speaking directly to the other person. In recent years, SNS has become a common tool amongst people to express opinions and feelings. Also, being connected on SNS is becoming a way to explain a relationship you have with a person. Exchanging SNS IDs is becoming more popular not only amongst friends but also in laboratories and between colleagues.

However, despite, or even perhaps because of, the convenience of SNS, just one small misstep can become a major issue. Have you ever heard the expression Social Harassment? This term refers to the harassment conducted on the internet and SNS sites that is connected to the hierarchy of the workplace. For example, requiring someone to respond to a friend request from a supervisor, to like a comment, or to share a tweet. It may involve demanding an immediate response to a message once the message read function shows that the message has been read by the recipient. In this way, interaction on SNS may misuse real life relationships or affect those relationships.

In other cases, private or sexual issues may be referred to on an online workplace or laboratory group discussion, or pictures may even be posted without permission. SNS can be good for relationships, however, there is always the chance that a careless comment may hurt or upset someone else.

Before sending a message, or posting a comment or photograph, take a moment to check what you are going to say or do. We hope that SNS is always a safe environment for you.

Column Message from a counselor



Recently in the news there has been a lot of talk about the sexual harassment of a female reporter. The majority of the responses have been horror and that sexual harassment is unacceptable; for previous victims it has been a reaction of relief that finally people are beginning to think this way. However, on the other hand, there have also been responses along the lines of “this is why we can’t hire females if they can’t handle something like that” or the perpetrator was trapped (there was no sexual harassment) and that recording without permission is also a crime; blaming the victim as well as ridiculing people who showed support for the victim. These sorts of comments may force victims who would have come forward to instead keep their silence. Those people who have been victims of sexual harassment and who have had a horrific and terrifying experience are further hurt by such comments.

In this article I would like to discuss the secondary damage inflicted on victims by these critical comments.

“Something like that” anyone who can say this clearly has no understanding of the seriousness of damage caused by sexual harassment. In a power relationship, the fear of sexual aggression and the humiliation of being reduced to a sexual object can leave serious scars on the victim that last well into the future. Having the courage to speak up instead of staying quiet should be admired. Also, expressing doubt that anything really happened leaves the victim who is desperately telling their story with the impression that no one believes them and increases feelings of isolation. Criticizing behavior that was taken for protection merely forces the victims into silence. Or, forces the victim to appease the perpetrator in the attempt to avoid further violence, which was not the case this time. These actions of the victim are simply desperate self-preservation.

If someone speaks to you about sexual harassment, or you become a witness to it, I do hope you will put yourself in the victims’ shoes. Contact the counseling office if you are unsure of what to do.

Osaka University Harassment Counseling Office

Toyonaka campus 06-6850-5029 (sexual, academic and power 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)

Website http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/ja/guide/student/prevention_sh



Edited and published by the Administrative Office for Harassment Countermeasures,
Department of General Affairs, Osaka University
1-1 Yamadaoka, Suita, Osaka 565-0871
Email: soumu-harassment@office.osaka-u.ac.jp

