

Sexualized Work Environment

Conduct a large group discussion to formulate a definition of a sexualized work environment. After a workable definition is decided upon, use the following questions to generate a large group discussion.

Answers:

1. A sexualized work environment is one where nothing is sacred. Boundaries are at best blurred and possibly nonexistent. It can begin with inappropriate and unprofessional staff to staff teasing or joking; and then, extends to staff to offender teasing and/or joking. A sexualized work environment can expand out of the office to anywhere the officer sees the offender in the offenders home, workplace, treatment facility, grocery store, or gas station.
2. Foul language, sexual innuendos, etc.
3. Sexually explicit behavior, love making
4. "Dirty jokes," jokes about male/female interaction
5. Just because there is a dress code does not mean it is enforced. If it is not enforced, do officers have an opportunity to dress in sexually suggestive ways?
6. If there are numerous complaints of harassment, could you have a sexualized work environment?
7. Possible Answers Could Include:
 - Open discussion, within hearing range of offenders, about an employee's off-duty activities;
 - A tolerance for use of unprofessional nicknames or name-calling;
 - Sexual innuendo in verbal and non-verbal communications;
 - Inappropriate demeanor among employees, and between employees and offenders;

- Inappropriate dress of both employees and offenders;
 - Disrespect among employees;
 - Gossip and rumors;
 - Inappropriate jokes or pranks, especially those with sexual innuendos.
8. Each officer needs to self monitor and have a clear understanding of personal ethics, as well as the agency ethics. Supervisors and administrators must set standards and be held to them.

Read the news clipping out loud to the class and conduct a large group discussion about the incident. While the article is not about sexual misconduct, it does illustrate how gossip and rumors can create problems for the individuals engaged in the discussion of gossip, as well as, those individuals the rumors are about.

Four Women Fired for Gossiping Idle Chatter Cost Four Seasoned Employees Their Jobs

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May 22, 2007 – What happened in the town of Hooksett, N.H., is no rumor.

Four town employees with 46 years of service between them were fired, in part for gossiping and discussing rumors of an improper relationship between the town administrator and another employee that Hooksett residents now agree were not true.

The administrator complained, and after an investigation the town council fired the women, finding, "Gossip, whispering, and an unfriendly environment are causing poor morale and interfering with the efficient performance of town business."

Sexualized Work Environment



1. What is a sexualized work environment? _____

2. What kind of language is acceptable in this environment? _____

3. What topics are openly discussed? _____

4. What kinds of jokes are told? _____

5. Is there an agency dress code? Is it enforced? _____

6. Are there numerous complaints of harassment? _____

7. What are some examples of sexualized work environments? _____

8. How do you change this type of environment? _____
