

PAHO Policy
on the Prevention
and Resolution of
Harassment
in the Workplace

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**Pan American
Health
Organization**



Regional Office of the
World Health Organization

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I. Policy Statement

As an international public health agency dedicated to improving the health and living standards of the people of the Americas, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is committed to providing a workplace where all persons working for the Organization are treated with dignity and respect and are able to perform their duties in an environment that is free from all forms of harassment.

Harassment affects workplace and individual well-being and performance, and will not be tolerated in PAHO. All persons working for PAHO shall be allowed to perform their duties in an environment that is characterized by collegial working relationships, mutual respect, and trust.

II. Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to foster a respectful workplace through the prevention and prompt resolution of harassment. This policy aims to prevent harassment by promoting increased awareness, early problem resolution, and the use of informal and formal complaint processes. The application of this policy will help create and maintain a positive and productive work environment in which individuals are treated with dignity and respect. It will not only promote the well-being of all people in the workplace, but will reinforce the values of integrity and trust that are the foundation of a sound organization.

This policy is intended to promote:

- A harassment-free work environment in which staff at all levels avoid behavior that may create an atmosphere of hostility or intimidation;
- Support for persons subject to harassment; and
- Due process for all concerned.

Dealing with harassment can be a difficult and complex matter. What one person considers acceptable behavior may be considered harassment by another, particularly in a multicultural environment. A complaint of harassment is serious and will be treated as such. Harassment needs to be addressed with sensitivity, promptness, and discretion. Open commu-

nication and early intervention are essential in preventing and resolving harassment.

III. Applicability

This policy applies to any person who works for PAHO, regardless of the type or duration of appointment, as well as to former staff or employees who allege that their separation was due to harassment, provided established procedural time limits under Staff Rule 1230.7 are respected. It shall not apply to any individual who is engaged to provide a specific product or service or in cases where no employer–employee relationship has been established.

The policy does not apply to complaints from the public. The responsibility for follow-up of such complaints lies with the concerned staff in Headquarters or the Country Offices.

IV. Effective date

The effective date of this policy is 1 May 2004.

V. Definitions

The following terms are used in this policy and are defined as follows:

Complainant– a person who submits a formal complaint to the Chairperson of the Grievance Panel.

Director– the Director of the Pan American Health Organization.

Examining Grievance Panel– a group of Grievance Panel members – composed of a chairperson, two members appointed by the Director and two members nominated by the staff – who are convened to hear a complaint of harassment.

Formal Complaint– a formal allegation of harassment that is submitted in writing to the Chairperson of the Grievance Panel.

Grievance Panel– an advisory body established to review formal harassment complaints and consisting of a chairperson and three alternate chairpersons; 12 members appointed by the Director; and 12 members nominated by the staff.

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Harassment– any improper conduct by an individual or group of individuals in the workplace that is directed at and offensive to another person or persons in the workplace, and that the individual or group knew, or ought to reasonably have known, would cause offense or harm. This conduct may take many different forms, including sexual harassment, and is often prolonged and malicious. Harassment comprises any serious or repeated objectionable act, comment or display that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat. Harassment may include conduct, comment or display related to race, religion, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical attributes, age, gender, or sexual orientation. It may occur among and between all levels of persons.

The definition of harassment encompasses not only intent but effect. Therefore, if a specific action by a person or group is reasonably perceived as offensive by another person, that action might constitute harassment, whether intended or not.

Reasonable actions by a supervisor intended to encourage satisfactory levels of performance are not harassment. Actions are considered reasonable if in accordance with the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service, the Staff Regulations and Rules of PAHO and generally accepted norms of conduct or behavior.

In addition, the legitimate and appropriate exercise of supervisory authority or responsibility does not generally constitute harassment. Supervisors periodically have to make operational decisions, e.g., staff reassignments and work allocation. Clearly, these decisions do not, in themselves, constitute harassment. However, when, for example, the duties assigned are patently and deliberately unrealistic or inappropriate, with the aim of undermining self-esteem and confidence, such actions may constitute harassment.

While not exhaustive, the Appendix to this policy provides some examples of what may or may not constitute harassment.

Informal Complaint– An oral or written communication by an offended person to an offending person that is intended to identify and address the offensive behavior. The offended person may give notice directly to the offending person or may give such notice through a supervisor, the Ombudsperson, the Human Resources Management Area, or the Staff Association.

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Mediation– a voluntary process used to resolve conflict in which a neutral person helps the disputing parties arrive at a mutually acceptable solution.

Ombudsperson– a neutral person selected by the Organization who helps conflicting parties arrive at a mutually acceptable solution under the informal complaint process.

Organization– the Pan American Health Organization.

Person– an individual who works for PAHO at a PAHO workplace, regardless of the type or duration of appointment.

Respondent– someone alleged to have engaged in harassment.

Sexual Harassment– a form of harassment which includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and which interferes with work, is made a condition of employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. When the harassment is committed by a person who is in a position to influence the career or employment conditions of the victim, sexual harassment is more offensive. In this situation the sexual harassment also constitutes an abuse of power.

Most cases of sexual harassment fall into one of two categories:

- **Hostile Work Environment:** A hostile work environment is created by verbal or other conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with work, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- **Quid Pro Quo:** This type of harassment occurs when (a) a person accepts or rejects sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and (b) another person uses that acceptance or rejection as a basis for an employment decision, or as a condition of continued employment.

Staff Member– a person who has been appointed to a post or position in PAHO pursuant to Staff Rule 420.

Workplace– means any place where persons subject to this policy (a) carry out the work of the Organization, or (b) meet at the direction or invitation of the Organization.

VI. Rights, Responsibilities, and Obligations

The following are the general rights, responsibilities, and obligations of all staff members and persons employed in PAHO, of all managers and supervisors, and of the Organization itself:

A. Staff Members and Persons Employed in PAHO

1. Each person, irrespective of grade or status, must act towards others in a courteous and respectful manner.
2. Each person must promote a harmonious and collegial work environment and must refrain from any action or conduct that may be construed as harassment.
3. Each person is encouraged to prevent and resolve workplace conflicts at the outset through dialogue and open communication.
4. Any person who believes that he or she has been treated in an improper and offensive manner is encouraged to communicate to the offending party, as soon as possible, directly or indirectly through a supervisor or manager, their disapproval or unease.
5. All persons can expect to receive immediate action if they report an incident of harassment to their supervisor or manager or, if necessary, to another appropriate supervisor or manager, the Human Resources Management Area, the Ombudsperson or Staff Association.
6. Any person can, in good faith, file a complaint of harassment without fear of embarrassment or reprisal.
7. All persons will be encouraged to initiate the informal complaint process before proceeding with the formal complaint process.
8. All persons involved in either the informal or formal complaint process must limit the discussion and the dissemination of verbal and written information regarding the complaint only to those with a legitimate need to know.

B. Managers and Supervisors

1. Persons with managerial or supervisory responsibilities (“Supervisors”) have a special responsibility to uphold this policy, and must make every effort to prevent and stop harassment while maintaining objectivity and neutrality.
2. Supervisors are expected to lead by example and to act respectfully in dealings with their staff and other persons working for the Organization.
3. Supervisors are expected to be familiar with this policy and to explain to their staff, as required, the measures and procedures for dealing with a reported complaint of harassment.
4. Supervisors are expected to intervene immediately when informed of improper or offensive conduct and to involve the parties in resolving the problem.
5. Supervisors are expected to use the annual appraisal process, as needed, to record behavior that may create an atmosphere of hostility or intimidation and to recommend training or other means of resolving such behavior.
6. Following receipt of a complaint, Supervisors are expected to address the needs of the parties and of the working unit, and to take the necessary steps to establish or re-establish harmonious working relationships.
7. Supervisors are required to handle confidentially all harassment complaints and to ensure that others act accordingly.
8. By virtue of their positions, Supervisors are required to participate in the training activities sponsored by PAHO on the prevention and resolution of harassment and on conflict resolution.
9. Supervisors should also ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that their staff have access to learning opportunities on the prevention and resolution of harassment in the workplace and on conflict resolution.

C. The Organization

For its part, the Organization will:

1. Inform all persons of this policy as soon as they have been given an employment contract in PAHO and provide them with a copy.
2. Brief new staff on this policy during orientation sessions and provide ongoing training opportunities for all persons regarding the prevention and resolution of harassment in the workplace.
3. Handle confidentially all allegations of harassment.
4. Take timely action to investigate and resolve incidents of harassment in the workplace.
5. Take steps during the complaint process, when necessary, to ensure the physical safety of the Complainant and the Respondent while in the workplace.
6. Take administrative or disciplinary measures – ranging from an oral reprimand to dismissal for misconduct – against:
 - (a) a Respondent in cases where a complaint of harassment has been substantiated by the Grievance Panel;
 - (b) any person determined by the Grievance Panel to have interfered with the resolution of a complaint;
 - (c) any person who files a complaint that the Grievance Panel determines was frivolous or in bad faith; and
 - (d) a Supervisor who is informed of a case of harassment but who fails to take proper action to deal with it.

VII. Complaint Process

Any person who feels that he or she has been subjected to harassment may use the informal or formal complaint processes discussed in this section.

A. Informal Complaint Process:

1. General:

- (a) The objective of the informal complaint process is to resolve a conflict in a timely, fair, and respectful manner without having

to resort to the formal complaint process. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem as early as possible with open communication and in a cooperative manner.

- (b) The use of conflict resolution mechanisms such as coaching, counseling, and facilitation can, in many instances, resolve the issue and prevent the situation from escalating to the point where filing a formal complaint becomes necessary.
- (c) While this policy encourages early resolution of workplace conflict using the informal complaint process, a person need not use the informal complaint process before electing to use the formal complaint process.

2. Informal Complaint:

If a person believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment, the following steps should be taken as part of the informal complaint process:

- (a) A person who feels offended or uncomfortable by the actions of another person is encouraged to make it known to that person, as soon as possible, in an attempt to prevent the situation from possibly worsening and, hopefully, to resolve the problem.
- (b) If the problem is not resolved or if the offended person does not want to speak directly with the other person, the offended person should meet with his or her supervisor, or with another manager, or seek advice from the Ombudsperson, the Human Resources Management Area or the Staff Association in an attempt to find a timely, just and equitable solution to the problem.
- (c) The Ombudsperson and the Organization will provide assistance to resolve the issue between the parties as quickly as possible, if necessary with the assistance of the Human Resources Management Area, the Staff Association or the Employee Assistance Program.
- (d) The Ombudsperson and the Organization, where appropriate, will encourage the parties to participate in a problem resolution process before the offended person proceeds with a formal complaint.

3. Duties and Responsibilities of the Ombudsperson

- (a) The Ombudsperson must be impartial in any complaint process and must recuse himself/herself in case of conflict of interest.
- (b) The Ombudsperson should participate in training opportunities in order to enhance his/her conflict resolution skills.
- (c) The Ombudsperson must maintain the confidentiality of complaints.
- (d) The Ombudsperson should ensure that parties involved in the informal complaint process have access to an appropriate level of support and advice.
- (e) If deemed necessary, the Ombudsperson may make a recommendation to the Human Resources Manager to separate the parties hierarchically, physically, or both, for the duration of the informal complaint process.

B. Formal Complaint Process

1. General:

- (a) Even though use of the informal complaint process is encouraged, a person may decide to file a formal complaint without initiating any of the informal methods of conflict resolution described above.
- (b) The formal complaint process, including an investigation, if necessary, will be completed without undue delay, normally within six months or less.

2. Formal Complaint Procedures

The formal complaint process contains seven steps:

Step 1 – Prepare and Submit a Complaint

The first step in the formal process is for the Complainant to submit a complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Grievance Panel within 90 calendar days from the date of the alleged harassment. The information provided should be as accurate and concise as possible. The complaint must include:

- (a) the name of the Complainant;

- (b) the name of the Respondent;
- (c) the nature of the allegations;
- (d) the relationship of the Respondent to the Complainant (e.g., supervisor, colleague);
- (e) the date(s) and a description of the specific act(s) or conduct that are the subject of the harassment allegation; and
- (f) if applicable, the names of any witnesses to the act(s) or conduct.

Step 2 – Screening and Acknowledgement of Complaint

- (a) If the Complainant has satisfied the time limit and filing criteria described in step 1, above, the Chairperson will acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint and provide a copy of the complaint to the Respondent within 10 working days from the date the complaint was filed with the Grievance Panel.
- (b) Upon receipt of a complaint, the Respondent has 60 calendar days to respond in writing. The Respondent must file his or her response with the Grievance Panel within the specified time limit unless the Chairperson has granted an extension of the filing deadline based on a compelling justification presented by the Respondent in writing to the Grievance Panel.
- (c) If the complaint does not meet the filing criteria specified in step 1, above, the Chairperson informs the Complainant in writing that the complaint cannot be accepted. If the defects in the complaint cannot be rectified, the Chairperson may suggest other means of resolving the issue that was brought to the Grievance Panel’s attention.

Step 3 – Review of the Complaint

- (a) Upon receipt of a Respondent’s written response to a complaint, the Chairperson will convene an Examining Grievance Panel to review the complaint and the response. If the Examining Grievance Panel is satisfied, based on the available evidence, that it has all the necessary facts and that the Complainant and Respondent

have been given a reasonable opportunity to be heard, it may decide not to undertake an investigation but rather to proceed directly to its recommendation, as outlined in step 6.

- (b) If the Examining Grievance Panel decides that an investigation is warranted in order to obtain additional information or clarification, the Examining Grievance Panel will notify all involved parties that an investigation will be initiated.
- (c) Prior to the conduct of an investigation, an Examining Grievance Panel must offer the Complainant and the Respondent an opportunity to resolve the conflict by using mediation. If either the Complainant or Respondent does not agree to mediation, the Examining Grievance Panel can request an investigation pursuant to step 5 below.

Step 4 – Mediation

If the Complainant and the Respondent agree to mediation, the Examining Grievance Panel:

- (a) may obtain professional mediation services from outside of the Organization or from any individual that is acceptable to both parties. In the case of outside mediation, the parties do not need to provide their agreement to the selected mediator.
- (b) may not initiate an investigation until the mediator has advised the Examining Grievance Panel that the mediation has been unsuccessful.

Step 5 – Investigation

- (a) An Examining Grievance Panel shall refer all investigations it deems necessary pursuant to Step 3(c) above, to the Ethics Office.
- (b) Investigations shall be conducted in accordance with the [Protocol for Conducting Workplace Investigations in PAHO](#).
- (c) The Ethics Office shall provide a written report containing its findings and conclusions to the Examining Grievance Panel upon completing the investigation.

Step 6 – Recommendation

The Examining Grievance Panel will review all the facts and evidence surrounding the complaint of harassment and the report of the investigator, if any, and will submit its own final written report containing its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Human Resources Manager or, in the event of a conflict of interest, the Director of Administration, as follows:

- (a) If the facts and evidence do not support the claim of harassment the final report should contain a determination that the complaint is unfounded and a recommendation that the case be closed. In addition, the Examining Grievance Panel may re-direct the Complainant to the appropriate avenue or recourse or suggest other means of resolving the conflict between the Complainant and the Respondent.
- (b) If the facts and evidence indicate that harassment has occurred, the final report should contain a determination that the complaint has merit and appropriate recommendations with respect to both the Complainant and the Respondent, taking into consideration the circumstances and severity of the case. If, for example, the evidence clearly indicates that the harassment has been serious and that the seriousness of the misconduct warrants separation from service, this recommendation should be included in the report.
- (c) If the Examining Grievance Panel cannot reach a unanimous decision on whether the facts and evidence indicate that harassment has occurred, the final report should contain both the majority and minority points of view. If any member of an Examining Grievance Panel so requests, an annex stating his or her views and his or her reasons for dissenting from the majority decision will be appended to the report.
- (d) If the facts and evidence demonstrate that the Complainant has intentionally made false statements in his or her formal complaint, the final report should contain a recommendation that appropriate disciplinary action be taken against the Complainant. Such disciplinary action should only be recommended in cases where there is cogent evidence to indicate that the Complainant did not believe that harassment

actually occurred or where the claim was initiated for frivolous or ulterior purposes.

Step 7 – Decision

- (a) Upon receipt of the Examining Grievance Panel’s final report, the Human Resources Manager or, in the event of a conflict of interest, the Director of Administration, will review the Panel’s findings and recommendations and take a decision regarding the administrative or disciplinary action that should be taken, if any.
- (b) The Complainant and the Respondent will be informed, in writing, of the decision within 60 calendar days of receipt of the report from the Examining Grievance Panel. Along with the decision, both the Complainant and Respondent shall be provided with a copy of the Examining Grievance Panel’s final report.
- (c) In cases where the Complainant or the Respondent is a staff member, the concerned party may appeal the decision to the PAHO Board of Appeal, in accordance with Section 12 (Appeals) of the Staff Rules.

C. Duties and Responsibilities of Complainants, Respondents, and Witnesses

- 1. Complainants, Respondents, and witnesses must:
 - (a) provide information and documentation upon the request of the Grievance Panel or appointed investigator;
 - (b) cooperate in the formal complaint process if and when called upon to do so; and
 - (c) limit the discussion of the complaint only to those with a legitimate need to know.
- 2. Complainants, Respondents, and witnesses will be given the opportunity to review their own statements as recorded by the Grievance Panel or by the investigator, if one is appointed, in order to confirm the accuracy of those statements prior to the Grievance Panel’s preparation of its final report.

3. Complainants and Respondents may have with them, during meetings and interviews related to the resolution of the formal complaint, a person of their choice who has agreed to accompany them and who is not a party to the process.
4. In the case of complaints that are determined to be unfounded, but made in good faith, the persons involved in the formal complaint process must ensure that the reputations of the Complainant, Respondent, and witnesses are safeguarded.

D. Relationship Between the Grievance Panel and the PAHO Board of Appeal

1. To avoid a duplication of action, a staff member who wishes to file an appeal against an administrative action or decision affecting his or her appointment status and which appeal includes an allegation of harassment, shall file his or her appeal with the PAHO Board of Appeal (BOA), in accordance with staff rule 1230.1. The Grievance Panel will not accept a formal complaint of harassment directly from a staff member when such complaint is one of the grounds of appeal against an administrative action or decision.
2. Any appeal filed with the BOA that contains an allegation(s) of harassment will be referred to the Grievance Panel for resolution of the harassment claim(s) only. The BOA will stay its consideration of the appeal pending receipt of a report from the Grievance Panel regarding the harassment claim. The Grievance Panel's report will be taken into account by the BOA in making its final recommendations to the Director.

VIII. Grievance Panel

A. Establishment and Composition:

1. A Grievance Panel will be established at PAHO Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to examine and make recommendations on formal complaints of harassment. The Grievance Panel shall consist of the following members, each having an equal vote:
 - (a) A chairperson and three alternate chairpersons appointed by the Director after consultation with the Staff Association;

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- (b) 12 members appointed by the Director; and
 - (c) 12 members nominated by the Staff Association.
2. The Director will appoint a nonvoting secretary and an alternate secretary to the Grievance Panel.
 3. The members of the Grievance Panel will be appointed for two-year terms. Initially, however, half of the members from each group listed in (A) (1), above, will be appointed for three-year terms in order to ensure continuity in the functioning of the Grievance Panel. Upon expiration of the terms of office of members appointed for three years, their successors will be appointed for two-year terms. Chairpersons and members may be reappointed for additional terms.
 4. Upon receipt of a formal complaint of harassment, the Chairperson convenes a five-member Examining Grievance Panel – consisting of the Chairperson or alternate, two members from group appointed by the Director and two members from the group nominated by the staff – to examine the complaint. The work of each Examining Grievance Panel is overseen and coordinated by a chairperson, with the assistance of the secretary.
 5. The Chairperson shall excuse any panel member from considering a specific complaint in the event of an actual or perceived conflict of interest or at the member's own request. In this situation, another Grievance Panel member from the same group shall be selected by the Chairperson to replace the excused member.

B. Duties and Responsibilities of Grievance Panel Members:

1. Members of the Grievance Panel must be impartial in any complaint process in which they are involved and must recuse themselves if they have a conflict of interest.
2. Members of the Grievance Panel are encouraged to participate in training opportunities in order to enhance their conflict resolution skills.
3. Members of the Grievance Panel are expected to comply with the established steps in the formal complaint process. The Grievance Panel may establish rules of procedure, if necessary, to assist them in carrying out those steps.

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4. Members of the Grievance Panel must maintain the confidentiality of complaints.
5. The Grievance Panel is expected to ensure that both Complainants and Respondents have access to an appropriate level of support and advice during the formal complaint process.
6. If deemed necessary, the Grievance Panel may make a recommendation to the Human Resources Manager to separate the Complainant and Respondent, hierarchically, physically, or both, for the duration of the formal complaint process.
7. The Chairperson shall report annually to the Director regarding:
 - (a) The number of formal harassment cases filed with the Grievance Panel;
 - (b) The amount of time taken between the filing of complaints and issuance of reports;
 - (c) A general summary of Grievance Panel findings;
 - (d) Overall recommendations; and
 - (e) Any trends noted by the Panel.

IX. Policy Announcement and Training

- A. The Area of Human Resources Management will provide copies of the *PAHO Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace* to each person subject to the policy. The policy will also be available on the PAHO Intranet.
- B. The Area of Human Resources Management will provide ongoing training opportunities to all persons subject to this policy regarding the prevention and resolution of harassment in the workplace.
- C. The Human Resources Management Area and the Staff Association will ensure that the names of the Ombudsperson and members of

the Grievance Panel, and their contact information, are available on the PAHO Intranet.

X. Monitoring and Amendment to Policy

- A. The Human Resources Manager, Staff Association, Joint Advisory Committee, Employee Assistance Program and the Chairperson of the Grievance Panel will work together to monitor the success in achieving the goals and objectives of this policy.
- B. Any proposed substantive amendment to this policy shall be discussed with the Staff Association and submitted to the Joint Advisory Committee for consideration. The final approval for any material change in the policy or in any of the procedures described therein shall be taken by the Director.

XI. References

- Standards of Conduct of the International Civil Service
- Ombudsperson Terms of Reference
- PAHO Staff Regulations and Rules

XII. Inquiries

Inquiries relating to this policy should be referred to the Human Resources Manager.

Appendix

Guide for Determining what Constitutes Harassment

The following questions may help you determine whether conduct (e.g., an act, comment, or display) constitutes harassment:

- Is the conduct unwelcome or offensive?
- Would a reasonable person view the conduct as unwelcome or offensive?
- Did it demean, belittle, or cause personal humiliation or embarrassment?
- Is it a series of incidents over a period of time?

If you answered “yes” to one or more of the above questions, it is also important that you consider the severity and impropriety of the conduct and the circumstances and context surrounding it before you conclude that the conduct at issue constitutes harassment.

The following contains a series of situations and examples that further clarify what is generally meant by "harassment."

Conduct that generally constitutes harassment	Conduct that may constitute harassment	Conduct that generally does not constitute harassment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Making serious or repeated rude, degrading, insulting, or offensive remarks, about a person's physical characteristics, medical condition, or appearance. ▼ Displaying sexist, racist or other offensive pictures or posters; sending offensive e-mails related to race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or disability. ▼ Repeatedly singling out a person for meaningless or unpleasant jobs that are not part of their normal duties. ▼ Threatening, intimidating (e.g., yelling, screaming, pounding furniture, slamming doors, throwing objects) or retaliating against a person, including one who has expressed concerns about perceived unethical or illegal workplace behaviors or actions. ▼ Extending unwelcome social invitations, with sexual overtones or flirting. ▼ Making unwelcome sexual advances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Publicly criticizing a person. ▼ Excluding a person from group activities or assignments. ▼ Withholding work assignments. ▼ Making statements that are damaging to a person's professional or personal reputation. ▼ Making sexually suggestive remarks. ▼ Touching a person or making other physical contact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Assigning work. ▼ Ensuring that Organization policies regarding work absences are followed. ▼ Requiring a person to perform his or her job. ▼ Taking disciplinary measures. ▼ Engaging in a single or isolated act, such as making an inappropriate remark or being abrupt. ▼ Not considering a person for a particular job because he or she does not meet the specific occupational requirements necessary to perform that job. ▼ Taking measures against a person who is careless in his or her work, such as in the handling of confidential documents. ▼ Engaging in a social relationship welcomed by those involved. ▼ Making a friendly gesture, such as a pat on the back, towards a co-worker.