

Sexual harassment

Discussion

Discuss these questions in pairs or small groups:

1. Do you think work is a good place to find a partner? Why / why not?
2. In a work setting, what body parts of a colleague would it be OK to touch in your country?

Tick all the OK parts:

hand	...	arm	...
face	...	shoulder	...
back	...	hair	...
stomach	...	bottom	...

3. What would happen if you did touch the parts of the body that you did not tick?

Reading

Make sure you know what these words and expressions mean before you read the article:

flirt
sue

suggestive photos
dressed seductively

sexy calendars
chat up

FRENCH FLIRT AT WORK

The engineering workshops at a well-known engine-maker based in Paris seem as clean and innocent as a church these days. The nude photographs and sexy calendars that used to be on some of the walls have been taken down or thrown away.

For that, the men in the department mostly have one of their female colleagues to thank. Brigitte Janin, an aerodynamics engineer, said she started arguing against the suggestive photographs from the

moment she joined the company 13 years ago. "It was being done just to provoke women," said Janin, 37. "When I said we didn't like it, they laughed at me." The company finally changed their policy when they agreed that the pictures could be a form of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment at work is a relatively new issue in France.

French law now allows women to sue for sexual harassment, but it is limited to harassment by a superior of a subordinate. Typically, many cases do not make it to court.

"It usually goes this way: the

woman complains about her boss, and then she's fired," said one lawyer specialising in workplace harassment. Then she sues, and money, if awarded, is usually little or sometimes nothing at all. "Judges will say it's because the woman is dressed too seductively," he added.

"Here we don't care about sexual harassment," declared another lawyer who, despite his bravado, asked that his name not be published. "Being macho is seen as a good thing in the office. Chatting up beautiful women is natural."

Read the text again and correct the statements below:

1. Sexual harassment only applies in cases of advances from a subordinate to a superior.
2. Usually a woman is fired after she goes to court.
3. Many judges blame a woman's behaviour.

Discussion

How far do you agree with Brigitte Janin about the photos? Why?

Do you think that a woman who dresses seductively should be prepared for unwanted sexual advances? Give an example of 'seductive dress'.

Can men be sexually harassed by women?

Have you ever been in a difficult situation of this kind at work or college?