

# Harassing Behavior?

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## Overview

In 1964, the United States Congress passed Title VII of the [Civil Rights Act](#), prohibiting discrimination at work on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin and sex. This later became the legal basis for early harassment law. The practice of developing workplace guidelines prohibiting harassment was pioneered in 1969, when the U.S. Department of Defense drafted a Human Goals Charter, establishing a policy of equal respect for both sexes.

Harassment in the workplace can take many forms. Sometimes intentional but very frequently the "offending" activity is totally unintentional. This game presents a variety of scenarios for the players to safely experience and learn from without the risks of actually experiencing them for real.

## Instructional Objective

The objective of this game is to allow workers/employees to understand the various types of harassment and how it may effect those who are the targets of harassment. It is often very beneficial to understand the perspective of others and to

The primary learning objectives include:

- Identifying the types of harassment.
- Mitigating potential personal liability of harassment.
- Understanding the penalties for harassment.
- Learning to recognize what types of behaviors do and don't constitute harassment.

- Communicate benefit of not participating in harassment

## **Learners**

This game is designed for anyone in the work force. This encompasses a very broad spectrum of demographics. This would particularly target those who are new to the workforce and/or those who have never had any previous harassment training or guidance.

## **Context of Use**

This scenario based activity can be used in several contexts including as part of a group workshop professional development workshop or on an individual basis. Additionally it could be completed as a "live" onsite activity or online from a distance . This could be part of a blended solution by playing the game in advance of a related training the doing the debrief when the parties get together in person. There are numerous options for how this could play out.

Part of the setup will be arranging for someone to play the roles required to be played as written in the scripted scenarios. Additionally, there will also be a brief 5 minute intro about how to operate as a player within Second Life. This will include how to walk, turn, chat, change views and other key basic functions.

The average length of a game should be in the 45 minute range.

If done as part of a group activity, at the conclusion of the game, (immediately if done as an onsite activity or sometime in the future if done remotely) a set of debriefing questions can be provided to allow players to discuss what they've experienced and a leader can guide a debriefing of how the scenario played out.

Individual scenarios could last from 10 to 20 minutes. Will a variety of scenarios available to choose from multiple scenarios could be presented with players switching roles as desired.

## **Object of the Game**

The object of the game is to experience harassment "in the shoes" of others. For instance, males may be required to play the role of a female and vice versa. By playing the role of someone from a very different demographic players can get a very unique perspective that they would not likely get in any other type of environment.

A secondary goal is to understand how to identify which types of behaviors are considered to be harassment and which are not.

These role playing scenarios will be recorded for playback at the conclusion of the session for debrief by the leader of the training.

## Design Details

This game will take place in Second Life and therefore have an animated, virtual look and feel. The setting within Second Life will be a typical office with desks and other standard office furnishings.

Instead of using the chat interface in Second Life and requiring players to type excessively this game will use a real-time audio feed such as the one available via the Breeze Meeting Room or possibly another similar voice over IP audio alternative such as Skype.



*Illustrative scene from Second Life*

The game will be authored in Second Life with the following system requirements:

- Platform:
  - Mac OS X (10.3.9 or higher)
  - Windows:
    - Windows 2000 SP4
    - Windows XP SP 2
  - Linux i686
  - Internet connection: Cable, DSL or ADSL
  
- Memory: 256MB RAM (PC) 512MB RAM (Mac)
- Disk space: 50MB - 1000MB HD space for Disk Cache
- CPU: 800MHz x86 CPU or better (PC) 1GHz G4 or better (Mac)
- Video: nVidia GeForce 2, GeForce4 MX or better  
ATI Radeon Radeon 8500, Radeon 9250 or better

- Audio (VoIP): Breeze, Skype or similar alternative
- Scenarios recorded via a screen capture recording tool such as Windos Media Encoder, Camtasia or similar alternative depending on interoperability with Second Life and the audio communication tool.

## Competing Products

Games 2 Train (<http://www.games2train.com/site/html/products/shcert.html> ) Has some arcade type games with similar content. However these are just simple modifications of question presenting methods whereas this game presents are more robust, complete picture of actual situations that are more realistic. This game better prepares the player to deal with actual situations they are like to face in the real world.

## Motivational Issues

This game engages the learner by presenting realistic, real-world situations that they are very likely to face if they haven't already faced them. . A number of the scenarios are not clear cut and easy to determine if harassment is present.

The biggest possible motivation is that this game presents a way to face situations that in real life could potentially become very confrontational. That threat is minimized when interacting via Second Life. Especially if the players are playing remotely and are not even in the same physical locations

This type of scenario-based environment provides:

- ***A risk-free environment for learning.*** No one will be fired or sued for virtually harassment in this game.
- ***A safe, non threatening way to experience potentially confrontational situations..***
- ***A good balance between learner & designer flexibility.*** That means to balance the free range of actions available to the learner versus the ability of the designer to use the game as a pedagogical tool for achieving specific learning goals.

## Design Process

When coming up with game ideas I started by brainstorming possible topics that might work in this type of setting. I usually always go to something that I can apply to my professional environment which is how I got down to scenarios based on Management Skills, Ethics, or Harassment.

My first thoughts were to try and come up with something that would be viewed as valuable by the participants of the game. In looking at the harassment content I became personally interested when I came across a number of scenarios in which I didn't know if harassment was occurring or not. When I found that I could actually learn a lot about

this topic I was immediately drawn into it further.

By far the most difficult challenge for me has been how to make everything work technically. The other games that had similar content to this one were all just simple modifications of ways to present simple questions. I felt they were just various ways to give a quiz type assessment. I wanted to go a little deeper and present a more robust representation of real-world situations where the correct answer isn't always a clear-cut black and white affair.

It is definitely a big advantage that players do not need to be in the same physical location to play this game. If I am able to use this game within my organization that is a big factor. We have locations across 12 states with many of those being very remote with very few people at each place. This makes it much more likely that those people would be able to participate.

As always, my wife served as my primary play tester and was invaluable in the feedback that she provided. For her input, I presented her with hand sketched, paper-based storyboards. She suggested several improvements to how the scenarios should be presented and even some great suggestions for the content of several scenarios. This has confirmed that it is always important to get another set of eyes looking at your output; even if it is just a rough mock-up of the final product. In fact, if possible, you should try to get multiple sets of eyes on your product at multiple stages throughout the development process to continually fix or improve your work.

## References

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