

Street Harassment

Street Harassment is about power and control and is often a manifestation of discrimination. People can be harassed for their race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. Street harassment is a policing behavior that limits someone's access to public spaces, leads individuals to stay on guard when they are alone, and even causes some to move or change jobs to avoid the behavior. It is a human rights and gender equality issue.

How prevalent is street harassment?

In 2019, the UC San Diego's Center for Gender Equity and Health and Stop Street Harassment led a [nationally representative survey](#) of 1,182 women and 1,037 men regarding sexual harassment and violence.

This study found:

- **81% of women and 43% of men reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment and/or assault in their lifetime.**
- **Verbal comments are the most commonly experienced form of sexual harassment.**
 - **76%** of women and **43%** of men reported experiencing verbal sexual harassment.
 - Of the female respondents, **49%** had been groped, **27%** had been followed, and **30%** had been flashed.
- **Sexual Harassment was most frequently experienced in public spaces** (e.g. parking lot, street, store, etc.) by **68%** of women and **23%** of men.
- **Men and women within marginalized groups are more likely to experience sexual harassment.**
 - **35%** of Black women and **39%** of lesbian or bisexual women were harassed within the last 6 months.
 - Of the female respondents, those with disabilities or those who identified as lesbian or bisexual were more likely to be harassed compared to straight women without disabilities.
 - Of the male respondents, men with disabilities, men living below the poverty line, and men who identify as gay or bisexual were more likely to be harassed.
- **Of those who experienced sexual harassment, strangers were listed as the most frequent perpetrators.**

Street harassment includes unwanted whistling, leering, sexist, homophobic or transphobic slurs, persistent requests for someone's name, number or destination after they've said no, sexual names, comments and demands, following, flashing, public masturbation, groping, sexual assault, and rape.

-Stop Street Harassment, March 2015

How does it relate to sexual violence?

[Stop Street Harassment](#) defines **Gender-based Street Harassment** as non-consensual behavior or actions forced on a stranger because of their actual or perceived sex, gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Gender-based street harassment can cause people to feel fearful and may even limit their access to public spaces. [Gallup's 2014 annual Crime survey](#), found that **37%** of U.S. adults say they would not feel safe walking home at night, with **45%** of women reporting they do not feel safe, compared to **27%** of men.

What can we do?

Educate youth and our peers about appropriate, respectful ways to interact in public. Hold harassers accountable through a calm and assertive response- let them know their behavior is unwelcome and unacceptable. Consider reporting to your employer, Title IX Office, or local police or transit workers. If you feel comfortable and safe doing so, step in and intervene when someone is being harassed. Raise awareness that street harassment is a problem through sharing stories and awareness-raising initiatives.

To learn more and find more ideas, visit the websites for [Hollaback Bmore!](#), and [Stop Street Harassment](#).