



# STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN LIBRARIES



## RESTAURANT INDUSTRY COLOR SYSTEM

By Erin Wade, Homeroom  
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**YELLOW** - creepy vibe or unsavory look.

**ORANGE** - comments with sexual undertones, like certain compliments on a worker's appearance.

**RED** - overtly sexual comments or touching, or repeated incidents in the orange category after being told the comments were unwelcome.

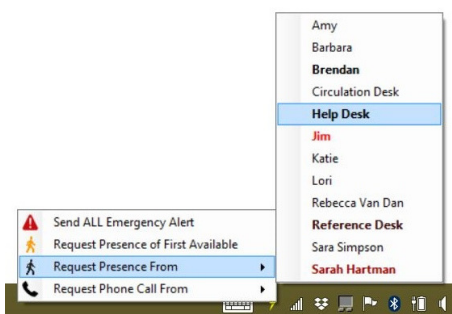
When a staff member has a harassment problem, they report the color – “I have an orange at table five” – and the manager is required to take a specific action. If red is reported, the customer is ejected from the restaurant. Orange means the manager takes over the table. With a yellow, the manager must take over the table if the staff member chooses. In all cases, the manager's response is automatic, no questions asked.

## WAYS TO SAY 'NO'

- "No."
- "No, I'm not interested."
- "In the future, please ask my permission to touch me."
- "This is making me feel uncomfortable."
- "I do not want..."
- "That's not funny to me."
- "Please don't do that. I don't like it."
- "Comments about my body are not appreciated."
- "That comment/behavior is inappropriate."
- "Your comment/behavior makes me uncomfortable."
- "I'm happy to answer questions about the library, but I don't answer questions about my personal life."
- "Do you have a library question I can answer?"
- "Calling me sweetheart/honey/baby is disrespectful to me as a professional. Please don't call me that again."
- "If you want me to help you, then I need you to be respectful and not make comments like that again."
- "If you don't...then I can't..."
- "If you don't stop making comments like that, then I can't help you."
- "If this behavior continues, then I will have someone else finish assisting you."
- "If this behavior continues, then I will ask you to leave the library."

## ALERT BACKUP

Middleton Public Library's desktop messaging system allows staff to discreetly call for backup.



...or use your  
own favorite  
instant  
messaging  
platform.

## CONSTRUCTIVE CONFRONTATION

Tips from "Constructive Confrontation:  
Being Decisive Rather than Nice" by Jane Holt

- Avoid the "Paralysis of Niceness."
- Remember: a simple 'No' should suffice.
- Persistence isn't flattering; sometimes it's stalking.
- Practice confrontation techniques.
- Take a few seconds to 'power pose' and breathe first.
- Trust your intuition.
- "Be empathetic, be respectful, be professional, be helpful, be patient, be calm, be brave, and be courteous. Be kind, sure. Nice, no."

## RESOURCES & FURTHER READING

“Amy Cuddy: Power Poses.” Performance by Amy Cuddy, YouTube, PopTech, 2 Nov. 2011, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=phcDQ0H\\_LnY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phcDQ0H_LnY).

“Bystander Intervention Tips and Strategies.” National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), 2018, [www.nsvrc.org/bystander-intervention-tips-and-strategies](http://www.nsvrc.org/bystander-intervention-tips-and-strategies).

Civitello, Amanda, and Katie McLain. “It's Not Just Part of the Job: Breaking the Silence on Sexual Harassment in the Library.” American Library Association Annual Conference, 2017. Slides and handouts: <https://www.waukeganpl.org/alaac17/>

Dewitt, Melissa. “Sexual Harassment in the Library: When Patrons Are the Perpetrators.” Hack Library School, 11 Sept. 2017, [hacklibraryschool.com/2017/09/11/27088/](http://hacklibraryschool.com/2017/09/11/27088/).

Holt, Jane. “Constructive Confrontation: Being Decisive Rather Than Nice.” *Public Libraries*, vol. 57, no. 4, 2018, pp. 19–22.

MacBride, Katie. “#TimesUp on Harassing Your Public Librarian.” [www.shondaland.com/act/a15876574/timesup-on-harassing-your-public-librarian/](http://www.shondaland.com/act/a15876574/timesup-on-harassing-your-public-librarian/)

Wade, Erin. “I’m a Female Chef. Here’s How My Restaurant Dealt with Harassment from Customers.” *The Washington Post*, 29 Mar. 2018.

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