

**OVYM Sexual Misconduct Task Force
Education Guidelines
Draft 1**

Notes:

- These education guidelines are a work in progress. The Task Force on Sexual Misconduct will continue to develop them further, based both on our own research and deliberations and on feedback from OVYM Friends.
- Glossary – the Task Force is in the process of developing the glossary. We welcome suggestions.

Education Guidelines - Sexual Misconduct

In conjunction with the development of a policy for addressing sexual misconduct, we present these queries. We hope they will help Friends think about sexual misconduct, and how to address allegations of sexual misconduct, should they arise in our meetings.

Queries

Following is a list of challenges Friends may feel in confronting sexual misconduct – allegations or even just talking about it abstractly. These challenges may keep us from addressing sexual misconduct in a healthy way and may interfere with maintaining an emotionally and physically safe and nurturing spiritual community:

- Desire to avoid conflict
- Desire not to make others uncomfortable or fear of own discomfort
- Belief that such things should not be exposed.
- When the accused is married or in a relationship - we shouldn't interfere in another person's marriage/relationship – how will making this behavior known affect or hurt the partner?
- What constitutes credibility when it comes to allegations?
- What if the alleged perpetrator is a person well respected in the meeting?
- The alleged behavior is something “foreign” to my experience, and I find it hard to understand/believe

As Friends, what is our responsibility to our community in confronting sexual misconduct and making our communities safe spaces?

Do we have a responsibility to make others aware of the allegation against Friend X in order to protect others he/she might harass or assault?

Is keeping the allegation(s) secret a form of dishonesty and a violation of integrity?

What practices do we need to adopt in order to prevent sexual misconduct?

What practices do we need to adopt in teaching our children and youth?

What practices do we need to adopt for adult Friends?

The OVYM policy on sexual misconduct defines consent to sexual behavior as requiring enthusiastic agreement. Is enthusiasm a necessary feature of consent? Why or why not?

Is it difficult to talk with a partner about sex? How does this affect the relationship? How can I/we learn to be better at communicating about difficult issues?

Support (under development)

- As Friends who strive to see the Light in all people, how do we provide support to all Friends including the accuser, the accused, witnesses, and survivors.

Glossary (under development)

Sexual harassment - Harassment is defined as unwanted behavior generally involving the exercise of formal or informal power by one person over another. Harassment is defined by both the feelings of the person who experiences it and by the intentions of the other person. What one person might consider an innocent comment or behavior could actually be experienced as harassment by another person. For example, people may have different comfort levels about being touched.

Sexual harassment does not always have to be specifically about sexual behavior or directed at a specific person. For example, negative comments about women as a group may be a form of sexual harassment. Although sexual harassment laws do not usually cover teasing or offhand comments, these behaviors can also be upsetting and have a negative emotional effect.

Sexual misconduct Sexual misconduct is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature including sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence (including domestic violence and dating violence), stalking, and related acts of retaliation.
(examples include) – See Canadian YM

Sexual assault - forcible or non-forcible sexual act or sexual contact that occurs without the consent or permission of the other person.

Sexual consent – agreement to participate in a sexual activity. Characteristics of consent are that it is freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, and specific.
(FRIES)

This formulation is from Planned Parenthood. The following website includes definitions and some clear videos that explain what consent is and is not and how to ask for and give consent without being awkward.

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sex-and-relationships/sexual-consent>