

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT & STUDENT MISTREATMENT

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# Sexual Harassment

- ▣ Unacceptable and unlawful conduct
- ▣ Will not be tolerated in the workplace and educational environment
- ▣ Defined as unwanted sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when:
  - 1.) submitting can impact employment
  - 2.) submitting can impact a grading decisions
  - 3.) conduct has the purpose of creating an intimidating or hostile environment

# If you are the violator...

- ▣ Individuals found to have violated this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination
- ▣ The Provost, Vice Presidents, Directors, Department Chairs, Division Chiefs and Offices are required to enforce this policy or will themselves be subject to separate disciplinary action

# If you are the victim...

## Two ways to seek assistance:

### ▣ Informal Approach

1.) Voice your concern to the person whose actions you find offensive or to the administrative head of the department

2.) Voice your concern to a colleague, who can then report it to an administrative officer for further exploration and periodic analysis

### ▣ Formal Approach

1.) Contact the Affirmative Action Office and file a formal complaint in writing

# Student Mistreatment

- ▣ **LCME standard MS 32**

*“Each medical school must define and publicize the standards of conduct for the teacher-learner*

*relationship, and develop written policies for addressing violations of those standards.”*

- ▣ **University of Louisville School of Medicine** has an explicit Student Mistreatment Policy that all medical students are aware of

- ▣ Includes **abuse, harassment and discrimination**, each of which is clearly defined

# Abuse

- ▣ Treat in a harmful, injurious or offensive way
- ▣ Verbal abuse such as swearing, deliberate humiliation
- ▣ Physical threats or harm
- ▣ Sexual advances

# Harassment

- ▣ Verbal or physical conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile learning environment

# Discrimination

- ▣ Behaviors, actions or interactions that have an adverse affect because of disparate treatment based on gender, race, age, sexual orientation or other biases

# Student Reporting

- ▣ Often reluctant to report based on fear of retaliation
- ▣ Can report to a number of sources, including student leaders, student affairs personnel, clerkship coordinator or director
- ▣ Student can report informally and request no further action or request that the issue be pursued further
- ▣ For reports of student mistreatment by residents, clerkship director and program director will be notified for further action



# Student Mistreatment Data

- ▣ 2009 AAMC Graduation Questionnaire results showed 8% of U of L graduating medical students felt they had experienced some form of abuse (vs. 16% nationally), and incidence has been on the rise for the past 5 years
- ▣ Type of abuse was most commonly verbal
- ▣ Source of abuse was most commonly residents, followed by clinical faculty
- ▣ Less than half of the 8% reported it

# Criticism ≠ Abuse

- ▣ Part of the learning process is accepting constructive critical feedback (key word is constructive)
- ▣ It is not reasonable for students to expect not to be criticized, but the criticism cannot be abusive as previously defined
- ▣ Some students (and residents) are more easily intimidated than others, what some would perceive as abuse, others would not
- ▣ Do your best to remain constructive, even when you are tired, stressed and overworked – remember how important you are as a teacher and strive to model professionalism

# You are also learners

- ▣ In addition to being teachers of medical students, you are also learners
- ▣ Likewise, you should not expect to never be criticized, but you don't have to endure mistreatment
- ▣ If you believe you are being mistreated, discuss your concerns with your chief resident, program director or graduate medical education officer

# Summary

- ▣ Sexual Harassment is illegal with serious consequences
- ▣ Student mistreatment is fundamentally wrong and violates institutional policy
- ▣ Learners can expect to be criticized but not abused
- ▣ Do good work and play well in the sand box