

Adult Harassment Best Practices

Rotary is committed to maintaining an environment that is free of harassment. Harassment is broadly defined as any conduct, verbal or physical, that denigrates, insults or offends a person or group based on any characteristic (age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientations, or gender identity).

All members and individuals attending or participating in Rotary meetings, events or activities should expect an environment free of harassment and shall help maintain an environment that promotes safety, courtesy, dignity, and respect to all. Adults who work with youth are subject to policies outlined in Rotary Code of Policies section 2.120.

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If you are subjected to behaviors that violate Rotary's policy on maintaining an environment free of any form of harassment:

1. Inform the respondent(s) that the conduct is unwanted and unwelcome and must stop.
2. Notify law enforcement if you feel threatened, unsafe, or that criminal activity has taken place.
3. Tell someone what happened, for example, a leader in the club, district or zone with documentation of names, dates, times, facts, witnesses, etc.
4. Report your allegation to Rotary by contacting your [Club and District Support officer](#). Any Rotarian that has an allegation of sexual abuse or sexual harassment is barred from working with youth in a Rotary capacity, until the allegation has been investigated and cleared.

If you witness harassment of another individual or receive an allegation of harassment:

1. Advise the complainant that you witnessed the event or received an allegation of harassment, and express sympathy, support, and compassion. Consult with complainant about reporting incident to a leader in the club, district or zone. If appropriate, determine who will do the reporting and notify law enforcement.
2. If the complainant agrees, report the allegation by contacting a leader in the club, district, or zone with documentation of names, dates, times, facts, witnesses, etc. If the respondent is a leader of the club, district, or zone, make the report to another club, district, or zone leader.
3. Notify Rotary through your [Club and District Support officer](#) that an allegation has been witnessed or received. Any Rotarian that has an allegation of sexual abuse or sexual harassment is barred from working with youth in a Rotary capacity, until the allegation has been investigated and cleared.

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If you are a club, district, or zone leader and receive an allegation of harassment within your club, district, or zone:

1. Express sympathy, support, and compassion with the complainant. Discuss Rotary procedure as well as any local club, district, or zone procedures for handling allegations, with the complainant. Indicate the allegation will be held in strict confidence and only shared if an investigation is pursued. Ask for their desired outcome and if they want an investigation.
2. Determine if the behavior falls within Rotary's harassment policy and warrants an investigation based on severity and pervasiveness.
3. If an investigation occurs, determine who to interview and what questions to ask. It is helpful to have two investigators in any interview or on any phone call, where one asks the questions and the other takes notes. Typically, you would talk to the complainant, respondent and eyewitnesses. Be sure to ask both the complainant and respondent for the names of people that witnessed the incident and add them to your interview plan.
4. Conduct the investigation in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practical under the circumstances. Each person should be notified of the allegations and asked to share what they observed. Requests to interview "character witnesses" – those that can vouch for a person's character but were not witness to the events – should not be included in your investigation.
5. Write a full summary report of the interviews you conducted and share with each person interviewed for their comment and confirmation. Occasionally a witness may alter their testimony after review. In these cases, both you and the other person(s) that conducted the interview need to make a judgement call if complainant is feeling pressured to change their testimony by the respondent or if this is a sincere attempt to correct their previous statement. Add the details of any change in statements to your findings report.
6. Complete report with any recommended action for the club, district, or zone to take to address the situation and/or prevent future such occurrences. Share your findings with the relevant club board of directors (club investigation), district governor (district investigation) or RI Director (zone investigation) for further action.
7. If the club, district or zone investigation team makes a finding of harassment, you must notify Rotary through your [Club and District Support officer](#). If the local finding is for sexual abuse or sexual harassment, the respondent must be permanently barred from any Rotary activities involving youth.