

Co-worker's crude comment inappropriate



abigail van buren

• dear abby

DEAR ABBY: Most of your responses I agree with, but the one you gave to "Hurt and Offended," who was with her fiance in a restaurant when a man she works with approached and asked, "What's your bra size?" was somewhat "off." You told her to report it at work.

he was being funny.) But it can't be sexual harassment if it happened outside the workplace. Rather than report him, I think she should drop it unless it happens again. — JAMES S. IN WISCONSIN

DEAR JAMES S.: You didn't read the woman's letter closely enough. In the second paragraph she went on to say, "I have seen these men every day and had work-related discussions with them. Two of them

have made reference to the incident, but neither has apologized." By referring to the incident at work, the men HAVE "brought it into the workplace." Read on:

DEAR ABBY: "Hurt and Offended" has done all that she needed to do. She said she had talked to her co-worker, who is the men's supervisor. As a supervisor myself, even if I'm told something in confidence and asked to take no action, I MUST take action — even if I don't supervise the offenders. Their actions were intolerable.

The supervisor she spoke to had better learn the law and take appropriate action immediately, or the company could be held responsible.

— MALE SUPERVISOR, SEBASTOPOL, CALIF.

DEAR MALE SUPERVISOR: Thank you for pointing it out. She should also make a point of documenting any further references made by those co-workers.

DEAR ABBY: If "Hurt" allows those co-workers of hers to get away with what they said to her, she can be sure they'll do it again to some other woman. Although the writer feels she would have "nothing to gain" by confronting them, I do not agree. I was raped at 15, and finally — at age 50 — I was able to say to the person what I needed to say. I have felt a whole lot better ever since that day.

In my opinion, she should go to her supervisor and tell him or her that she would like to have a meeting with everyone who was involved. She should ask that the supervisor be present. The following issues should be presented:

- (1) The question she was asked was rude, and embarrassed both her and her fiance that night. (2) How would they have felt if she had made a comment concerning their anatomy in public and in such a manner? (3) If they were in her situation, how would they have felt if their wives, mothers or sisters were treated in the same way? They need to be told that what was

said was not cute or clever, not a joke, and above all, will not be tolerated by her again. In reality it was sexual harassment, and will be handled as such if it recurs.

There are courts of law that take care of such situations. And those courts need to know that she will go to one if they pull that stunt again. — FREE AT LAST, AUSTIN, TEXAS

DEAR FREE AT LAST: I applaud you for having the courage to confront the person who raped you. I hope that "Hurt and Offended" will understand the parallel between your experience and hers, and have the courage to stand up for herself as you did.

TUESDAY EVENING AUG. 23, 2005. Table with columns for time slots (6 pm to 10:30) and channels (A&E, ABC, ANPL, BRAVO, CBS, DISC, DISN, E!TV, ESPN, ESPN2, FAM, FMC, FOOD, FOX, FX, FXSP, HALL, HBO, HGTV, HIST, IND, LIFE, MTV, NBC, NICK, PBS, SCIFI, SPK, TLC, TRAV, TVLND, UNIV, USA, WB, WGN).

WEDNESDAY EVENING AUG. 24, 2005. Table with columns for time slots (6 pm to 10:30) and channels (A&E, ABC, ANPL, BRAVO, CBS, DISC, DISN, E!TV, ESPN, ESPN2, FAM, FMC, FOOD, FOX, FX, FXSP, HALL, HBO, HGTV, HIST, IND, LIFE, MTV, NBC, NICK, PBS, SCIFI, SPK, TLC, TRAV, TVLND, UNIV, USA, WB, WGN).

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FRIDAY EVENING AUG. 26, 2005. Table with columns for time slots (6 pm to 10:30) and channels (A&E, ABC, ANPL, BRAVO, CBS, DISC, DISN, E!TV, ESPN, ESPN2, FAM, FMC, FOOD, FOX, FX, FXSP, HALL, HBO, HGTV, HIST, IND, LIFE, MTV, NBC, NICK, PBS, SCIFI, SPK, TLC, TRAV, TVLND, UNIV, USA, WB, WGN).