

Feel free to use and/or adapt whatever information you find useful!

Set the Tone.

1. Open the event by helping everyone feel welcome. If people don't know each other, have everyone in the group introduce themselves.
2. Create a safe space for the discussion. Ask people to be good listeners, respectful and polite – and set a good example yourself. It's especially important to ask your discussion group attendees to please refrain from passing judgment on anyone else who shares a story ("What were you wearing?" "Why were you there?" "I would have screamed!" "I would have reported it," etc).

There is no wrong way to respond to harassers and everyone's personal history, the circumstances, and how the person feels that day impacts their decision. It is not anyone else's place to tell someone how they "should" respond. What IS often useful is to say things like, "I'm sorry that happened. If it happens again, one tactic you may want to consider is XXX" or "How horrible! I'm glad you're okay. I had a similar experience and what worked for me was YY").

3. If you think people may become upset by the stories, you could have a list of resources ready for referral, such as a local women's shelter or counseling service. People are also welcome to contact Stop Street Harassment.
4. SSH has many fact sheets and flyers available for download on the website that could be of use to attendees, visit: www.stopstreetharassment.org/resources/images/.

Suggested Introduction:

1. You can share information from the introduction about what street harassment is and why the issue matters to help everyone get on the same page about what you're there to talk about (see pages 3-6).
2. Share some of the strategies for dealing with street harassers (see pages 8-13).
3. If people haven't already read the book, you can have everyone read the stories together, taking turns reading the stories aloud.

Possible Discussion Prompts and Questions:

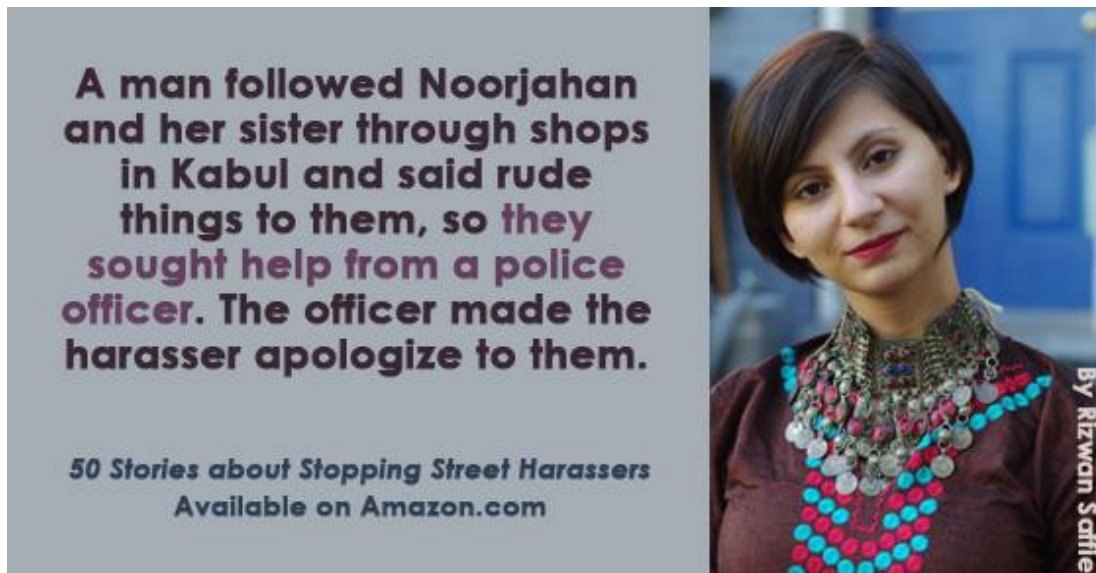
1. Share one of your favorite stories from the book. Ask attendees what story and tactic they liked best and why.
2. Share one of your personal street harassment stories and how you responded to it. If you wish you had responded differently, share what you would have said or done in an ideal situation.
3. Ask participants if they'd feel comfortable sharing experiences they've had and how they've dealt with harassers.
4. Ask participants to consider the pros/cons of different tactics, like public shaming, ignoring, lecturing harassers, reporting them, etc. When might they feel comfortable using the various tactics? Which do they think will stop harassers most effectively?
5. Ask participants to think about at least one new tactic or phrase they could envision themselves saying to harasser.
6. If you have time, ask participants to role play different responses or act out the stories. Role playing and practicing responses can help people feel more confident and prepared to use them when she or he is harassed.

Conclusion:

1. If you or your group wants to take community action, visit the website's toolkit section. Also, the book *Stop Street Harassment: Making Public Places Safe and Welcoming for Women* has many concrete examples, as well as more background information on the topic.
2. Take a group photo and send to Holly, hkearl@stopstreetharassment.org. Share it on Instagram and tag @stopstharassmnt.
3. Thank the participants for sharing their stories and thoughts. If people want to share stories on the SSH Blog, invite them to visit the site to do so.

Resources:

1. On the next page, find an "8 Responses to Street Harassment" flyer you could print and hand out to participants (it prints four flyers per page).
2. On pages 4-5, find an interview for MTV about the book. Some answers or the whole interview may be interesting to share during the discussion.
3. A Ms. Magazine Blog article on pages 6-7 illustrates how street harassment can turn dangerous and three ideas for taking action to stop it.
4. Find countless more resources on the SSH blog, www.stopstreetharassment.org.





8 Ways to Respond to Street Harassers

1. Name the behavior & state that it is wrong ("That's harassment")
2. Tell them exactly what you want them to do ("Back off").
3. Ask if that's how they want their loved ones treated.
4. Say, "Don't harass women," or, "Don't harass me" and leave.
5. Ask the harasser to repeat themselves or explain themselves.
6. Loudly announce to passersby what the harasser just said or did.
7. Take out pen and paper and start interviewing the harasser.
8. Shame them: "I can't believe you said that, how rude!"

*Use strong body language & an assertive tone. No need to apologize to them.
(Leave immediately or get help if you feel unsafe.)*

Visit www.StopStreetHarassment.org for more ideas.



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New Book Shines Light On The Global Problem Of Street Harassment [Interview]

Posted 10/15/13 4:54 pm EST by [Claire Biggs](#) in [Resources](#), [Women's Issues](#)

[Street harassment](#) has been a global problem for years. Thanks to a new book from Holly Kearl, founder of [Stop Street Harassment](#), readers will finally get a detailed look at what others around the world are doing to fight back against the problem.

To find out more street harassment and her new book, "[50 Stories About Stopping Street Harassers](#)," check out our interview with Kearl below:

ACT: For those who don't know, what is street harassment and who does it affect?

HOLLY: While people are harassed for all types of reasons when they're in public spaces, Stop Street Harassment focuses specifically on [gender-based street harassment](#). Street harassment is any action or comment between strangers in public places that is disrespectful, unwelcome, threatening and/or harassing and is motivated by gender or sexual orientation.

In the USA, there were two academic studies that showed [street harassment] impacted 100% of women. It's less clear how many members of the LGBTQ community as a whole it impacts, but it is likely quite high, too.

ACT: What would you tell someone who thinks street harassment isn't a big deal or that people should take it as a compliment?

HOLLY: Some forms of street harassment, like whistling or "catcalls," are often portrayed by the (male-owned) media as a compliment. But compliments are consensual and make someone feel safe and good, and they do not sexually objectify another person. Street harassment, by definition, is unwanted and it happens without the other person's OK.

Also, a lot of street harassment is really scary. More than 80% of 811 women in one study said they'd been the target of sexually explicit language, 75% had been followed, and more than 50% had been sexually touched against their will. None of that is complimentary — it's predatory and disrespectful.

ACT: You've already written one book on street harassment. What was that book about?

HOLLY: My first book "[Stop Street Harassment: Making Public Places Safe and Welcoming for Women](#)," has its roots in my master's thesis on street harassment and was published by an academic press. It draws on academic studies, informal surveys, and interviews with activists to explore complexities of the issue. In the second half of the book, readers find concrete strategies for dealing with street harassers and ways to become involved in working to end this all-too-common violation. This book has given a lot of legitimacy to the issue and it has been used by the United Nations and New York City Council.

ACT: For your new book, you collected stories from people around the world who experienced street harassment. What surprised you about what they said?

HOLLY: I am always surprised by how similar street harassment is: From Afghanistan to Australia, from Colombia to France, men whistle and make kissy noises at women, say "Hey, baby," and "Hey, honey,"

and grab and follow them. Sometimes I shake my head and think, is there some international, underground school that all these men go to where they learn how to be harassers?

ACT: You've agreed to pledge 50 percent of your book's proceeds to Stop Street Harassment programs. What will that money help SSH do?

HOLLY: Funds will go to two main SSH projects. One is an ongoing [fundraiser](#) to be able to conduct the [first-ever national, comprehensive study on street harassment](#). A really good, national survey is \$47,000. I'm also self-funding focus groups with different groups of people across the country to gather more stories.

The second program is the [Safe Public Spaces Mentoring Program](#). Through an application process, people can apply to have a formal mentorship with SSH as they undertake a campaign or host an event or make a film, etc., on street harassment in their community. They receive a range of resources, weekly check-ins with SSH staff and a small grant to offset the expenses they may incur (such as space rental, photocopying, and art supplies).

ACT: Your book includes creative, entertaining, and empowering techniques for dealing with street harassment. Can you share your favorite with us?

HOLLY: I find that anything people can do to surprise their harassers ends up being really effective. In one of the first stories, a woman in England was rushing to an appointment when a man yelled out an inappropriate comment about her butt. She turned around and yelled back, "Bald head!" He looked upset, and she said, "What? I thought we were just exchanging observations."

ACT: Finally, if you could share one thing about street harassment that you think everyone should know, what would it be?

HOLLY: First, a message specific to people who experience street harassment: You're not alone and it's not your fault.

Then, more generally, I think everyone should know that street harassment is a human rights issue because it causes harassed persons to change their lives to try to stay safe. They change routes and routines and how they dress, limit where they go, and some people even move neighborhoods or change jobs because of harassers along the commute. Street harassment is not a "minor annoyance," a joke or a compliment, and it's time for everyone to speak out against it!



When Street Harassment Is More Deadly Than Catcalls

October 21, 2013 by Holly Kearl

Recently in Florida, a 14-year-old girl was walking down the street [when a man](#) in an SUV pulled up beside her and offered her \$200 to have sex with him.

When the girl refused, he pulled her by her hair into his vehicle and choked her until she lost consciousness. Then he dropped her on the ground and ran over her multiple times, only stopping when [witnesses](#) intervened. The girl was airlifted to a hospital and stabilized. The man has been arrested and charged with attempted murder and kidnapping.

Lest you think outrageous incidents like these are an anomaly, a few weeks ago, a man in a car pulled up next to a [woman running](#) in California and offered her a ride. When she refused, he backed up and hit her not once, but twice, dragging her behind him the second time. She sustained non-life threatening injuries, and the suspect is facing charges of second-degree assault and hit-and-run.

It's not just men in cars who harass and harm women. In Georgia, a woman was walking alone at night and [three men approached her](#), trying to talk to her. She ignored the men and, without warning, they pushed her to the ground. Two men held her down while the third man sexually assaulted her until a passerby scared them away and helped the woman home.

These seem like extreme stories. But in a [survey](#) of 811 women, 75 percent reported they had been followed by a man they did not know, more than 50 percent had been sexually touched, and 25 percent had been assaulted. Nearly one in four of these women said their street harassment experiences began around age 12 and nearly 90 percent said they had been harassed by age 19.

Since whistling, comments such as "Hey, baby" and demands for a smile or a phone number are the most common and visible forms of [gender-based street harassment](#), it is easy for many people to dismiss the problem.

"Get over yourself." "It's a compliment." "What's the big deal?" "If you don't want to be harassed, don't go outside." These are examples of what I've been told for speaking out, while others, like activist/writer Soraya Chemaly, [have been told](#) to "lighten up" and that the behavior is just "flirting."

While people may think it is a stretch to connect catcalls with assault and attempted murder, sometimes catcalls escalate into something worse and women never know when that might happen.

More importantly, both catcalls and assault are forms of entitlement. The (primarily) male street harassers believe they have the right to access girls' and women's bodies. They feel they can say and do whatever they want, and if women don't comply, well, then they're a bitch or ugly, and the men may feel justified in grabbing them, throwing trash at them, assaulting them or running them over.

As a leading expert on this topic, I'm often asked what people can do to avoid harassment. This is the wrong question. Girls and women already change their lives in myriad and often impractical ways to avoid

50 Stories about Stopping Street Harassers Book Club | Discussion Guide

harassment, such as changing routes and routines and even moving neighborhoods—and such tactics don't always work.

We need to ask instead how we can stop harassers and how we teach men to stop acting entitled to women's attention or bodies.

Here are three ideas.

1. Call out, interrupt or distract friends who are harassers. Many harassers (including women) only harass in groups and they may be trying to impress their friends or get a laugh. Friends telling them it's not funny or cool can influence them to stop. [This video](#) includes many ideas for what to say to harassers, and Stop Street Harassment's [website](#) offers tips.
2. Report and protest cultural content that encourages street harassment and assault and portrays it as OK. The YouTube channel [Simple Pickups](#) (with more than 1 million subscribers) is one example; it teaches men how to make vulgar and threatening comments and to grope women they don't know, including such lines as, "What is the biggest c*ck you've ever had up your a**hole?" and "This right here means you like to have your face ji**ed on." It's never okay for someone to speak like that to someone without their consent. Sign [this Change.org petition](#) asking YouTube to take down the channel.
3. Break the cycle of harassment and talk to kids, especially boys, about the issue. Often, when kids start out as harassers, they are mimicking what they've seen among male relatives or older friends, or they are trying out what they've seen in the media (including kids' cartoons and online porn). Talking to them at a young age about what street harassment is and how to interact with people respectfully in public spaces [without being a harasser](#) is extremely important to help counterbalance those messages. Here are three resources to help: The Futures Without Violence program [Coaching Boys into Men](#) provides men with a playbook/toolkit they can use to talk with boys about street harassment, domestic violence and sexual violence; the Roger's Park [Young Women's Action Team](#) compiled their work on addressing gender-based violence with boys in the ["Where Our Boys At?"](#) toolkit; and Jake Winn, a Peace Corps volunteer and youth development facilitator in northern Azerbaijan helped his male students make [an Anti-Street Harassment video](#) as well as [developing a companion lesson plan](#).

Street harassment is not a joke nor a compliment, and it's time for everyone to commit to stopping it.