

ROSA

Tennis, singles and doubles conference champion



Harassment

I like everyone. Well, almost everyone. There is this one boy in my class named Brandon. I can't stand him. He acts like he rules the school. I guess it's because he's pretty funny. It's strange. Brandon makes fun of practically everyone, but kids hang around with him all the time.

I have no idea why, but Brandon is always messing with me—flicking my hair when he sits behind me in class, whistling at me when I walk by, snapping my bra. It is so annoying. My brother thinks it's because I have a disability. My friends say he likes me. I don't think it's either, I think he just wants to be popular, so he does it to get attention.

One day, I was coming out of the bathroom where I was changing for practice. I was wearing a tank top and this cute, little tennis skirt. Well, Brandon was hiding behind the door. As soon as I opened it, he jumped out and flagged me! Yanked my skirt down! I totally freaked out. All of his friends were laughing and clapping. I was so embarrassed. I just wanted to disappear.

My friend Uni came into the bathroom and tried to calm me down, 'cause I was crying. She is tough. Uni doesn't take mess from anyone. She told me she'd go rip his pants off and see how he felt when the world saw his underwear. I laughed but told her "no way." I didn't want to start a war or anything. We decided not to stoop to his level. Instead of following him, I went to the principal's office and told her what he did to me. He was on in-school suspension for a whole week! It doesn't like...erase the most embarrassing moment of my life...but at least now he knows he can't get away with messing with me.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

RESOURCES

www.aauw.org

www.about-face.org

www.bygirlsforgirls.org/harassment.html

www.equitynj.org/harassment.htm

www.teenwire.com

JOURNAL IDEAS

Make a list of ways you can make someone stop harassing you. First, list what you would do if you were being harassed. Next, make a list of how you could help a friend who was dealing with the same stuff. Make a list of ways you can make someone stop harassing you. First, list what you would do if you were being harassed. Next, make a list of how you could help a friend who was dealing with the same stuff.

Harassment. Big word, huh? Know what it means? It's when someone bugs another person with their words or actions. Sometimes harassment is just annoying—other times it can make a person feel like they are being tortured. There are lots of different ways for people to harass others. It happens all the time—especially at school. One of the worst kinds of harassment is sexual harassment—that's when someone says or does something irritating or unwanted involving your private parts (you know, all the body parts under your undies). It's easier to understand what harassment is by seeing examples. Here's what it looks like:

- * Someone keeps calling your house and hanging up
- * A few boys find a hole in the bathroom wall and peep at your team when you're changing
- * Some weirdo in the store brushes up against you on purpose
- * Girls call you a bad names and spread rumors about you
- * On your walk home from school, there is this one bully who is always whistling and smacking his lips at you

How do you know if it's really harassment?

If a person says or does something that: makes you feel uncomfortable, hurts your feelings, embarrasses you, makes you scared, involves your private parts—it's harassment. Sometimes it happens a bunch of times—a person picks on you for months. But harassment can happen just once too—like if someone just randomly comes up and grabs your butt.

What can you do about it?

A lot. Many types of harassment are against the law. You have the power to make it stop, but you have to be brave and speak up. Tell the person to stop harassing you. Tell someone else what is going on—a teacher, your coach, your parents, the guidance counselor. Don't fight back—that makes you as low as the person harassing you. Whatever you do, don't just ignore it—no one should get away with harassment.