

Street Harassment Definitions:

First definition, by Micaela di Leonardo, author of “Political Economy of Street Harassment” (1981): *“Street harassment occurs when one or more strange men accost one or more women... in a public place which is not the women’s worksite. Through looks, words, or gestures, the man asserts his right to intrude on the women’s attention, defining her as a sexual object, and forcing her to interact with him.”*

Stop Street Harassment definition: *Unwelcome words and actions by unknown persons in public places which are motivated by gender and invade a person’s physical and emotional space in a disrespectful, creepy, startling, scary, or insulting way.*

Gender-based street harassment primarily impacts women (cis and transgender) but it also impacts some men in the LGBTQ community. <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/resources/definitions/>

Prevalence of Street Harassment:

- Stop Street Harassment 2008 survey: 99% of 811 women from 23 countries, 45 US states
- Academic studies conducted in Indianapolis (early 1990s) and California Bay Area (late 1990s): 100%
- Community studies in Pakistan (2005), Yemen (2009), and India (2009): more than 90%
- A community study in Rogers Park, IL (2003): 86% of girls ages 12-19
- National studies in Canada (2000) and Egypt (2008): more than 80%
- Studies focused on public transportation in Beijing (2002), Tokyo (2004), New York City (2007), Delhi (2009), Korea (2010), and Chicago (2010): more than 60%

Examples of the Types of Street Harassment, from Stop Street Harassment Survey:

- Whistling, honking – 95%
- Vulgar gestures – 82%
- Sexually explicit comments – 81%
- Following – 75%
- Sexual touching – 56%
- Public masturbation – 37%
- Assault – 25%.



Read more: <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/resources/statistics/>

Impact of Street Harassment on Women:

Street harassment is a form of sexual terrorism because women never know when it might happen, by whom, and how far it may escalate. Because of street harassment, from a young age women learn that public spaces are male territory. In the Stop Street Harassment survey, almost one in four women said the harassment started by age 12 and around 90 percent by age 19. Because of street harassment, women learn – and are told from a young age - to limit the places they go, they try not to be in public alone (especially at night), and when they are alone, they stay on guard.

International Anti-Street Harassment Week Fact Sheet

On *at least a monthly basis*, women who took the SSH survey said they do the following because of harassment:

On Guard Behavior:

- Avoid making eye contact – 69% (32% said they always do this)
- Constantly assess their surroundings - 80% (62% said always)
- Purposely wear clothes to attract less attention – 37% (10% always)
- Talk on a cell phone – 42% (10% always)

Behavior that Limits their Access to Public Spaces:

- Cross street/take other route - 50% (16% said always)
- Avoid being out at night/after dark – 45% (11% always)
- Avoid being out alone – 40% (8% always)
- Pay to exercise at a gym instead of outside – 24% (11% always)

Significant Life Decisions:

- Moved neighborhoods (at least once) because of harassers in the area – 19%
- Changed jobs (at least once) because of harassers along the commute – 9%

As a whole, these are not trivial changes women make nor is their impact on society trivial. Women's unequal access to public places is a quality of life issue and a human rights issue. **And ultimately, there will be no gender equality in any country as long as men harass women in public spaces.**



Learn More about Street Harassment:

- Articles, books, reports:
<http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/resources/articles/>
- Documentaries, films, music videos:
<http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/resources/video/>
- Posters, fliers, signs:
<http://www.stopstreetharassment.com/resources/images.htm>
- Organizations/groups that address street harassment:
<http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/do-something/community-action/organization>
- Ideas for responding to street harassment: <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/strategies/>
- Ideas for action that can end street harassment: <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/ending/>
- Resources for men: <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/male-allies/>

