



VILLE DE  
GENÈVE

When I witness sexual  
harassment in public places:

I can act!

*Towards*  
**Zero**  
*sexism*

IN MY CITY

[www.geneve.ch/zero-sexisme](http://www.geneve.ch/zero-sexisme)

# Sexual harassment in public places

## What are we talking about?

Any action or behaviour that undermines a person's dignity due to their sex, sexual and/or affective orientation, gender identity and/or expression.

It can take the shape of inappropriate looks or comments, intrusive attitudes, insults, threats, exhibitionism, or other physical and/or sexual assaults.

They sometimes take place in the street, but also in public transportation, parks, public events, parties, education and sports facilities.

For more information on the legal framework of sexual harassment and available resources:



## How is this relevant to me?

### Sexual harassment is everyone's concern.

We generally distinguish between:

- ✳ **VICTIMS:** most of them are women and LGBTQI+ persons.
- ✳ **PERPETRATORS:** all men are not harassers, but most perpetrators of sexual harassment in public places are men.
- ✳ **WITNESSES:** they can be strangers (bystanders, other users or staff working in the public place) or known either to the victim or the perpetrator.

## As a witness, how can I help?

There are many ways to take action, because every situation is different and must be evaluated according to its context.

Here are a few tips:



### BEFORE

- **I can learn** about sexism and sexual harassment in public spaces.
- **I can learn** to identify the different behaviours that fall under the definition of sexist and sexual harassment.
- **I can question** the notion of consent, my own understanding of it, and that of others.
- **I can get to know** local resources available on this issue.
- **I can think** about ways of reacting that I would feel comfortable with if I were to be confronted to this kind of situation. I can also attend a workshop to prepare myself.

**AS A WITNESS,** I can take action without putting my own safety or that of others at risk. By reacting, I show that this kind of behaviour is neither normal, nor acceptable: I position myself as an ally. This way, I contribute to creating a kinder and safer urban environment in which everyone can feel comfortable and welcome.

Translated from French by The Kuro Collective



### DURING

IN CASE OF AN IMMEDIATE THREAT TO YOUR SAFETY OR THAT OF OTHERS, **CALL THE POLICE AT 117.**

- **I can try different strategies** to stop the situation (without putting myself in danger). For example, I can:
  - act as a barrier between the victim and the perpetrator,
  - pretend to know the victim,
  - ask them if they need help,
  - shift the perpetrator's attention, for example by asking them an open question (it can be trivial or absurd),
  - ask the perpetrator to stop their behaviour and/or leave, using "I" statements and without lecturing them.
- **I can ask other people** (For example, bystanders, employees of public transportation, or staff at the event or venue) to take action with me so that I don't intervene alone.
- **I can document the situation** in case the victim wants to file a complaint or report the incident to the police.
- **Once the perpetrator of the harassment is gone, I can:**
  - make sure the victim is safe,
  - ask them what they need, without rushing them. I can reassure them and make sure to not touch them without their consent,
  - offer to call someone for them, to accompany them to file a complaint or report the incident with the police ("main courante"),
  - leave them my contact information, if necessary,
  - if needed, share information about resources at their disposal.

**These actions can be undertaken individually or together.**



### AFTER

- **I can report the situation** on the *Genève en poche* App using the reporting tool\*.
- **If I know the person targeted** and am in contact with them, I can follow-up and remain attentive to their needs.
- **If I know the perpetrator,** I can speak to them later with a cool head about the situation, to express my disagreement and let them know that their actions are inappropriate and/or constitutes assault. I encourage them to question themselves.
- **If I myself need to talk about what happened,** I can speak to my friends and/or relatives or reach out to available resources in Geneva.

These strategies are inspired by the work of various organizations: Amnesty International, Le deuxième Observatoire, MILLE SEPT SANS, We Can Dance iT.

**\*DOWNLOAD THE GENÈVE EN POCHE APP:**



## I want to know more

**Taking action against sexual harassment in public places isn't always easy, but there are resources to inform and train yourself, such as:**

- The online toolbox of the action plan «Towards zero sexism in my city»: [www.geneve.ch/zero-sexisme](http://www.geneve.ch/zero-sexisme)
- Amnesty International: [www.amnesty.ch/fr/education-aux-droits-humains/ecole/ateliers/ne-detourne-pas-le-regard](http://www.amnesty.ch/fr/education-aux-droits-humains/ecole/ateliers/ne-detourne-pas-le-regard)
- Le deuxième Observatoire: [www.2e-observatoire.com](http://www.2e-observatoire.com)
- MILLE SEPT SANS: [www.milleseptsans.ch](http://www.milleseptsans.ch)
- We Can Dance iT: [www.wecandanceit.ch](http://www.wecandanceit.ch)