



# Scenario: Accommodations in the Schoolhouse

Group Size: 4-15

***This scenario may contain explicit language and references to discrimination and ableism which may be emotionally activating for some people. If you need support, services are available through the [CAF Member Assistance Program \(CFMAP\)](#) and the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#).***

Petty Officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> class (PO 2) Indira Kumar is an instructor at a Naval School who is responsible for training a group of sailors. One of the students, Sailor second class (S2) Benoit Garnier, has dyslexia, a learning disability that affects his reading and writing abilities. After class on the first day of the course, he approaches PO 2 Kumar, in the presence of several classmates, and informs them of his condition and that he has already completed the learning disabilities accommodations process, including the required psycho-educational assessment. He requests some accommodations, such as extra time for tests. PO 2 Kumar would like to support him and ensure he has equal opportunities to succeed in the training, but the daily schedules of the course are jam-packed, and it is hard to imagine how more time could be given. They tell S2 Garnier they will get back to him about his request.

The other students in the class who hear S2 Garnier's request look at each other with surprise. They chat amongst themselves about how unfair the accommodation would be. It would give S2 Garnier an unfair advantage towards being top of the class, which comes with some honours. When S2 Garnier exits the class, the other student looks at him strangely and many sneer and turn away from him. One of the other students says sarcastically, "Well, how *very convenient* for you, Ben!" Another comments, "Low intelligence seems to have its perks." "Lucky you! Where can I get one of those *so-called* learning disabilities, Ben?" another adds. PO 2 Kumar overhears the students.

PO 2 Kumar is unsure what to do about the requested accommodations. They wonder if the students, while inappropriate in their comments, have a point about fairness and whether they have a duty to accommodate S2 Garnier. They also wonder how S2 Garnier could be successful in an operational setting if he needs more time than his fellow sailors in the class.

## Categories

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| Principles:       | Respect the Dignity of all Persons                 |
| Values:           | Integrity, Courage, Excellence                     |
| Cultural Themes:  | Service, Leadership, Teamwork                      |
| Misconduct Types: | Employment Inequality, Hateful Conduct, Harassment |
| GBA Plus Themes:  | Disability   |
| Audience:         | Canadian Armed Forces                              |

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# Facilitator's Guide

## Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle of Respect the dignity of all persons in this scenario.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, courage, and excellence in this scenario.
- Discuss the difference between equality and equity and why we strive towards equity in this situation, and in the CAF at large: Equality means equal opportunity; everyone given the same resources and opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.
- Discuss learning disability accommodation policies in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) training system.
- Discuss the Accessible Canada Act as well as the Canada Labour Code for legal requirements to accommodate those with disabilities in the workplace.

## Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the issue in this scenario?
  - PO 2 Kumar wonders if they are required to provide S2 Garnier extra time for his tests, which could help him be successful despite his learning disabilities. They also worry that it could create resentment and perceived unfairness among his classmates. \*Note: The CAF is required to remove barriers and accommodate persons with disabilities in employment under the [Accessible Canada Act](#).
2. What considerations are at play with respect to the DND and CAF Code of Values and Ethics?
  - Respect the dignity of all persons: All members deserve to be respected. The comments of the other students in this scenario can be considered micro-aggressions, which is a form of discrimination and harassment.
  - Courage: S2 Garnier showed courage in coming forward to his instructor to request accommodations.
3. What possible courses of action could PO 2 Kumar take in relation to the accommodations in this scenario? Which is the best option? Why?
  - Option 1: Provide accommodations. As S2 Garnier already has already gone through the Learning Disabilities accommodation process, as directed by DAOD 5516-5, he must be provided with the requested accommodations, and employment equity. Creative solutions can usually be found to provide additional time, even in busy schedules. \*Note that not having enough time in the schedule isn't grounds to not provide learning disability accommodations.
  - Option 2: Do not provide the requested accommodations. Everyone must complete the performance checks in the same way, within the same amount of time. It's only fair. The Commandant has made it clear that keeping to the class schedule is of the utmost importance. Facilitator note: this option is illegal and directly contributes to toxic workplace culture, and unfair treatment of persons with disabilities.
  - Option 3: Seek advice. PO 2 Kumar could seek advice on the best course of action from a school Personnel Selection Officer, Training Development Officer, and/or from someone in their chain of command. She could also research the CAF policies and look for school Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) about learning disabilities and, more specifically, the accommodation request submission processes. As she would find in DAOD 55 safety, "If an individual is capable despite a learning disability (LD) of meeting the minimum operational standards related to Universality of Service, the needs of that individual must be accommodated unless accommodating those needs would impose undue hardship on the CAF considering health, safety and cost." \*Note: In this scenario, if the student had not yet completed the accommodations process, they should be given the option to cease training until the process has been completed or continue the training without accommodations and be responsible for their outcomes.
4. What possible courses of action could PO 2 Kumar take regarding the other students' comments to S2 Garnier in this scenario? Which is the best option? Why?
  - Option 1: Ignore the other students. The students' remarks were not respectful, curious, or passing. They were directly ableist and considered hateful conduct.
  - Option 2: Act. As stated in the DAOD 5516-5, "An individual must not be subject to discrimination or harassment in any form on the basis of an LD or a perceived LD, for disclosing one or for the use of an accommodation." It is the duty of the instructor to react to the hateful conduct and harassment that they have witnessed. Inform and educate all students about this DOADs in order to remove the bad perception and rumours

\*Note to facilitator: Please review the details within [DAOD 5516-5, Learning Disability Accommodation during Recruiting, Training and Education - Canada.ca](#) to better prepare for follow-on discussions for this topic.