



Scenario: All Maxed Out

Group Size: 4-15

This scenario may contain explicit language and references to harmful situations 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 \(EAP\)](#).

"It's just not fair," Fatima says to Ginette, a coworker and friend.

"What's wrong, Fatima?" asks her friend.

"I've been trying to get on a three-day workshop that would really help me with some projects?" asks Fatima. "When I asked a few weeks ago, the director refused to authorize it for me. Well, I just found out the new employee got on that workshop — and she's only been here for two months."

"That is disappointing," Ginette says. "It sure doesn't seem fair that she should get it. I mean you've been here five years, and you need it."

"But what's really bothering me," Fatima adds, "is that I think it's related to those monthly teambuilding luncheons that the director started six months ago."

"The luncheons?" asks Ginette, a bit perplexed. "Oh yes! I enjoyed the restaurant we went to last month so much that my husband and I went there last week for our anniversary. I know you've missed a few of the teambuilding luncheons because of your projects, but I don't see how that would affect you."

"Actually, I've missed the last four monthly luncheons," says Fatima. "Three months ago, the director had a talk with me and asked me if I realized how important the teambuilding luncheons were. He pointed out that the Director General (DG) had received very positive feedback about them and had asked her other directors to consider initiating similar efforts. When I missed the luncheon again last month, the director mentioned to me that my absence had been noted."

"But why are you not going, Fatima? Do you have something against teambuilding?"

"Of course not. I like the idea of going out for section lunches on special occasions, but as a single parent I really can't afford these restaurants, and every month?!"

"What are you going to do?" asks Ginette.

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons
Values:	Integrity, Courage, Excellence
Cultural Themes:	Identity, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Employment Inequity
GBA Plus Themes:	Income, Family Status
Audience:	Defence Team

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in this workplace setting.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, courage, and excellence in the workplace.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the problem in this scenario?
 - Open group discussion.
 - This scenario illustrates a challenging situation when professional and personal pressures come into conflict in the workplace.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to Defence Ethics and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) ethos?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Discuss the ethical principle of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in this workplace setting.
 - Discuss the ethical values of integrity, courage and excellence in the workplace.
3. As an observer, what advice could you offer to the director and to Fatima?
 - Open group discussion.
 - The director is acting responsibly by implementing teambuilding initiatives because a better team spirit will make the workplace both more productive and more personable. However, it is generally a good idea for a manager to consult those affected by any initiative they would like to implement, and to monitor their staff's ability to participate in it. In this case, the director may well have discussed with her personnel the planned monthly teambuilding luncheons (we don't know, because we are not given this information), but even if she did, he has not demonstrated that she has given sufficient weight to the effects of the inequalities of power that are always present between management and their personnel.
 - As for Fatima, she needs to find ways to develop her assertiveness. In this case, she could have avoided any misunderstanding by simply explaining her circumstances to the director the first time she was asked about missing the teambuilding luncheons. As a result, the director would have known that Fatima was skipping the lunches because of her financial situation and not from any lack of team spirit.
 - On the other hand, we need the moral courage to know where to set limits in discussing our personal business at the office, because we are not required to explain everything about our personal life to those to whom we report. In addition, Fatima could also have approached the director to ask why she was refused the workshop and to determine what alternate measures she could take to improve her capabilities on the job.
 - We must consider the greater context of this situation, and understand why someone, particularly a woman, would not feel comfortable sharing their status as a single parent, or their financial information, in fear of further harm or discrimination. How can we look at the greater organizational culture in the CAF/Department of National Defence (DND) and use this as an opportunity to make our teams more accessible for everyone without individuals needing to disclose their personal information.