



# Scenario: Avoiding the Obvious

## 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 \(EAP\)](#).***

"Hi Brigitte. How was your vacation?" asks Lieutenant Commander (LCdr) Sam Hamidi.

"Wonderful Sam!," replies Brigitte Boyer. "It was great to get away from the tension and stress here. It's been difficult with the personnel issues over the past several months. I really needed the break."

Brigitte and LCdr Hamidi work at a large project office in the National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) with military and civilian staff. They are at a critical point in the project's development, but Brigitte must spend much of her time and energy trying to mitigate several conflicts among her subordinates, with very little help from her director, Colonel (Col) Jane Cho.

Later that week, Brigitte meets with Col Cho to update her on several project areas. Col Cho asks Brigitte if the next project deliverables will be met on time. "I believe they will, but I would be more confident if staff relations were healthier here," says Brigitte. "I've spoken to you before about this ongoing issue."

"Yes, Brigitte, you have," replies Col Cho. "I think you are doing an incredible job juggling all the diverse personalities in this directorate. Carry on."

"But ma'am, I'm still having difficulty dealing with two junior majors who haven't adapted to work at the strategic-level and don't understand that their civilian staff can't be treated like tactical troops," explains Brigitte. "I also have another section head who can't organize his staff or direct their work. The orderly room staff needs constant supervision while the Warrant Officer is away on medical leave. If you spoke to the two majors, it would alleviate much of the stress in their two sections because they won't listen to me. I'm at the end of my rope. It seems that there is at least one grievance per month from someone in their sections. There's also that harassment complaint I submitted to you several weeks ago that you need to review."

"Well, you are very experienced dealing with staffing issues," said Col Cho. "I don't think there is anything I could add other to suggest you consider using Alternative Dispute Resolution first. Let me know how next week's meeting with Public Services and Procurement Canada turns out. Thanks, Brigitte."

Brigitte is as frustrated and stressed out as she was before her vacation. Brigitte was now certain that her boss's reputation as someone lacking in leadership skills is accurate. She avoided conflict at all costs and refused to deal with any personnel issue that required a decision. Brigitte really was at the end of her rope but knew that she had few options. She could speak with the director general (DG), but he is new the role and it might appear that she's being disloyal to her boss by going behind Col Cho's back. Brigitte believes that loyalty to one's boss is critical, but she also feels responsible for the employees in the directorate who are being unfairly affected by the unhealthy work environment.

### Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons, Serve Canada before Self
Values:	Integrity, Loyalty, Courage, Stewardship, Excellence
Cultural Themes:	Identity, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Not Specific
GBA Plus Themes:	Not Specific
Audience:	Defence Team

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# Facilitator's Guide

## Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principles of Respect the Dignity of all Persons and Serve Canada before Self in this setting.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, courage, stewardship, and excellence in this scenario.

## Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the problem in this scenario?
  - Open group discussion.
  - The ethical dilemma revolves around leadership responsibilities, loyalty to superiors and commitment to subordinates' well-being.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to Defence Ethics?
  - Open group discussion.
  - How are the ethical principles of Respect the dignity of all persons and Serve Canada before self complementary in this scenario? Can they be seen at being at odds with each other? Possible points include the importance of addressing personnel issues, fostering a healthy work environment, and prioritizing the well-being and dignity of every individual within the directorate.
  - Discuss the ethical values of integrity, loyalty, courage, stewardship, and excellence in this scenario. Consider the perspectives of Brigitte, Col Cho, and all of the personnel in the organization. Possible points include how Brigitte's loyalty to her boss clashes with her sense of stewardship. Her honesty, courage and commitment to excellence are all tested as she attempts to address the ongoing personnel issues and create a more conducive work environment. How can the values be impacted by an unhealthy work environment?
3. What advice would you give Brigitte Boyer?
  - Open group discussion
  - Engage in open and honest communication with her boss, Col Cho. Express her concerns about the unhealthy work environment, the personnel issues, and the impact on her subordinates.
  - Seek guidance and mentorship from senior leaders (i.e., the director general) or experienced colleagues within the organization. They might be able to provide insights into navigating personnel issues and maintaining a healthy work environment.
  - She should balance her loyalty to her superiors with her ethical obligations to serve with respect for the dignity of all persons. This entails addressing personnel issues, maintaining open communication, and seeking guidance and resources to create a healthier work environment within the organization.