



Scenario: Emotional Support and Workload

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 \(EAP\)](#).

Mark is a full-time indeterminate employee and has been in the same substantive position and section for the past eight years. He is married to Claudette, who suffers from progressive cancer and has been under life-prolonging treatment regimens on and off for the past three years.

Mark has been very grateful for the flexibility shown to him by his employer, which has enabled him to take various forms of leave to assist Claudette in handling her condition and treatments. Mark now has an increasingly negative paid leave, however, due to the support he feels from his coworkers as well as his income, he very much wants to keep working. Claudette is no longer able to work, and they both depend on Mark's salary.

Mark comes to work regularly and is obviously under serious stress that fluctuates day to day. He spends considerable time talking about his circumstances with different coworkers, which is very consoling to him. One of the employees in the section, Mike, has come to the manager to express his concerns, in confidence, that there is a serious obstacle to productivity in the section because of all the personal support Mark is receiving. This is resulting in some employees, including himself, feeling like they are carrying a disproportionate share of the workload. Mike feels that something must change.

Categories

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

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle to “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” and “Serve Canada before Self” in the workplace.
- Discuss the ethical values of courage, stewardship, integrity and excellence regarding this scenario.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the problem in this scenario? What are the considerations?
 - Open group discussion.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to Defence Ethics and the military ethos?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Discuss the ethical principles to “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” and “Serve Canada before Self” in the workplace.
 - Discuss the ethical values of courage, stewardship, integrity, and excellence in this scenario.
 - The first principle is at odds with itself in this scenario. The difficulty of remedying this situation, on the face of it, is that respect and compassion for Mark’s condition are entirely justified, however, so is respect for everyone else’s workload and own needs.
 - The obligation to Serve Canada before self as well the values of integrity, courage and stewardship fall in line with Mike bringing forward his concerns.
3. What action(s) should the three members take in this scenario?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Option 1: One-on-one sessions between the team members and the manager should occur to find out what everyone’s perceptions of the situation are. It is the manager’s job to know whether the workload is fairly distributed among all – though “fair” here is exactly what is unclear depending on one’s definition of “fairness”. It is often difficult to compare productivity from person to person, unless they are all doing the same task and there is some agreed-upon view of the relative importance of quality and quantity.
 - Option 2: Hire a short-term person to support team. If the team really is in a state of hardship, in relation to workload, the manager ought to seek a short-term resource solution, if the budget room exists. Perhaps that person can be of special support to Mike if he is having a pressing work problem.
 - Option 3: Flexible working hours and working from home could be solutions for Mike, while continuing to ensure he can benefit emotionally from the support of colleagues. It’s difficult to imagine Mark himself would not want to remain productive to the extent possible, to support the rest of the team, while, of course, also being able to support his wife at least as much as he has been up until now.