



# Scenario: Pink Hair on Parade

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

A group of soldiers are on parade practicing for Remembrance Day. One of them, Private (Pte) Jones, has recently dyed their shoulder-length hair bright pink, taking advantage of the new, more relaxed dress regulations in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). The senior non-commissioned members (NCMs), Sergeant (Sgt) Wong and Master Corporal (MCpl) Thibodeau, are not happy with Pte Jones's choice of hair colour and think it is disrespectful and unprofessional. They approach Pte Jones and start to berate them for their appearance.

"Pte Jones, do you know how stupid you look on parade with that pink hair?" asks Sgt Wong. "If you get caught on video camera and end up on the news, our unit would be the laughingstock of the base. The base commander would be furious!" MCpl Thibodeau exclaims. Both NCMs are speaking loud and in angry voices. They vaguely threaten them that there will be consequences if they do not dye their hair back to a "human colour" before the Remembrance Day parade. "Do you know what the word "uniform" means? It means being all the same," shouts Sgt Wong.

Pte Jones thinks about how it is expected that the military will have boundaries that members must respect, including those related to dress and appearance. It is true that pink hair is outside the norm, but norms can change over time. Pte Jones wants to authentically express themselves through their style, but they do not want to cause problems for the Senior NCMs or the Base Commander if they appear in the video of the parade and then the public loudly disapproves. If that happened, it would take away from what the focus of the parade should be, remembering the veterans. The CAF dress instructions do, however, say that their hair colour is now permissible but, now in this real-life situation, Pte Jones does not know what to do.

### Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons, Obey and Support Lawful Authority
Values:	Integrity, Excellence, Courage
Cultural Themes:	Service, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Hateful Conduct, Discrimination, Abuse of Power, Harassment
GBA Plus Themes:	Rank
Audience:	Canadian Armed Forces

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# Facilitator's Guide

## Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principles of Respect the dignity of all persons and Obey and Support lawful authority in this scenario.
- Discuss the ethical values of Integrity, Excellence, and Courage in this scenario.

## Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the ethical dilemma in this scenario?
  - Open group discussion.
  - The ethical dilemma in this scenario is whether Pte Jones should prioritize their self-expression and challenge their superiors, while respecting the new CAF dress regulations, or avoid confrontation.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to Defence Ethics and the CAF ethos?
  - Open group discussion.
  - Respect the dignity of all persons: The Senior NCMs should be respectful to Pte Jones, regardless of hair colour. Consider also if the way the other members are talking to Pte Jones, intimidating them and threatening them is right and respectful to Pte Jones and others that could be showing outstanding and outside the norms of a group.
  - Obey and support lawful authority: All CAF members must support lawful authority, with the CAF Dress Instructions included.
3. In this scenario, what boundaries and norms are being challenged by Private Jones's hair colour?
  - Open group discussion.
4. What possible courses of action could Pte Jones take in this scenario? Which is the best option? Why?
  - Option 1: Pte Jones could insist that they are in line with the new CAF dress instructions. They could show the NCMs the specific regulation at [Dress instructions | Section 2 Appearance - Canada.ca](#) (section 2-2-5). They could leave their hair colour as it is.
  - Option 2: Pte Jones could dye their hair prior to the Remembrance Day parade. Although the dress regulations allow for pink hair, they do not want to cause a stir or endure any consequences from the Senior NCOs.
  - Option 3: Seek advice. Pte Jones could seek out advice from an ethics officer or someone else in the chain of command, such as the unit Sergeant-Major.
5. In 2022, the CAF dress regulations were updated to be more inclusive and aligned with societal norms, while still respecting safety and operational effectiveness. Why do you think this was deemed necessary?
  - Open group discussion.
  - Societal Norms: The CAF is a microcosm of Canadian society. As much as is possible, policies applying to CAF members, including standards of dress, should reflect the changing norms in Canadian society. This will welcome a more diverse group of CAF members, which will benefit the CAF as diversity is a known force multiplier. Ref.: [Dress instructions | Section 2 Appearance - Canada.ca](#) (section 2-2-4-d)
  - Inclusion: The practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources, where all members have a sense of belonging and are encouraged to be their authentic selves. Leaders are to treat with dignity and respect to all personnel under their care. In some cases, additional accommodations may be needed. Specific religious or spiritual accommodations, in respect of this policy, are regulated under [DAOD 5516-3: Religious or Spiritual Accommodation](#).

Additional reference: [Changes to the Canadian Forces Dress Instructions - Canada.ca](#).