



Scenario: Privileged Platform

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 \(EAP\)](#).

You are attending a course where several retired military members have been invited to share personal experiences and opinions. The Directing Staff (DS) stresses that the exchange with the veterans is offered as a privileged platform.

During the questions and answers (Q&A) session, one of the DS asks one of the presenters what he thinks about increasing diversity in the current military environment. Much to the obvious satisfaction of some, and the discomfort of several others, the retired guest shared his scepticism with what he referred to as “social experiments.”

He backed up his opinion with historical “data” in reference to operational failures involving diverse people in roles for which they were ill-suited.

The language that he used to refer to women, Indigenous Peoples, and racialized people was quite inappropriate. The presenter’s comments were controversial enough to create uneasiness within the group.

After the presentation, the DS chose not to present a rebuttal statement. You feel that it was the responsibility of the DS to address the inappropriateness of the comments.

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons, Obey and Support Lawful Authority
Values:	Integrity, Courage, Stewardship
Cultural Themes:	Service, Identity, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Hateful Conduct
GBA Plus Themes:	Gender, Indigenous (All), Race/Ethnicity, Sex
Audience:	Canadian Armed Forces

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in the workplace.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, courage, and stewardship in this scenario.
- Discuss hateful conduct regarding gender and racial biases in this scenario.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What would you do in this situation? What are the considerations?
 - Allow open discussion from the group.
 - Ethical concerns: In this scenario, inappropriate comments are said about women, Indigenous Peoples and racialized people. These comments are hateful/bigoted and not in accordance with Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) policies. You feel that the DS should have addressed the issue.
 - Personal factors: Although the comments from the veteran offend you, the DS does not seem to share your concerns. You would like to say something but, as a student in training, you know that you are being evaluated. You may doubt your ability to credibly challenge what the veteran is saying, and your comments might be perceived as disrespectful.
 - Environmental factors: The veterans are invited to share personal experiences and opinions. Some of the comments are inappropriate because they portray a negative image of women, Indigenous Peoples and racialized people. The comments do not seem to bother the DS, although there is an obvious feeling of uneasiness amongst the students.
2. What is the ethical dilemma in this situation?
 - There is no question that these comments are inappropriate, that they reflect one person's opinion and are not representative of CAF values. However, it does test your personal values and it takes courage to stand-up and challenge someone else's point of view.
 - How do positions of power and hierarchies play a role in this scenario?
 - How would your response differ if you were a woman, Indigenous person or racialized person listening to these remarks?
 - How would these comments impact the CAF institutional reputation if they got out to a wider audience?
3. What are some potential courses of action that could be taken in this scenario? What should you do? Why?
 - Option 1: Challenge the veteran's point of view and explain that his opinion conflicts with CAF values. You may want to add that, in your opinion, diverse perspectives contribute significantly to the operational effectiveness of the CAF. You might be viewed as being disrespectful to an honoured guest.
 - Option 2: Address the situation with your DS and ask for an explanation. If you report the incident, you will violate the concept of “privileged platform,” thus risking the trust and confidence of the DS and your colleagues.
 - Option 3: Do not say anything. However, allowing such comments to go unchallenged is also disrespectful to various marginalized groups.