



Scenario: Rooting Out the Weak

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 \(EAP\)](#).

"I'm fed up having to deal with incompetence!" declares Sgt Bill Portman. "I asked them to do one simple task and they can't even do that right."

"Who are you talking about?" asks MCpl Sanger.

Sgt Portman is a Signal Operator (Sig Op) posted to Ottawa for the first time. Since joining the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), other than two overseas operations, he's only been posted to large Army bases. He's confident, technically skilled and rumoured to be a contender for advancement to higher ranks. MCpl Sanger, also a Sig Op, is happy to have Sgt Portman as a supervisor, even if he's a little blunt.

"It's Geri Barteaux" says Sgt Portman. "I was asked to provide output stats for the first phase of our project so I asked Geri to do it since I hate admin. They missed a whole section and when I asked them about it, they looked like they were going to cry. I mean, c'mon, get a backbone and do the job right."

"No offence, Sgt, but Geri is a soft-spoken person, and I don't think they're used to working with that software," says MCpl Sanger. "I heard they're likely temporarily going to replace Warrant Officer (WO) Marconi when he gets posted."

"What?" asks Sgt Portman loudly. "I'm not working for someone who can't figure out a simple software program."

A few weeks later, MCpl Sanger overhears a conversation between Geri and a Sgt from another section. "I think Sgt Portman is going to be trouble for me," says Geri sadly. "He obviously doesn't like me because he questions everything I do and everything I ask him to do. It's always a challenge. Now he keeps telling jokes, usually within earshot of my cubicle, about the difference between weak leaders and strong ones."

"He's not used to working with a lot of civilian staff," says the Sgt. "You aren't weak. I'm sure he'll come around."

"I'm not so sure," replies Geri. "The other day I found a file on my desk with several advertisements for position assignments in other units. I think he's trying to bully me into leaving this position."

MCpl Sanger is not really surprised at what he overheard. Sgt Portman has made no surprise about how he feels about working with Geri, and anyone else he thinks is "weak". He's also made some jokes about how the military should go back to being a "true military". While MCpl Sanger doesn't share Sgt Portman's views, he thinks that if his Sgt did place the job advertisements, it wasn't only in poor taste, but it was wrong. Then again, maybe a colleague of Geri's put them on their desk thinking they might be interested in them. Later that week, MCpl Sanger is working through his lunch and hears Sgt Portman on the phone in the cubicle next to him.

"Yup, I'll get rid of them. Maybe I'll start my own information operation campaign. I'll call it OP INTIMIDATION." Now MCpl Sanger is quite certain what the Sgt is trying to do. He feels bad for Geri, but he's not sure what he could do about it.

"They'll probably just handle it themselves," he thinks to himself. "But then again, I don't think Sgt Portman is the kind of guy to back off."

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons, Obey and Support Lawful Authority
Values:	Integrity, Loyalty, Courage, Stewardship, Excellence
Cultural Themes:	Service, Identity, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Harassment, Hateful Conduct
GBA Plus Themes:	Culture, Gender
Audience:	Defence Team

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle of Respect the Dignity of all Persons as well as Obey and Support Lawful Authority in this setting.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, loyalty, courage, stewardship, and excellence in this scenario.
- Discuss harassment, bias, intimidation, and bystander technique intervention in this scenario.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the problem in this scenario?
 - Open group discussion.
 - The ethical dilemma revolves around whether MCpl Sanger should confront Sgt Portman, report his actions to superiors or the appropriate channels, or take other actions to address the situation.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to Defence Ethics and the CAF ethos?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Discuss the ethical principle of Respect the Dignity of all Persons and Obey and Support Lawful Authority in this setting.
 - Discuss the ethical values of integrity, loyalty, courage, stewardship, and excellence in this scenario.
3. Is it ethical for team members to openly express a bias against certain colleagues? What responsibilities do colleagues have in supporting those that are being mistreated?
 - Everyone has a responsibility to lead by example and promote a positive workplace.
 - Everyone has a responsibility to support and protect one another, speak up against unethical behavior, and ensure a safe and respectful working environment for everyone.
4. Would the ethical considerations be different if Geri was non-binary? Note that harassment based on gender identity is illegal and unethical.
5. What possible action(s) should MCpl Sanger take in this scenario? Why?
 - Open group discussion
 - Option 1: Discuss with Sgt Portman. MCpl Sanger may choose to engage in a constructive conversation with Sgt Portman to address the situation honestly and respectfully. There is a risk that the Sgt will become angry and frustrated and turn against the MCpl. Consider the use of bystander technique to promote healthy workplace and avoid this situation.
 - Option 2: Ignore the situation. He even thinks that Geri can handle this situation on their own. This may not be the best option because if Geri does not act, the bullying, harassment, and intimidation will most likely continue.
 - Option 3: Discuss with the chain of command. Notifying the chain of command would lead to action being taken to address the situation.