



Scenario: Spicy Assumptions

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 \(EAP\)](#).

As unit members log in for their weekly virtual team meeting, people start to chatter about what they'll be having for lunch. "I just ordered curry from this delicious Indian restaurant," said Melanie Rainie. "I'm supporting a local business that delivers lunch."

"Really? I hate that stuff. It always upsets my stomach!" replies Master Corporal (MCpl) Rupali Patel.

"Girl, how did you not starve to death as a child?" asks Melanie. The two burst out into laughter.

Bill Flannagan, the unit harassment prevention advisor, joined the call moments ago. He says he needs to speak to Melanie after the meeting. That afternoon, MCpl Patel asks her friend and colleague what Bill wanted to talk to her about.

"Well, he warned me that what I said earlier could be interpreted as harassment," explains Melanie.

"What?!" shouts MCpl Patel.

"He said that I was negatively stereotyping you and your culture by suggesting that all you were fed as a child was curry," said Melanie. "Anyhow, I'm sorry if I offended you."

"Offended me? Mel, please," replies MCpl Patel. "You have nothing to apologize for. Our relationship has been founded on humor and fun! I know that it's Bill's job to deal with racism and harassment, but it would have been nice if he would have asked me before approaching others on my behalf." Everybody in our team pokes fun at each other's likes and dislikes. Frankly, I think it's a bit of an overreaction that we can't joke about curry just because my name is Patel."

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons
Values:	Courage
Cultural Themes:	Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Hateful Conduct
GBA Plus Themes:	Culture, Race/Ethnicity, Religion
Audience:	Defence Team

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in this scenario.
- Discuss the ethical value of courage.
- Discuss Hateful Conduct and racial/ethnic discrimination policies with respect to this scenario.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the problem in this scenario?
 - Open group discussion.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to Defence Ethics?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Discuss the ethical obligation of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in this scenario.
 - Discuss the ethical value of courage this scenario.
3. How does hateful conduct policy come into play in this situation? At what level is this situation best addressed? Why or why not?
 - Open group discussion
 - Culturally insensitive or otherwise offensive comments can be a form of harassment and must be taken very seriously. Should leadership be informed, as “military supervisors and civilian managers have the primary responsibility and means of ensuring the compliance of their Department of National Defence (DND) employees and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members.” (DAOD 5012-0)?
4. Can we still make that kind of joke if there is a personal relationship between the two people, and a previous history of joking? Does it make a difference if the people joke telling are from the same culture/religion/ethnicity etc.? Why or why not?
 - Open group discussion
 - Joke tellers need to be aware of the possibility that they might offend and create negative reactions. The acceptability of a joke largely depends on the relationship that exists between the person who is telling the joke and those hearing it.
 - Context matters and while potentially sensitive jokes could be funny to some, joke tellers should pay attention to their audience and be confident that it will not prompt largely negative reactions in the audience.
5. Whose responsibility is it to call out possible harassment? How does our own bias contribute to what we see as harassment or just joking?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Body language, intent, and impact are all things we can consider when determining if a joke borders into harassment. We also need to consider that the joke may be a micro-aggression towards another person or group of people.
 - Micro aggressions are very common in our society, and many people who are part of marginalized or racialized groups are used to them however, they are still forms of harassment and need to be condemned.