



Scenario: Standing Up for a Transgender Soldier

Group Size: 4-15

This scenario contains explicit language and references to transphobia, harassment, and threats which may be emotionally activating for some people. If you need support, you can contact the [Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre \(SMSRC\)](#) at 1-844-750-1648 (24/7/365) or access the [services for Canadian Armed Forces members and Defence Team employees](#).

Corporal (Cpl) Marc Bédard is on patrol duty with his platoon when he notices one of the new recruits, Private (Pte) Riley Downes, has openly spoken out about being a transgender man, and is falling behind the rest of the group. Cpl Bédard asks him what's wrong, and Pte Riley tells him that he is feeling sick. Pte Riley looks pale and sweaty, and Cpl Bédard wonders if he ate something bad. Cpl Bédard tells Pte Riley to stay close to him, and then he radios the sergeant (Sgt) to report Pte Riley's condition.

The sergeant doesn't seem to care. "That Downes," he says, "is a weakling and a freak, and should never have been allowed to join the army. *She's* not a real man anyhow. *She's* a confused little girl. I never wanted a transgender person in my platoon to start with. Don't worry about it, Bédard. I'm going to make sure that Downes either quits or gets kicked out."

Cpl Bédard is shocked and angry by the sergeant's words. He knows that Pte Riley is transgender, but he believes it doesn't take away from Pte Riley's role as a soldier or his place within the CAF. Cpl Bédard also believes Pte Riley is a good soldier and an honourable person and feels that everyone has had bad days physically where they may not perform to the best of their abilities. In Cpl Bédard's opinion, Pte Riley deserves respect and support like all other CAF members regardless of who they are, not hatred and abuse. Cpl Bédard wants to stand up for him, but he is afraid of the consequences due to the rank difference between him and the sergeant. The sergeant has a lot of influence and authority, and he could make his life a living hell. Cpl Bédard doesn't know what to do.

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of All Persons
Values:	Integrity, Loyalty, Courage, Excellence
Cultural Themes:	Service, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Sexual Misconduct, Hateful Conduct, Abuse of Power, Discrimination
GBA Plus Themes:	Gender, Rank
Audience:	Canadian Armed Forces

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle of Respect the dignity of all persons in relation to this scenario.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, loyalty, courage, and excellence in relation to this scenario.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the ethical dilemma in this scenario?
 - Open group discussion.
 - The ethical dilemma in this scenario is whether Cpl Marc Bédard should confront or report the Sgt for his discriminatory and abusive remarks towards Pte Riley Downes or remain silent to avoid conflict and retaliation.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to the Department of National Defence (DND) and Canadian Forces (CAF) Code of Values and Ethics?
 - Open group discussion.
 - **Respect the dignity of all persons:** Pte Riley Downes has the right to be treated with respect.
 - **Courage:** Cpl Marc Bedard will need to show moral courage to act on the unacceptable conduct of the Sgt.
3. What possible courses of action could be taken in this scenario? Which is the best option? Why?
 - **Option 1:** Marc could report the unacceptable conduct of the Sgt. Marc could also be an open and vocal ally to the 2SLGBTQI+ community and offer support to Pte Downes if he requests it. Marc can ensure that their platoon, and the CAF at large, is an open and safe space for all personnel.
 - **Option 2:** Ignore the incident. Marc could ignore the words of the Sgt. This would avoid any negative retaliation from the Sgt but would leave Riley open to future harassment, abuse, transphobia, and potentially negative career implications. By not reporting, Marc is actively contributing to more hate within the CAF culture. This is not the preferred option.
 - **Option 3:** Seek advice. Marc could speak to his unit's ethics officer or his chain of command to better understand what he should do considering the responsibility to support other CAF members.
 - **Option 4:** Marc could work with the affected person to ensure they receive support and inform them of their recourse options
4. How can we foster a culture of respect, diversity, and professionalism in the CAF workplace? Keeping in mind this scenario with Marc and Riley, what do you think are some of the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive team that the Sgt likely has not considered?
 - Open group discussion.

Note to facilitators:

- Please review the definitions of sex and gender identity.