



Scenario: Sticks and Stones

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 \(EAP\)](#).

Privates (Pte) Scott Macfarland and Joseph Ahmadi are reservists attending a course at their area training centre. They are cleaning the camp laundry room when Pte Macfarland comes across some graffiti carved into the back of the door – calling for “death to Muslims.”

“We’re not going to be able to paint over this; it’s carved too deep into the wood,” says an angry and visibly uncomfortable Pte Macfarland. “We’ve got to report this to the section commander.”

“No way!” responds Pte Ahmadi, as he turns away and starts to try and leave. His shoulders are turned down and in.

“Joe, it isn’t right not to report this,” Pte Macfarland says. “It’s deliberate, it’s hateful, and it might be aimed at you. We’re also an area with a lot of Muslim civilians and we can’t let this slide.”

“I appreciate that Scott, but no,” Pte Ahmadi insists. “I feel like I’ve earned the trust and respect of the platoon and most of the soldiers here this summer. Why let one idiot ruin all that? If the Commanding Officer finds out, the whole course could get into trouble.”

“But Joe, my conscience won’t let me do nothing,” says Pte Macfarland. “Besides, we have to report this, even just for admin reasons – the carving is too deep, so the door will have to be replaced.”

“Really, please don’t, it isn’t your problem. Maybe it was a joke, even if it is a bad one. There have been jokes made about your religion too, and you insisted I let them go. So, let’s just clean this up best we can and pretend it never happened. I don’t want to be a troublemaker; I just want to focus on the job we are here to do.”

Pte Macfarland is left wondering what he should do.

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons
Values:	Courage, Integrity
Cultural Themes:	Service, Identity, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Hateful Conduct, Racism
GBA Plus Themes:	Culture, Religion
Audience:	Defence Team

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss alleged Hateful Conduct based on a religious belief.
- Discuss incitement to violence against a group.

Facilitation Questions:

1. How could Private (Pte) Ahmadi or Pte MacFarland deal with their own doubt or disagreement about whether it is necessary to escalate this incident?
2. Does the graffiti carved in the door constitute hateful conduct? If so, does Pte MacFarland have the duty to ensure that the training establishment chain of command is made aware of what happened, despite Pte Ahmadi's concerns?
3. How can the chain of command in the training establishment address Pte Ahmadi's fear of reprisals?
4. Would the graffiti still require a response from the institution even if there were no Muslims present at the facility at the time of the vandalism since there is a civilian Muslim population nearby.
5. How does the leadership climate in the training establishment influence whether course students are likely to feel safe and comfortable to report this event?
6. What measures could the training establishment take immediately in addition to, or instead of, an investigation of the incident carried out while the course continued?
7. Pte Ahmadi points out that Pte MacFarland previously dismissed a bad joke against his religious institution as being unnecessary to turn into a formal complaint. Is there an essential difference between the two cases, or is it just a question of degree? Do any jokes that demean someone's faith constitute hateful conduct?
8. Question for civilian participants: If this was graffiti in an office washroom in a primarily civilian facility, how would the approach change? How would the emotions involved in the scenario change?