



## Scenario: The Insistent Sergeant

### Group Size: 4-15

**This scenario contains explicit language and references to sexual situations, including sexual harassment 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 have access to [services for Canadian Armed Forces members and Defence Team employees](#).**

A civilian employee, Mila, joined your office/unit several weeks ago. In her first week, you overheard your colleague, Sgt Oscar asking Mila on a date. Mila declined. Since then, both you and other colleagues have overheard Sgt Oscar repeating his request to Mila for a date on numerous occasions, in spite of her repeated refusals.

During a coffee break, you approach Mila and ask her how she is doing and how she is finding the new job. Although she likes the “job”, she says she doesn’t really like the environment and she is very uncomfortable with Sgt Oscar’s advances. She goes out of her way to try to avoid Sgt Oscar during the day, but their workstations are in the same corridor. She indicates that she is getting headaches, she does not want to come to work in the mornings, and she doesn’t know who to turn to. She is afraid to talk to her supervisor about the issue because her supervisor works closely with Sgt Oscar, and she is not sure she will be believed. You wonder how you can support her.

Meanwhile, in your view, Sgt Oscar’s behaviour, which is creating a stressful and potentially unsafe environment for Mila, amounts to sexual harassment. You advise Sgt Oscar of this. He jokes that you are “on the wrong side” and persists in repeating his requests in the days following, even when you are within earshot.

You again approach Sgt Oscar to discuss his behaviour. He tells you, “It took my father two years to convince my mother to marry him. I am sure Mila will eventually see how good I could be for her.” You realize he is not listening to you or to Mila and does not acknowledge that his behaviour is having a strong negative impact on another person. You are left wondering what steps to take.

### Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons Serve Canada before Self, Obey and Support Lawful Authority
Values:	Integrity, Courage
Cultural Themes:	Service, Identity, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Sexual Misconduct
GBA Plus Themes:	Gender
Audience:	Defence Team

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# Facilitator's Guide

## Learning Objectives:

- Recognize and be able to talk about sexual harassment.
- Understand that Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members have the responsibility to provide support to persons affected by sexual harassment.
- Be able to speak about some of the ways someone can report sexual harassment, in or outside the unit.
- Understand other ways in which CAF members can provide support to persons affected by sexual harassment.

## Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the difference between requesting someone go on a date with you and sexually harassing them? *References* [DAOD 5012-0 Harassment Prevention and Resolution](#) and [Canada Labour Code, Ch 12 – Sexual Harassment](#)
  - Asking someone out on a date is considered benign as it is very normal for people to develop feelings and have attractions for other people, and to want to form relationships. This can be the case for anyone, including within the CAF/DND.
  - Persistence despite refusals can constitute sexual harassment. This behaviour could contribute to a toxic work environment and negative unit climate. In explicitly declining the very first request for a date (e.g., by saying no to Sgt Oscar), Mila was not providing implicit consent to continue being pressured in the same way.
2. In your opinion, what are the potential risks/problems that could arise with the scenario?
  - Sgt Oscar may not recognize that repeatedly asking someone for a date constitutes sexual harassment. Why is this? Are there aspects of power or privilege at work here?
  - Mila experiences significant discomfort when coming to work. Her feelings of safety being compromised and the tension in the office could result in her lack of productivity, lack of engagement, absenteeism, have negative impact on her mental and physical well-being and as a result, have career implications, especially if no one is made aware or have done anything to ensure she feels safe going to work.
  - Potential impacts on colleagues witnessing this kind of behavior.
  - Administrative or disciplinary actions could follow.
  - Sgt Oscar's actions could lead to tensions and a negative climate in the office/unit.
  - Potential for continuation and amplification of Sgt Oscar's behaviour if not addressed. Not taking action to rectify the situation signifies that this behavior is considered acceptable.
3. What could prevent you from further addressing this situation with Sgt Oscar? What possible repercussions could someone fear if they were to address the situation?
  - Normalizing and validating that many barriers exist and that it can be hard to have these conversations
4. What do you think you should do in this situation? Should you be escalating this?
  - Reiterate to the Sgt that his behaviour may be considered sexual harassment and is not acceptable within any workplace, especially at CAF/DND. Specifically, inform the Sgt that his behaviour is not in line with the Defence Ethics Programme (DEP). The first principle is "Respect the Dignity of all Persons."
  - Consider discussing what concrete steps or actions should be taken to report this situation.
  - Check in with and support the new employee. Potential support (if applicable and desired by the affected person) such as discussing what can be done to make her feel safer at work and/or providing information about sexual harassment reporting and supports such as the Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre.
  - Ensure that Mila is informed of the actions taken in case there is backlash and to avoid her being blindsided if the Sergeant were to confront her on this situation. Explain that no repercussions are acceptable and support her to consider her reporting options.