



Scenario: The Weight of Words

Group Size: 4-15

This scenario contains explicit language and references to hateful conduct and race-based harassment 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 Corporal (Cpl) Ben Campbell walked into the Junior Ranks mess at the base. He noticed a group of his peers awkwardly laughing. In the center of the group was Cpl Jay Singh, his expression was stoic yet hurt as he endured yet another "joke" about his race. Cpl Campbell felt a knot in his stomach. "This isn't right," he thought to himself.

From the corner of the room, Cpl Trish Lavoie, another bystander, caught his eye. Her discomfort mirrored his own. Their unit had held a training session on the topic of workplace diversity and inclusion during their yearly orientation session back in the fall. They should all know this is unacceptable behaviour.

Cpl Campbell was not sure what to do about what he was witnessing. The importance of keeping good relations with his colleagues was very clear to him and he didn't want to be called a snitch if he reported the misconduct. On the other hand, he also felt bad for Cpl Singh and wished that this type of racial harassment would no longer have a place within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) culture.

Cpl Lavoie approached him, upset about the situation. "This is hateful conduct," she tells Cpl Campbell. "We have a duty to report this to the chain of command. There is even an incident tracking system for this type of thing." Although Cpl Campbell was also wondering what he should do, he had also recently heard that the "duty to report" had been repealed. He was confused. "Perhaps we should speak to Jay directly to see what he would like to do about the situation. As he is the victim of this harassment, maybe he should make the call and not us," Cpl Campbell suggested.

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons
Values:	Integrity, Loyalty, Courage, Stewardship, Excellence
Cultural Themes:	Service, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Harassment, Racism, Hateful Conduct
GBA Plus Themes:	Race/Ethnicity
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, stewardship, and excellence in relation to this scenario.
- Discuss the repeal of the duty to report.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the ethical dilemma in this scenario?
 - Open group discussion.
 - The ethical dilemma in this scenario revolves around the conflict between the moral obligation to report misconduct and the potential social repercussions of doing so. Corporal Campbell is caught between his duty to uphold the values of workplace respect, diversity, and inclusion, and his concern over being labeled negatively by his peers.
 - The situation is further complicated by the recent repeal of the duty to report, leaving Corporal Campbell uncertain about the correct course of action. Ultimately, the dilemma is whether to take a stand against racial harassment or to prioritize camaraderie and personal reputation within the unit.
 2. What considerations are at play with respect to the DND and CAF code of Values and Ethics?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Respect the dignity of all persons: Cpl Jay Singh has the right to be treated in a respectful manner in the workplace.
 - Courage: CAF members must refuse to condone unethical conduct and to discuss and resolve ethical issues with the appropriate authorities. Dealing with this situation will require courage.
 - Excellence: CAF members are expected to foster and contribute to a work environment that promotes teamwork and respect. The harassment, based on race, that Cpl Singh has been facing is not in line with the ethical value of excellence.
 3. What possible courses of action could Cpl Campbell and/or Cpl Lavoie take in this scenario? Which is the best option? Why?
 - Option 1: They could immediately report the incidents of hateful conduct and racial harassment to their chain of command.
 - Option 2: Ignore the incident. They do not want to be seen as snitches and Cpl Campbell heard that the duty to report had been repealed.
 - Option 3: Speak to Cpl Singh and ask him how he would like to deal with the incidents of misconduct. Offer him support, regardless of his decision about reporting.
 4. In this scenario related to hateful conduct and racial harassment, do you think that CAF members who are bystanders to this type of misconduct to have a duty to report?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Consider the ethical responsibilities as a bystander to hateful conduct and racial harassment.
 - There may be more than one right answer to what CAF members should do when faced with this type of scenario. The aim of this discussion is to help participants consider what they would do in response to a situation of hateful conduct based on racial harassment, in order to better help prepare themselves to act in a way that is in line with their beliefs and the CAF ethical principles and values when/if the time comes.
- Note: In 2024, there was a repeal to the duty to report obligations that were previously in place for CAF members. While CAF members may still feel, and act upon, an ethical duty to report, this is no longer a legal or administrative obligation.