



Scenario: Time to Leave?

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 \(EAP\)](#).

Serge joins Victoria, who is sitting alone in the cafeteria taking a rare coffee break. "What's up Vic? You seem out of it."

"I'm thinking of accepting a transfer to another organization," replies Victoria. "Leaving? But you've only been here a year, and we really appreciate the quality of your work. You would certainly be a big loss to the organization."

"Well," replies Victoria, "the truth is that this year has been a non-stop series of little things that have caused friction between my supervisor Mei and I."

"Do you mind telling me about it?" asks Serge. "Maybe I can change your mind."

"As you know," explains Victoria, "Mei is a long-time friend of Noémie and Trish, who work for her. So, when I mentioned a few times in my first weeks that I'd noticed some documents had been misfiled, her reaction was to accuse me of trying to look good by criticizing fellow employees. After that, if I found a misfiled document - and it happened regularly - I corrected the situation and kept it to myself. Mei also takes two or three long smoke breaks each day with her two friends. One day, I dared mention that it had been very busy while they were gone, and Mei exploded and accused me of being jealous of the good working relationship that Noémie and Trish have with her. Let's say that I have found it difficult to enjoy working in this kind of environment."

"Have you considered raising the issue with someone higher up?" asks Serge.

"Well... A few months ago, I had an informal chat with Juliette, our director. She was very sympathetic, and said she was aware of the problem but explained that Mei was just one-and-a-half years from retirement. She encouraged me to hang in there." "Are you leaving because another year is too much?" asks Serge.

"Yes and no. The last straw came a few weeks ago when I got my performance report. It is the worst one I have ever received in my 15 years at the Department of National Defence (DND). I do not want my career to suffer any more."

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons
Values:	Integrity
Cultural Themes:	Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	Not Specific
GBA Plus Themes:	Not Specific
Audience:	Defence Team

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principle of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in the workplace.
- Discuss how ethical value of integrity in the workplace.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the problem in this scenario?
 - Open group discussion.
 - It shows a conflict that arises from a lack of respect for others in workplace relationships. It also shows us what can happen when management does not take remedial action.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to Defence Ethics?
 - Open group discussion.
 - Discuss the ethical principle of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in the workplace.
 - Discuss the ethical value of integrity in the workplace.
3. What actions could the director have done to mitigate the issues when Victoria brought the issue higher? Is she promoting a healthy workplace for all?
 - The case points out the effect of weak leadership on the ethical climate of an organization. Assuming the director was not aware of the existence of the problem until Victoria brought it to her attention (although she should have been – a separate but serious leadership problem), the director should have taken remedial action to address the situation once she did become aware.
 - At a minimum, the director should have told Victoria that she would monitor the situation and not merely advise her to “hang in there” until Mei’s retirement, which was still a year and a half away. We can imagine many reasons the director would want to adopt an avoidance strategy to deal with the situation, but all of them amount to evading the responsibilities of leadership.
 - One of the most important leadership obligations is a commitment to an ethically, healthy workplace that fosters fairness, diligence, and respect for others.
4. How would this situation make you feel personally if you were Victoria?
 - We spend 8 hours a day at work; what is it like to have a supervisor who is explosive, accusatory, exclusionary and forms cliques with other staff members?
 - How do experiences and relationships like this impact the broader Defence Team culture?