

Sexist Behaviors/Sexual Harassment Scenario

Learning Objective: Upon completion of this scenario and lesson, the learner should be able to identify inappropriate sexist and sexual harassment behaviors. Additionally, the learner should be able to create and implement a course of action to address and prevent a culture of inappropriate behaviors.

Focus: Sexist behaviors, sex-based discrimination, and sexual harassment awareness

Intended Audience: EO Advisors and/or Leaders

Setting: Conversation between Private Smith (female) and Private Williams (male)

Narrator: In the scenario you are about to view, two service members discuss their work on a recent assignment. One of the service members feels as if they are being treated unfairly. As you observe this scenario think about what you would do if this issue was brought to your attention.

Williams: I'm sure glad to be done moving all of the equipment, talk about hard work!

Smith: Yeah, I suppose it was for some of you... but I had to stand back and watch while everyone else looked down on me for not contributing.

Williams: Well, you can't really blame them. They were doing all of the heavy lifting.

Smith: They were, but that wasn't my choice. Whenever we have to move equipment, Major Jordan tells me to just let the "bigger guys" handle it. Maybe he doesn't realize this makes the men respect me less. But ya know, I'm just as capable of moving something from one place to another as they are.

Williams: Yeah, I agree but I wouldn't be complaining. Doesn't it make things easier for you?

Smith: It really doesn't. Like I said, people respect me less when they do all of the hard work and I'm always on the sideline you know? And that really carries over into other situations too.

Williams: What do you mean by other situations?

Smith: Because, I feel like it reinforces all of the men's beliefs that I'm inferior to them. They think that because I'm a woman they can treat me like a piece of meat. Like last week when we all were having lunch before our meeting. Let's just say, that's the last time I wear any makeup on this base.

Williams: Really? What happened?

Smith: It was just awful. They were all calling me things like Barbie, and Britney Spears, and asking me what I was doing later. They were objectifying me and telling me they wanted to "teach me things." As if I'm interested in all of them... or any of them for that matter. I just want to do my job and have the same opportunities to prove my worth that everyone else gets. And on top of that, one of them keeps

saying he likes to imagine what I'd look like in a bikini. First of all, gross! And second, none of them have to deal with anything like that. I'm sure they wouldn't like it if they were the only man in the group and all of the women were making jokes at their expense.

Williams: That actually sounds like some serious harassment going on there. You should consider bringing this up with your commanding officer.

Smith: Well the problem is my commander is always so busy, and I really don't want to get excluded any more than I already am. I just don't know how to bring it up without sounding like I'm complaining about something petty. It's not like anyone has physically attacked me. And they all joke with each other a lot, but it just seems unfair and it all makes me so uncomfortable.

Target Audience: Leaders

Lesson Goals

- To identify sexist behaviors, sex discrimination, and sexual harassment occurrences
- To explore possible effects of sexist behaviors, sexual harassment and discriminating behaviors
- Generate thoughts and ideas about how to best address this situation as a senior leader.
- To understand different approaches in addressing potential issues

Physical Setting

- Attendees seated at tables viewing VCT and transitioning into groups assigned by a facilitator to discuss possible courses of action. Then, share group's decision amongst all class members.

Procedures:

- Facilitator will arrange room so members are able to observe the VCT scenario.
- Facilitator will read the goals of the lesson to the members.
- Facilitator will show the VCT to the attendees.

Instructor reads: The animation you are about to view depicts a real life situation. After viewing the clip, you will answer some individual questions and then discuss the situation as a group.

Facilitator will now play the animation.

Facilitator reads: Now that you have viewed the scenario, you have 5 minutes to individually answer the following questions:

1. What behaviors did you observe in the animation? Were any exhibited behaviors sexist, sex discrimination, or sexual harassment? Which ones?
2. Name some possible effects the female may have felt after the incident.
3. As a leader, explain how you could possibly address and correct this issue.
4. How would you prevent further occurrences such as these in your unit?

After the 5 minutes, the facilitator reads the following:

Now that you have had the opportunity to come up with your own responses, as a group you will now share your responses with each other and come up with a consensus to share with the entire class. You will have 15 minutes to discuss your responses.

After the 15 minutes, ask for groups to volunteer to share their responses with the larger group.

Facilitator will use the discussion to explore concepts found in the discussion key.

Discussion Key: There are several areas that should be noted in this scenario. The first is the soldier's employment (or lack thereof) in doing manual tasks. Some people look at the abilities of others through their own sexism and the sex roles they've learned through their socialization. Is the leader determining the task assignments based on this or some other logical reason? If the decisions are based on sexism (intentional or otherwise), then these task assignments are a form of gender discrimination (treating others differently based on their sex). While in this scenario it may not seem like a big deal, it can foster

bigger issues. Others may become resentment if they perceive that they are the only doing the heavy lifting and others are just bystanders. This can lead to her being discriminated against by others or alienated or ostracized because they feel she isn't pulling her fair share (even though that decision was not hers to make). Later in the scenario she expresses indicators of a sexually harassing and potentially hostile environment. The attention and comments she received are clearly unwanted as she so states. In the spectrum of harm, unaddressed sexist behaviors have the potential to develop into sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and ultimately, potentially to sexual assault. It is important to engage early and eliminate these type behaviors when first identified. These issues rarely "go away" on their own, and direct leader involvement and action is essential in eliminating these behaviors at the earliest opportunity.

Target Audience: EOA Course

Lesson Goals

- To identify sexist behaviors, sex discrimination, and sexual harassment occurrences
- To explore possible effects of sexist behaviors, sexual harassment and discriminating behaviors
- Generate thoughts and ideas about how to best address this situation as a EOA/PM
- To understand different approaches in addressing issues

Physical Setting

- Students seated in horseshoe viewing VCT and transitioning into pairs assigned by instructor to discuss possible courses of action. Then sharing group's decision amongst all group members.

Procedures:

- Facilitator will arrange students in a horseshoe, then transition to circle after viewing VCT.
- Facilitator will read the goals of the lesson to the students.
- Facilitator will show VCT to students.

Instructor reads: The animation you are about to view depicts a real life situation. After viewing the clip, you will answer some individual questions and then discuss the situation as a group.

Instructor will now play the animation.

Instructor reads: Now that you have viewed the scenario, you have 5 minutes to individually answer the following questions:

1. What behaviors did you observe in the animation? Were any exhibited behaviors sexism, sexual harassment, or sex discrimination? Which ones?
2. How do the behaviors seen compare to Allport's Levels of Acting out Prejudice spectrum?
3. What were the indicators you saw that indicated sexual harassment or discriminating behaviors?
4. Name some possible effects the female may have felt after the incident.
5. As a leader, explain how you could possibly address and correct this issue.
6. As an EOA, what is your role in addressing these type behaviors? What approaches can you use?

After the 5 minutes, the instructor reads the following:

Instructor reads: Now that you have had the opportunity to come up with you own responses, as a group of 2-3, you will share your responses with each other and come up with a consensus to share with the entire class. You will have 10 minutes to discuss your responses.

After the 10 minutes, ask for groups to volunteer to share their responses with their group. Facilitator will use the discussion to explore concepts found in Dr. Gordon Allport's Levels of Acting out Prejudice spectrum and the discussion key.

Discussion Key: There are several areas that should be noted in this scenario. The first is the soldier's employment (or lack thereof) in doing manual tasks. Some people look at the abilities of others through

their own sexism and the sex roles they've learned through their socialization. Is the leader determining the task assignments based on this or some other logical reason? If the decisions are based on sexism (intentional or otherwise), then these task assignments are a form of gender discrimination (treating others differently based on their sex). While in this scenario it may not seem like a big deal, it can foster bigger issues. Others may become resentment if they perceive that they are the only doing the heavy lifting and others are just bystanders. This can lead to her being discriminated against by others or alienated or ostracized because they feel she isn't pulling her fair share (even though that decision was not hers to make). Later in the scenario she expresses indicators of a sexually harassing and potentially hostile environment. The attention and comments she received are clearly unwanted. In the spectrum of harm, unaddressed sexist behaviors have the potential to develop into sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and ultimately, potentially to sexual assault. It is important to engage early and eliminate these type behaviors when first identified. These issues rarely "go away" on their own and direct leader involvement and action is essential in eliminating these behaviors at the earliest opportunity.