



Video: Shared Secret 2023

Shared Secret: Facilitation Guide



Overview

This facilitation guide and accompanying video have been developed to assist equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) professionals and practitioners in discussing *Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces*.

Additional information on how to conduct a facilitation can be found in the *Leader's Conversation Guide* (available at deomi.mil).

This guided discussion is focused on the *Shared Secret* video. The video demonstrates potential behaviors one could see or hear in many environments. The facilitator can use the video and guide to discuss the demonstrated problematic behaviors and how the unit members and leaders can prevent, mitigate, or address them. Adherence to this facilitation guide is encouraged to ensure consistency in training delivery.

However, this guide is not all-inclusive and may be expanded based on the facilitator's experience. Throughout this guide, questions are framed to stimulate the facilitator's thoughts on areas to explore and consider in this process and the specific topic. Users should provide a controlled, safe, and nonattributorial environment where individuals will be willing to share their perspectives. EO and EEO professionals, practitioners, and leaders can use this event to review and educate their members on policy and acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Sexual harassment is covered in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1020.03, *Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces*.



Purpose

The objectives for this discussion:

- Define sexual harassment.
- Discuss the video and the behaviors seen within it.
- Grasp how the fear of harassment can affect the individual and the organization.
- Understand the escalation sexual harassment behaviors can take if not addressed.
- Discuss sexual harassment prevention strategies.

Preparation

This guide has been developed assuming that users have some basic facilitation skills and understand the facilitation process. Users should also review the *Leader's Conversation Guide* for additional parameters, techniques, and information on facilitation (available at deomi.mil). The *Leader's Conversation Guide* provides areas to consider, including the following:

- Site selection
- Ground rules the facilitation may use
- Question development
- How to conduct the discussion

Definitions

It is important to note that sexual harassment may not only occur in person but through electronic means as well, such as through the use of social media. DoDI 1020.03 defines these terms as follows:

- Harassment is defined as behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to a reasonable person, whether oral, written, or physical, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and deliberate or repeated offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature when:
 - Submission to such conduct is, either explicitly or implicitly, made a term or condition of a person's job, pay, or career.
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person.
 - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
 - Such conduct is so severe or pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the victim does perceive, the environment as hostile or offensive;
 - Such conduct is used or condoned by any person in a supervisory or command position, of any form of sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, pay, or job of a member of the Armed Forces or a civilian employee of the Department of Defense;
 - Such conduct includes any deliberate or repeated unwelcome verbal comments or gesture of a sexual nature by any member of the Armed Forces or a civilian employee of the Department of Defense.



Impacts of Sexual Harassment

Service members may fear being retaliated against when reporting harassment allegations. According to DoDI 1020.03, Section 2.5b, the DoD will hold leaders at all levels appropriately accountable for fostering a climate of inclusion that supports diversity, is free from harassment, and does not tolerate retaliation against those filing harassment complaints. It is also important to note that DoDI 1020.03 states there is no requirement for concrete psychological harm to the complainant for behavior to constitute sexual harassment. Behavior is sufficient to constitute sexual harassment if it is so severe or pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the complainant does perceive, the environment as hostile or offensive. Sexual harassment that goes unreported can affect the individual and the organization:

Individual	Organization
May fear reporting	Decreased readiness
Low self-esteem	Lack of trust and morale
May become depressed or anxious	Hostile work environment
Socially excluded	Culture of exclusion
Low productivity	Passive bystanders

Strategies to Prevent Sexual Harassment

As leaders, it is critical to be aware of our surroundings whether in the office or out in the field. Being able to create a healthy command climate where Service members feel heard and understood can make a great impact when it comes to reporting harassment. Some principles of prevention strategies are:

- Discuss avenues (including anonymously) for reporting inappropriate behaviors.

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- Discourage social media that supports harassment inappropriate behaviors. Policies and reporting procedures are clearly posted for Service members.
- Hold members accountable for leading/participating in inappropriate behaviors.

Notes:





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Process

Before the participants' arrival, determine and prepare the setting for the guided discussion. Ensure the video is prepared to view (direct from [Harassment Prevention and Response \(deomi.mil\)](https://deomi.mil) or may be predownloaded).

Video Description

Shared Secret

FOR FACILITATOR USE ONLY: The video tells the story about two Service members, Steven and Sarah, in which Sarah sexually harasses and bullies Steven. Steven had confided in Sarah that he was still a virgin. Following this discussion, Sarah sent him an inappropriate photo and text message (implying an unwanted sexual advance). He politely declined her offer. She then posted his personal information and phone number on social media, along with a link to a "hookup" site. He also found her gossiping to her friends at work about his status as a virgin. Steven asked Sarah to take down the post, as he started receiving inappropriate texts from multiple people. The video concludes with Steven confiding all of this information to a male civilian and asking him what he can do about this situation.

Video Participants

- **Victim:** Steven
- **Perpetrators:** Sarah
- **Bystanders:** Civilian male and other coworkers



Directions

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Validate: explain the purpose or objective of the discussion/training.
3. Set expectations and establish ground rules.
4. Introduce the topic (using the notes you created based on the topic).
5. Show and explain behaviors of sexual harassment.
6. Provide the handout (if used) to the participants.
7. **Read instructions:** You are about to watch a video that is made for awareness purposes only.
8. **Read instructions:** Answer the questions in your handout individually after watching the video. Then later, we will share your answers with the group.
9. Show the video.
10. Have participants answer the handout questions (5–10 minutes). Please encourage them to use critical thinking as they view the questions.
11. Lead a discussion based on the questions used.

Facilitator Notes

Suggestions: Display the questions on a bulletin board, butcher paper, or PowerPoint, or prepare them in a handout. Explain to the participants that they will need a pen and paper (or handout) to answer the questions you will use during the guided discussion. **The anticipated responses (ARs) after each question can assist the EO professional in identifying potential discussion points.**

**Facilitator Note:* The facilitator should be prepared to discuss the questions (or similar questions) with the participants.

**Give students ample time to answer the questions.*



Facilitator- Develop Questions

Below are potential questions and ARs for use in guiding the discussion. Before the session, the facilitator should review them and may develop their own. The provided handout matches the questions provided below. If you modify or add additional questions, modify the handout accordingly.

**Facilitator Note:* The facilitator should be prepared to discuss the questions (or similar questions) with the participants.

- Describe the behaviors shown in the video and how they constitute sexual harassment.

AR: Steven had shared a very personal detail about his life with his friend, Sarah (i.e., that he was a virgin). She later sent him a text with an (implied) sexual advance (words intended to initiate a sexual encounter with him) in order to “help” him lose his virginity. The text included a suggestive photo of Sarah that would have been considered offensive and unwelcome to a reasonable person. Steven thanked her for the offer but declined it, indicating he’d like to remain friends. The two had plans to have lunch together the next day. When he arrived for the lunch date, Sara was with a group of female friends. Sarah shunned him, and the group of women were laughing and staring at him. He heard one whisper, “no way!” It seemed obvious that Sara had shared the secret he had confided in her. Sarah had taken the harassment a step further, creating an intimidating, hostile, and offensive working environment. She then went on to post his personal details and phone number online, along with a link to a “hookup” site and a call for male and female volunteers to “help him figure out what he likes.” At this point, Steven was subjected to numerous suggestive texts and photos from strangers, as well as people he knew. It is important to note that Steven is now being cyberbullied. As stated in DoDI 1020.03, sexual harassment can occur through the use of electronic devices. Here, Sara is further harassing Steven, deliberately using the power of social media to inflict even more harm, creating a barrage of unwelcome sexual advances and offensive messages from strangers as well as people Steven knew.

- What are some assumptions you might make about Sarah’s behavior?

AR: Steven admitted to Sara that he was a virgin, but he didn’t necessarily indicate that it was a problem for him. People remain virgins for a variety of reasons (e.g., religion or waiting for the right partner). Sarah assumed that it was a problem that need to be remedied. It seems as though Sarah was probably offended by Steven declining her sexual advance. She turned from friendly to dismissive and then to mocking, harassing, and vengeful. We might also assume that posting Steven’s personal details with a link to a “hookup” site was not an effort to help him, but to stigmatize and humiliate him in front of his peers.

- What are the potential impacts of this harassing behavior? What if they are allowed to persist?

AR: Steven stated that he is “going through a rough time.” He has been mocked and ostracized by his closest friend and the extended friend group at work. In addition to feeling anxious, he is probably feeling lonely, and may be suffering other from other mental health issues (e.g., anger, resentment, embarrassment, fear). In addition to creating unnecessary mental anguish, it is likely that this harassment will impact his morale and his ability to meet work demands. In this case, there are bystanders (other coworkers) involved as well. This group’s behavior can reduce group cohesion and distract from the daily tasks/mission.

- In this video, there are multiple bystanders. What actions could they take?

AR: The bystanders in this video could tell the offender to stop what she is doing, as it is sexual harassment. They could also report the harassment to a supervisor, EO professional, or their command. Allowing these types of behaviors to continue can cause them to escalate into larger problems. It should be stated that this behavior is disruptive, unacceptable, and distracts others from the overall mission. They could reach out to Steve and offer their support and friendship as the situation develops.



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- What could happen if the behavior is not reported and who could be impacted?

AR: If the behavior is not reported, the victim’s mental and physical health will likely continue to deteriorate. He may continue to be ostracized by others in the group. Not only will this affect his productivity at work, it can also affect others in his work unit. In addition, the perpetrator may continue to harass and bully the current victim, as well as other victims in the future. Organizationally, mission readiness may decline and unit cohesion may erode.

- How can you prevent occurrences of similar behaviors in your unit? What actions can you take as a leader to address and correct this issue?

AR: Understand the importance of bystander intervention and train members on intervention techniques. Caution members to be very careful with social media: Avoid posting anything about anyone that is shared in confidence or that invites harassment. Develop different types of training to raise awareness on the issue. Provide research resources and training to all DoD personnel. Hold discussions in a controlled environment where all can speak freely. Use the DEOMI website to gather more information about the principles of prevention and create a zero-tolerance environment for such behaviors in the organization. Hold each other accountable and encourage members and leaders to correct perceived issues.

Think about other questions you may wish to ask the participants.

Reflection Questions

Question and AR:

Question and AR:



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Lead the Discussion

Open the discussion by asking volunteers to share their responses with the group based on the questions used. As you do so, keep in mind:

General Considerations

- Ensure all participants have an opportunity to share their thoughts.
- Encourage open communication among participants.
- When applicable, ask clarifying questions.
- Use anticipated responses to help the group when needed.
- Avoid “why” and close-ended questions.
- Remind participants of the ground rules when necessary.
- Remember to let participants know that you are listening.
- Take notes for your summary and conclusion.
- Paraphrase when participants are unclear with their answers/assist them in reaching the objectives.
- Let the discussion be fluent with little to no disruptions or corrections.

Examples of Other Questions That Can Be Asked:

- In your own words, how would you define sexual harassment?
- Where have you seen these behaviors in your organization or past organizations?
- What are some preventative measures to avoid a hostile environment from occurring?
- As a bystander, what can you do to encourage someone to report harassing behaviors?
- How can these behaviors, if gone unreported, affect mission readiness?

Close the Session

**Facilitator Note:* During the conclusion, paraphrase participant comments to show that they were heard. The provided conclusion is an example on how to close out the guided discussion.

End your discussion by restating the objectives covered at the beginning and provide closing comments.

Summary:

Restate the initial objectives:

- Define sexual harassment.
- Discuss the video and the behaviors seen within it.
- Grasp how the fear of harassment can affect the individual and the organization.
- Understand the escalation sexual harassment behaviors can take if not addressed.
- Discuss sexual harassment prevention strategies.

Potential Closing Comments

During this period, we explored how sexual harassment can impact the individual being harassed and the organization. As seen in this scenario, sexual harassment can happen through electronic means. An individual that is being sexually harassed may be fearful to report. If harassing behaviors are not addressed, mission readiness can decline, and a hostile work environment may occur.



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Everyone has a role in preventing harassment. To mitigate harassing behaviors, we must be proactive, address allegations without bias, and take appropriate actions as necessary. Some might consider the behaviors exhibited in this scenario as harmless, but they are not. They can bring division, a lack of trust, and low morale. As leaders and members, it is important that we be aware of these behaviors and impacts and do what we can to proactively prevent, diffuse, negate, and address concerns if they appear.

Handout

Video: Sexual Harassment

1. Describe the behaviors Steven is experiencing and how it is sexual harassment.
2. What are some assumptions you might make about Sarah's behavior?
3. What are the potential impacts of this harassing behavior? What if they are allowed to persist?
4. In this video, there are multiple bystanders. What actions could they take?
5. What could happen if the behavior is not reported and who could be impacted?
6. How can you prevent occurrences of similar behaviors in your unit? What actions can you take as a leader to address and correct this issue?



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