

# Facilitator's Guide

## Electronic Humor Stings



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This guide can assist equal opportunity professionals and leaders in determining the best possible solution for the related video.

## Training Objectives

- To discuss indicators and potential effects of observed behaviors
- To generate thoughts and ideas about how to best address this situation as a leader
- To recognize different approaches in addressing concerns

## What (behaviors) did you observe in the video?

- The Army SSG (SSG Griffin)
  - Received an unwanted email from his supervisor
  - He was upset due to the video making fun of disabled individuals
- The Air Force SMSGT (SMSGT Baletto)
  - He didn't want SSG Griffin to delete the email
  - He wanted SSG Griffin to inform someone who could stop the inappropriate emails

## If you observed this interaction, what assumptions could be made?

- At the individual level:
  - Members may not trust the supervisor who sent the email
  - Members do not agree with the viewpoints of the supervisor who sent the email
  - Members may not know who they can turn to when they experience inappropriate behaviors
  - There may be other inappropriate behaviors occurring and this was not a one time incident
- At the organizational level:
  - There is an acceptance and toleration of these type of discriminatory behaviors, especially since it is being demonstrated by a senior supervisor
  - There may be a polarization of individuals/teams
  - There may be a decreased performance due to inappropriate behaviors
  - Additional problems may be occurring and not known/appropriately addressed
  - Members might be being discriminated against based on the individual characteristics; if it is happening to a disabled individual, who else is being exposed to/affected by the behaviors?

## If you observed this interaction or received emails from your supervisor such as the one in this video, what could/should you do?

- Approach your supervisor and let them know you do not want to receive inappropriate emails and tell them how it impacts you when receiving emails such as these
- Inform another senior level supervisor what you received and ask for their assistance
- Notify your Equal Opportunity/Inspector General or someone who has the ability to advise the commander on what is occurring within their organization

## Discussion

There are many different possibilities that can be employed to resolve the situation as shown in the video. Ignoring and not addressing this type of behavior (sending inappropriate emails) can create an environment encouraging additional inappropriate emails, or escalated negative behaviors including discrimination towards an individual, class, or caste. The best approach to address this situation (since SSG Griffin already requested his supervisor to stop sending emails similar to the one in the video) would be for SSG Griffin to:

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- For military- ask the supervisor's supervisor, the Senior Enlisted Advisor or the Commander for help in correcting the inappropriate behavior, additionally most leaders have an "open door policy" where members can openly discuss their concerns
- For civilians- request assistance from the supervisor's supervisor, or contact an EEO professional to discuss options to correct the inappropriate behavior

### **How can you prevent further occurrences such as these?**

- Do not let this incident go unchallenged; the supervisor has already been requested to stop the behavior and did not; elevate the situation to another level
- Discourage those who act in an inappropriate manner; do not laugh, joke, or go along with an inappropriate behavior; challenge it and ask them to stop it; discuss with the offender the effects upon yourself and others
- Recognize and address inappropriate behaviors at your level if you can; if you cannot, or the offender fails to correct their behavior, report the situation to an appropriate authority for resolution
- Attend and support training on appropriate behaviors in the workplace (especially while using work computers). Discuss real-life situations and ask for varying perspectives on how to deal with them
- Stress the importance of reporting inappropriate behaviors and the protection against retaliation/reprisal

Some might consider the behaviors exhibited in this scenario as harmless, but they are not. If allowed to continue they can escalate and foster a variety of negative individual and organizational climate behaviors such as, a lack of trust in leadership, low unit cohesion, and low morale, etc. Identifying inappropriate behaviors and intervening early are crucial to developing a cohesive and professional workplace.