

Facilitator's Guide

Breakroom Blast



Breakroom Blast

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 understand different approaches in addressing concerns

What (behaviors) did you observe in the video?

- Jose (male actor)
 - He was upset because he couldn't attend training
 - He wanted his chance to attend the same training others were permitted to attend
- Logan (female actor)
 - She is the leader of the team/organization
 - She was at first eager and happy to listen to Jose
 - She didn't feel future training opportunities should go to Jose when there are younger, less experienced members available to go to the training

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

- Jose might be being discriminated against because of his age
- Logan only wants younger members to attend training
- There may be a perception of favoritism to younger members in this organization

If you observed this interaction, what could/should you do?

- Approach Jose and let him know what you observed
 - Ask him if he would like you to speak to Logan (may choose to go together)
 - Ask him if he would like you to go to the commander to file a complaint
- Approach Logan and let her know what you observed
 - Tell her what you observed could be seen as Age Discrimination
 - Ask her to explain why she is not allowing Jose to attend the training
 - Let her know how her actions might be perceived by others as unfair (and possibly discriminatory if she based her decisions on Jose due to his age)
- Bring the situation to the attention of the equal employment office for their advice and recommended solutions to the situation.
- Bring this situation to the attention of unit leadership and recommend leader/supervisor training on the effects of perceptions and the requirements of the law.

Note: Although not mandatory, civilian employees and applicants should attempt to resolve their complaint at the lowest level possible. For more information on the EEO complaint processing, go to <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/age.cfm> or contact your local EEO representative.

How would you prevent further occurrences such as these?

- Ensure leaders understand what actions could be perceived as discriminatory.
- Ensure leaders understand that discriminating against someone (civilian members) due to their age (over 40) is a violation of the ADEA (*Age Discrimination in Employment Act*) and explain what these behaviors may look like
- Conduct professional leadership training for unit members explaining employees' rights
- Publically display future training opportunities, ensuring everyone is aware of upcoming opportunities

Breakroom Blast

- Create a tracker to monitor who is offered training, who attends/attended training, who refuses training, or any other opportunities available to members

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 individual and organizational climate changes 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. There is rarely only one way to resolve an issue/situation, this guide provide only some of the options available to leaders.