



Video: Hallway Chatter 2024

# Hallway Chatter: 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](https://deomi.mil).

This guided discussion is focused on the *Hallway Chatter* 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 non-attributional 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:

- Discuss the video and the behaviors seen within it and how they relate to hallway chatter that can be harmful to the workplace environment and individuals.
- Understand the impacts of being unaware of how hallway chatter can be harmful to individuals, the workplace climate, and the organization.
- Discuss ways to have effective conversations about issues and frustrations that may be occurring in or outside of the workplace before they become topics of negative hallway chatter.

## 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](https://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

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.
- Discriminatory harassment involves unwelcome conduct based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity), national origin, or sexual orientation.

The DoDI 1350.02 defines these terms as follows:

- Prohibited Discrimination— discrimination, including disparate treatment, of an individual or group on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, or sexual orientation that is not otherwise authorized by law or regulation and detracts from military readiness.



## How is Hallway Chatter Harmful?

Hallway chatter of a discriminatory nature consists of topics that, if overheard, can evoke feelings of discrimination in others or promote acceptance of discrimination within the climate of an organization. Examples of discriminatory harassment that can occur in harmful hallway chatter can look like:

- Offensive jokes
- Insults or put-downs
- Ridicule or mockery.

Some risk factors of hallway chatter of a harmful nature are:

Individual	Organization
Stressful life events	Passive bystanders
Some personality traits	Lack of trust and morale
Perceived weaknesses	Hostile work environment
Low productivity	Culture of exclusion
Acceptance of discrimination	Negative communication climate

## Strategies to Discourage Harmful Hallway Chatter

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 makes a positive impact on the overall climate. This includes how employees engage with each other in casual work communication and the conversations that take place. Some ways to discourage hallway chatter that can become harmful are:

- Discourage discriminatory social media posts and engagements.
- Proactively address difficult topics, such as those in the media, political climate, or larger social environment.

- Clearly post policies and materials related to expectations of acceptable workplace conduct.
- Hold members accountable for leading/participating in inappropriate behaviors.

Notes:



Video: Hallway Chatter 2024

## Process

Before the participants' arrival, determine and prepare the setting for the guided discussion. Ensure the video is prepared to view (direct from the [Center of Excellence Portal](#) or may be predownloaded).

## Video Description

### Hallway Chatter

FOR FACILITATOR USE ONLY: The video opens with two Service members discussing events in the media addressing issues in other countries. The Service members engaged in dialogue that was demeaning and dismissive of larger social issues in a foreign country. This was overheard by another Service member walking through the halls. This same Service member later overhears another Service member on a phone call who makes several negative comments regarding “foreigners” in a tone of frustration. The Service member who overhears these two conversations reflects on how these behaviors have become pervasive in the climate.

### Video Participants

- **Victim:** Other Service members who overhear the conversations
- **Perpetrator:** Two males chatting in the hallway, and one male on the phone
- **Bystanders:** The Service member who overhears the conversations



## 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. Explain what discriminatory harassment is and how it relates to hallway chatter.
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.*

## Reflection Questions

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

Question and AR:

Question and AR:



## Facilitator- Developed 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 hallway chatter and how it can be harmful to the climate.

**AR:** Hallway chatter reflects casual conversations that occur in the workplace that could be harmful to the overall climate and organization, depending on the conversational topic. Speaking in derogatory language or in negative tones about events or populations could be considered by some listeners as prejudicial or discriminatory. If this language is used frequently and over time, it can become a concern. Topics that are controversial in the media, political climate, or other social environments are common topics one might hear as hallway chatter. Care should be used as one discusses these type events in open forums where others may hear only pieces of the overall conversation and possibly misconstrue the elements within it.

- Describe how hallway chatter can become harmful and negatively affect individuals in the workplace.

**AR:** Hallway chatter of a harmful nature can be overheard by others in the vicinity of the conversations. Negative comments or tones of the conversation can be understood or even misunderstood as discriminatory and offensive to some populations. For example, the anti-foreigner sentiments expressed by Service members in the video could be hurtful to Service members who are foreign-born, first-generation Americans, or whose heritage is rooted in the countries being disparaged/discussed. Relatively innocuous comments that are repeated or become pervasive in the workplace can, over time, may become problematic to the overall climate. Work productivity may also decrease if individuals are distracted by harmful hallway chatter.

- If you were a bystander who overheard hallway chatter of a discriminatory nature, how could you intervene?

**AR:** As a bystander, if you feel comfortable, you can interject into the conversation and bring awareness to the individuals that the topic of conversation may not be suitable for the work environment or in an open forum, as it could be considered offensive or derogatory.

If you do not feel comfortable approaching the individuals yourself, inform your supervisor of your concerns about the conversation topic in the workplace.

- What are some examples of ways leaders can be cognizant of and proactive against harmful hallway chatter?

**AR:** Leaders can show their appreciation for and celebration of diversity by recognizing and valuing the unique contributions and perspectives diverse populations bring to the organizational climate. They can encourage a culture of openness, acceptance, and collaboration where everyone feels welcome and appreciated. In addition, if there seems to be an abundance of discriminatory hallway chatter over time, the EOA might consider preemptive awareness training to discuss the overall potential impacts upon individuals and the overall organization.

Additionally, when there are prominent issues in the media, political climate, or other social environments that may be controversial or involve strong feelings, leaders can address these head-on by having effective conversations with their unit about these topics to promote understanding within the unit.



- What are some ways that the organization can protect against harmful hallway chatter?

**AR:** Senior leaders can empower other leaders to have effective conversations within their units to address controversial issues head-on and promote psychological safety within their units through facilitating mutual understanding and sharing of perspectives on difficult topics and issues. Leaders can also discourage negative or harmful hallway chatter by enforcing standards of acceptable conduct among Service members that do not tolerate discriminatory behavior, including derogatory language and conversation.

## 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 closed-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 fluid with little to no disruptions or corrections.

### Examples of Other Questions That Can Be Asked

- In your own words, describe how hallway chatter could be harmful in the workplace environment.
- What are some ways your organization can discourage hallway chatter that could be construed as negative?
- How can harmful hallway chatter affect mission readiness?

- As a leader, what behaviors can you show to create an environment where others feel open to discuss issues and frustrations in a positive way?

## Close the Session

*\*Facilitator Note:* During the conclusion, paraphrase participant comments to show that they were heard. The provided conclusion is an example of 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:

- Discuss the video and the behaviors seen within it and how they relate to hallway chatter that can be harmful to the workplace environment and individuals.
- Understand the impacts of being unaware and how hallway chatter can be harmful to individuals, the workplace climate, and the organization.
- Discuss ways to have effective conversations about issues and frustrations that may be occurring in or outside of the workplace before they become topics of negative hallway chatter.



### Potential Closing Comments

Some might consider the behaviors exhibited in this scenario as harmless, but they are not. The comments and behaviors exhibited in this scenario may seem simple in nature. However, discussing world events in such a way could be considered disparaging or derogatory and offensive to those of other ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, not every Service member is a U.S. citizen; some are immigrants working their way to this privileged status. Within the DoD, our members work in multiple multinational and coalition environments. Consider this: What would a member of another country think if they overheard such comments?

Disparaging comments rarely make others feel good about the situation, and it is demeaning in many ways. If uncorrected, these types of behavior could become more pervasive and lead to bigger issues, such as intolerance toward others and an overall lack of trust between members. Unchecked, these behaviors can foster strained relationships, show a lack of mutual respect, and potentially lead to a harassing, hostile, or an offensive environment. If inappropriate behaviors are 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, low morale, etc. Recognizing and identifying potential inappropriate behaviors and intervening early are crucial to developing a cohesive and professional workplace.





Video: Hallway Chatter 2024

# Handout

## Video: Hallway Chatter

1. Describe harmful hallway chatter and how it can be harmful to the climate.
2. Describe how hallway chatter can become harmful and negatively affect individuals in the workplace.
3. If you were a bystander who overheard hallway chatter of a discriminatory nature, how could you intervene?
4. What are some examples of ways leaders can be cognizant of and proactive against harmful hallway chatter?
5. What are some ways that the organization can protect against harmful hallway chatter?