



USCG: Age Discrimination

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 holding discussions on 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 at: [defenseculture.mil](https://www.defenseculture.mil)

This guided discussion is focused on the USCG Age Discrimination video. The associated 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 on 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 as an opportunity to review and educate members on policy and acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Though this scenario uses USCG personnel which fall under separate DHS/USCG policy guidance, the scenario/behaviors are also applicable to DoD personnel. For USCG personnel, follow policies under the COMDTINST M535 – CG Civil Rights Manual and the USCG Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment (ADAH) Policy Statement. For DoD military or civilian personnel, follow definitions and policy as defined in DoDI 1020.03 or DoDI 1020.04. Practitioners should be able to correlate the scenario to their appropriate training audience.

Based on the objectives provided to you,
what is your purpose for this discussion?

What do you hope to gain from having
this discussion?

Use this space to write down
important names of participants or
leadership.

Purpose

The objectives for this discussion:

- Define unlawful discriminatory harassment
- Discuss the video and the behaviors seen within it
- Grasp how the fear of harassment can affect the individual and the organization
- Understand how unlawful discriminatory harassment can be targeted towards age
- Discuss unlawful discriminatory harassment prevention strategies

Preparation

This guide has been developed with the assumption 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 at: [GDE-Leaders Conversations-20210428.pdf \(defenseculture.mil\)](https://www.defenseculture.mil/Portals/0/2021/04/28/GDE-Leaders-Conversations-20210428.pdf). The Leader’s guide provides areas to consider, including:

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

USCG ADAH Policy Statement

Discrimination and harassment have NO place in our Service. We will respect those we serve and those who serve with us. We will ensure a work environment that is free from conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment based on an individual's race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), age, disability, genetic information (including family medical history), marital status, parental status, political affiliation, military service, engagement in a protected Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) activity, or any other basis protected by law. We will act to address such conduct well before it rises to a level that may affect our people or the performance of our mission. Each member of the Coast Guard will be familiar with our EEO policies to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination and harassment.

Retaliation/Reprisal

Unlike other DoD military branches, the USCG uses the terms retaliation and reprisal interchangeably. According to the COMDTINST M535 – CG Civil Rights Manual, the Coast Guard will not tolerate retaliation against members for reporting harassing conduct under this or any other policy or procedure, or for assisting in any inquiry about such a report. Acts of retaliation or reprisal for reporting harassment or participating in an investigation of harassment are prohibited.

When does harassment become unlawful?

As defined by the COMDTINST M535 – CG Civil Rights Manual, Unlawful harassment is discrimination that violates federal law. Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, nonverbal, or physical, that is based on an individual’s protected status (including: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, status as a parent, marital status, political affiliation, and retaliation).

Potential Prohibited Harassment Behaviors Include:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Unwanted physical contact | Stereotyping |
| Offensive Jokes | Intimidating acts |
| Epithets or name-calling | Veiled threats of violence |
| Ridicule or mockery | Racial or other slurs |
| Insults or put-downs | Hazing |
| Displays of offensive objects/imagery | Offensive non-verbal gestures |

Impacts of Discrimination

Anyone who experiences discriminatory harassment may be fearful of being retaliated against. An organization that allows discriminatory behaviors to persist may experience a decrease in productivity, morale, and mission readiness. It is important to ensure proper training and prevention strategies are in place to combat these behaviors.

Policies & Public Laws:

COMDTINST M535 – CG Civil Rights Manual

USCG ADAH Policy Statement

DoDI 1020.03- Harassment Prevention and Responses in the Armed Force

DoDI 1020.04- Harassment Prevention and Responses for DoD Civilian Employees

Public Law 90-202 - discrimination on the basis of age when the aggrieved individual is at least 40 years of age

Notes:



Process:

Before the participant’s arrival, determine and prepare the setting for the guided discussion. Ensure the video is prepared to view ([Harassment Prevention and Response \(defenseculture.mil\)](https://www.defenseculture.mil)).

Video Description

FOR FACILITATOR USE ONLY: The video displays two members in Service uniforms, Krista and Darren and a new government civilian member named Randall. At the beginning of the video Krista is telling Darren about their new coworker Darren and she tells him that Randall is “older”. She questions whether he is up to date on current systems because of his age. Randall meets Darren and Krista and tells them where he is coming from and all of the work he did there. At the end of the video Krista is still complaining about Randall as she does not want any “old dudes” on their team.

Video Participants

- **Victim:** Randall
- **Perpetrator:** Krista
- **Bystanders:** Darren

Directions:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Validate: Explain the purpose or objective of discussion/training.
3. Set expectations and establish ground rules.
4. Introduce the topic (Use the notes you create based on the topic).
5. Show and explain how the behaviors is categorized as discriminatory.
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. As you watch the video, be aware of the discrimination that is taking place. Someone that is experiencing discrimination may immediately shut down in the situation.
8. **Read Instructions:** After watching the video, answer the questions in your handout individually. Then later, we will share your answers with the group.
9. Show the video.
10. Have participants answer the handout questions (5-10 minutes).
Encourage them to use critical thinking as they view the questions.
11. Lead a discussion based on the questions used.

Facilitator Notes:



Facilitator Notes



Suggestions: Display the questions on a bulletin board, butcher paper, PowerPoint, or prepare them in a handout. Explain to the participants that they will need 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 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. Prior to 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.

- How is Krista taking part in discriminatory behavior?

AR: Krista makes many comments in regard to their new co-worker Randall's age. She makes a mockery of him having gone to school in the 70's and therefore is not update to date on systems they use currently. Even as Randall introduces himself to the team explaining his past work Krista still jokes about his age to Darren. As stated in DoDI 1020.03 harassment includes offensive jokes, mockery, stereotyping, etc. Krista is acting against the ADAH policy statement as her comments could reinforce or contribute to an intimidating environment for Randall.

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

AR: While Randall did not hear Krista being discriminatory it can still have an impact on the morale of co-workers. Other potential impacts include, lower productivity, decreased morale and readiness. Those being discriminated against may lose trust in their peers and hostile work environment may ensue.

- Who could be impacted by these behaviors?

AR: In this scenario, the offender is speaking discriminatorily about a co-worker to another co-worker. This could put everyone involved into an awkward situation. Eventually the scenario involves other co-workers who witness this discrimination. The victim may be fearful to report of this discrimination as he is new to the team and does not want to be excluded.

- Darren is a bystander in this scenario, what should he do?

AR: Some potential responses include educating the participants that while they seemed to be joking around, their behavior can be viewed by others as discriminatory because it is regarding age. Allowing these types of behaviors to continue can cause them to escalate into bigger problems. It should be stated that this behavior is disruptive, unacceptable, and distracts others from the overall mission.

- How can you prevent further occurrences of similar behaviors in your unit? As a leader, what appropriate action can you take to address and correct this issue?

AR: Understand that discussing the age and characteristics of someone over age 40 could be viewed as discriminatory behavior. 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 leaders to correct the issue.

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

Reflection Questions

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Question and AR: | |
| Question and AR: | |
| Question and AR: | |

Lead the Discussion

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

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 when necessary for your summary and conclusion.
- Paraphrase when participants are not clear with their answers/assist them in reaching the objectives.
- Let the discussion be fluent with little to no disruptions or corrections.



** Facilitator Note: During the conclusion, the facilitator can paraphrase some of the comments made by the participants, showing them that they were heard. The conclusion provided is just an example of how to close out the guided discussion.*

Close the Session:

You should end your session by reiterating the objectives covered at the beginning and provide closing comments.

Summary:

Restate the initial objectives:

- Define unlawful discriminatory harassment
- Discuss the video and the behaviors seen within it
- Grasp how the fear of harassment can affect the individual and the organization
- Understand how unlawful discriminatory harassment can be targeted towards age
- Discuss unlawful discriminatory harassment prevention strategies.

Examples of other questions that can be asked during the discussion:

1. In your own words, how would you define discriminatory harassment?
2. Where have you seen these behaviors in your organization?
3. What are some preventive measures to avoid a hostile environment from occurring?
4. As a bystander, what can you do if you see someone acting in a discriminating way?
5. How can these behaviors, if gone unreported, affect mission readiness?

Facilitator's Conclusion

Potential Closing Comments:

During this discussion, we discussed how jokes, mockery, and stereotypes while may seem insincere can still be used in a discriminatory manner. Individuals being discriminated against may be fearful to report the behavior especially if they are new to the organization. If harassing behaviors are not addressed, mission readiness can decline, and a hostile work environment may occur.

To mitigate harassing behaviors, we must be proactive in prevention, address allegations without bias, and take appropriate actions if necessary. Some might consider the behaviors exhibited in this scenario harmless, but they are not. They 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: USCG Age Discrimination

1. How is Krista taking part in discriminatory behavior?
2. What are the potential impacts of this harassing behavior? What if they are allowed to persist?
3. Who could be impacted by these behaviors?
4. Darren is a bystander in this scenario, what should he do?
5. How can you prevent further occurrences of similar behaviors in your unit? As a leader, what appropriate action can you take to address and correct this issue?