



USCG: Religious 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: [GDE-Leaders Conversations-20210428.pdf \(defenceculture.mil\)](https://defenceculture.mil/GDE-Leaders-Conversations-20210428.pdf)

This guided discussion is focused on the USCG Religious 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. Discriminatory harassment is covered in DoD Instruction 1020.03.

Purpose

The objectives for this discussion:

- Define 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 discrimination can be targeted towards religion
- Discuss discriminatory harassment prevention strategies

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

What do you hope to gain from having this discussion?

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/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

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

Definitions

Discriminatory harassment is covered in the Department of Defense Instruction 1020.03. 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 is defined as: A form of harassment that is unwelcome conduct based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender-identity or sexual orientation.
- Retaliation encompasses illegal, impermissible, or hostile actions taken by a Service member's chain of command, peers, or coworkers as a result of making or being suspected of making a protected communication in accordance with DoDD 7050.06.
- Reprisal, a form of retaliation, is defined as taking or threatening to take an unfavorable personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, for making, preparing to make, or being perceived as making or preparing to make a protected communication.

What is Discriminatory Harassment?

As stated in DoDI 1020.03 discriminatory harassment is a form of harassment that is unwelcome conduct based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender-identity or sexual orientation.

Harassing behaviors include:

Offensive jokes or epithets	Insults or put-downs
Ridicule or mockery	Racial or other slurs
Stereotyping	Intimidating acts
Derogatory remarks about a person's accent	Displays of offensive objects or imagery

Impacts of Discrimination

Service members may fear being retaliated against when reporting harassment allegations. According to DoD Instruction 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. 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.

Strategies to Prevent Discriminatory Harassment:

Leaders should be aware of the choices and decisions they make and how they could be perceived as discriminatory. It is critical for service members to treat one another fairly regardless of on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender-identity or sexual orientation.

- Promote a culture of accountability where service members feel empowered to address and challenge potential discriminatory behavior among their peers
- Empower the use of bystander intervention strategies
- Tailor training to address specific, relatable, real-life scenarios that could occur

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 enlisted Coast Guard members, BM2 Brennan and MK3 Faulkner. Faulkner asks his supervisor, BM2 Brennan, if he can have Halloween off. Brennan responds that it is a busy week ahead and they get plenty of other federal holidays off in the year. Brennan asks Faulkner why he needs Halloween off. Faulkner responds because he is Wiccan and it is an important holiday. BM2 Brennan then starts joking around saying that Faulkner has a cauldron and a black cat because he is Wiccan. After these comments are made it is clear Faulkner is upset about what has just occurred.

Video Participants

- **Victim:** BM2 Brennan
- **Perpetrator:** MK3 Faulkner
- **Bystanders:** None

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 BM2 Brenna taking part in discriminatory behavior?

AR: Once MK3 Faulkner states that he is Wiccan and he would like Halloween off, BM2 Brennan starts joking around about him having a cauldron and a black cat. Per DoDI 1020.03, harassment includes offensive jokes, mockery, stereotyping, etc. Brennan's comments cross the line into discriminatory harassment because the comments are about Faulkner's stated religion.

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

AR: Mission readiness can decline because Faulkner is now focused on what just happened to him. He could become upset and anxious if he perceives that he is being discriminated against because of his religion. If such discriminatory harassment is allowed to persist, Faulkner may experience a hostile work environment and low morale.

- Who could be impacted by these behaviors?

AR: Regardless of rank anyone can be affected by discriminatory harassment. Observers to Brennan's actions might likewise tease or mock Faulkner's beliefs, thinking their actions are acceptable and leading to a hostile environment or bullying situation. Other leaders, who know of the occurrence and who take no action, could be perceived to as condoning the behavior. This could lead to a lack of trust or confidence in leadership. Faulkner's job satisfaction may be impacted since he cannot observe his religious holiday and he was 'mocked' for expressing his beliefs. This can also affect others who have similar or different beliefs than the 'mainstream.'

- If you were a bystander in this situation, what could you do?

AR: Some potential responses may include talking to BM2 Brennan and informing him that his behavior could be construed as discriminatory harassment. Educating Brennan on the effects of his comments and how they could violate policy might lead to a change in his decision. Another response may be telling MK3 to go to talk to his chaplain representative or EO so he fully understands his options.

- 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: Take religious accommodation requests seriously and respect the beliefs of others. Don't assume others have a 'made up' religion. Discuss religious accommodation requests with your Service proponent (typically the Chaplain's Office). Implement training to raise awareness on the issue and provide potential supervisor processes and actions to be taken. Educate others to understand the impacts of their comments and how they can be interpreted as discriminatory. Provide research resources and training. Facilitate 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 perceived issues.

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.

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 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 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 discrimination can be targeted towards religion
- Discuss discriminatory harassment prevention strategies

Facilitator's Conclusion

Potential Closing Comments:

During this discussion, we discussed how jokes, mockery, and stereotypes can be interpreted as discriminatory acts. Individuals being discriminated against may be fearful to report the behavior especially if the behavior came from a supervisor. 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 can bring division and drive 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 Religious Discrimination

1. How is BM2 Brennan 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. If you were a bystander in this situation, what would you 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?