

Equal Opportunity Training Video

Notes for training

Key personalities in this scene are:

Julian - new employee learning about the store job

Cassius - long-term employee

Mark - their supervisor



Two Faced

The video is concerned with a long term employee making life difficult for a new employee and their supervisor. It provides an opportunity for discussing age discrimination and bullying.

Questions:

Question 1: Julian is clearly the 'meat in the sandwich' here. Does he have a complaint of discrimination?

Question 2: What sort of workplace would allow such inappropriate behaviour to go un-checked.

Question 3: Where does Cassius get the power to get away with his antics?

Question 4: What are the chances of managers being bullied or harassed by employees?

Question 5: How would you describe the 'game' Cassius is playing in this workplace?

Question 6: Julian is clearly afraid to tell Mark it was Cassius who set him up. What could Mark put in place to break down the fear barrier to make it less threatening for employees to speak up about such matters?

Ideas for training staff, managers (anyone in a supervisory position) or contact officers:**Staff**

- Show the scene up until Julian hands the clip board to Mark, the supervisor.
- Ask the group: 'what game is Cassius playing?' - allow responses to flow unchallenged.
- Ask the group 'how would Cassius benefit by undermining Julian?' - allow responses to flow unchallenged. Then ask: 'what do you think would hold back Julian from complaining about Cassius?'
- Ask the group: 'how would Cassius benefit from undermining Mark?' - allow responses to flow unchallenged.
- Ask the group: 'from within your working lives, is there anything familiar about this scene?' - responses unchallenged.
- Ask the group: 'has Cassius broken any laws by his behaviours?' - responses unchallenged.
- Tell the group you are going to show the second half of the scene and ask them to think about any changes in their views from those given in response to the above questions.
- Show the second half.
- Ask the group: 'have any of your views changed?' Look for comments that 'the very person Cassius is trying to undermine is the one to whom he wants to look most favourable?'
- Again, ask if there is any familiarity with this scene - [often people will recognise the two faced nature of people they work with or have worked with]. You may wish to point out that this was a real case dealt with in-house by an employer and that the equivalent of Cassius was sacked for workplace bullying.
- Use the opportunity to also point out the [well-documented] 'Jekyll and Hyde' approach to workplace bullying. Use examples if you have them, but often participants will have their own examples.

- Highlight the legal definition of workplace bullying emphasising the words ‘systematic’ ‘repeated’ ‘undermining’ in relation to the scene.
- Finally, state that many folk have the opinion bullying is only meted out by managers towards staff. Point out that this scene shows managers, too, can be bullied.
- The video allows for a discussion on bullying behaviours and their long term impact. Link the discussion to your policies and complaint procedure.
- Discuss ways for Mark to handle this situation with Cassius.
- The video is based on a real situation where an employer contacted the Equal Opportunity Commission for support and strategies. The organisation dealt with the situation and it led to the bully having his employment terminated.

Managers

- Form into small groups to discuss how this matter could have been avoided and the best way to respond to the situation as presented. Small groups to convey ideas to collective. Trainer summarises main points.
- Discuss ways for Julian to manage the situation with Cassius. Have managers role play the meeting with Cassius to begin managing his behaviour.

Contact Officers

- Ask contacts to work with the person next to them to plan how they would structure an interview with Julian if approached for support. Record presented ideas on a whiteboard then get group consensus on the order each element should be included in the interview. With the trainer or a volunteer acting out the role of Julian, using the entire scene as the backdrop to the story, invite contacts to conduct the interview, giving equal chances to participate, following the agreed format. It is often easier for a volunteer to play Julian, freeing up the trainer to observe, question and comment without having to think about the storyline.
- Ask contacts what they think would be Julian’s best option for dealing with this problem and how they might support him if he were to seek their help.