Handout for Facilitators: Scenarios and Debriefing Notes

These scenarios and debriefing notes also can be found in the Accountability and Repairing Relationships slide deck. Please refer to the facilitator guide for information about guiding and supporting learners through this activity.

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| **Questions for Learners**The debriefing notes below provide examples of possible responses to the following questions and are not intended to be exhaustive.1. What specific behaviour(s) are demonstrated that could cause harm?
2. What is the potential impact on the victim/survivor (short- and long-term)?
3. What is the potential impact on person who caused harm (short- and long-term)?
4. How would the person who caused harm would know their actions were inappropriate?
5. What are the underlying messages, beliefs or values behind the behavior (intended or unintended)?
6. What power dynamics are at play (i.e., how might differences in power affect how each person acts and responds)?
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# Scenario 1

Rohan has just been hired and is eating his lunch in the staff room alone. His new boss, Brad, walks into the room and stands close to him. Rohan nudges his chair slightly further away. “Hey, great to have you on the team!” Brad exclaims. He sits down beside Rohan and pulls his own chair closer. Rohan scoots his chair backwards. During Rohan’s department orientation, Brad disclosed that he was gay and recently single. Rohan is also gay and hesitantly disclosed his own sexual orientation in response.

“What a weekend!” Brad continues, “I tried out a new dating app and I really nailed it, if you know what I mean.” He winks at Rohan, who nods his head and looks down at his sandwich. Brad shares a sexually explicit story about the man he had a date with on the weekend. Rohan rarely looks at Brad while he’s talking, but occasionally offers a small smile as Brad carries on. Brad asks Rohan if there were any dating apps “back in his country” and remarks that Rohan should really consider getting online to date. Rohan says nothing. Another colleague walks into the room. “Hey, maybe we’ll end up going on a date, eh?!” Brad laughs and walks out of the room.

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behaviour demonstrated:**

* Crowding personal space
* Talking about sexually explicit stories without consent or interest from other person
* Implying romantic or sexual relationship between boss and employee
* Othering - using language to draw attention to specific pieces of identity, which can make people feel like they don't belong (e.g. “your people” and “my people”)

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* Discomfort in the workplace which leads to struggles focussing, learning and performing
* Having sexual orientation disclosed to strangers or coworkers - risk of decreasing personal safety and resulting fear, discomfort, anxiety
* Pressure to respond by appeasing boss for fear of losing job
* Feeling a lack of belonging
* May stir up hurtful memories of previous dating app experiences

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* Human Resources may become involved, mobilized by either Rohan or colleague who walked in
* Informal communication (rumors, gossip) amongst colleagues about Brad’s behavior
* Professional reputation or role
* Mental health impacts - embarrassment, shame, anxiety, depression etc.

**How the person who caused harm would know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Rohan shifting his chair away, avoiding eye contact, not engaging in the conversation
* Stops the conversation when someone else comes in the room

**Underlying messages, beliefs or values behind the behavior (intended or not)**:

* It’s normal and expected for men to talk about their sexual activities without checking in or considering whether other people are interested or comfortable
* If you don’t tell them to stop then it’s fine to keep going

**Power Dynamics at play:**

* Brad is Rohan’s boss - supervisor should not make any advances, as the employee may not be able to give voluntary consent due to feeling compelled to oblige
* Brad seems to feel more safe disclosing his sexual orientation
* Rohan is implied to be racialized and from a different country

# Scenario 2

It’s the beginning of the semester and Matt and Eva have been assigned to work together. Matt shares that he just started on the lacrosse team. Eva shares that she arrived from Brazil two weeks earlier and is eager to gain more English speaking skills. At the end of class, Matt asks Eva if she would like to go for a beer. Eva declines. For the next several weeks, Matt repeatedly asks Eva to hang out, offering to help her with her English skills over a beer or dinner. She continues to decline, citing tiredness and other obligations she has. Matt begins to show up other places on campus that Eva spends time, including her favorite coffee shop, a specific section of the library, and her usual bus stop. They often make eye contact, but Eva has stopped responding to his smiles. He tries to engage her in conversation, but she usually keeps her head phones in. Eventually, he approaches her one night at the bus stop when no one else is around. He asks her to go for a drink again and asks why she keeps playing hard to get. He seems angry. Eva says nothing, but turns and quickly walks away from the bus stop. He sends her several messages on Facebook, pleading for her forgiveness. She does not respond to any of them. Eva contacts her instructor to ask to switch partners and ends up sharing what has been happening.

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behaviour demonstrated:**

* Repeated requests to hang out, despite consistent declines
* Showing up in places where Eva is (stalking)
* Intimidation
* Persistent messages (stalking)

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* Difficulty focussing on course work
* Need to shift routines to avoid him
* Fear about what he may do next

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* Eva or her instructor may involve Student Affairs to address his behavior; this could include formal or informal measures (up to and including expulsion)
* Eva may involve police as the behavior could qualify as criminal harassment
* Mental health impacts - embarrassment, shame, etc.

**How would the person who caused harm know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Repeated declined invitations
* Not smiling when they see each other
* Keeping headphones in
* Not engaging in conversation

**Underlying messages, beliefs or values behind the behavior (intended or not)**:

* Excessive pursuit (stalking) is romantic and shows your interest is real
* Men are entitled to dates when they “work hard” for them
* All women must be interested in the men who like them (i.e., playing hard to get)
* He had no idea he was making her uncomfortable
* Because she never verbally expressed her lack of romantic interest, it’s okay for him to continue pursuing or be confused about her interest

**Power Dynamics at play:**

* Matt may be afforded more social power or privilege based on being an athlete (e.g. Brock Turner)
* English as an additional language for Eva
* Eva as a new international student may not have the same support system or knowledge about norms/what is or isn't acceptable
* Physical fitness or size

# Scenario 3

Will and Issa live in residence and have been dating for a few weeks. Issa brings Will back to her dorm room for the first time. Will brings a bottle of gin and a few shot glasses. Issa expresses her preference for mixed drinks, and so they have a few glasses while they watch a movie in bed on her laptop. Issa begins yawning and talking about how the alcohol hit her really hard. Will laughs and calls her a lightweight. He pours two shots for them. Issa decines and says she needs to get up early for class. Will says that he’ll go if she takes the shot of gin. Issa reluctantly takes the shot. Will leans in to put his mouth on hers and she laughs and pulls away. She shifts backwards to reach for the light switch and Will begins trying to pull her shirt up, saying he thought Netflix and Chill is what she wanted. Issa pushes at his chest, saying “Hey” progressively louder until she is shouting. Will shouts “Hey!” back and Issa freezes. Issa’s roommate knocks on the door and they both quickly sit up.

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behaviour demonstrated:**

* Pressuring to drink more
* Pushing mouth and body onto Issa without consent (sexual assault)
* Pulling shirt up without consent (sexual assault)
* Shouting back in Issa’s face

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* Blaming self for drinking or “leading him on”
* Becoming frightened of what will happen if she says no again
* Feeling disrespected, devalued, and/or violated

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* Issa or her roommate could involve Residence Advisors/staff, who could mobilize a campus or police response
* Issa or her roommate could mobilize a campus/residence response, which may result in formal or informal measures
* Issa could engage with police or community-based services re: attempted sexual assault
* Issa or her roommate may share what happened, which could have social or professional repercussions for Will
* Mental health impacts - embarrassment, shame, anxiety, depression etc.

**How would the person who caused harm know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Issa explicitly declining (alcohol and more physical contact), eventually shouting
* Issa stating she is tired
* Issa reaching for the lights
* Pulling and pushing away
* Nervous laughs
* Body stiffening

**Underlying messages, beliefs or values behind the behavior (intended or not)**

* Being invited back to someone’s room means you’re going to engage in sexual activity
* It’s ok to “tease” someone into drinking more - especially in university (this is actually pressure and manipulation)
* Getting someone drunk/drunker increases your chances of having sex
* There is lots of sex in new relationships; sex is something people in new relationships are entitled to
* Men can keep pressing forward for sex and it’s a woman’s job to stop it or “gate-keep”
* Men’s desires take precedence over someone else’s non-consent or boundaries

**Power Dynamics at play:**

* The relationship is new so they may be unsure of how the other will react
* Body size and physical strength
* “Playful” teasing and alcohol use - one person seems more inebriated than the other; again “teasing” in this case is actually manipulation and coercion

# Scenario 4

Julia just moved to a new department. Her co-worker, Brandon, is friendly and is training her on her new job duties. After a few days, when no one else is around, Brandon comes over to chat. He talks about going to a strip club the night before, then laughingly apologizes and says “Jeez, you better not tell HR about that!” Julia is surprised that Brandon would bring up such a topic in the workplace and says nothing in response. Later that day Brandon needs help with a jammed photocopier. Julia kneels down to look inside the machine and sees the piece of paper right away. She stands up and hands it to him. With a chuckle, Brandon says, “Too bad you weren’t on your knees for longer.” When Julia gives him a look of uncomfortable disapproval, Brandon insists he was kidding and it was just a joke.

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behavior demonstrated:**

* sharing sexually explicit personal stories
* making a sexual comment implying that she should provide him with a sexual act

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* Discomfort in the workplace, embarrassment, shame,
* Fearfulness about rejecting his advances
* Worry that something about her attire or actions has invited the behavior
* Concern about what he may share with other colleagues, rumours
* Worry that if she brings her concerns forward formally, she would be perceived as a “troublemaker” or “too sensitive,” especially as a new employee who may not have established strong connections or credibility with the rest of the team.

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* If Julia brings concerns forward, Human Resources may become involved, which could include formal or informal measures being taken
* Julia may share what happened with colleagues, leading to social or professional ramifications for Brandon
* Mental health impacts - embarrassment, shame, anxiety, depression etc.

**How would the person who caused harm know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Silence as a response to his storytelling
* Deliberate look of uncomfortable disapproval
* It took place in a workplace, violating professional norms

**Underlying messages:**

* It’s professionally appropriate or acceptable to share sexually explicit stories with your colleagues
* It’s professionally appropriate or acceptable to sexually objectify and/or proposition your colleagues
* It’s ok to sexually objectify or proposition your colleagues if it’s a joke
* It’s safe to enact this behavior in this workplace and, therefore, women aren’t safe in this workplace

**Power Dynamics at Play:**

* Colleagues have to continue working together
* He is in control of her training
* She is a brand new employee
* Gender norms may shape people’s responses to his behavior (i.e., excuse it, call it a joke, tell her she’s overreacting, “boys will be boys”)

# Scenario 5

Alex is in the supply room gathering material for a project. They quietly overhear Luke and Devon talking about how they expected all the women in the program to be weird and unattractive. Devon comments that he thought he’d have to get out and meet some “do-able” women elsewhere once in a while. Luke agreed then said he was surprised that there are quite a few girls that were easy on the eyes. Devon nodded, adding in, “Jen looks like she would be into some kinky stuff. I would.” They both laugh and walk past Alex on their way out. Alex mutters “not cool” under their breath. Luke laughs and says “whoops, we didn’t know you were there, good thing you’re just like one of the guys, right?”

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behaviour demonstrated:**

* Sexually objectifying female peers
* Recruiting peer to hide behavior
* Misgendering Alex - calling nonbinary person a “guy”

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* Discomfort, embarrassment, anger and worry.
* Concern about social and professional impacts if they speak up, as they know the visual arts community is tight knit
* Worry about what they (and the rest of their male peers) say and sexually judge about them when they’re not around, especially as a non-binary person
* Torn about whether they should tell their friend Jenn and what consequences could be for telling or *not* telling her

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* If Alex tells others about what they overheard, it could have social and professional consequences
* Faculty members may become aware of inappropriate behavior happening in the program; academic consequences could follow.
* Mental health impacts - embarrassment, shame, etc.

**How would the person who caused harm know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Verbal indications (e.g., “Not cool,” low voice)
* They indicated that they already knew the behavior was inappropriate by stating “Whoops” and trying to recruit them as an ally to keep the secret.

**Underlying messages:**

* The worth of female peers is in how sexually desirable they are
* Sexually objectifying your peers is acceptable and funny.
* The behavior was actually acceptable as long as only other men/masculine people witnessed it.

**Power Dynamics at Play:**

* Devon and Luke may hold more social power based on who they are, which could influence whether they face consequences or whether Alex feels comfortable speaking up
* Presumably small cohort - many relationships could be impacted by any action taken
* Alex’s gender is non-binary and may face additional reprecussions for speaking out or not be believed at all because of gender-based discrimination

# Scenario 6

Becca is grabbing drinks with a group of male colleagues after a day of professional development. After a few drinks, Aaron starts talking about a date he had on the weekend. He talks about how he could tell his date was easy and that she would put out on the first date. He says he didn’t blame her based on what a stud he is and signals to his crotch. A few other men chime in about their own sexual encounters on first dates, joking about who can satisfy a woman best. Becca remains silent and pretends to be distracted by her phone. Aaron turns to Becca and asks her “Would you have sex on the first date?” Becca responds, “Not with you” and gives him the middle finger. Aaron calls her a bitch, and shifts the conversation back to the training earlier that day.

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behaviour demonstrated:**

* Sharing sexually explicit stories without consent
* Making sexually explicit gestures
* Asking for sexually intimate personal information
* Calling Becca a derogatory name when she doesn’t engage

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* Vulnerable, self conscious and/or intimidated, especially as only female.
* Discomfort when she was questioned so openly about her own sexual behaviors/choices
* Isolation from the group
* Worry that she has been the target of sexual conversations amongst her male colleagues

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* Personal or professional ramifications for Matt if stories about his behaviour are shared
* Strained relationships within staff team
* Becca could bring her concerns to Human Resources, formal or informal measures could follow

**How would the person who caused harm know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Disengaging in the larger conversation - no story sharing, eye contact or amusement shown
* Focussing on her phone
* Clear response to Matt’s question about her own sexual behaviors
* It took place in a work context, ignoring professional norms and expectations

**Underlying messages:**

* Women’s value or worth is primarily based on their sexual function or performance
* Sleeping with someone on the first date is comical or shameful for women but a celebration for men
* It’s appropriate to retaliate against someone for not sharing their intimate information

**Power Dynamics at Play:**

* Some members of the group may experience more or less social power based on who they are, which could influence how comfortable they are intervening or speaking up
* One female in a group of males
* Alcohol involved - can shift the predictability of people’s reactions or act as an excuse for actions

# Scenario 7

Chantale is in her second month in a new department. She has gone out for drinks with colleagues occasionally after work in the past and has had a good time. Dom walks up to her one afternoon and asks her if she wants to “come out with me and the guys” that evening. Chantale explains she cannot tonight because she has a project due first thing tomorrow morning. Dom laughs and insists she join him. “Come on, don’t play hard to get, we know your people like a good party” and he leers at her suggestively. Chantale shifts uncomfortably in her chair and asks him what he means by “your people.” Dom responds with “You know, you Native chicks! We know you're up for a good time, not a long time!” and laughs loudly. Leaning over he whispers, “We can play a private game of cowboys and Indians, hey? I can show you how we conquered your people back in the day.” Chantale stands up from her desk and quickly excuses herself saying she has a meeting with the manager and walks away.

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behaviour demonstrated:**

* Specifically references perpetrating violence against Chantale via “conquering your people” and “Cowboys and Indians” comments
* Sexualized and racist comments (“Native chicks,” “you people,” “here for a good time, not a long time”)
* Invading personal space, using whispers to conceal behavior
* Ignores boundaries set by Chantale multiple times

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* As a new employee, may be fearful about speaking out and/or concern about whether this is considered normal/acceptable behavior
* As an Indigenous women, fear about speaking out about against a White person who caused harm
* Fear, worry, embarrassment about being a target of sexual harassment
* Fear or worry about further harassment or retaliation if she speaks up

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* HR could become involved, leading to personal and professional consequences

**How would the person who caused harm know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Stating “No” to his first invitation
* Uncomfortable body language
* Asking him to explain his use of words
* Walking away rather than further engagement/responding

**Underlying messages:**

* Making violent, sexual, racist comments to people you work with is appropriate or acceptable
* Indigenous women are sexual objects to use
* Violence against Indigenous people is acceptable
* Stereotypes about Indigenous people are reinforced or factual: alcoholism, sexual promiscuity

**Power Dynamics at Play:**

* Some victims/survivors are considered more “credible” than others; Chantale is Indigenous and a new employee, both of which may place her in a position where she is less likely to be believed
* Dom is White and a longer term employee

# Scenario 8

Chris is in his third year of business at university. Chris started the semester off by formally changing his name and pronouns with the admin office and with his class instructors and peers. Chris identifies as a trans man, and with his legal name change recently being approved he felt now was a good time to share with his peers. After class one day, two of his classmates approach him, Susan and Rebecca. They are smiling and giggling as they approach him, whispering quietly to each other. Rebecca asks Chris, “So, you’re a guy now, right?” Chris takes a deep breath and explains, “Yes, but technically I have always been a man. I have just now changed my name to reflect my identity properly.” Rebecca and Susan both laugh again, Susan leans close to Chris, brushing her hand across his chest, and says, “But, are you actually a man now?” Chris is very uncomfortable and tries to take a step backwards to create some space between him and Susan and Rebecca. “I do not know what you mean by that,” Chris states. Rebecca is now standing right at his shoulder, her hand brushes down his chest towards his pants .“You know, are you a guy…down there?” She looks at Susan and they both laugh again. Chris feels his face flush and he turns and leaves the room quickly, hearing Susan and Rebecca giggling and talking behind him as he leaves.

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behaviour demonstrated:**

* Multiple transphobic comments: implying Chris’s gender only became ‘real’ since he changed his name/paperwork; specifically commenting on and asking about Chris’ genitalia; laughing at Chris’ discomfort
* Invading Chris’ personal space and touching him without consent (sexual assault)

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* Embarrassment/humiliation, discomfort about being publicly questioned and teased
* Fearfulness about whether harassment will continue, escalate or be picked up by peers as acceptable
* Pulling away from peer relationships out of worry that others will behave similarly

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* Could be formally reported to student conduct officials, which could have social, professional and academic consequences

**How would the person who caused harm know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Chris immediately corrects them about their incorrect assumptions about his gender
* No mutual laughter
* Backing away to create space
* Red face
* Turning away and leaving the situation abruptly

**Underlying messages:**

* Your genitals determine your gender
* It’s ok to ask people questions about their genitalia
* It’s ok to make jokes about other people’s genitalia and gender
* Touching people without their consent is ok
* Making sexualized jokes about people’s gender/genitalia is ok

**Power Dynamics at Play:**

* Chris is newly “out” as a trans man and so may feel more vulnerable
* Rebecca and Susan are both cisgender women and would be perceived as unlikely people to cause harms of violence based on gender stereotypes
* Gender norm/stereotype about how all men must love physical or sexual attention from women may make it difficult for Chris to come forward
* Being in a public space heightens the risk of Chris being outed without his consent

# Scenario 9

Sharan and Vijay are in the same social circle where everyone knows each other and everyone is either a current or former international student. Everyone seems comfortable knowing that they share commonalities and some share familial connections back home. There is a sense of safety and security and some are in romantic relationships with one another. Sharan also feels cared for and protected because living here alone is scary and the larger community is tight and not welcoming. Sharan and Vijay are dating and sexually active. She is careful and does not want anyone to know, fearing that her family back home could find out and that would mean big trouble.

Sharan has been feeling anxious lately. Vijay can be mean sometimes if he doesn’t get his way especially when it comes to sex. He threatens to stop taking care of her, refuses to pick her up after work and take her grocery shopping. Today, Sharan resisted the pressure and physical advances by pushing him back and looking away. He said that she doesn’t appreciate all he has done for her and threatened to tell everyone that she was having sex with other guys. She knows some of the other girls are in relationships and was thinking about talking to them, but feels overwhelmed, embarrassed and ashamed. Sharan does not want to make him angrier, and is already noticing the other guys staring at her, snickering and commenting to each other. Sharan feels that it will be simpler to apologize and “make-up” rather than experience the fall-out.

## Debriefing Notes:

**The specific behaviour demonstrated:**

* Pressuring and forcing Sharan to engage in sex (sexual assault or rape)
* Threatening to stop taking care of her
* Threatening to spread lies about her

**Potential impact on victim/survivor:**

* Fear of rejection from him and worry about isolation from her peer group
* Fearful about others finding out she is in a sexual relationship
* Fearful that her family back home will find out and the cultural stigma around sex and consequences
* Feeling embarrassed and ashamed
* Believes she has no other option but to apologize and make-up

**Potential impact on person who caused harm:**

* If Sharan does tell someone in the peer group, he might face social consequences
* If Sharan accesses other support services, there could be consequences (e.g., police)

**How would the person who caused harm know their actions were inappropriate:**

* Sharan pushed him back and looked away
* Using threats to control her indicates he knows he has done something wrong

**Underlying messages:**

* Some people (based on culture, gender, beliefs, norms etc) are entitled to sex from another person
* If you’re in a romantic relationship with someone, you owe them sex
* If you’re financially indebted to someone, you owe them sex
* Sex itself is a taboo topic
* Only certain acts count as violence (e.g., rape can’t occur within a marriage or romantic relationship)
* Girls shouldn’t have sex before marriage or sex before marriage is shameful

 **Power Dynamics at play:**

* Social power - Violence occurring within smaller peer groups can mean fewer social supports, increased pressure to not report, and fears about social consequences or ostracization
* He provides financial and social security
* Cultural ideas about gender roles and sexual behavior (who’s allowed to have it, who’s not, who can say no to sex)

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