Sensitivity Training

Human Skills Development Training Manual

Training Materials
# Table of Contents

**Module One: Getting Started** .................................................................................................................. 5
  - Workshop Objectives ............................................................................................................................. 5

**Module Two: Introduction to Sensitivity Training** .................................................................................... 6
  - Definition .............................................................................................................................................. 6
  - History ................................................................................................................................................. 7
  - Who Needs It? ....................................................................................................................................... 7
  - Goals .................................................................................................................................................... 8
  - Case Study .......................................................................................................................................... 8
  - Module Two: Review Questions ........................................................................................................... 9

**Module Three: Benefits** ........................................................................................................................... 11
  - Raising Awareness ............................................................................................................................... 11
  - Interaction .......................................................................................................................................... 12
  - Behavioral Changes ............................................................................................................................. 12
  - Productive Workplace .......................................................................................................................... 13
  - Case Study .......................................................................................................................................... 13
  - Module Three: Review Questions ....................................................................................................... 15

**Module Four: Stereotypes** ....................................................................................................................... 17
  - Explicit ................................................................................................................................................. 17
  - Implicit ................................................................................................................................................. 18
  - Purpose ............................................................................................................................................... 18
Effects ................................................................................................................................. 19
Case Study .......................................................................................................................... 19
Module Four: Review Questions ....................................................................................... 20

Module Five: Discrimination ............................................................................................. 23
Employer Responsibility ................................................................................................... 23
HR and Best Practices ....................................................................................................... 24
Elephant in the Room ......................................................................................................... 24
Overcoming Stereotypes .................................................................................................... 25
Case Study .......................................................................................................................... 25
Module Five: Review Questions ....................................................................................... 26

Module Six: Sex and Gender Stereotypes ......................................................................... 29
Employer Responsibility ................................................................................................... 29
HR and Best Practices ....................................................................................................... 30
Elephant in the Room ......................................................................................................... 30
Overcoming Stereotypes .................................................................................................... 30
Case Study .......................................................................................................................... 32
Module Six: Review Questions ....................................................................................... 33

Module Seven: Age ........................................................................................................... 35
Employer Responsibility ................................................................................................... 35
HR and Best Practices ....................................................................................................... 36
Elephant in the Room ......................................................................................................... 36
Overcoming Stereotypes .................................................................................................... 37
Case Study .......................................................................................................................... 37
Gather Information from the Complainant ................................................................................. 59
Evaluate the Credibility of the Complaint ................................................................................ 61
Interview Those Involved .......................................................................................................... 61
Take Action Against the Offender .............................................................................................. 62
Case Study ................................................................................................................................ 62
Module Eleven: Review Questions ............................................................................................ 63

Module Twelve: Wrapping Up .................................................................................................... 65
Words from the Wise .................................................................................................................. 65
Module One: Getting Started

Welcome to the Sensitivity training workshop. Sensitivity training is crucial in creating a workplace that is inclusive and a safe place for all to work.

This workshop will introduce you to your company’s responsibility with regard to promoting sensitivity, as well as the benefits that come along with it. It will also describe the steps that should be taken when it is determined that employees are not in compliance with the business’ policy.

Workshop Objectives

Research has consistently demonstrated that when clear goals are associated with learning, it occurs more easily and rapidly.

This workshop is designed to help you in the following ways:

• Define sensitivity training and its usefulness and necessity in the workplace.

• Identify the benefits for self and the company, in pursuing a sensitivity objective.

• Successfully raise awareness of others.

• Identify different types of stereotypes, their delivery and effects.

• Discuss Human Resources and its best practices to dealing with issues associated with stereotypes.

• Define the steps to handling complaints associated with sensitive issues and stereotypes.

• Describe the pros and cons of being “sensitive”.

Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others.

Emily Post
Module Two: Introduction to Sensitivity Training

Put a flyer up on the board in the breakroom that says “Sensitivity Training” and I bet there are zero volunteers. Some people think it means they are going to lose something. Some people think it means they are going to cry in front of co-workers. Some people even think that it is a complete waste of time and energy.

This introduction to sensitivity training and how it relates to the workplace will show the many benefits to a training of this type, both for individuals and for the workplace culture. It will also define the steps necessary to introducing a successful sensitivity program. And, no one will cry.

Definition

Sensitivity training or diversity training, there are many names for the same goal: Creating a more inclusive workplace that capitalizes on the differences in everyone. There are many different areas of focus in sensitivity training, all focusing on empathy, respect for others and cooperation towards a common goal. This type of training creates more positive and inclusive employees, a more profitable work culture and a more positive work life for all.

There are many areas sensitivity training must address, ones that are regulated by federal and state laws. ADA Diversity laws and enforcing guidelines must be followed by all businesses. Severe penalties are in place for those who don't follow them. Some of these areas include:

- Race
- Gender identification
- Religion

People may not remember what you said, but they remember the way you made them feel.

Maya Angelou
• Age

• Disability

**History**

Sensitivity training has been discussed as early as 1914. It really didn’t become a focus of research and use until around the 1940s, by a European psychologist, Dr. Kurt Lewin. From there, most sensitivity studies were focused on the behavior of groups of people. During the 1950s, sensitivity training turned more towards individual behaviors and by the late ‘60s, the values of this training was becoming more of a mantra. It was around this time that regulation and legislation in protection of groups of people began taking affect.

Today, the focus is still on interactions within a group, but are more directed towards an individual’s behaviors and emotions. Those who enroll in this type of training program are usually looking to improve their own interpersonal skills. From the business point of view, sensitivity training will keep the work culture positive and within federal and state guidelines.

**Who Needs It?**

Everyone. Who needs more empathy? Everyone. Who needs better interpersonal skills? Everyone. Everyone can learn to better emotional awareness, better empathy, and better social skills that are involved in sensitivity training. Imagine a workplace where everyone was in control of their emotions, thought of others first, and when there was a conflict, everyone knew how to turn it into a growth event. This “imagined” workplace would be positive, successful and profitable.

In this day of globalization, there are many different religions, cultures, ages, and types of people that all work together. Our companies are not limited to our borders like years ago. This requires a higher level of sensitivity in the workplace. Because of these new cultures, awareness of the legal requirements for sensitivity may not be known to all, and education is required.
Goals

What are the goals of sensitivity training? First and foremost, from the business standpoint, to maintain and stay within all federal and state regulations against harassment or discrimination. A work culture with negativity such as discrimination is an unprofitable work culture. It is widely known that a positive work culture is a more successful business.

From an individual standpoint, sensitivity training will provide better self-awareness and the effects that we have on others around us. It will also teach a better awareness of inter-social interactions and relationships. Greater empathy and insight for others are skills included in the focus of sensitivity training.

Case Study

Tom, Sherry, and Rich are sitting down at a table in the breakroom for their lunches. They notice the new flyer on the bulletin board, from HR, announcing an upcoming event. A required event. “Someone screwed up again if we are required to take sensitivity training now,” said Sherry. She goes on to say that this is probably because of a disagreement in another department. Tom thinks that it is some sort of government requirement that HR “has” to make everyone complete. Rich looks at the flyer further and says, “It says here that we will gain empathy and better self-awareness. I guess we will see.”

Two weeks later, the three are having lunch again, after attending the HR training program. Sherry points out that everyone did need to attend the program, as she did not realize that there were people that were so unaware of the effects of their actions at work. Tom agreed saying that sometimes we just need to be reminded that it is our own ideas that fuel our actions, and this can affect an entire department in the end. He realized his words and actions can have a global affect in this day of multi-cultural workplaces. Rich adds that many departments have diverse employees and everyone needs to feel included and valued. The others agree and leave feeling more positive about the company.
Module Two: Review Questions

1) Sensitivity training improves:
   a) No one
   b) Workplace culture
   c) The pay scale of employees
   d) The intelligence of management

2) Sensitivity training includes all the choices below, except:
   a) Age
   b) Sex
   c) Religion
   d) Job title

3) Sensitivity training has been studied since:
   a) 1940s
   b) 1800s
   c) 1980s
   d) 2000s

4) Which of the doctors listed below is credited with first studying sensitivity training?
   a) Sigmund Freud
   b) Martin Luther King
   c) Kurt Lewin
   d) Christian Spock

5) When sensitivity training was first discussed, it MOSTLY focused on which of the following?
   a) Training for educational institutions
   b) The values of the training itself
   c) Individual behavior
   d) Behavior of groups of people
6) According to the “History” lesson, what was the main focus of sensitivity training in the 50s?
   a) Behavior of groups of people
   b) Individual behavior
   c) The values of the training itself
   d) Training for educational institutions

7) According to the “History” lesson, what was the main focus of sensitivity training in the 60s?
   a) Individual behavior
   b) Training for educational institutions
   c) The values of the training itself
   d) Behavior of groups of people

8) Who should receive sensitivity training?
   a) Human resources
   b) All of the company’s employees
   c) All managers
   d) All new employees

9) From the business standpoint, what is the goal of sensitivity training?
   a) To maintain and stay within all federal and state regulations against harassment or discrimination
   b) To provide better self-awareness and the effects on others around us
   c) To teach a better awareness of inter-social interactions and relationships
   d) To increase profits

10) What is not the goal of sensitivity training, from an individual standpoint?
    a) To provide better self-awareness and the effects on others around us
    b) To maintain and stay within all federal and state regulations against harassment or discrimination
    c) To teach a better awareness of inter-social interactions
    d) To teach a better awareness of relationships
Module Three: Benefits

When we think of the benefits of sensitivity training, we think of employees’ ability to identify biases that if not responded to appropriately, can hinder the productivity of the business and/or effectively work with people of different backgrounds.

Raising Awareness

Raising awareness is the first step to promoting change. With the media, one’s limited experience with individuals of different backgrounds, or what they have heard from others, it is easy to fall into the mindset that one knows everything there is to know about people of a different religion, race, age, etc. More often than not, this is simply untrue.

The training is a helpful tool in dispelling myths and receiving accurate information with regard to cultural differences and diversity.

I've been ripped for being too sensitive, but I do think people need to walk in another person's shoes before they accuse them of being too sensitive.

Hank Haney
Interaction

One of the most effective ways to learn about someone different from one’s self, is to actually interact with him/her. Not only do you learn about that person as an individual, but you can also learn about their culture, race, and so on. Understanding how one thinks and factors such as religion that affects the way they think, will open your mind to new perspectives and help you communicate with them at their level. This will include verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication.

Let’s take a look at a few examples of how your communication skills can improve.

Example 1: In Nigeria, subordinates typically do not make direct eye contact when verbally communicating with their boss, as a sign of respect. In the United States, if you do not make eye contact with your boss, you may be suspected of hiding something. Keeping this in mind can help prevent you from misinterpreting one’s intentions.

Example 2: While physical touch such as patting someone on the shoulder may be seen as a harmless way of telling someone, “Job well done!” it can be viewed as harassment, as you were not invited to touch the person.

Behavioral Changes

Another benefit to sensitivity training and all it includes is better relationship management. Once we understand the expectations of people from different groups, we can then use that to build and maintain better, more positive relationships, both in the workplace and in everyday life.

How does sensitivity training aid in our relationships? First, through our interaction. Through our contact and learning about others, we are more likely to change the way we think about others and behave in their presence. Communicating in a more positive manner improves our relationships with everyone we encounter. Better communication equals better relationships.
Productive Workplace

While developing positive relationships with co-workers is an important benefit of sensitivity training, the overall goal is to ensure a workplace that is productive. Many don’t realize how not being able to successfully communicate with co-workers, has a direct impact on how work gets done. This can affect quality as well as productivity.

Here are some examples of how a diverse workplace affects productivity.

- Various perspectives equal various solutions to solve issues
- Greater employee morale
- Higher employee engagement
- Working with customers on a global scale
- Less employee turnover
- More innovation

Case Study

Brett and Mike are talking about the upcoming sensitivity training. Mike said he agrees that everyone in the office should be sensitive to the needs of everyone else in the office, but he feels having actual training on it is not necessary. Brett explained that while one would think everyone would understand the importance of being sensitive to others, that’s simply not the case. He went further by saying that the training is not only to teach how all should act, but it’s also to show the benefits of doing so. Some of these include raising awareness of other religions, races, etc., which can result in behavioral changes, and a more productive workplace.

Mike expressed he was being closed-minded, and thanked Brett for pointing this out to him. He then stated he looks forward to the training to learn even more.
Module Three: Review Questions

1) What is the first step to promoting change?
   a) Meeting new people
   b) Raising awareness
   c) Sharing stereotypes
   d) Spending a lot of time with the people you already know

2) Sensitivity training aims to ___ myths of culture and diversity.
   a) Agree with
   b) Bring out
   c) Dispel
   d) Cover up

3) Which of these is mentioned in the “Productive Workplace” lesson?
   a) Lower employee morale
   b) Lower employee engagement
   c) Various perspectives equal various solutions to solve issues
   d) Only working with customers on a regional scale

4) Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the “Productive Workplace” lesson?
   a) Greater employee turnover
   b) More innovation
   c) Higher employee engagement
   d) Working with customers on a global scale

5) What does this module mention as an effective way to learn about someone different from one’s self?
   a) Read stories about them
   b) Interact with them
   c) Watch news programs about them
   d) Talk to others about them
6) Example 1 in the “Interaction” lesson talks about what country?
   a) Ireland
   b) Dominican Republic
   c) China
   d) Nigeria

7) In the United States, not making eye contact with someone you are talking to, is generally viewed as:
   a) Hiding something
   b) Being respectful
   c) Being honest
   d) Showing that you are upset

8) Which of these was NOT mentioned as a method of communication?
   a) Verbal
   b) Non-verbal
   c) Visual
   d) Tactical

9) According to the “Behavioral Changes” lesson, a benefit of sensitivity training is which of the following?
   a) Emotional control
   b) Relationship management
   c) Greater self-esteem
   d) Confidence in others

10) The “Behavioral Changes” lesson states:
    a) Better communication equals better interaction
    b) Better communication equals a stronger sensitivity training
    c) Better communication equals better relationships
    d) Better communication equals better understanding
Module Four: Stereotypes

Stereotypes are the assumptions that we make about others. These assumptions can be based on our perceptions of race, sexual orientation, and even age. They are usually overly critical descriptions of one or a few of a group, but do not describe the group as a whole. Stereotypes are generally grouped into two different categories: implicit and explicit.

Stereotypes can be both positive and negative in the statements, but do not be mistaken; all stereotypes have a negative effect.

Explicit

Explicit stereotypes are those opinions and beliefs that are intentional, controlled, and usually communicated to others. They are part of our everyday lives. Explicit stereotypes are usually based on something perceived by the owner. These stereotypes are easily recognizable. Some examples include hate marches and Neo-Nazi groups, Muslims being attacked after the events of 9/11, and China being blamed for Covid-19.

If you want to positively influence others, begin by influencing how they experience you.

Sylvia Baffour
Implicit

An implicit stereotype is a belief that is held unconsciously. What does that mean? For example, believing that African Americans are better than Caucasians at basketball. It sounds like a compliment, doesn’t it? Most of us have not ever played a game of basketball, never mind have an educated opinion on the abilities between two groups of people at the game. So where does this idea come from? Most of these stereotypes are a product of our upbringing and social interactions.

Most cultures have laws and regulations against any type of discrimination in the workplace. However, implicit stereotypes can still affect the business world. An example would be the research and results of studies that are focused on the reactions of employers to the names at the top of resumes for possible employees. Studies have shown that names that sound “black” get less call backs than names that sound “white.”

Purpose

What is the purpose of creating stereotypes? Well, first let’s point out that when individuals or groups develop stereotypes, they typically don’t realize that’s what they are doing. They believe they are taking the information they’ve learned about different groups and attributing it to them. The reality is they are using sweeping generalizations for a group of people even though they likely saw those characteristics or actions in a fraction of the population. Having these stereotypes gives them a false sense of understanding the group, which can be seen as prejudices or misconceptions.
Effects

The effects of stereotypes can be vast.

- Individuals from a particular group can limit their work, as they are not expected to be able to achieve more than a certain point.
- Individuals from a particular group can look down upon their own achievements because they have not met the goal of what they are expected to be able to do.
- Negatively impact one’s long-term mental health.

This can result in the opposite of the desired outcome with regards to workplace productivity.

- Lower employee morale
- Less employee engagement
- Greater employee turnover
- Less innovation

Case Study

Natalie and Betty decided to take their 15-minute break together. They sat outside to enjoy the beautiful day. While chatting, Natalie began laughing and told Betty she had something funny to share with her. Betty said she couldn’t wait to hear it. Natalie stated that Li Xui was put on her team to help with the new project. Betty asked what was so funny about that.

Natalie said, “Li Xui is Asian, which means we are definitely going to succeed at the project.” Betty didn’t laugh or even crack a smile. Natalie asked what was wrong. Betty said even though it seems like a compliment to say that Li Xui is smart, it’s really a stereotype that is unfair to Li Xui and everyone. Natalie thought about it for a second then said she knew it was a stereotype, but figured since it is saying something “positive” about someone, it is okay to say. Betty disagreed and advised Natalie to do some independent research on what implicit and explicit stereotypes are.
Module Four: Review Questions

1) Which of the following does not describe an explicit stereotype?
   a) Communicated to others
   b) Unconscious
   c) Intentional
   d) Controlled

2) Which of these does describe an implicit stereotype?
   a) Intentional
   b) Controlled
   c) Communicated to others
   d) Unconscious

3) What does the “Implicit” lesson mention?
   a) Names that sound “black” get less call backs than names that sound “white”
   b) Names that sound “Latino” get less call backs than names that sound “black”
   c) Names that sound “white” get less call backs than names that sound “Asian”
   d) Names that sound “Asian” get less call backs than names that sound “Latino”

4) What sport was mentioned in the “Implicit” lesson?
   a) Golf
   b) Baseball
   c) Basketball
   d) Football

5) Which of these BEST describes the definition of a stereotype?
   a) What one assumes about others
   b) What one has learned about others
   c) What one reads about others
   d) What one writes about others

6) What is the main reason for creating stereotypes?
   a) To understand other groups
   b) To make particular groups feel inferior
   c) To not interact with people of different groups
d) To make particular groups feel superior
7) Which of these terms is LEAST likely used to define stereotypes?
   a) Misconceptions
   b) Prejudices
   c) Detail
   d) Labels

8) Which of these is NOT mentioned in the module as an effect of stereotypes?
   a) Individuals from a particular group can limit their work, as they are not expected to be able to achieve more than a certain point
   b) Individuals from a particular group can look down upon their own achievements because they have not met the goal of what they are expected to be able to do
   c) Particular groups understanding that what they thought of their group is not true, and they should follow the stereotypes
   d) Negatively impact one’s long-term mental health

9) Which of these is LEAST likely to be an effect of stereotypes?
   a) Lower employee morale
   b) Greater employee turnover
   c) More motivation
   d) Less employee engagement

10) Of the following, which is MOST likely to be an effect of a stereotype?
    a) Greater collaboration between employees
    b) Less hostility
    c) Lower employee morale
    d) More trust in the employer’s anti-discrimination policy
Module Five: Discrimination

Racial discrimination still happens today in the workplace, and it is very unfortunate. It can be a spoken stereotype, or more overt hiring practices. Sometimes, hiring managers allow personal thoughts or ideas to affect their decisions, unconsciously. Racial discrimination is both federally and state regulated, with stiff penalties for allowing or engaging in racial practices. Because of this, companies need to monitor company processes to ensure that all policies are being followed.

Employer Responsibility

All employers must provide a workplace that is diverse and offering equal employment to all races or places of origin. This is guaranteed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This legislation focuses on many different areas of employment such as, but not limited to:

- Interview questions and requirements
- Candidate offers such as benefits
- Pay scales
- Job requirements

I hope that people will finally come to realize that there is only one ‘race’ - the human race - and that we are all members of it.

Margaret Atwood
HR and Best Practices

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits any regard for race in the hiring processes of any employer. This can be a very difficult practice to identify often, as the discrimination is not as evident as other types of harassment and discrimination. It can be very difficult to prove that an employee is engaging in unfair hiring practices. Here is a partial list of the behaviors that the federal government has deemed illegal:

- Requiring a job applicant to list their race on the job application, and use that to determine whether or not they will be hired.
- Setting an employee’s salary based on race.

Elephant in the Room

There are many stereotypes associated with various races/ethnicities. Below are some examples stereotypes that are portrayed in the media and entertainment.

- African Americans commit more crimes, and are better at sports.
- Asians are good at math, and poor drivers.
- Latinos are hard workers, and lazy.
- Caucasians work hard, and are racist.

Generally a stereotype might be seen as positive or negative, but that is not the point. The overall message is that it is incorrect to judge any individual in regards to any stereotype.
**Overcoming Stereotypes**

Although, a non-discriminatory work culture begins at the CEO/owner level, HR has the responsibility to design and enforce the appropriate policies to promote a non-racially discriminatory work culture. These policies must include processes that are designed to curb any issues in the interviewing and hiring processes of every applicant. These processes must also include policies for regular monitoring and auditing for compliance.

**Case Study**

Peter approached John’s desk, asking if he could talk to him about something that was bothering him. John said yes, so Peter proceeded to talk. He explained that he was feeling uncomfortable in his team because whenever a conversation came up to marketing their new product to various consumers, they always looked to him, to be the “voice” of African Americans. He said he appreciated the fact that they value his opinion, but felt they need to realize that he is only one African American person, and cannot speak for all African Americans. He also said that everyone in the team is trained to consider the needs of various consumers when developing a marketing pitch, so others should chime in as well.

John told Peter that he understood his concern, and assured him that they work for a company that welcomes diversity, and handles any issues that may arise surrounding it. John advised Peter to talk to someone to human resources, share his concern, and request advice on how he should handle the matter. Peter sought counsel from HR, who suggested that he have a one-on-one meeting with his supervisor. Peter did so, and was able to resolve the issue bothering him.
Module Five: Review Questions

1) Employers offering equal employment to all races is guaranteed by which of the following?
   a) Economic Opportunity Act of 1964
   b) Small Business Act of 1953
   c) Civil Rights Act of 1964
   d) Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973

2) The act that offers equal employment to all races, focuses on all aspects of employment, except for:
   a) Interview questions
   b) Work hours
   c) Pay scale
   d) Job requirements

3) Which stereotype is mentioned in the “Elephant in the Room” lesson?
   a) African Americans are better at sports
   b) Asians are not smart
   c) Latinos are educated
   d) Caucasians are not hard workers

4) Of the stereotypes below, which is mentioned in “Elephant in the Room”?
   a) Latinos complain a lot
   b) African Americans work when it is convenient for them
   c) Caucasians do not challenge themselves
   d) None of the above

5) “Elephant in the Room” states which of these as a stereotype?
   a) Latinos are hard workers, and lazy
   b) Caucasians do not enjoy working with Asians
   c) Asians only work with African Americans
   d) African Americans like to work with people of all races/ethnicities

6) ________ is one of the stereotypes in the “Elephant in the Room” lesson.
   a) Asians only treat other Asians fairly
   b) Latinos like to start work early
c) Caucasians work hard

d) African Americans do not like to work overtime hours
7) What is true of employers requiring employee candidates to list their race on the job application?
   a) This is legal if the company is considered a small business
   b) This is only illegal if the company does not currently have a diverse employee population
   c) This is legal for the state of New York
   d) This is illegal

8) Setting an employee’s salary based on race:
   a) Is acceptable when a mass hiring is taking place
   b) Is never acceptable
   c) Is not acceptable only in the states of California and Texas
   d) Is acceptable if the company has less than 50 employees

9) A non-discriminatory work culture begins at the:
   a) CEO/owner level
   b) HR level
   c) Department Manager
   d) Employee

10) Who is generally responsible for designing and enforcing a non-discrimination policy for a company?
    a) Department managers
    b) Owner
    c) CEO
    d) Human Resources
Module Six: Sex and Gender Stereotypes

We all wish that this was not still an active topic, especially in the workplace; but it is. From hiring processes and job descriptions that are gender based, to the work culture, to the rate of pay, there are still many areas that still have insensitive wording and policies. This module is going to address the issues around sexual stereotypes and ways to discourage this type of work culture.

Employer Responsibility

Sexual stereotypes lead to sexual discrimination. This can be a problem in the workplace. This type of behavior falls under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and is federally monitored and has very serious consequences. An employer must ensure that there is no difference between male and female employees in the workplace. Some of the areas of particular note are:

- Job descriptions and hiring processes
- Salaries and later promotions
- Quotas and responsibilities of the position.
### HR and Best Practices

The first step to ensuring a well rounded workforce, is to examine the hiring processes of the company. HR needs to design the processes and policies to be all inclusive for both women and men, except in certain cases where a particular gender is necessary. Accepting applications and performing interviews that are fair is extremely important. One gender or the other should not be discouraged from applying for any position.

Hiring managers need to be trained in sensitivity to this issue during entry to their positions. The questioning and considerations that are given each candidate need to be the same. Salaries and job expectations need to be the same for both men and women. These policies need to be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that strict adherence to the federal law is being followed.

### Elephant in the Room

The elephant in the room – sexual stereotypes, there are so many. And they go to both men and women. Both are negative and offensive. Here are just a few:

- Men are stronger and better at manual labor.
- Men are smarter and better with finances.
- Women are more sensitive and better at socially active jobs.
- Women are less capable of physical labor.

### Overcoming Stereotypes

Employing both men and women is a beginning step to a positive work culture that embraces employees of all sexes. Avoiding teams and departments of one or the other sex must be a policy. Organizations must ensure that all pay scales are equal for all employees performing the same duties. This will promote a message of equality.

Another way to ensure an inclusive work culture is to educate all employees about the consequences of participating in any type of discrimination or harassment. Orientation modules and training sessions that cover the reporting and discipline resulting of such behaviors. This will also communicate a culture that discourages any sort of sexism in any form.
Case Study

Stacy and Reba are co-workers as well as friends. Stacy was so excited to tell her that she and a male co-worker were promoted to team leads. Reba was so excited for Stacy and asked her the details of the new position, salary increase, and so on. Stacy explained that her new role requires her to be a subject matter expert for less experienced members of her team. She also said that with the position comes a $5,000 annual raise.

As Stacy and Reba were celebrating, Brad, the other employee who was promoted walked up to them. He congratulated Stacy and said, “That $7,000 raise will really come in handy, huh?” Stacy looked surprised, and said, “Yeah, it will.” When Brad walked away, Stacy began complaining to Reba that she feels she got less of a raise because she is a woman. Reba said the company can’t legally do that, and convinced Stacy to speak with her manager regarding her concern.

After a long conversation with her manager, Heather, Stacy felt relieved to know that it wasn’t her sex that kept her from getting a $7,000 raise, it was the additional experience that Brad has as a subject matter expert, which she didn’t know about.
Module Six: Review Questions

1) The “Employer Responsibility” lesson states that sexual stereotypes lead to what?

   a) Sexual knowledge
   b) Sexual discrimination
   c) Sexual acts
   d) Sexual harassment

2) The act mentioned in the module that stands against sexual discrimination, went into effect in what year?

   a) 1995
   b) 1987
   c) 1972
   d) 1964

3) Which of these was not mentioned in the module as an area in which employers must consider when ensuring sexual discrimination is not taking place?

   a) Job descriptions
   b) Salaries
   c) Firing
   d) Quotas

4) Of the following, what area was not mentioned in the module as something employers must consider to make sure sexual discrimination is not taking place?

   a) Hiring process
   b) Promotions
   c) Responsibilities of the position
   d) First interview

5) In the “Elephant in the Room” lesson, which one of these is mentioned as a stereotype?

   a) Men are less capable of physical labor
   b) Men are more sensitive and better at socially active jobs
   c) Women are smarter and better with finances
   d) Men are stronger and better at manual labor
6) Which of these is mentioned in “Elephant in the Room” as a stereotype?

   a) Men are not as well-equipped as women to work in customer service
   b) Women are better at jobs that require data entry
   c) Men are smarter and better with finances
   d) Men are better at dealing with upper management

7) _______ is a stereotype talked about in the “Elephant in the Room” lesson.

   a) Men thrive more in leadership roles
   b) Women are more sensitive and better at socially active jobs
   c) Men are not productive when they serve in a role that is subordinate to women
   d) Women are more productive when they serve in a role that is subordinate to men

8) Choose the item that was spoken of as a stereotype in “Elephant in the Room”.

   a) Men are not as emotionally invested in their jobs as women
   b) Women are too emotionally invested in their jobs
   c) Men have higher IQs
   d) Women are less capable of physical labor

9) Which of these is not mentioned in the module as something that will promote a message of equality?

   a) Employing both men and women
   b) Avoiding teams that consist of all men or all women
   c) Allowing the men of the company to have a man representative that speaks on their behalf, and vice versa
   d) Same pay scale for all employees performing the same duties

10) “Overcoming Stereotypes” says that a way to ensure an inclusive work culture is to:

    a) Educate all male employees on how women employees operate, and vice versa
    b) Educate all those in management positions on how to interact with female employees according to their needs, and male employees, according to theirs
    c) Educate all employees on the consequences to participating in any type of discrimination or harassment
    d) Educate all employees on how to interact with their counterparts
Module Seven: Age

Ageism is defined as “the act of discriminating against someone based on their age.” As life spans increase, so does the age of the workforce. Many seniors are not retiring when they hit 60s. People are working well into their 70s and 80s. Ageism can occur in the form of hiring practices, promotions, education, etc. Businesses today must ensure that ageism of any sort is not allowed in the work culture.

Employer Responsibility

Hiring employees of varied ages creates a much more versatile workforce. Employees of varying ages, are able to relate to a wider variety of tasks, with more than one approach to completing the goals. For example, a young employee may only think of online answers to a problem, when an older employee may go out into the field and find the answer.

One of an employer’s responsibilities is to uphold the federal and state guidelines surrounding ageism in the workplace. Adherence to these laws is required and the consequences for noncompliance are severe. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act is a federal law, passed in 1967. This legislation ensures the fair employment of anyone over the age of 40. Here are some of the areas that the ADEA law covers for aging Americans:

- An employer cannot reduce the benefits or life insurance coverage.
- An employer cannot discriminate during a downsizing period.
- An employer cannot force an employee to retire early.

Ageism is as odious as racism and sexism.
Claude Pepper
HR and Best Practices

An excellent way for HR to curb the chances of ageism is to start with the hiring processes of the company. When designing the job descriptions for posting, be mindful of the adjectives that are used in describing the candidates that are needed. Words/phrases such as “up and coming”, “young”, and “energetic”, should not be used.

Ensure that the hiring policies include focus on hiring applicants that are hired on merit and achievements. Often times hiring managers hire more for who fits well on a team over skills. This will usually produce a team that is very similar in traits, with very few unique ideas. Including a wide variety of ages in the workforce produces teams that are better trouble shooters, better communicators, and more successful in day to day tasks.

Elephant in the Room

There are many different stereotypes associated with the older employees. These generalizations are unfair and baseless. Older workers are often thought to be:

- On the way out of the door of the company.
- Unable to learn new ideas and processes.
- Overqualified for entry level positions.
- More apt to take sick leave.

Most of these stereotypes are ideas that we all have grown up with for most of our lives. Everyone recognizes the pictures of the frail, little old lady, or the stories of the hard of hearing old man. We have been taught that older citizens are less capable and need assistance. These ideas are not true of everyone, just like other stereotypes. One cannot categorize an entire group of people by the characteristics of a few.
Overcoming Stereotypes

Changing stereotypes within a company that is engrained as ageism stereotypes, are difficult. This work culture of embracing all aged employees must begin from the top of the organization, down. HR can assist with changing these ideas, with education of the employees to the real facts about older workers. Some examples would be:

- Older workers actually take fewer sick days than the younger counterparts.
- Older workers have been proven to be more eager to use new technology and equipment.
- Older workers have shown to be more likely to come up with new innovations than younger employees.

Case Study

Hunter and Rory are both up for the supervisor position that just became available at ABC Company. Hunter believes because he recently got his business degree, and did several internships with Fortune 500 companies, he is guaranteed the job. Rory has 30 years of work experience, with 20 of them being with ABC. With this under his belt, Rory feels there’s no way anyone else could get the job.

The two happened to be passing each other in the hallway, and stopped to chat. They both talked about how excited they are about being considered for the role. Hunter told Rory that although Rory has been with the company a long time, and has proven to be an excellent worker, he thinks the company is looking for a fresh perspective from someone new and young. Rory was shocked by what Hunter said, but didn’t want to get into a conversation about it. Instead he said, “Well, good luck to you, Hunter.”

The next day, the hiring decision was made and announced. Rory got the job. Hunter told some of his other co-workers that he was shocked that he didn’t get the job, but understands that Rory will be a great asset in this position.
Module Seven: Review Questions

1) When was the Age Discrimination in Employment Act passed?
   a) 1961
   b) 1967
   c) 1963
   d) 1969

2) According to the “Employer Responsibility” lesson, ADEA covers all of the following, except:
   a) An employer cannot force an employee to retire early
   b) An employer cannot discriminate during a downsizing period
   c) An employer cannot fire an employee over the age of 40 because the job is not being satisfactorily performed
   d) An employer cannot reduce the benefits or life insurance coverage

3) All of the following, except _____, are terms used in a job posting that can be viewed as discriminatory, based on age?
   a) Young
   b) Up and coming
   c) Millennial
   d) Experienced

4) Which of these is a stereotype mentioned in the “Elephant in the Room” lesson?
   a) On the way out of the company
   b) Able to learn new ideas and processes
   c) Underqualified for entry level positions
   d) Less apt to take sick leave

5) Of the following, which is a stereotype in “Elephant in the Room”?
   a) They are more productive
   b) Unable to learn new ideas and processes
   c) Don’t understand technology
   d) Aren’t creative
6) Which of these is a stereotype mentioned in “Elephant in the Room”?
   a) Overqualified for entry level positions
   b) Can’t handle stress
   c) Are unhappy employees
   d) Burn out quickly

7) __________ is a stereotype discussed in the lesson, “Elephant in the Room”.
   a) Do not socialize with colleagues
   b) More apt to take sick leave
   c) Poor performance
   d) Older people are too sensitive

8) It is most product to hire someone based on:
   a) One who worked for their former employer the longest
   b) Years of overall experience
   c) Merit
   d) How soon they can begin the new job

9) Embracing all aged employees must begin with whom?
   a) Workers who have been with the company for at least 5 years
   b) Department managers
   c) Human resources
   d) The top of the organization

10) What does “Employer Responsibility” say about hiring individuals of varied ages?
    a) It creates a more flexible workforce
    b) It creates a more restrictive workforce
    c) It creates a workforce that is harder to train
    d) It creates a workforce that is not likely to succeed long-term
Module Eight: Disabilities

When it comes to disabilities and stereotypes, many of them are with regard to the level of how much one is physically, mentally, or emotionally capable of performing. As with all other stereotypes, this mindset can be damaging to the one who is being talked about, as well as the one doing the talking, as limiting another’s abilities, can result in lost productivity.

Employer Responsibilities

When posting jobs, companies cannot use wording that openly discriminates people with disabilities. Additionally, they cannot require candidates to disclose any disabilities. They may request the information, but not force candidates to respond. Although employers cannot dismiss candidates on the sole basis of disability, if one has a disability that will prevent the individual from performing basic job duties even if accommodations are provided, the employer may seek other candidates that are more qualified.

If an individual with a disability is hired, the company must make ample effort to ensure the employee has any accommodations necessary to perform their job. In addition, the employee cannot be paid less because of the disability. In addition to the above, employees with disabilities are protected when it comes to:

- Firing
- Promotion
- Benefits
- Training
- Job assignments
- Leave

The only disability in life is a bad attitude.

Scott Hamilton
• Lay-off
**HR and Best Practices**

It is unlawful for HR to ask an applicant whether or not they are disabled, or the extent of a disability.

Upon interviewing applicants, HR should ask questions as to an applicant’s ability to perform specific actions related to the required tasks. These questions cannot be related to any applicants disability. All questions, both before hiring and after, must be job related.

Once the position is offered, a medical examination can be required, if all other applicants are required to take the same examination. After the hiring process is complete, a medical examination cannot be required of an employee except of the instance of a job transfer if the new position requires one.

**Elephant in the Room**

Just like any other group of people, there are many stereotypes concerning persons with disabilities. And just like any other stereotypes, these too are false. These generalizations are based on ideas and assumptions that are completely unfounded. Ideas such as “disabled people need all of our sympathy.” This statement is the opposite of the truth. Disabled people do not want sympathy, rather a fair chance at the same lives that everyone else enjoys.

Some of the other stereotypes include that disabled people are: slow, dumb, unproductive, unfriendly, socially backwards, and many, many more. Disabled people are able to perform the same tasks as other unaffected employees, if given the chance.
Overcoming Stereotypes

One way for a company to overcome the stereotypes regarding persons with disabilities, is to foster a work culture that is inclusive and diverse. Starting from the top of the organization, down to the last person hired, everyone must be sensitive to the issues surrounding disabilities.

A work culture that supports disabled employees should include:

- A diverse and inclusive work force that includes employees with different abilities.
- A well-designed compliance and anti-harassment program.
- Sensitivity or diversity training for all employees, including management.
- Employee educational items such as posters, pamphlets, handbooks, etc.

Case Study

Casey missed a deadline at work and he is devastated. He thought he was going to finish and look good to his boss, and instead he feels like a failure. He decided to talk to Steve, the gentleman who sits next to him in the office. Steve told Casey that everyone misses a deadline once in a while and not to be so hard on himself. Steve then says, “Besides, with your physical disability, the boss will have sympathy for you anyway.”

Casey was hurt by Steve’s comment, and very determined to never miss another deadline. He did not want anyone setting low expectations for him, and never wanted to give himself an excuse for not performing his best.

From that day on, Casey worked extremely hard to make sure he never missed another deadline. And, he never did.
Module Eight: Review Questions

1) “Employer Responsibilities” does NOT mention which of the following as an area to be considered when making sure there is no discrimination against those with disabilities?
   a) Firing
   b) Promotion
   c) Benefits
   d) Salary

2) Of the following, which was not stated in “Employer Responsibilities” as a topic in which disability discrimination should not exist?
   a) Training
   b) Job assignments
   c) Lay-off
   d) Retirement

3) When interviewing a candidate, what percentage of questions can be formatted in a way that asks about the candidate’s disabilities?
   a) 15%
   b) 0%
   c) 5%
   d) 10%

4) When is it acceptable to require a job candidate to undergo a health exam?
   a) Once the candidate completes the first interview, and his offered a second interview
   b) Never
   c) Once a job offer has been made to the candidate
   d) At the time of completing the application

5) Which of the following is not true?
   a) Disabled people need our sympathy
   b) Disabled people should be given a fair chance at doing a job
   c) Disabled people should be paid the same as non-disabled people for doing the same job
   d) Disabled people may require certain accommodations to complete a job
6) Creating a culture that fosters the inclusion of employees with disabilities, starts with:
   a) Human Resources
   b) Employees who have been with the company for at least 5 years
   c) The top of the organization
   d) Department managers

7) When is it acceptable to not hire a person with disabilities?
   a) When a project can be completed faster without a person with disabilities
   b) Where state law permits it
   c) When more than 50% of your employee population is made up of women
   d) Never

8) Sensitivity training that includes a section on people with disabilities, must be completed by whom?
   a) Employees that have been with the company for a long time and Human Resources
   b) New employees and management
   c) Management and Human Resources
   d) All employees of the company

9) Employee educational items are useful in reminding employees on how to create an inclusive work culture. Of the items listed below, which was NOT mentioned in the module as one of these items.
   a) Handbook
   b) Pamphlet
   c) Poster
   d) Video

10) It is ____ acceptable for an employer to require a job candidate to disclose a disability.
    a) Rarely
    b) Always
    c) Sometimes
    d) Never
Stereotypes concerning religion have grown since the globalization of the business world. Never before has the workforce been so diverse. With this diversity come some challenges in the area of stereotypes and sensitivity towards others. We must all remember that this great country was founded on the basis of the freedom of religion, to have or even not to have.

**Employer Responsibilities**

An employee’s religion should not have any reflection on his or her work performance. The right to religion goes back as far as the beginning of this country and the First Amendment, but the legal reference would be the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII. This act forbids employers from discriminating against any employee in any way due to religious preferences.

Title VII also forbids employers from any disparate treatment. Disparate treatment is defined as any treatment of any employee that is less than other employees. This applies throughout an employee’s tenure, from the initial interview through termination of employment. For example, giving everyone who celebrates Christmas a bonus and not giving one to those who do not would be disparate treatment.
HR and Best Practices

The HR compliance team needs to thoroughly inspect the company policies for cases of disparate wording and policies. Best practices begin in the design of the policies for the day to day operations of the business. Ensure that all policies, holiday observances, bonuses, etc. are fair to all protected categories. The employer has a duty to accommodate everyone.

Some of the areas of focus should be:

- Hiring practices
- Promotion policies
- Reasonable accommodation policies

Elephant in the Room

Stereotypes are often based on misinformation and ignorance. People that do not know anything about a religion, may have many opinions about that religion. Religion is usually deeply personal issue, but can differ greatly between employees. An employer must be aware of all their employees’ different ideas and beliefs.

A common stereotype is of the “Bible thumper”, who pushes their beliefs on others. After September 11, 2001 Muslims were the target of increased religious discrimination. Truly, these stereotypes are based on unfounded ideas and opinions and have no place in the workplace.

Overcoming Stereotypes

Overcoming religious stereotypes is just as challenging as other stereotypes. Because a religious preference is a deep belief, it is hard to overcome false ideas about other religions. Employers must exert the extra effort to support an inclusive work culture.

Ensure that all major religious holidays are recognized on the company calendar and get equal attention. Make informational pamphlets available to all employees through HR. Require that all bonuses occur at
a time that they are not construed as holiday gifts. The best way to accomplish the goal is through education and leadership.
Case Study

Fatima is new to the department. Due to her religion, she wears a head scarf to work. She was afraid that she wouldn't be welcomed because of this fact. In addition, the team seemed to be busy doing their tasks and no one is really communicating with her. Fatima decides to reach out to Bella, who showed her around the company. She told Bella that she was a little nervous about not fitting in because of her head scarf. Bella told her not to worry, and invited her into the break room for a drink. When they got there, some other team members were there. Everyone is sitting and enjoying their coffee, so the two grabbed their coffee and joined them around the table. After introducing herself to everyone, she asked a little about everyone else.

She realized that she has a lot in common with several fellow employees, and plans to spend many of her coffee breaks with them.
Module Nine: Review Questions

1) What year did the act that prohibits workplace discrimination of religion come into place?
   a) 1974
   b) 1974
   c) 1964
   d) 1970

2) What did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 insure, according to the lesson?
   a) Forbidding employers from any disparate treatment
   b) Allowing Discrimination
   c) Hiring applicants based solely on religion
   d) Allowing unequal treatment

3) What is disparate treatment?
   a) Treating employees differently
   b) Treating employees the same
   c) Treating employees with respect
   d) Hiring very few employees

4) Who is responsible for fair treatment in the workplace?
   a) HR
   b) The person who is oppressed
   c) All employees
   d) Supervisor/manager

5) Who has to inspect the policies for a case involving disparate wording?
   a) HR
   b) Managers
   c) Employees
   d) The CEO

6) According to the text, who has the ultimate responsibility to accommodate all religious beliefs and ideas in the workplace?
   a) Employers
   b) Human Resources
c) Employees who practice religions that did not originate in the United States
d) All employees

7) As per “Elephant in the Room”, how do stereotypes come to be?
   a) Media  
   b) Opinions  
   c) Ignorance  
   d) Job performance

8) What caused an increase in targeted discrimination against Muslims?
   a) Events of 9/11  
   b) Personal disbelief  
   c) Lack of education  
   d) TV

9) How can religious stereotypes be overcome, according to “Overcoming Stereotypes”?
   a) Watch television programs  
   b) Make informational pamphlets  
   c) Have a religious parade  
   d) Show positivity

10) Finding common ground when communicating with others is perceived as ______.
    a) Negative  
    b) Manipulative  
    c) Positive  
    d) Indifferent
Module Ten: Handling Complaints (I)

In a diverse workplace, the chances of conflict are high. It is critical that HR is committed to providing a safe and diverse workplace for everyone. Employees need to know that any type of stereotypes or discrimination will not be tolerated. Education also needs to contain the complaint process.

Develop Process

Every employee has the right to wage a complaint that is confidential. The complaint processes need to be designed to be thorough, timely, and equal to all. These processes need to be documented and retained. Here are some of the requirements:

- Ways to report
- Report information necessary
- Confidentiality and non-retaliation descriptions
- Investigation processes
- Review procedures
• Disciplinary processes

Publish Process

After the design of the processes and their policies, this non-discrimination program needs to be printed and put into use. There needs to be several ways for employees to access this information. Because of this, here is a short list of places to include the complaint process:

• Employee handbook, given to all employee upon orientation
• HR office
• Manager or supervisor

These policies need to be written at an 8th grade reading level, to accommodate all employees. They should also be published in all languages spoken in the company. Written information should always be published in at least 12 pt. font to ensure ease of reading.

Train Employees

Employees need to be well-equipped to deal with any discrimination complaints they have. Before they can tackle the issue, they must be trained on the process of how to do so.

Training can take the forms of:

• E-learning
• Large-group discussions
• Small-group discussions

Regardless of how the training is conducted, there are several items to keep in mind to ensure the training is effective.

• The objectives should be clear.
• The wording of the training is appropriate for all age/education levels.

• The context should be concise, but thorough.
Assess the Effectiveness of the Process

There are really two areas that should be assessed when it comes to the process of handling complaints. First, the training itself should be evaluated to gauge whether or not employees understand it and feel confident in implementing it. Secondly, once an employee files a complaint, is there proper follow-up and resolution?

In both cases, there are some simple ways to assess effectiveness. Some of these are:

- Questionnaires
- Verbal, informal feedback
- Focus groups
- Hotlines

Case Study

James and Kathleen are having lunch. They just finished working on a course for sensitivity training, which includes a section on how to handle complaints regarding discrimination. Kathleen stated in addition to appending this information to the employee handbook, they need to discuss how and when they are going to train current employees on the content.

They agree that doing the training in large groups would be best. They also talked about the methods they will use to assess the effectiveness of the training. This will include having employees completing questionnaires and participate in focus groups.

Once they've had the chance to consult with the HR department and department managers, they will establish the training dates.
Module Ten: Review Questions

1) The chance of conflict in a diverse workplace is__________.
   a) Low
   b) High
   c) The same as a non-diverse workplace
   d) None at all

2) What grade level can the processes and policies not exceed?
   a) 3rd Grade
   b) 10th Grade
   c) 8th Grade
   d) 12th Grade

3) The smallest font size in which the policies should be written is_______.
   a) 14 pt.
   b) 12 pt.
   c) 18 pt.
   d) 16 pt.

4) While training employees, what does the module say is important to ensure understanding?
   a) Content is accustomed to most backgrounds
   b) There are no outside distractions
   c) The training is at an average pace
   d) The wording of the training is appropriate for all ages and education levels

5) Training is BEST in the form of__________.
   a) Hand-picked groups
   b) One-on-one discussions
   c) Conference calls
   d) Large group discussions

6) What type of feedback can you give to assess the effectiveness of the process?
   a) Kind
   b) Indirect
   c) Informal
d) Authoritative
7) What type of group would help when trying to assess the effectiveness of the process?
   a) Informal group
   b) Large group
   c) Focus group
   d) Formal group

8) According to the module, the complaint process is designed to be__________.
   a) Easy
   b) Thorough
   c) Fair
   d) Short

9) What is needed in the publishing process?
   a) The training needs to be published within a certain number of pages
   b) The training needs to be verbally read to all employees
   c) The training needs to be published in every language spoken in the company
   d) The training needs to be straight to the point without distractions

10) What is NOT a requirement for the complaint process?
   a) Review procedures
   b) Confidentiality and non-retaliation descriptions
   c) Consider wage differences
   d) Report information necessary
Module Eleven: Handling Complaints (II)

It is extremely important for the HR department to properly handle all complaints involving stereotypes and discrimination. The manner in which the issue is handled can mean the difference between effective investigating and creating more issues for the company. There are several necessary steps that each complaint needs to have addressed in the means that have usually been set forth in the company’s compliance program. Issues need to be addressed as soon as possible, with documentation of each step. In the following module are some of the steps.

Gather Information from the Complainant

The first step is to address the complaint by interviewing the reporting party. Not just the victim can report bad behavior, co-workers, other employees, and even customers are able to report infractions. All reports must be taken seriously and without any assumptions. This is only a fact-finding mission, not a decision to take any action. This interaction with the reporting party must remain confidential. Include the following points:

- What occurred?
- What was said?
- When did the incident occur?
- Who witnessed the event?
At this step, there is no conclusions to reach, just recording the facts. This information must be documented and forwarded to the proper supervisor in a timely manner. Delaying the investigation can be detrimental in many ways for not only the victim but also the company.
Evaluate the Credibility of the Complaint

After receiving the information from the complainant, HR needs to then evaluate the credibility of the complaint itself. Unfortunately, not all reports are credible. Not all situations are interpreted the same by all. There are several items that can be studied to determine the truthfulness or credibility of the report and the information provided. Is this the first time that this type of incident has been reported? Is this something that could be personal rather than work-related? Criteria could include:

- The reporter’s demeanor
- The details that are included, are they specific or vague?
- Does the report make sense, is it possible?
- Is the reporter prone to making complaints?

Interview Those Involved

The next step is to interview all the people that witnessed the incident in the report. Everyone that is spoken to must understand that all parts of the investigation must be kept confidential. This includes the company, the reporting and offending parties, and the witnesses. You should also reassure the witness of the zero tolerance for retaliation for any testimony that he/she may offer. Here are some more tips to conducting this interview:

- Do not answer any questions from the witness concerning the report.
- Do not express any opinions.
- Keep the questions simple and to the point.
- Does he/she have any other information that may be pertinent to the issue?
Take Action Against the Offender

After the investigation has been completed, there may or may not be a consequence for possible offenses that occurred. There are usually steps in place through the HR department, as to the particular steps for each company and how discipline is handled.

In the case that there are disciplinary actions, these actions need to be taken as soon as possible. There are several issues that need to be considered in regards to discipline: employee’s past personal record, the severity of the offense, and any federal or state guidelines.

Types of discipline can include: verbal warning, written warnings, required diversity training, transfer of department, suspension, and even termination of employment.

Case Study

Three weeks ago, the Mill Paper Company conducted a sensitivity training, which came right on time for Tam. Tam confided in Bert that she had an experience that was uncomfortable, and she thinks it was discrimination. She told Bert that she doesn’t want to get anyone in trouble, but feels if she doesn’t speak up, it is sending the message that the action was okay.

Tam went on to explain that her supervisor, Cheryl sent a sign-up sheet around the team for the upcoming holiday party. Those who wanted to participate, were to write down what they plan on bringing. Tam wrote down that she would bring cookies. Once everyone had a chance to sign the sheet, it got back around to Cheryl’s desk. Cheryl quietly pulled Tam to the side and told her she was surprised she decided to participate. Tam asked why. Cheryl said because she heard that Tam was an atheist and the party has a Christmas theme. Tam said she understood what she was signing up for and would like to participate. Cheryl harshly asked Tam, “If you don’t believe in a religion, why would you celebrate that religion’s holiday?”

Bert agreed that Cheryl was out of line and encouraged her to bring the matter to the attention of HR. Tam complied. Once the investigation was complete, Cheryl personally apologized to Tam and said it would never happen again.
Module Eleven: Review Questions

1) When reading the “Gathering the Information from the Complainant” lesson, what question was not asked?
   a) What occurred?
   b) Where did this happen?
   c) What was said?
   d) Who witnessed the event?

2) When gathering information from a complainant, the interaction____
   a) Must stay confidential
   b) Can be shared with the alleged
   c) Can be shared with the complainant’s supervisor
   d) Can be shared with everyone except the alleged

3) What is the BEST reason why shouldn’t you delay an investigation?
   a) The situation can get worse for the victim
   b) The situation can get worse for the culprit
   c) No one will think the situation is serious
   d) The situation will grow worse

4) What would you NOT ask yourself when evaluating the credibility of a complainant?
   a) The details that are included, are they specific or vague?
   b) Is the reporter prone to making complaints?
   c) Are there witnesses that can agree with the story?
   d) Does the report make sense, is it possible?

5) When interviewing those who were involved, you should NOT____________.
   a) Ask questions straight to the point
   b) Express your opinion
   c) Get answers from everyone
   d) Write what people have to say

6) When gathering information, what do you record?
   a) A summary
   b) Information you think is important
c) Conclusions  

d) Facts

7) If there are disciplinary actions that need to be taken, when do you address them?

a) As soon as possible  
b) A week later  
c) When the victim says so  
d) When the problem dies down a little

8) What type of discipline is LEAST likely in such cases?

a) Written warning  
b) Verbal warning  
c) Self-discipline  
d) Transfer of department

9) When gathering information, it should reach the supervisor:

a) As soon as reasonably possible  
b) Within 24 hours  
c) Within two weeks  
d) Within one month

10) What happens if companies don’t properly solve problems?

a) It can create more issues for the victim  
b) It can create more issues for the culprit  
c) It can create more issues for the company  
d) All of the above
Module Twelve: Wrapping Up

Although this workshop is coming to a close, we hope that your journey to improve your understanding of sensitivity in the workplace is just beginning. Please take a moment to review and update your action plan. This will be a key tool to guide your progress in the days, weeks, months, and years to come. We wish you the best of luck on the rest of your travels!

Words from the Wise

People may not remember what you said, but they remember the way you made them feel.
-Maya Angelou

If you want to positively influence others, begin by influencing how they experience you.
-Sylvia Baffour

The only disability in life is a bad attitude.
-Scott Hamilton

Religion is like a pair of shoes...Find one that fits for you, but don't make me wear your shoes.
-George Carlin

It takes the same energy to complain as it does to compliment.
-Harbhajan Singh Yogi