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"Perceived Bias"



CASE-EX VIDEO VIGNETTE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

For all members of the Army Profession

<http://cape.army.mil>

“Perceived Bias”

Table of Contents		
1:	Basic Concepts	p. 2
2:	Facilitation: Best Practices	p. 2
3:	“Perceived Bias” Part 1 &2 Video Transcript	p. 3-4
4:	Additional Resources.....	p. 5
5:	Sample Discussion Questions.....	p. 6-7
6:	AAR/Check on Learning.....	p. 8

BASIC CONCEPTS

- Watch the video and read the transcript prior to discussion.
- Review “Facilitation Best Practices.”
- See “Additional Resources” for more content.
- Think about a personal experience, story, or event that relates to the scenario and consider using this as a way to start the discussion.
- Present each part of the vignette and lead an open discussion that relates to a desired learning outcome. Use the “Sample Discussion Questions” to help you prepare questions.
- After watching and discussing each part of the story, identify the takeaways and discuss how each participant will apply this experience.

FACILITATION: BEST PRACTICES

The facilitators’ main role is to be a catalyst for conversation and learning about the topic at-hand. This module contains two rounds of discussion and ends with time to reflect on personal stories and vignettes that relate to the module.

Here are some key points to consider when preparing to facilitate a discussion:

- Let participants do most of the talking.
- The facilitators’ key role is to ask questions that spark thought and conversation.
- Ensure you engage everyone within your group and set the conditions for them to share thoughts openly. Do not let any one person or contingent dominate the conversation.
- Have questions prepped for each round to drive the conversation. Ask open-ended questions and encourage participants to elaborate on their answers/thoughts.

You are the catalyst for conversation. Make sure you continue to ask questions that make your group dig deeper. For more information and guidelines on facilitating professional development discussions, visit the CAPE Website at <http://cape.army.mil>.

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: PART 1



“My name is Charles Stephens.

I grew up in Kentucky and I joined the Army and did 23 years. I have been in Civil Service for seven and a half years on retirement—when I retired from the Army. Thirty years, boy that sounds like a large chunk doesn’t it? It is.

There’s probably some things I’d do differently.

I took over a new position in December with all of the responsibilities and none of the pay or the position. You know, (it) seems to be fairly common.

Have you ever been asked to help get someone a job?

There are people around here—and it’s probably not very many—but there are

some people around that are here because of who or what they *were*; not because of what they bring or their *current* qualifications. They have gotten (here) based on help.

Within you, you want to help the “good guys” because the really good guys are honestly a little bit more few and far between than what we would like. I could be downtown, or like you said, I could get an e-mail from a guy who used to work for me as a green suitor and he’s, let’s say, Germany getting ready to retire (and) wants to retire here—help.

I get (a call) just out of the blue because somebody else he talked to gave him my contact information, and he called me and asked me about positions—about GS positions because I’m in a supervisory position. He even asked me to help him. I didn’t know the guy so he didn’t reach out to me because he knew me, he had just reached out to me because he had gotten my contact information from someone else as someone who may be able to help him.”

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: PART 2



“I just told him, “Look the only thing I can tell you to do is look at the USA job’s website. All of the jobs will be posted there. I

couldn’t do anything for you anyway.”

I sit on boards and I interview people sometimes, but that’s all. You can’t give the perception that there’s any kind of favoritism or any undue pressure. It’s all equal and everyone has to be equal.

In the past I’ve had guys—actually, I have a guy working for me now who we just talked about—that I went out of my way to make sure there was no perception that I had helped him, because I didn’t. But I had to avoid even the perception of it because of the potential for issues.

We’ve come to a point now where we’re blacking out the names on resumes

that we review but you can’t help—it’s a small community—and you can’t help but say, “Oh, I know this guy”. You know, just by the resume. And actually it worked out pretty well because people, who knew I knew the man, knew better than to talk to me, just to keep the process above board. And it worked out, I mean the guy’s a great employee.

And like I said, it’s not so much the rules for me—even though I know it’s against the rules, and I don’t do it—it’s not that I don’t do it to just obey the rules. I do it because it’s just the right thing to do, I think. You know, like I said, everybody has to get the same opportunity.

I mean, that’s just one of those things you have to deal with. You have to ensure that your people understand that you don’t work that way, and you have to demand that of them as well.

And that’s what I try to do.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are available:

	<p><u>Center for the Army Profession and Ethic:</u></p> <p>Visit the CAPE Army Profession Website: http://cape.army.mil/AAOP/aaop.php</p>
	<p><u>United States Office of Government Ethics:</u></p> <p>http://www.oge.gov/Topics/Use-of-Government-Position-and-Resources/Use-of-Government-Position---Resources/</p>

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PART 1: Discussing Mr. Stephens' Story

[Watch "Perceived Bias" – Part 1]

1. Have you ever been asked to help someone get a job? How did you respond?
2. Mr. Stephens says, "There are some people around that are here because of who or what they *were* (and) not because of what they bring or their *current* qualifications." What effect might this perception have on the work environment and climate?
3. Mr. Stephens talks about his intrinsic desire to help the 'good guy.' He notes that they are "few in far between." What is Stephens describing here? How do you interpret this statement?
 - a. Based on his perspective, what can you infer about Mr. Stephens' professional identity?
 - b. What impacts the development of an Army Professional's identity over time?
 - c. How does an individual's identity directly influence his/her observable behaviors?
 - d. How does Mr. Stephens' "intrinsic desire to help the 'good guy'" relate to being a steward of the Army Profession? What does he mean by 'good guy'? Good as a friend or good for the Army?
4. How does Mr. Stephens' level of competence, character, and commitment influence how he perceives this situation? How might perceptions differ based on varying levels of character, competence, and commitment for different individuals?
5. What decision is Mr. Stephens facing? What are the possible moral and ethical implications of his decision? Is there a conflict possible when trying to ensure the Army gets high quality employees while at the same time having to properly work through the hiring process?
6. What are some courses of action Mr. Stephens could take when evaluating his decision?
 - a. How does the Army Ethic provide guidance in this situation?
 - b. What rules or regulations apply?
 - c. How does Army Culture and his organization's climate/esprit de corps impact his decision?

PART 2: Discussing Mr. Stephens' Story

[Watch "Perceived Bias" – Part 2]

1. Mr. Stephens talks about the importance of equality in the workplace. How does this impact his decision?
2. Mr. Stephens says he avoids even the perception of helping someone get a job. Why does or why doesn't perception matter? Why might it have been important to Mr. Stephens in this situation?
3. Mr. Stephens says, "It's not that I *don't* do it just to obey the rules, I do it because it's just the right thing to do." Has there been an experience in your life where you took action not because of a desire to follow the rules, but because you felt like it was the right thing to do?
4. Describe your moral compass. How willing are you to follow it with or without a set of rules to support? How much weight do rules and regulations have on your evaluation of a decision with moral/ethical implications?
5. How did Mr. Stephens demonstrate his adherence to professional standards and discipline? How did he exemplify discipline in his actions?
6. What was the underlying motivation for Mr. Stephens to follow to the rules and regulations regarding the hiring process, despite it being a common practice in his organization?
 - a. How did he demonstrate his commitment to the Army Profession through his actions?
7. How do leaders foster a climate that promotes ethical behavior and the discipline to adhere to the Army Ethic, simply because "it's the right thing to do?"
 - a. How often are individuals within the Army rewarded for making the right moral or ethical decision? Why does simply "doing the right thing" sometimes need to be recognized?
 - b. What impact can rewarding moral courage have on the culture and esprit de corps of an organization?
8. How does Mr. Stephens' behaviors serve as an example of stewardship? If he had decided to hire the individual based solely on his connection, how might that have impacted the Army Profession as a whole?
 - a. What implications could this have for the status of the Army as a Profession if this is a commonplace occurrence?

AAR/CHECK ON LEARNING

Personal Vignettes and Takeaways

Facilitator asks students to share any personal vignettes and takeaways from the module.

It is important for the group to relate to this story on a personal level. Conclude the module emphasizing the significance of Mr. Stephens' story. Soldiers should walk away with a better understanding of the decision point, and be able to properly convey the importance of the decision-making process to individuals in their unit.

Upon concluding, the following questions are useful for determining learning and promoting reflection:

Learning	Q - What did you learn from listening to the reactions and reflections of other leaders? Q - What are the future implications of this decision and or experience?
Reflection	Q - How do you feel/what do you think about what you learned? Q - What will you do with your new information? Q – How can you apply this experience to better develop yourself and your fellow professionals?