

A case of mistreatment at work case study examples

[Business](#), [Company](#)



The center of the problem in the case study was the insensitivity of some of the employees – particularly Peter and Alex – to the cultural background of Jessica, which made Jessica feel uncomfortable, if not discriminated upon.

The problem was worsened when Tom, Jessica’s boss, just brushed off Jessica’s concerns when Jessica approached him with her problem. This made Jessica feel that she didn’t have her manager’s support and that if she didn’t, then she didn’t really have anyone else to turn to.

Although Susan did show concern and advised Alex and Peter to go easy on Jessica and even advised the two of them to talk to Jessica, this was not really taken seriously by Alex and Peter. They didn’t see it as a big problem and so when they approached Jessica, they appeared very casual, which made Jessica even more uncomfortable. Moreover, they caught Jessica off guard when they confronted her, that is, they confronted her at the wrong place and at the wrong time, which prevented Jessica from expressing what she truly felt.

During Jessica’s performance appraisal review, another problem that occurred was that Tom never gave Jessica a chance to explain her side. Performance appraisal reviews should be a dialogue and not just a meeting where one party does all the talking.

Finally, and probably the bigger problem, was that the company didn’t have a clear policy on diversity in that there was no established procedure for filing reports against mistreatment.

Some of the possible solutions would include the team members communicating more openly about their issues. For example, Jessica could have informed Alex and Peter that she was offended by their jokes, which could have immediately put a stop to them. Alex and Peter should have also confronted Jessica in a more appropriate setting, that is, they should have scheduled a meeting with her. This way, Jessica could have also prepared for the meeting. In addition, Susan should have taken the initiative to talk to Jessica to find out first hand what the problem was and to show Jessica that she supported her.

When Jessica approached Tom about her problem, Tom should have listened more carefully and should have been more open-minded about Jessica's concerns instead of easily dismissing them. When he received feedback from Susan regarding the tension in the group, he should have also exerted more effort to find out what was happening before making judgments on how it would affect Jessica's performance. In the same manner, he should have given Jessica a chance to explain her side during the performance appraisal review and should have tried to understand her concerns instead of assuming that he understood the situation well by proposing ways for Jessica to improve her performance without even hearing her side.

Finally, the company should have a clearer diversity policy with clear and established procedures on the action that can be taken should this policy be violated. The company's senior management should also show more support for this policy and should implement it in a stricter manner.

The best solution would be the last, which is that the company's senior management should take a more active role in ensuring compliance of the diversity policy. Jessica's problem was definitely not the first instance. Apparently, diversity issues had been experienced by many of the other employees, too. As such, the best way to change the company's culture so that it becomes more diversity-friendly is for the company's senior management to support and promote such culture through efforts such as rewarding diversity-friendly behavior and penalizing the opposite.

Works Cited

Meares, Mary M. and Oetzel, John G. " A Case of Mistreatment at Work?."

Case Studies For

Organizational Communication: Understanding Communication Processes.

2nd ed. Eds. J

Keyton & P. Shockley-Zalabak. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury, 2006. 379-388.

Print.