

*Objective:* To view military rank and service branch as cultural groups.

<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	About a half day to a full day
<b>RISK LEVEL</b>	Moderate
<b>PARTICIPANTS NEEDED</b>	Any number of participants, plus one facilitator
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<p>Please take the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare copies of the seven situations in Exhibit 4.5 and distribute them to participants.</li> <li>2. Instruct participants to read one or more of the situations and to provide several responses to each situation, indicating which is most appropriate. Then, ask them to explain why they chose the response as most appropriate in the following way: Is it what they feel they would <i>like</i> to do, <i>should</i> do, or would actually do?</li> <li>3. Ask the students to identify which of the five intercultural barriers are relevant to each situation: language differences, use of nonverbal communication, stereotypes, evaluation, and stress.</li> </ol>
<b>DEBRIEFING</b>	<p>The facilitator needs to be sensitive to the unique situation of military culture, particularly if the training group includes people of different rank and service branch, so that no participant is embarrassed or put in a difficult situation with consequences in real life outside the training situation. Some discussion questions are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How is the military culture uniquely different from other cultural groups?</li> <li>2. Were you able to identify barriers to communication?</li> </ol>

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3. Were you able to identify strategies for decreasing intercultural communication barriers?
4. Which barriers were the most difficult to overcome?
5. Have you had actual experience with these communication barriers?

**INSIGHT**

Barriers to communication are viewed differently by those outside the military culture than by those inside that culture.

Exhibit 4.5 *Critical Incidents in the Military*

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**Sexual Harassment**

*Complainant:* Chief Master Sergeant (CMS) White male

*Offender:* White female secretary

*Complaint:* A secretary in my office has lodged a sexual harassment complaint against me with the civilian equal opportunity office (EEO). She claims I sexually harassed her by using endearing terms and derogatory comments. She lodged this complaint yesterday based on a statement I made that she claims was offensive. The statement was made in pure jest. She usually carries a key to the duplication machine that is tied to a large metal hook. She appeared to be in a good mood, and I was in a good mood, so I said, "Hey, here comes my favorite hooker." There were two other individuals standing by, and they chimed in, saying, "Yeah, ours, too." Everybody laughed, including her, then went on with his or her business. Yesterday I received notice of a complaint being lodged against me.

**Military Dependents: National Origin**

*Complainant:* Asian female dependent

*Offender:* Black female dependent

*Complaint:* We bowl every Friday night. I'm on a bowling team with three other ladies from Korea and Thailand. There is a Black woman on one of the other teams who continually talks about us. She calls us names and stares at us the whole time we are bowling. She slapped her husband one night because he was talking to me about Korea. She told me that she didn't want me nowhere near her husband. I don't know him and didn't start the conversation that night. I don't mind the stares so much, but I get embarrassed at the way she talks about us. I reported her to the manager at the bowling alley, but he said there was nothing he could do. My husband is in the Navy and has been at sea for 5 months, so he can't help me. The woman says we have no right to bowl in the Air Force Bowling Alley, but the rule only states that we be military dependents to join the league. I want her to stop talking about me and stop staring at me. Can you help?

**Racism Complaint**

*Complainant:* Black male Half Sergeant (SSgt)

*Offender:* SSgt. Marine

*Complaint:* I went into the marine enlisted club looking to have a beer and cool off. This marine sitting at the bar began to stare at me. I ordered a drink and some chips and began to watch TV at the bar. The Marine SSgt made a comment that I should use the Air Force Club; they usually cater to my kind. I tried to ignore him, but he continued to make racial slurs directed at me. The bartender tried to quiet him down without success. Finally, I reported him to the night manager. They appeared to know each other well. Finally, the guy left. The night manager informed me there might be trouble if I left by the front entrance and suggested I leave by a side door. I decided to have another drink and left by the front door. The SSgt was waiting, and we got into a fight. The police arrested both of us, releasing me to my commander. I want you to get the marine charged with racial prejudice and get my record wiped clean.

*(continued)*

### **Commander Religion**

*Complainant:* Female First Lieutenant

*Offender:* Male Lieutenant Colonel

*Complaint:* I have a young female First Lieutenant assigned to my unit who said she was going to lodge a complaint against me. She claims I will not allow her an opportunity to participate in various religious activities involving her church. The Lieutenant is an excellent musician, I'm told, and is in charge of her church choir. She claims that I've prevented her from attending various functions by changing her shift schedules. The Lieutenant is one of three officers assigned to the unit. We are required to have one officer on call each night, ready to respond at a moment's notice. The Lieutenant, aside from being the newest member on board, single, and living on base, was recently trained on some delicate equipment that one other officer is temporary duty (TDY) receiving training for. Prior to her arrival, duties were covered by my two male officers. With one being TDY, I felt the Lieutenant must shoulder a larger role of responsibility. My remaining Captain has long been involved in some off-duty education and is nearing completion. I do not feel I should hinder him in his endeavors at this time. The problem will be resolved within 2 months with the return of the Captain who is TDY and the completion of the second Captain's education. I feel my actions are correct based on the circumstances. How can I prevent her from filing an equal opportunity training (EOT) complaint against me?

### **Racism Complaint**

*Complainant:* Black male Sergeant

*Offender:* White male Technical Sergeant (TSgt)

*Complaint:* Three days ago I was involved in a name-calling incident with one of the guys in my dorm. He called me a name, I called him a name, we both went into our rooms, and that ended it. Last night a TSgt came into the dorm looking for the guy I previously had the name-calling incident with. I came out of my door as he was going by. The TSgt asked me if I knew where the other guy lived. I said yeah, down the hall. The TSgt asked me to show him the room. I said I was in a hurry and really didn't want to have anything to do with the guy. The TSgt insisted by grabbing me by the arm. I jerked my arm back, telling him not to grab me. At that time the administrator I'd had the problem with stuck his head outside the door and yelled, "Sarge, that's the . . . I was telling you about. He's always starting trouble." I yelled back at him, saying he should mind his own business. The TSgt said he'd handle this dumb . . . . Based on the TSgt's statement about the incident, I received a letter of reprimand for insubordination. I want the letter of reprimand withdrawn and the TSgt cited for prejudice. Can you help me?

### **Sexual Discrimination by Supervisor**

*Complainant:* Female security policeman

*Offender:* Male supervisor

*Complaint:* In October I was called into my supervisor's office and informed that my application for dog handler training was being disapproved. I had applied for this training 3 months prior. At the time I applied, two men requested the same training. The three of us have approximately the same time in service and the same rank and experience in the Security Police. I am friends with the two men and was informed by them that their applications were approved at base level and sent forward to the commander with recommendation for approval. My supervisor informed me that my application was disapproved in the squadron because they did not feel I was strong enough to control a dog. He further stated that, in their opinion, I had shown an abnormal fear of large dogs and possibly would wash out of school because of this. The supervisor could have only gotten this information through conversation with one of the other applicants. He has never observed me around animals. I've got a good working relationship with the supervisors and most of the people in the section. I don't want to ruin it. I would like a shot at the school, but I don't want to cause trouble in the squadron. What should I do?

(continued)

**Sexual Harassment**

*Complainant:* White woman (military)

*Offenders:* Two civilian contractors

*Complaint:* They are painting some empty houses on my street. Since I live on base, I go home for lunch each day. When I get out of my car, they will usually come to the door of the house they are painting and whistle or yell at me. I have reported them, but nothing has come of it. I want them to leave me alone and, if possible, have the contractor thrown off base for not taking action. What should I do?

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*Objective:* To rehearse the role of an Alter Ego with someone from another culture.

**TIME REQUIRED** About a half day

**RISK LEVEL** Moderate

**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED** Any number of participants, plus a facilitator

**PROCEDURE** Please take the following steps:

1. Assemble a multicultural group of participants.
2. Organize the group so that half sit in a circle of chairs and the other half stand behind the seated members. The standing person will become the Alter Ego of the seated partner. Every time the seated person speaks or might have a viewpoint, the Alter Ego will express that implicit message to the group. For example, if the person smiles and agrees with the leader, the Alter Ego might say, "That doesn't make any sense at all, but since you are giving me a grade, I had better pretend to accept what you say and not make waves." Help students generate new situations and scripts to rehearse managing conflict in its multicultural context.
3. When the group discussion has continued for a while, ask the members to pause and discuss what they have learned before continuing.

**DEBRIEFING** In debriefing this experience, it is important to point out that the Alter Ego might not always be right. However, the Alter Ego gives an alternative interpretation, and by

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observing the member's reaction to that interpretation, it will be possible to judge whether the Alter Ego was on target or not. Some discussion questions are as follows:

1. Were some Alter Egos more accurate than others?
2. Were Alter Egos that were from the same culture as their partners more accurate?
3. Why were some messages not made explicit in the discussion except through the Alter Ego?
4. How would multicultural communication be changed if people understood what others are thinking but not saying?
5. How will you use what you learned in this experience?

INSIGHT

People from different cultures do not always say everything they are thinking.