



That's Dave's seat

Wendy, a new recruit at the Tasmania Prison Service (TPS), is subjected to inappropriate behaviour from her colleagues.

What should she do?

The story

Wendy, a recruit on her first shift, walks into the mess room to have lunch. After grabbing her meal from the fridge, she sits down at a table already occupied by two officers who have been with TPS for several years.

Tony tells Wendy, "Sorry, you can't sit there. That's Dave's seat."

"Yeah", agrees Damien. "You new recruits sit over at that table near the phone, so if it rings during the lunch break, you answer it."

Wendy hesitates but gets up and moves.

The other officers laugh and call out, "Sorry, that's just the way it is!"

Questions

1. What are the ethical issues around this situation?
2. Tony and Damien were subjected to the same behaviour when they started – it's not personal, right?
3. What could Wendy, Tony and Damien do to address the issues?

The information used in this scenario is not factual – we created it for education and discussion. Any likeness to actual persons or events is coincidental.

Questions – Facilitator copy

4. What are the ethical issues around this situation?
 - ▽ Tony and Damien have displayed anti-social and inappropriate behaviour towards Wendy.
 - ▽ This behaviour could be viewed as bullying and harassment due to Wendy's exclusion.
 - ▽ Tony and Damien have assumed authority to enforce a 'rule' that new officers sit in a particular area.

5. Tony and Damien were subjected to the same behaviour when they started – it's not personal, right?
 - ▽ No, Tony and Damien experiencing the same exclusion when they started doesn't make it right.
 - ▽ A culture of inappropriate behaviour develops when the offending conduct is not addressed.

6. What could Wendy, Tony and Damien do to address the issues?
 - ▽ Wendy should report the behaviour to her supervisor, who needs to speak to Tony and Damien about their behaviour.
 - ▽ Tony and Damien need to understand the impact their exclusion has had on Wendy and not carry on an inappropriate tradition.
 - ▽ TPS conducts training in avoiding bullying and harassment.
 - ▽ New staff encouraged not to accept this kind of behaviour.



The Commission can help

We are available to provide support and assistance with identifying, reporting, investigating, managing and preventing misconduct: prevention@integrity.tas.gov.au or 1300 720 289.

For more Misconduct Prevention resources go to www.integrity.tas.gov.au/resources.