

Tackling race and religious based hate crime network

Case Management Session for responding to race and religiously based hate crimes

This exercise has been developed by Athena-Maria Enderstein, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead at Durham University, and Josh Callander, Anti-Harassment Campaign Manager at the University of Bath.

Aim: To review religious-based hate incident case scenarios (with a varied range of challenges), discuss different approaches to handling such situations and to exchange and inform good practice.

Overview: This session will take a practice-based approach. Participants working in groups will look at different scenarios and will be asked to consider factors such as availability of resources, organisational culture, local context and intersectionality, among others. Participants are encouraged to bring along examples of situations and approaches that have worked to inform the wider discussion.

Cases

Case 1

Yusuf has just moved into university halls of accommodation as a first-year student. Yusuf is the only ethnic minority student within his flat, and there is a 50-50 gender split in the group of 12. The flatmates are generally acclimatising to their new environment quite well, engaging in social activities as a group and exchanging social media profile information. Yusuf and the other male members of the flat, feeling comfortable in their new environment, begin to play pranks on one another and other members of the flat. These include covering each other's rooms in toilet paper, moving items in the kitchen, and posting comments on somebody else's social media account. James, one of Yusuf's flatmates, responds to Yusuf placing cups of water on his bedroom floor by placing slices of ham on Yusuf's desk and furniture. Yusuf, on returning to his room, discovers the "prank" and storms into James' room and a physical skirmish is broken up by their flatmates. Yusuf reports the incident to the Students' Union Advice and Support centre.

Case 2

Amaka is a PhD student in the Science Faculty, she moved from Nigeria to take up this position. As part of her work she spends several days a week in the laboratory. She most often works with two other PhD students and one Research Assistant employed by the university. When she arrived at the

Commented [MOU1]: We would advise separating your group into 3 groups, each responsible for reviewing one case, determining a course of action, and then presenting to the wider group for critical examination.

Commented [MOU2]: The purpose of this exercise isn't to determine whether discrimination, in any form, has taken place. Rather we are looking to examine how we would respond to these cases at individual and institutional levels. Although you might not have a full understanding of the context, you can still work through responses to these disclosures or reports.

Commented [MOU3]: Items of note for this case study:

- Intersectionality here is key, determining whether this is religiously-motivated, racially-motivated, or both. Reinforce that this can, and will be, with regard to perception.
- Acknowledging that examples of Islamophobia can, and will, be racially motivated in addition to, or instead of, religiously-motivated.
- What do your processes look like for reports made to the Students' Union?
- What informal and formal resolution does your institution and/or Students' Union have?
- What were the posts on social media and were they inappropriate content?
- What impact will this have on the rest of the flat?
- Could Yusuf or James face disciplinary action for their physical altercation?
- Consider the location of the incident and the implications for the legal responsibilities of the university.

Commented [MOU4]: Items of note for this case study:

- Intersections of the PhD student experience and the complexities that present when reporting or considering report. Impact on experience, research, thesis. Who does the student report this incident to? PhD students often report sense of isolation from institution.
- Consider the impact on Amaka's mental health and wellbeing. What can the institution do to support?
- "Drip-drip" effect of micro-aggressions and hate-motivated incidents.
- What immediate safeguarding measures can you put in place?
- Impact of bystander behaviour in this example and also what information could be obtained through witnesses.
- Consider the status of the person who was subjected to the unwanted behaviour, Amaka, would she be considered a student or a staff member?
- What responsibilities does the institution have in terms of ensuring equal treatment?
- Who else might be involved in this case, such as supervisors or line managers?
- In these kinds of cases what constitutes sufficient evidence of persistent harassment?

beginning of her PhD the Research Assistant said she was not welcome and made comments about her “dark skin”. When challenged by another student the Assistant discounted their comments as a joke. Over the subsequent months Amaka was subjected to increasingly aggressive verbal abuse from the Research Assistant and has frequently found her desk and belongings damaged. For Amaka these incidents have raised her levels of anxiety which impact her work and have aggravated a pre-existing mental health condition. When she received an abusive text message from the Research Assistant, who obtained her number from another student, she felt she finally had solid evidence to report the case to the University. Amaka has submitted a formal report stating that she has been subjected to ongoing harassment and a race hate incident by a member of staff.

Case 3

Natan is a lecturer working in the Social Sciences faculty, he is of Jewish faith. Natan submitted his CV to the Departmental Progression and Promotion Committee for promotion to Assistant to Associate Professor. The DPPC did not submit Natan for nomination to the Faculty Promotions Committee. Natan met with the Head of Department to hear why his application had not been progressed. At this meeting the Head of Department said that Natan had failed to meet the criteria and benchmarks for the promotion such as contributing to the administrative functioning of the department, programme leadership, mentoring other teachers, or supporting departmental collaboration. The Head of Department also raised concerns around repeated reports from Natan’s colleagues regarding missed deadlines, lack of communication, and a dismissive attitude from Natan. Natan feels that the statements from colleagues and the fact that his promotion application was not progressed is a result of his Jewish faith. Natan has submitted a formal report to the university stating that he has been subjected to religious discrimination by colleagues and his Head of Department.

Commented [MOU5]: Items of note for this case study:

- This is a real test of University and Human Resources procedures and documentation. How has evidence of Natan’s poor performance been collected?
- What structures are in place to support minority staff members who are seeking promotion?
- What structures are in place to support minority staff who reports inappropriate behaviour.
- Could this potentially be part of a wider organisational issue of discrimination or anti-Semitism?
- Would this be considered ethnic or religious based discrimination?
- Who is responsible for handling the formal report and carrying out the investigation?
- Discuss intersectionalities present in the case and how they might present themselves.
- What awareness does there need to be in terms of power dynamics supporting promotion?
- Do students need to be consulted about their experiences?

Case management grid:

Please note anything that stands out for you in terms of commonalities or differences with other institutions and any best-practices that might be fruitful to share with the network.

Response procedure		
Key Actions	Short-term:	Long-term:
Relevant parties		
Support for person who committed unwanted behaviour		
Support for person who was subjected to unwanted behaviour		