

Scenario 1 – "I Don't Understand"

It's your second week in a new role.

Your manager explains a task and asks: "Is everything clear?"

You have already told your manager you understand and have spent two hours working on it before realising you don't. You suspect other people may also have misunderstood the instructions.

Discuss

Do you speak? What is the risk of silence? What is the risk of speaking? How could you test your understanding without undermining others?

Scenario 2 – The Mistake

You send some information to a client.

Twenty minutes later, you realise you've included incorrect information.

A colleague notices first and says: "Let's wait and see whether anyone notices.."

Correcting the mistake will be expensive and embarrassing for the organisation.

Discuss

Who is responsible for deciding whether it matters?

What information do you need?

What are the consequences of action versus inaction?

How might professional codes/policies affect the decision?

Scenario 3 – The Impossible Deadline

Your manager asks: "Could you get this finished by 4pm?"

You already have another task due today and don't believe both can be completed properly. Both tasks affect other colleagues who are waiting for your work.

Your manager looks very busy.

Discuss

Do you simply say yes? How could you respond professionally? Construct what you would actually say to the manager.

Scenario 4 – Everyone Else Knows Each Other

You've joined an established team. Everyone appears to know one another and there are lots of conversations and jokes you don't understand.

At lunchtime, most people disappear together without inviting you. After several weeks you notice that the established team often excludes another new colleague too.

Discuss

How could you begin building relationships? What shouldn't you assume? How much responsibility lies with you versus the team? At what point might you have some responsibility for helping create a more inclusive team?

Scenario 5 – "That's Not How We Do It"

You notice what appears to be a much easier way of completing a routine task. When you suggest it, an experienced colleague replies:
"We've always done it this way."

You have evidence that your proposed method could save the team several hours each week. Your proposed change would improve efficiency but require colleagues to learn a new way of working and initially increase their workload.

Discuss

Do you push the idea? Drop it? Who should be consulted? How would you build support? Is improvement always worth disruption?

Scenario 6 – The Group Chat

Several colleagues have a private WhatsApp/group chat. You supervise one of the people participating in the chat. Someone posts an unkind joke about another member of staff.

Other people react with laughing emojis. You don't find it funny. A new team member privately messages you afterwards:
"Does everyone here talk about people like this?"

Discuss

Has your responsibility changed? What effect could silence have? What could challenging achieve? What risks accompany challenging?