

Civilian Vignette 17 – Birthday Bash

Topic: Bystander Intervention, Sexual Harassment

Situation: Birthday Bash

It's the boss' birthday. The room is decorated, balloons are hung, and the atmosphere is set for celebration. All the branch chiefs and leadership are present. Sam walks up and places a phone on the table with audio on. The music begins to play, but the lyrics are provocative and full of sexual innuendos. The boss blushes and nervously smiles. All the branch chiefs get a kick out of the song and start clapping and laughing. You do not appreciate the music, or the sexual overtones being conveyed.

Discussion Questions:

1. What would you say to Sam?
2. What is the culture of the office and how do we know that it is an issue?

Solution:

Utilize the 3D's (Direct, Distract, or Delegate) to intervene in the situation. If left unaddressed, it could lead to unprofessional and inappropriate actions and behaviors within the workplace. You could address your concerns with Sam, directly voicing your concerns and what could happen if someone feels offended by the music and files a sexual harassment complaint. This could create/contribute a culture of unprofessional behaviors that could allow sexual discussions in the workplace.