

Filing a Formal Sexual Harassment Complaint

Topic: Sexual Harassment and Retaliation

Situation: SPC Coles is being Sexually Harassed

SPC Coles, files a formal harassment complaint against several members of the new Infantry squad. SPC Coles files the complaint upon discovering that squad members have a “hot” list ranking individuals based on physical appearance. After filing the complaint, SPC Coles is called derogatory names and accused of being a troublemaker and a non-team player. Soldiers say things like, “What? You think you’re better than the rest?”; “Why do you think they let people like you in the Infantry? It was to entertain the others.” Squad members tell others in the platoon not to associate with SPC Coles because they could face repercussions. Someone leaves a note under SPC Coles’ barracks room door saying, “Drop the complaint if you ever want to be part of the team.”

Discussion Questions:

1. What did you notice was happening in this vignette?
2. What is your reaction to what is happening here?
3. If confronted with a similar situation, what would you do?
4. What Army values have been violated and how could you use the Army Values to address/intervene in this situation?
5. What is the responsibility of those who know of inappropriate conduct?
6. What could have been done?
7. Why do you think nobody intervened?

Solution: The vignette demonstrates ostracism, a form of retaliation. Upon filing a formal harassment complaint, SPC Coles’ peers began excluding them from the squad and encouraging others to do the same, to pressure them into dropping the complaint. Retaliation can be reported to the chain of command, SARC, Victim Advocate, or IG.