

# Dilemma:

## “My religion is a topic in the lunch room”

Each group has a host.

This dilemma card is for the host and contains:

- A host guide
- A dilemma
- Fact boxes
- A question guide for dialogue one and dialogue two

**Host guide** As a host, your role is to facilitate a good, constructive dialogue where everyone gets to speak. Your role is not to participate by sharing your own perspective, but you are welcome to put your perspective into play by phrasing it as a question (“What if they ...?”).

Try to be curious (“Why do you think that?”) and investigative (“What if they react differently than you assume?”).

Aim to make it safe for participants to say or share something vulnerable by making it clear that different perspectives are welcome and that everyone should be respectful.

### **The dialogue is divided into two parts.**

The first part is about giving advice to the person who posed the dilemma, and the second part is about the theme of the dilemma from the perspective of the panellists and their experiences at DTU.

On pages 3 and 4, you will find questions and data, which you can use to qualify the dialogue.

After reading this guide and skimming the question guide, please read out the dilemma to the panel. Give them a moment to reflect on the dilemma. Then initiate dialogue one.

# Dilemma:

Noori has a dilemma. He was recently employed at DTU in his dream job. His new colleagues have been welcoming, and he feels settled in.

So far, so good. However, he has overheard colleagues talking in a derogatory manner about religion, including his religion, several times at lunch or in a similar social context.

He doesn't talk about his religion at work, so he doesn't think that it is meant as a hidden message for him. Nevertheless, it is unpleasant to listen to, and he doesn't feel he can participate in the conversation without drawing attention to himself in an uncomfortable way.

Even though he sees it as only small talk between colleagues, he feels like the subject excludes him from the conversation. And it seems to be a recurring topic.

For him, it would be the same, if he were to speak in a derogatory manner about Christian traditions such as baptism, confirmation, Easter, etc. Not that he has a negative opinion about Christianity or any desire to do small talk about it. He simply thinks the example is effective when trying to get people to empathize. But can he mention it without creating a bad atmosphere? And if he should take it up with someone, who should he approach? The colleagues involved? The management? The occupational health and safety organization (AMO)?

Being new at the workplace already makes you feel vulnerable, and it can be difficult to speak up about something you find problematic. On the other hand, he is also worried that if he doesn't do anything now, he will have to continue to feel uncomfortable in social contexts, and the longer he waits, the harder it will be to bring it up.

He would like the panel to discuss his options.

# Dialogue one:

**1**  
**What advice does the panel give?**

- [Start by hearing each panellist's thoughts on the dilemma so everyone gets the chance to speak from the start]
- "What could the underlying cause(s) for the dilemma be?"
- "How do you think his colleagues would react if Noori said something?"
- "What do you think of the options stated by the person who posed the dilemma?"
- [Feel free to use the data from the boxes to boost the discussion]
- [Other investigative questions]
- "We have to come up with an answer, but you don't all have to agree. What does each of you think the person who posed the dilemma should do?"

*"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful", from Poornima Luthra's (Associate Professor, CBS) book about being an active ally in creating an inclusive workplace where you can be your authentic self.*

*Examples of harassment based on faith or religion include:*

- *Making fun of a person's religious clothing or diet.*
  - *Making derogatory, generalizing, or dehumanizing remarks about a person's religion.*
  - *Alluding to connections to illegal acts, terrorism, sexism, etc.*
- (Fact sheet on religion in the workplace, The Danish Institute For Human Rights)*

# 2 Dialogue two:

## What do you do, and what could you do?

This part of the dialogue focuses on the panellists' own experiences at DTU.

Start dialogue two by telling the panel that the focal point is still the theme of the dilemma, but now they should look at the conditions in their own unit as well as considering other solutions.

Please note that dialogue two may be a bit more sensitive. Aim to create a safe and respectful space for everyone. The goal is still not to agree on everything, but to learn more about each other's perspectives.

- "Do you recognize the dilemma or parts of it, either on a personal level or through observation?"
- "What would you do if you overheard someone or found yourself in a conversation where something derogatory was said about religion?"
- "Do you do anything specific in your unit to avoid colleagues with a minority religion feeling excluded?"
- "Is there a part of the advice you gave that you practise in your unit? If yes, what? If no, would that be possible?"
- "What else could you do? At individual, group, and organizational level?"
- [Other investigative questions]
- "What will each of you take with you to your unit, either as a point of attention or as possible solutions related to the theme of the dilemma?"