

# Research Methods and Professional Practice January 2022

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## « Collaborative Learning Discussion 1



[Charlotte Wilson](#)

### Initial Post

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The chosen case study: Abusive Workplace Behaviour, describes one member of a team being verbally and emotionally abusive to other members, stopping them from having the credit they deserved (ACM, 2020). Within the case study, it talks about members of the team who were aware of the actions of this particular member; however, chose to ignore (ACM, 2020).

Within this case study, individuals have been violating the BCS Code of Conduct. Firstly, the principle of Public Interest whereby individuals should "conduct your professional activities without discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, nationality, colour, race, ethnic origin, religion, age or disability, or of any other condition or requirement" (BCS, n.d.). This is supported further by the AVM's ethic principles of 1.1 and 3.3, with well-being being the key focus (ACM, 2020). In addition, another of BCS principles which have not been met include Professional Competence and Integrity (BCS, n.d.). Where this individual chose to remove credit from others in the team, they were in turn claiming competence that they may not have possessed.

This case study is interesting because it shows a lack of ethics from the individual causing problems, and a lack of ethics from those who knew what was happening but chose to ignore. This in itself shows that it is not just your responsibility to adhere to your individual ethical principles, but others within your environment as well.

### REFERENCES

- ACM (2020) Case: Abusive Workplace Behaviour. Available from: <https://ethics.acm.org/code-of-ethics/using-the-code/case-abusive-workplace-behavior/> [Accessed 25 January 2022]
- BCS (n.d) BCS Code of Conduct. Available from: <https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/become-a-member/bcs-code-of-conduct/> [Accessed 25 January 2022]

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2 replies

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Post by [Freya Basey](#)



Further to Charlotte's points, this case study suggests that some of Max's abusive behaviour is directed specifically at female members of the team (ACM, N.D.). For example, by not allowing them to be named as authors on studies.

Discrimination on the basis of gender in the workplace is illegal under the Equality Act 2010 (Ayling & Miller, 2021). Furthermore, an amendment to hate crime laws in the UK to include misogyny is being considered and has garnered considerable support (Westendarp, 2022). If passed, this change would allow for more stringent sentencing of people who are hostile towards women based on their gender.

In addition to the criminal law applicable to Max, there are also legal concerns applicable to Jean and, by extension, the employing company itself (Health and Safety Executive, N.D.). Employers and those acting on behalf of employers, such as team managers, have a duty of care to staff. This includes protecting them from the kinds of harassment and abuse that are described in the case study. Failing to do so could result in litigation against the employer and individuals under civil law.

In conclusion, not only is Max in contravention of various professional codes of conduct for the IT industry, but what he is doing is also illegal and could carry heavier penalties if he continues to act in this way. In addition, management are also failing to appropriately protect Diane and could therefore face litigation themselves.

#### References

ACM (N.D.) Case: Abusive Workplace Behavior. Available from: <https://ethics.acm.org/code-of-ethics/using-the-code/case-abusive-workplace-behavior/> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

Ayling, L. & Miller, J. (2021) Sex discrimination and employment. Available from : <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/emp-law/sex-discrimination/factsheet#gref> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

Health and Safety Executive (N.D.) Preventing Workplace Harassment and Violence. Available from: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

Westendarp, L. (2022) UK upper house votes to make misogyny a hate crime. Available from: <https://www.politico.eu/article/house-of-lords-votes-to-make-misogyny-a-hate-crime-handing-johnson-series-of-defeats/> [Accessed 2 February 2022].

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Post by [Jan Küfner](#)

[now](#)

Peer response

Maslow (1943) defined a hierarchy of needs that typically is depicted in a pyramid. The pyramid having physiological needs (hunger, thirst, sleep) at the bottom as the lowest layer and self-actualization on the top as the highest layer of



five layers in total. Maslow (1943) also states that a person strives to fulfill the needs of a layer first before moving on to fulfill the needs of the next layer. For example, a person will first take care s/he doesn't have hunger or thirst before s/he can strive to love someone and or belong to a social group. Maslow (1943) also states that people are motivated by unsatisfied needs. This for example means, that if a person does not feel love or does not feel to belong to a group, they strive to find love and they strive to be a part of a group. Maslow (1943)

Within the example Max is using this intrinsic motivation of a person to be part of a group, to be part of a team at work by rejecting people from that team by either not allowing them on stage or by not naming them in publications. But not only May is using this, but also the leadership is using it by blaming the victim / the people that are excluded by suggesting that it is their fault by stating that they should grow up. (ACM 2020)

Abusing people's intrinsic motivation is however likely to be very short sighted, since eventually an individual realizes that s/he is only teased with the fulfillment of their need and then are likely to move on / are likely to find a new job. Since people leaving a work team affect the team's overall performance negatively, since time needs to be spent to train new hires, people leaving have knowledge that is not replaced, etc. an overall negative effect to the performance is the consequence.

To motivate a team in a way Max does and backed up by management too is therefore not only ethically and legally incorrect as shown by Freya and Charlotte it is also very likely to decrease the performance of that team significantly.

Maslow, A.H. (1943). "A theory of human motivation". Psychological Review. 50 (4): 370–396.

ACM (2020) Case: Abusive Workplace Behaviour. Available from: <https://ethics.acm.org/code-of-ethics/using-the-code/case-abusive-workplace-behavior/> [Accessed 25 January 2022]

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