

SHDV Sample Scenarios + Reflection and possible solutions

On 14 January 2026, the decentralised Equal Opportunities Commission of the Faculty of Sociology organised a Jour Fixe focusing on sexual harassment, discrimination and violence (SHDV). Specifically, the session involved examining constructed, fictional case studies and exploring appropriate ways of dealing with them. The Equal Opportunities Commission developed a total of six such case studies set in various contexts, incorporating all status groups: seminar settings (students and academic staff), technical and administrative staff, consultation hours and PhD supervision (PhD candidates and supervisors), conferences/congresses/workshops (PhD candidates and postdocs), assessment of final theses or seminar papers (teaching staff and students), and student group work (teaching staff and students).

This document brings together all the case studies and records the discussion held at the Jour Fixe regarding them. The headings in the table of contents are linked to the respective case studies. The following questions were used when working on the case studies. The reflections and proposed solutions are also based on these questions:

1. What might the consequences be?

(if no action is taken/if action is taken?)

(This may relate directly and immediately to those affected and involved, but may also relate to the faculty and/or university level.)

2. How can we counteract this? What would be alternative courses of action?
How do we deal with this? What would be possible procedural steps?

(If you have already had experience of this: how have similar cases been handled in the past? What went well? What did not go so well?)

3. What does this mean for your work? What might be possible preventive measures?

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Example scenario 1: Seminar context (students and professor)

During an introductory seminar, a professor describes the potential introduction of quotas for women in political office as excessive and 'woke'. The students present then exchange glances. One female student plucks up the courage to challenge the professor on his statement during the seminar and criticises it as unscientific. The professor retorts to the student that one shouldn't always take everything so seriously or react so emotionally to everything. He claims this is precisely why women do not belong in politics. He asks her what else he is supposed to watch out for in his choice of words and whether he should now also start asking students about their pronouns. Several students are visibly uncomfortable during the exchange. After the seminar session, the students discuss the matter amongst themselves, but do not dare to say anything to the teaching staff, as many of them have to write a seminar paper for the seminar.

Reflection and possible solutions

1. What might the consequences be? (if no action is taken/if action is taken?) (This may relate directly and immediately to those affected and involved but may also relate to the faculty and/or university level.)

- Students feel discriminated against.
- The students are afraid to speak to the teaching staff, partly because they are dependent on them for both their assessment and the recording of their academic achievements and examination results.
- Students stop attending the seminar and either work through the seminar reading material on their own at home or stop doing so altogether. Some others have decided to take the seminar in a different semester, when another lecturer is running the course. As a result, a few students have to study for longer than planned. This can have problematic consequences for some students if they receive BAföG or a scholarship that requires them to complete their studies within the standard period of study.
- Word of the teaching staff's attitude is spreading (across faculties) amongst students, and the professor's specific seminar is no longer attended – or is barely attended at all. Instead, the seminars and courses offered in the same module by other teaching staff are overcrowded, thereby increasing their workload.
- Potential damage to the reputation of the degree programme, the faculty and the university.
- Students (particularly first-year students) get the impression that teaching at the university is conducted in such a way that sexist and queerphobic remarks are regarded as normal.
- Anti-feminist statements are normalised by the teaching staff's behaviour. This encourages some students to express such views more aggressively.
- Tensions amongst students: The student who spoke out feels let down by her fellow students or is subsequently excluded from group settings.

- Students' assumption that they are protected and anonymous when they take action
- Taking action is a major hurdle for students

2. How can we counteract this? What are the alternative courses of action? How do we deal with this? What are the possible procedural steps? (If you have already had experience of this: how have similar cases been handled in the past? What went well? What did not go so well?)

- The teaching staff should listen, accept the criticism and take it seriously.
- Students could join forces and write a collective email to the professor or the dean of studies or seek a face-to-face meeting.
- Students could contact Bielefeld University's Harassment and Discrimination Support Centre.
- Three possible courses of action based on the three pillars of the SHDV guidelines (Section 2): seeking advice, reporting the incident and/or lodging an official complaint with the AGG complaints office

→ Seek advice from internal and external counselling services (e.g. the Central Student Counselling Service (for students), the Counselling Service for Staff and Managers (for the professor) or the Women's Emergency Helpline (for everyone))

→ Reporting (anonymous and non-anonymous) (still under development)

→ Submit a complaint to the AGG Complaints Office (non-anonymously, providing the full names of all complainants as well as those of the accused persons) (Legal Department of the Division of Studies and Teaching (for students) or Legal Department P/O (if a person employed by Bielefeld University is involved, in this case the professor (this also generally applies to -employed staff)) (in this example, the P/O Legal Service could be contacted, as a person employed by Bielefeld University is involved)

- Students could contact the AStA [Student Union], the faculty's decentralised Equal Opportunities Commission, the departmental student representative committee or the Equal Opportunities Office to ask for support.
- Students should document the events and exchange contact details with one another (witnesses).
- Course evaluation
- Comments might be perceived as an irrelevant issue, as the content or nature of the comments is not listed in the guidelines against SHDV and is generally not specified in detail
- It must be ensured that those making the complaint do not face any negative consequences
- Outsource the marking of examination papers,

If an official complaint has been lodged with the AGG complaints office:

- examples of possible measures following the relevant legal assessment:
 - ➔ Conducting a formal disciplinary meeting
 - ➔ Verbal or written guidance
 - ➔ Conducting a disciplinary complaints procedure
 - ➔ In the case of civil servants, conducting disciplinary proceedings
 - ➔ A written warning
 - ➔ (Immediate) dismissal

3. What does this mean for your work? What might be some possible preventive measures?

- At the start of your teaching, draw attention to the guidelines against sexual harassment and the university's three pillars (counselling, reporting, complaints) and show the university website or the slides from the faculty's Equal Opportunities Commission.

- Anyone can seek advice, for instance if there is any uncertainty or a sense of unease (for example, by contacting the women's emergency helpline)
- Make approachable confidential advisors, tutors etc. – whom students already know and trust – as well as counselling services, more visible
- Provide students with information on support services etc., as well as greater insight into university structures, via departmental student representative committees or the AStA [Student Union], right from their first semester

Example scenario 2: Technical and administrative staff

Ms X works as an administrative officer at a university. Her line manager, Mr Z (a person of colour), is a respected professor in the faculty. Recently, Mr Z. has started making ambiguous comments about Ms X.'s appearance on a regular basis (such as saying that her blouse is very pretty, or that she looks quite different with her hair tied up and should wear it that way more often). At first, Ms X. tries to ignore the comments so as not to cause a conflict.

However, the situations are becoming increasingly uncomfortable. Ms X feels constantly uneasy and on display and is increasingly avoiding being alone with him in an office.

On Ms X's birthday, Mr Z brings her a birthday present: two theatre tickets. Ms X tries to politely decline the invitation, but Mr Z insists that she should think it over again. To avoid the situation over the next few days, she calls in sick for the rest of the week.

Reflection and possible solutions

1. What might the consequences be? (if no action is taken/if action is taken?) (This may relate directly and immediately to those affected and involved but may also relate to the faculty and/or university level.)

- Ms X feels under pressure because Mr Z is in a higher position in the hierarchy and approves her holiday requests as well as deciding on her performance appraisal.
- Her work performance suffers because of the situation, as she constantly feels uncomfortable and under scrutiny.
- After a while, Ms X. hardly dares to go to work and often calls in sick. Due to her frequent absences, the workload piles up, partly on her colleagues, and eventually becomes almost impossible to catch up on.
- Ms X does not speak about the incidents or her unease, as she is afraid of being accused of racism.
- The strain and stress are taking their toll on Ms X's physical and mental health.
- Ms X is signed off work for an extended period and, after a while, receives only sick pay, which puts her under financial pressure.
- Ms X resigns from her job.
- If Ms X resigns from her job, she could receive a poor reference from Mr Z.
- If Ms X resigns from her job, Mr Z might behave in the same way towards the next case worker.
- If Ms X resigns from her job, she may be unemployed for a while and find it difficult to secure new employment.
- Even though Ms X has not confided in anyone at work, other colleagues are speculating about what has happened and discussing it amongst themselves.
- A change in attitude towards Ms X, becoming more negative, should she take action

- An intensified power dynamic and unchanged treatment of Ms X if no action is taken

2. How can we counter this? What are the alternative courses of action? How do we deal with it? What are the possible steps to take? (If you have already had experience of this: how have similar cases been handled in the past? What went well? What didn't go so well?)

- Ms X could confide in someone in her workplace or department.
- Ms X could contact internal and external counselling services (e.g. the women's helpline and/or the counselling service for staff and managers)
- Ms X could contact the faculty-specific Equal Opportunities Commission to get an overview of existing support services and, as a first step, to speak to someone about her experiences.
- Ms X could contact Bielefeld University's helpdesk for experiences of harassment and discrimination.
- Ms X could request a transfer
- Three possible courses of action based on the three pillars of the SHDV Guidelines (Section 2): seeking advice, reporting the incident and/or lodging an official complaint with the AGG complaints office

→ Seek out internal and external counselling services (e.g. the Counselling Service for Staff and Managers (for Ms X) or the Women's Emergency Helpline (for everyone))

→ Reporting (anonymous and non-anonymous) (still under development)

→ Submit a complaint to the AGG Complaints Office (non-anonymously, stating the full names of all complainants as well as those of the accused persons) (Legal Service of the Department of Studies and Teaching (for students) or Legal Service P/O (if a person employed by Bielefeld University is involved, in this case Ms X and Mr Z))

If an official complaint has been lodged via the AGG Complaints Office:

- examples of possible measures following the relevant legal assessment:
 - ➔ Conducting a formal disciplinary meeting
 - ➔ Verbal or written guidance
 - ➔ Conducting a disciplinary complaint procedure
 - ➔ In the case of civil servants, conducting disciplinary proceedings
 - ➔ A written warning
 - ➔ (Immediate) dismissal

3. What does this mean for your work? What might be some possible preventive measures?

- During discussions or status group meetings, reference can be made to the policy against sexual harassment and the three pillars of the university (counselling, reporting, complaints), and the university website or the faculty's Equal Opportunities Commission presentation slides can be shown.
- Regular discussions between technical and administrative staff regarding the working atmosphere.

Example scenario 3: Consultation hours and PhD supervision (PhD students and supervisors)

An international PhD student at the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology who does not speak German feels uncomfortable in the presence of her supervising professor, for whom she is also employed on a third-party funded project. Some time ago, the professor began asking the PhD student very personal and intimate questions. So far, the PhD student has tried to avoid these questions and change the subject. She has attributed this behaviour to 'cultural' differences and therefore does not discuss it with others, whether in her private circle or with other PhD students or colleagues.

The professor also has the PhD student proofread his manuscripts, as, according to him, she speaks better English than he does. This involves a considerable time commitment, as the PhD student also carries out extensive literature reviews and drafts entire papers as part of this work. When the PhD student tries to tell the professor that this work is not part of the duties specified in the job opportunity, the professor suggests to her that it is a privilege to work under his supervision and that this should be payment enough. He always emphasises that this is the real currency in the academic world and that it would look good on her CV.

During consultation hours in the professor's office, he increasingly sits very close to the PhD student, which she finds too close; she feels very uncomfortable in these situations. At the next meeting with the professor, the PhD student would like to leave the office door open. The professor replies that they would then be unable to talk undisturbed and that other people in the corridor would feel disturbed. He ignores her request and closes the office door.

Reflection and possible solutions

1. What might the consequences be? (if no action is taken/if action is taken?) (This may relate directly and immediately to those affected and involved but may also relate to the faculty and/or university level.)

- Feelings of shame, insecurity, etc.
- significant psychological strain (caused by the situation and by the heavy workload (which often go hand in hand))
- Increasing isolation (due to not sharing these uncomfortable feelings and due to a lack of support structures or a lack of awareness of existing support structures)
- Withdrawal from the PhD programme (possibly leading to a return to the home country, as it is no longer possible to remain in Germany (e.g. residence permit expires))
- Leaving an academic career (despite outstanding research) and changing career paths

2. How can we counteract this? What are the alternative courses of action? How do we deal with this? What are the possible procedural steps? (If you have already had experience with this: how have similar cases been handled in the past? What went well? What did not go so well?)

- Establishing channels of communication, particularly within peer networks (in this case: other (international) Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology PhD candidates, especially those who are currently or have previously been supervised by the same supervisor, or the PhD student representatives; contacting internal faculty bodies, e.g. the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Doctoral Committee, the Bielefeld Graduate School Internationalisation Officer or the Directorate)

- The doctoral candidate could contact the faculty-specific Equal Opportunities Commission to gain an overview of the advisory services available at and, as a first step, to speak to someone about their experiences.
- Refer to the doctoral regulations and the employment contract (e.g. clarify supervision obligations, working hours and job content, etc.).
- Option of bringing another person along to meetings
- Change of supervisor; consultation with the co-supervisor
- Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology: Contact the external liaison lecturer
- The PhD candidate could contact Bielefeld University's Helpdesk for Experiences of Harassment and Discrimination.
- Three possible courses of action based on the three pillars of the SHDV guidelines (Section 2): seeking advice, reporting the incident and/or lodging an official complaint with the AGG complaints office

→ Seek advice from internal and external counselling services (e.g. the Counselling Service for Staff and Managers or the Women's Emergency Helpline (for everyone; counselling also available in English and other languages))

→ Reporting (anonymous and non-anonymous) (still under development)

→ Submit a complaint to the AGG Complaints Office (non-anonymous; all names of the complainants and the accused must be provided) (Legal Service of the Department of Studies and Teaching (for students) or Legal Service P/O (if a person employed by Bielefeld University is involved; in this case, the PhD candidate and their supervisor))

If an official complaint has been lodged via the AGG Complaints Office:

- examples of possible measures following the relevant legal assessment:
 - ➔ Conducting a formal disciplinary meeting
 - ➔ Verbal or written guidance

- ➔ Conducting a disciplinary complaint procedure
- ➔ In the case of civil servants, conducting disciplinary proceedings
- ➔ A written warning
- ➔ (Immediate) dismissal

3. What does this mean for your work? What might be some possible preventive measures?

- Draw attention to the policy against sexual harassment and the university's three pillars (counselling, reporting, complaints) and the university website.
- Highlight the relevant contact points and university structures at the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology Welcome Day, or send this information out via the newsletter at the start of the semester.
- Clear, comprehensive terms of employment
- The establishment of a transparent, central point of contact where all forms of discrimination are recorded

Example scenario 4: Conference/congress/workshop (PhD students and postdocs/PDs)

At a conference taking place in a building at Bielefeld University, participants include, amongst others, a PhD candidate and a professor with a habilitation from the faculty. The professor with a habilitation is very popular amongst colleagues because they are very funny. The PhD student has only just started at the faculty, has recently moved to Bielefeld and is therefore not yet familiar with the university's structures or the city. The person with a habilitation therefore offers to attend the conference with the PhD student.

During a one-to-one conversation, the person who has completed their habilitation comments on the PhD candidate's profile picture on the faculty website, saying that they look very pretty and attractive, and asks why they don't want to grow their hair longer again.

In a group with other academics, the person with a postdoctoral qualification repeatedly fails to use the pronouns the PhD candidate has requested when addressing them and, after being made aware of this, makes fun of them.

After the conference dinner, which finished late, both head to the tram stop. The person with a postdoctoral qualification asks if they would like to join them for a drink, dismisses any refusal as a joke, and then offers to walk them home for safety's sake. Despite repeated polite refusals, the person with a postdoctoral qualification gets off the tram with them and continues to try to accompany them but finally gives up just before they reach their block of flats.

Reflection and possible solutions

1. What might the consequences be? (if no action is taken/if action is taken?) (This may relate directly and immediately to those affected and involved but may also relate to the faculty and/or university level.)

- Feelings of shame and severe psychological distress, isolation in the workplace
- Avoiding the office, the faculty building and events → withdrawal
- Withdrawal from the PhD programme, despite outstanding research, and a change of career path
- Existing risk if no action is taken
- The PhD candidate changes universities, even if action is taken

2. How can we counteract this? What are the alternative courses of action? How do we deal with this? What are the possible procedural steps? (If you have already had experience with this: how have similar cases been handled in the past? What went well? What did not go so well?)

- Guideline: Section 2.2 applies across the entire Bielefeld University campus! (This also includes people who are not officially employed by the university); Sections 1 and 2 apply without exception to all genders
- Establish channels of communication, particularly in peer contexts (in this case: other PhD students or non-professorial academic staff who have been at the faculty for some time, or representatives of the non-professorial academic staff; contact internal faculty bodies, e.g. the Equal Opportunities Commission)
- Have a discussion with your supervisor (with the option of involving a further person in the discussion)
- Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology: Contact the external confidential adviser

- When organising conferences or workshops: establish rules on communication and behaviour in advance; appoint a contact person or persons and/or set up an awareness team; draw attention to the university's policy against sexual harassment and discrimination; draw attention to counselling, reporting and complaints services
- In an acute threat situation: Notify the university's security service (if the incident occurs on campus) or the safety escort service so as not to have to walk to the tram stop alone; contact the police
- The PhD candidate could contact Bielefeld University's Harassment and Discrimination Support Centre.
- Three possible courses of action based on the three pillars of the SHDV policy (Section 2): seeking advice, reporting the incident and/or lodging an official complaint with the AGG complaints office

→ Seek advice from internal and external counselling services (e.g. the counselling service for staff and managers or the women's emergency helpline (for everyone))

→ Reporting (anonymous and non-anonymous) (still under development)

→ Submit a complaint to the AGG Complaints Office (non-anonymously, providing the full names of all complainants as well as those of the accused persons) (Legal Service of the Department of Studies and Teaching (for students) or Legal Service P/O (if a person employed by Bielefeld University is involved; in this case, the PhD candidate and the person with a postdoctoral qualification))

If an official complaint has been lodged via the AGG Complaints Office:

- examples of possible measures following the relevant legal assessment:
 - ➔ Conducting a formal staff appraisal
 - ➔ Verbal or written instruction
 - ➔ Conducting a disciplinary complaints procedure
 - ➔ In the case of civil servants, conducting disciplinary proceedings

➔ Warning

➔ (Immediate) dismissal

3. What does this mean for your work? What might be some possible preventive measures?

- Draw attention to the policy against SHDV and the university's three pillars (counselling, reporting, complaints) and include a link to the university website – for example, at the start of the conference – or include relevant information in the conference pack. After the event, circulate a questionnaire that also asks questions on the topic of SHDV, thereby enabling cases to be recorded anonymously.
- Highlight the relevant offices and university structures during the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology Welcome Day.
- Highlight these structures in informal, peer-to-peer discussions.
- Prepare and display **information material**, for example in the toilets and/or as an insert in the conference folder (material is available, for example, from the Bielefeld Women's Emergency Helpline or the Faculty's Equal Opportunities Commission)
- Outline a **strategy** to combat SHDV – possibly based on existing concepts (e.g. using a code word as in the ' ' campaign: 'Is Luisa here?') or in collaboration with local university structures (e.g. the university's or faculty's Equal Opportunities Commission).
- Identify a **contact person** who is available during events to address questions and concerns and who can be approached, for example, using the agreed code word (e.g. 'Is Luisa here?'). Ideally, this person should not be part of the organising team to avoid potential conflicts of interest.
- Set up an **awareness team** that has received at least one awareness-raising session on the topic beforehand (the approach taken by the departmental student representative committee for Educational Science at Bielefeld University, for example, or that of the departmental student representative

committee for Sociology (fs.soziologie@uni-bielefeld.de), can be used as a model).

- In consultation with Facility Management, the **security service** can increase its presence in the relevant part of the building. This can be particularly helpful for events taking place at weekends or during the semester holidays.
- Establishment of **rules** (on communication and behaviour) / **a code of conduct** for the event (for example, the DVPW has published a paper on the topic of 'discrimination-free events').
- Setting up a **quiet room**. The university already has centrally provided nappy-changing, breastfeeding and quiet rooms, some of which are lockable.
- At the start of the event, **draw attention to:**
 - (Communication and behaviour) **rules / Code of Conduct** (for example, with reference to the DVPW paper ' : Discrimination-Free Events ')
 - the pre-designated **contact person(s)** and the **Awareness Team**
 - **quiet rooms** at the university
 - the **right to manage the premises**, which authorises the organisers to expel from the event any persons behaving in a discriminatory manner (if necessary, with support from the security service)
 - the University's **policy** against SHDV (in particular noting that this applies to all persons on the campus grounds, even if they are not employed by the University or are guests of the University)
 - the website of the Faculty of Sociology's **Equal Opportunities Commission**
 - **counselling, reporting and complaints services**
 - the University's safety **escort service** , which can be contacted in an emergency.
- make the information gathered on this topic available to new staff as part of a welcome pack
- Train staff, tutors, etc. to deal with any issues that may be brought to their attention

Example scenario 5: Assessment situation – final dissertation or seminar paper (teaching staff and students)

A professor is supervising a BA student's final dissertation on a topic relating to the sociology of gender. She grades the dissertation 2.0. She assesses the research design as generally coherent and well executed; the methods and theories used are established approaches, which the student has dealt with factually correctly, albeit somewhat superficially. When the examiner receives the second examiner's report from the examination office, she is puzzled to find that, given its mark of 2.7, the second report is excessively negative and, moreover, couched in highly polemical terms. The professor has the impression that the reason for the scathing report lies not in the quality of the thesis, but in an ideological disagreement (an anti-feminist stance on the part of the second examiner).

Reflection and possible solutions

1. What might the consequences be? (if no action is taken/if action is taken?) (This may relate directly and immediately to those affected and involved, but may also relate to the faculty and/or university level)

- The student receives a lower mark than expected, which reduces her chances of securing a study place on her intended Master's degree programme.
- The report unsettles the student; she doubts her abilities and may abandon the idea of pursuing a Master's degree.
- Word of the incident spreads amongst students; the professor is no longer approached regarding gender sociology topics; or students avoid gender sociology topics.
- The professor feels unsettled and concerned because she fears that there is unspoken fundamental criticism of gender-sociological approaches within the faculty, or that anti-feminist ways of thinking might even be gaining ground.
- Academic and teaching freedom at the expense of students (as reflected in marking)
- Abuse of power
- Belittling/undermining of certain views

2. How can we counteract this? What are the alternative courses of action? How do we deal with this? What are the possible procedural steps? (If you have already had experience of this: how have similar cases been handled in the past? What went well? What did not go so well?)

- The professor seeks a discussion with her colleague and exchanges views with him on their respective academic assessments of the work.

- The professor seeks a discussion with the colleague and explains to him what the tone of the report might mean for the student and recommends that he revise the report.
- The professor seeks advice (from a colleague, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the examination office, etc.)
- After reading the second assessment, the student seeks a discussion with the first assessor.
- The student lodges an objection or complaint with the examination office against the second assessment.
- The student could contact Bielefeld University's Helpdesk for Experiences of Harassment and Discrimination.
- Requesting a justification for the assessment and an independent third-party assessment
- Bringing in an independent mediator
- Workshop for teaching staff to raise awareness
- Discussion amongst teaching staff to improve handling of such cases
- Three possible courses of action based on the three pillars of the SHDV guidelines (Section 2): seeking advice, reporting the incident and/or lodging an official complaint with the AGG complaints office

→ Seek advice from internal and external counselling services (e.g. the central student counselling service (for the student), the counselling service for staff and managers (for the professor) or the women's helpline (for everyone))

→ Reporting (anonymous and non-anonymous) (still under development)

→ Submit a complaint to the AGG Complaints Office (non-anonymously, stating the full names of all complainants as well as those of the accused persons) (Legal Service of the Department of Studies and Teaching (for students) or Legal Service P/O (if a person employed by Bielefeld University is involved, in this case the supervising staff))

If an official complaint has been lodged via the AGG Complaints Office:

- examples of possible measures following the relevant legal assessment:

- ➔ Conducting a formal disciplinary meeting
- ➔ Verbal or written guidance
- ➔ Conducting a disciplinary complaint procedure
- ➔ In the case of civil servants, conducting disciplinary proceedings
- ➔ A written warning
- ➔ (Immediate) dismissal

3. What does this mean for your work? What might be some possible preventative measures?

- Encourage recommendations for constructive feedback → Drawing up guidelines for the assessment of final theses at the faculty
- Discuss this in advance with the other examiner and agree on what constitutes constructive feedback
- Mention opposition to feminist assumptions/attitudes more explicitly in the guidelines as a form of discrimination
- Prior consultation between the assessors
- Transparent procedure
- Select teaching staff as assessors who are well-known and whose subject areas are relevant

Example scenario 6: Group work involving students (teaching staff and students)

A group presentation is to be given as part of a seminar for a course credit. During the group meetings, one female student repeatedly makes racist and sexist remarks to a non-white female student. The affected student feels uncomfortable, whilst the other group members do not comment on these remarks. The student approaches the lecturer running the seminar and reports the comments and her discomfort within the group. The lecturer tells the affected student that it is only a short presentation and that so many group meetings are not necessary for preparation. She should not take it so personally and simply finish the presentation as quickly as possible. After that, she will no longer have to be in contact with the student making the remarks.

Reflection and possible solutions

1. What might the consequences be? (if no action is taken/if action is taken?) (This may relate directly and immediately to those affected and involved but may also relate to the faculty and/or university level.)

- Feelings of powerlessness → The student feels that the lecturer is not taking her seriously, feels helpless and does not know what else to do; psychological strain.
- The student feels pressured to continue with the group work.
- The student is suffering psychologically as a result of the comments, which may also affect her physical health.
- The student gets anxious about the group meetings and goes to them every time with a stomach ache.
- The student no longer participates in the group meetings.
- The student drops the seminar, receives no credits and must retake the seminar next semester, which leads to a delay in her graduation. This can have problematic consequences if she receives BAföG or a scholarship that requires her to complete her degree within the standard period of study.
- The student no longer speaks out about future experiences of discrimination.
- The student who discriminated faces no consequences for her remarks and actions and will discriminate against other students in future.
- Word of the lecturer's attitude could spread throughout the faculty, and her seminars may no longer be attended, or attendance may drop significantly. Instead, the other modules in the same programme taught by other teaching staff will be overcrowded, thereby increasing their workload.
- Potential damage to the reputation of the degree programme, the faculty and the university.

- Students (particularly first-year students) are left with the impression that teaching and group work at the university are conducted in such a way that sexist and discriminatory remarks are regarded as normal.

2. How can we counteract this? What alternative courses of action are there? How do we deal with this? What are the possible procedural steps? (If you have already had experience of this: how have similar cases been handled in the past? What went well? What did not go so well?)

- The student can keep a written record of events and document the discriminatory remarks.
- The student could contact the AStA [Student Union], the faculty's Equal Opportunities Commission, the anti-racism working group or the departmental student representative committee to seek support.
- The student could seek a meeting with the lecturer or send her an email. This could also be done with the support of other students or a counselling service (e.g. the women's helpline).
- The student could contact the Harassment and Discrimination Support Centre.
- Three possible courses of action: seeking advice, reporting the incident and lodging a complaint

→ Seek out internal and external counselling services (e.g. the central student counselling service (for students) or the Women's Emergency Helpline (for everyone))

→ Reporting (anonymous and non-anonymous) (still under development)

→ Submit a complaint to the AGG Complaints Office (non-anonymously, providing the full names of all complainants as well as those of the accused persons) (Legal Service of the Department of Studies and Teaching (for students) or Legal Service P/O (if a person employed by Bielefeld University is involved, in this case the lecturer (this also applies generally to student employees)) (in this example, the P/O Legal

Service could be contacted, as a person employed by Bielefeld University is involved)

If an official complaint has been lodged via the AGG Complaints Office:

- examples of possible measures following the relevant legal assessment:
 - ➔ Conducting a formal disciplinary meeting
 - ➔ Verbal or written guidance
 - ➔ Conducting a disciplinary complaint procedure
 - ➔ In the case of civil servants, conducting disciplinary proceedings
 - ➔ A written warning
 - ➔ (Immediate) dismissal

3. What does this mean for your work? What might be some possible preventive measures?

- At the start of your teaching, draw attention to the guidelines against sexual harassment and the university's three pillars (counselling, reporting, complaints) and show the university website or the slides from the faculty's Equal Opportunities Commission.
- Anyone can seek advice, for instance if there is any uncertainty or if they feel uneasy (for example, by contacting the women's emergency helpline).