

HUMAN RIGHTS CASE STUDY

John, Ava, Cesar, Sang and Folami are working together on a group project for an accounting class.

- ❖ Folami notices that Ava and John never sit beside her when they meet during group work sessions. Both Ava and John have not initiated conversation with Folami and it appears to Folami that they break eye contact whenever Folami looks their way. Folami wonders why Ava and John are behaving this way. Folami concludes that Ava and John have discriminated against her as a person of color.
- ❖ Cesar notices Folami appearing angry/hurt/distracted in a recent group meeting and approaches her to find out what's happening. Folami shares her concerns about Ava and John. Cesar decides to speak to the group about the group's dynamics because he has noticed several group members appear visibly uncomfortable during meetings. The consensus is to hold a 15 minute group meeting to do a 'check-in' to see how group members are feeling with the group communication, dynamics and work accomplished so far.
- ❖ John shares that he has never before worked in such a culturally diverse group. John comes from small-town Saskatchewan, and tells the group he has never before met someone of Korean or African descent before moving to Calgary. He doesn't recall how to correctly pronounce people's names and feels a bit uncomfortable sharing this with the group, and averts eye contact as he speaks to this. He shares he has a part-time job outside of school, family responsibilities involving caring for his younger brother, and has decided to take 6 courses this semester in an attempt to complete his course work earlier.
- ❖ Ava shares that she is quite shy and introverted and is having some difficulty feeling comfortable to bring her ideas to the group. She reveals that she is strong with research, but hasn't really expressed her input in group discussions to this point for fear of her ideas being perceived as unimportant or ignored. Speaking to the group feels uncomfortable to Ava.
- ❖ Sang says he feels things are going quite well. He shares that he has noticed everyone in the group contributing in unique ways and sees that a final product is beginning to emerge. Sang tells the group he has experienced a lot of positive experiences working in groups, but has had several difficult experiences also. Sang shares that he has learned some important practices for helping make group work go well, and sees the strengths of each group member as essential to looking at how group member's individual contributions' are recognized and appreciated. Sang shares that he values each person's input equally and wants to help make the process smooth for all group members.

Each of these students above have described their group experience in a very different way and is unique amongst their shared story and group's history. Certainly group situations involving human rights can be more complicated; however, it can be important to explore all sides of a story to gain information and possible understanding.