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### Case Scenario 5.1

You are a female professional working as a clinical case manager and providing direction to a male colleague. You observe that he frequently ignores your feedback and engages in behaviors that appear to undermine your input or authority (e.g., not following through on requests, disregarding direction, not responding to emails, prioritizing work from male colleagues), which is different from the experiences of your other male colleagues. You speak to this individual about the observed behaviors, but are uncertain about how to address the underlying gender-related dynamics you suspect are at play.

#### ❖ Issues to Consider

- ◆ Do this person's interactions with you seem markedly different from his interactions with male colleagues? What evidence supports this?

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- ◆ Do your responses to these interactions seem reasonable and justified?

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- ◆ Who could you consult with to help you think through the situation?

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- ◆ What are your personal and professional responses to these dynamics (e.g., self-doubt, anger, frustration, less employment satisfaction, less certain or confident about decisions, feeling embarrassed in front of other colleagues)?

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- ◆ What important factors should you consider in approaching a discussion with your colleague, if needed (e.g., examples of what you have observed, the concerns you have about the behaviors, why it is important to address the issues)?

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- ◆ Is there someone who could facilitate a constructive discussion with this person if you need support?

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❖ **Considerations for Practice**

It can be trying to manage undermining or disrespectful treatment from male colleagues that appears, at least partly, rooted in gender-related biases or difficulty accepting females in positions of greater authority. In contrast to overtly inappropriate or harassing behaviors (e.g., a colleague making a direct disparaging or hostile remark), the subtlety of the dynamics in this type of situation can make it difficult to know how to respond. It may be helpful to take a moment to think through and write down your thoughts and feelings about the situation to gain further clarity, or talk to a colleague to get feedback about your perceptions. The subversive nature of some forms of workplace gender bias can lead to female professionals questioning themselves and feeling uncertain about how to address the dynamics at play.



**REFLECTION**

- ◆ How would you respond if you felt disrespected, slighted, or undermined by a colleague? Imagine a specific circumstance relevant to your work, and consider how you would react and respond (e.g., by addressing it directly when appropriate, by managing your own internal experience in a healthy way, or by developing a plan with support from a colleague or supervisor).

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