
What the Experts are Saying



Jeremy Baker

About Jeremy Baker

Jeremy Baker is the Deputy Assistant Director for the Office of Intelligence at Homeland Security Investigations, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security. Jeremy has worked in the national security field, including within the intelligence community, military, law enforcement for 20 years.

On How Leaders Can Approach Situations in Which They are Experiencing

Discrimination

One advantage to working in a field such as ours is that, by and large, you are employed either within the federal government itself or in a government-adjacent company. And the government and these companies tend to have robust policies, procedures, and programs to address discrimination. I would encourage all employees to familiarize themselves with a general process overview of how these programs work, and to identify the reporting and intake procedures or program points of contact for those programs. Most agencies and companies will have these prominently posted on their intranet sites. As a corollary, I also strongly encourage the general principle of addressing issues at the lowest level, if at all possible. What does that look like? If I am having an issue with my supervisor where I feel like I'm experiencing discrimination, I need to bring it up directly to that supervisor if at all possible. A frank conversation where at some point I utter the phrase "When you do [behavior] it makes me feel discriminated against." I can't tell you how many times I've seen a situation get resolved at that very moment, because a well-meaning supervisor was not aware of the impact their actions or words were having, or there was a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of words or actions. A round of clearing the air, apologies, changed behavior, and deeper appreciation quickly followed. This scenario is certainly not universal, and for every well-meaning leader who didn't understand the impact of their words and deeds on an employee, or where there was a misunderstanding at the root of the issue, there may well be a poor leader who is truly behaving in a deliberately discriminatory manner. These individuals need to be reported, investigated, and removed from the national security field for the good of us all.