



Case Study 4 – Jeffrey

This is a fictional case study but is like many of the complaints that the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission receives.

Jeffrey is a man in his late 20s, who is currently employed as a salesclerk with a large electronics store in Halifax. Jeffrey has been working for this store for five months, and he was just voted Employee of the Month by his co-workers. Jeffrey lived in Toronto for several years while studying Computer Science at university. He moved back to Halifax about a year ago, and he lives with his parents. Jeffrey's interest in technology and electronics has helped him become an excellent salesclerk who is well liked and respected by his coworkers and his customers alike.

The electronics store operates on a rotating shift schedule, and from the beginning Jeffrey had always worked either a Saturday or Sunday shift giving him one day off on the weekend and one weekday off. It was convenient for the store to have coverage during the weekend, and it was convenient for Jeffrey as well to have a day off during the week so that he could attend medical appointments and spend time with friends and family.

On his day off, Jeffrey who had been living with a diagnosis of schizophrenia for several years, attended a therapy support group at a mental health clinic next door to a shopping center. Quinten, an assistant manager at the electronics store, who was shopping at the mall on what was also his day off, saw Jeffrey coming out of the mental health clinic. Quinten was in his car in the parking lot, and Jeffrey didn't see him.

Quinten brought up that he had seen Jeffrey at the mental health clinic at work the next day during a manager's meeting. He shared this information with another assistant manager and the store manager. Quinten had explained that he had heard that the clinic was for people that were "crazy", and he was worried that Jeffrey could be violent or dangerous. Soon after this information was shared, Jeffrey was transferred to overnight shifts stocking shelves with new inventory.

Jeffrey was told that this change needed to happen to help run the business more effectively, and that the store wasn't busy enough to continue with as many salesclerks on the sales floor during the daytime. While Jeffrey wasn't happy with this change in scheduling, he didn't question it very much because he needed the job.



Soon after the change took place, other employees started to ask members of the management team why Jeffrey had been switched to overnight shifts, and they shared that they missed working with him. The managers explained to the employees that it was a change that needed to happen to help run the business more efficiently. A few weeks after the scheduling shift took place, Quinten was eating lunch in the break room and casually told another employee that he thought Jeffrey might be “mental” because he had seen him at the clinic.

The employee shared this information with one of Jeffrey’s friends, who thought it was strange that the assistant manager had shared such private information with staff members. They shared this information with Jeffrey.

When Jeffrey found out that his co-workers and managers at the electronics store had been talking about him, he felt very upset, disrespected, and frustrated.

Group Discussion Questions

1. If the manager had a concern, how could they have approached it differently?

2. Was there any indication that Jeffrey might have required workplace accommodations?



3. What assumptions and biases might have been involved?

4. Would Jeffrey have grounds to file a human rights complaint?
