

Case Study: O-5 Adultery

Description:	An active duty, married Navy O-5 commits adultery with a married civilian. He is relieved of command.
Background:	The Air Wing commander convened an informal investigation to explore the case and to determine what decisions, events and circumstances contributed to the behavioral failing. The investigation was initiated following the results of Captain's Mast but was conducted separately from Captain's Mast.

Findings:

1. O-5 was married and lived with his wife and two children. He had been married for fifteen years.
2. O-5 was candid during interview and stated that he and his wife had lost much of their intimacy over the previous five years. They more or less co-existed in a comfortable but hollow environment. Their sex life was sporadic to non-existent. They did not have many common interests and the ones they used to have had fallen away.
3. O-5 had never cheated on his wife, despite the situation. He did volunteer that his occasional viewing of adult pornographic materials on his home computer had become more frequent.
4. O-5 had a Facebook page where he posted photos of himself including one in a flight suit. He also posted a photo of him working out in the gym. O-5 was in superb shape, jogged and lifted weights.
5. Four months prior to the adulterous incidents, O-5 received an email from Facebook containing a message from an old college lover. She requested to be friends. O-5 said that he hesitated for a couple of days before responding because he was not sure what he thought about the situation.
6. O-5 said that upon a second Facebook email reminder, he accepted her request. She responded on his Facebook page with the comment, "you look as handsome as ever. I am not surprised that you rose so high in the Navy." She also posted a photo of herself, her husband and her cat. O-5 said he felt somehow relieved at those photos of her

husband and cat as it seemed the friendship would be just that, a friendship. When investigators asked what he meant by that he replied that he had felt guilty by be-friending her and had erased the Facebook emails from his computer.

7. O-5 and the woman began to routinely correspond via Facebook and he examined all of her wall photos. He said he felt guilty about that as he often conjured up memories of the times they had enjoyed, much of it a sexual nature. In fact, she had been the most exciting sexual partner in his life. He said he began to fantasize about seeing her and repeating some of the past.
8. O-5 said he knew that such thoughts could never amount to anything because he knew the penalties in terms of his conscience, his wife's feelings if she ever found out and his career.
9. The woman soon suggested that they meet for a drink and the O-5 did not respond immediately. She continued to make such requests and finally the O-5 agreed to meet with her. He told investigators that he knew he was putting himself at risk, not because there was anything wrong about meeting an old friend for a drink, but because he knew deep down inside that he was thinking about something else.
10. The woman flew to the coast and the O-5 met her in a hotel bar on the other side of town from where he lived. He thought she looked fantastic and that she had hardly aged at all. He felt the old feelings for her that he had felt years before. She had photos of the two of them together back in the old days and for a couple of hours they caught up about old friends, laughed and enjoyed each other's company.
11. Eventually she said she had to go and asked him to walk her to her car. It was dark, she was parked in a car garage, and so when they got to her car she asked for a hug for old times. He agreed but when he hugged her he allowed his hands to wander down her back and pulled her towards him. He said he felt her pressing toward him and they kissed. He said they kissed for a long time and then they got into the back seat of her car where they engaged in inappropriate behavior.
12. O-5 said that during his drive home he felt sick with guilt and could hardly look at his wife when he got home. He said he vowed to never do it again.
13. O-5 said that a few days later the woman called him and as they

talked he felt more comfortable. Much of the guilt had vanished and he agreed to meet for another drink. That led to an afternoon in a motel room.

14. O-5 said that the affair continued for a couple of months until he was summoned to see the CAG. The CAG had printouts of various Facebook entries and email entries that the woman's husband had sent to the Navy. He had become suspicious of his wife's behavior and had accessed her Facebook page when she had left her computer on. He saw the entries about getting a drink and put them together with her travel schedule. When he approached her about it, she admitted the affair.
 15. O-5 admitted guilt to his CAG and was relieved of command. He was subsequently awarded NJP and retired eleven months later on the date of his twentieth year of service.
-

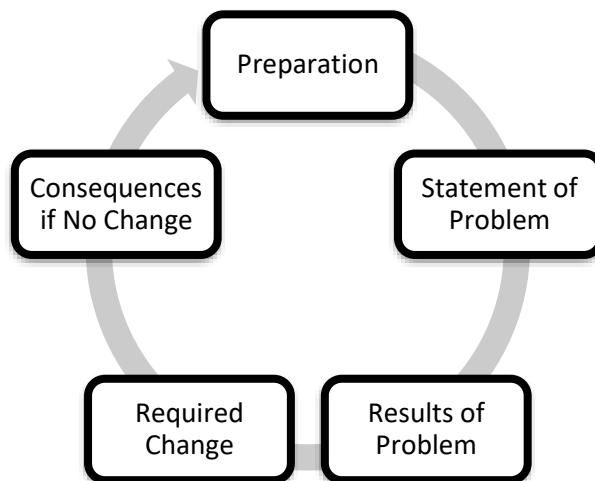
Facilitation Questions:

1. Diagram the thought-to-action chain for the O-5.
 - a. Loss of intimacy, loves wife, sexual drive/libido remains high, sees Facebook friend as a sex object immediately and knows it, keeps it from wife...he is guilty of his thoughts, allows situation to continue, fantasizes about the past with the female friend, agrees to drink knowing what he is thinking, doesn't have a plan to seduce her but doesn't have a plan not to, puts himself into a vulnerable situation, commits adultery, feels guilt, vows to discontinue, continues relationship until caught, admits guilt.
2. At what point in the chain does he go wrong?
3. What could he have done?
4. Do you think this case is unusual?
5. Do you think he could have observed the actions of others (while a junior officer, etc.) that might have supported some of his actions?



Constructive Confrontation Discussion:

1. The first opportunity for constructive confrontation is internal. In this case, the O-5 would benefit from a constructive confrontation with himself. He is having issues with his marriage that he is failing to address. Those issues may or may not be related to his “curiosity” about his old flame. He could also benefit from an internal discussion about exactly what he wants/expects from a meeting with the former lover. How does he see the meeting progressing? What would the next steps look like?
2. A next opportunity for confrontation might come from a friend or colleague. These “on-lookers” often know about or strongly suspect affairs or extramarital romances. Have you ever been in such a situation? Approaching a friend or co-worker in such a situation would be very difficult and you would have to be sure that real, negative consequences were likely. Using the case study, your own observations, or a hypothetical example, how would you realistically handle such a confrontation? Look at the wheel below for a template.



Preparation:

1. What does this step mean to you? How would you prepare? In what setting would this type of confrontation best take place?

Statement of Problem:

1. What is the problem (or likely result) of the misbehavior? What problem is it for you? What problem is it for the unit, etc.?
2. How would you state this to your colleague/friend?
3. Listen.

Results of Problem:

1. Using the example, what are the likely results or negative outcomes from the problem and how would you state that to the friend?
2. Listen.

Required Change:

1. What change in behavior do you want to see?
2. Listen.

Consequences If No Change:

1. Hopefully, by this point in the confrontation, you are having a discussion and not a shouting match. The understanding of consequences would be something that both of you agree to vice you listing them

Case Conclusions:

1. What main points did you take from this case study?
2. What are your concerns as a facilitator with this case study?