

Design Document: Recognize, Respond, Report

October 2026

Project Title

Recognize, Respond, Report: Your Part in a Harassment-Free Workplace

Annual anti-discrimination training for all employees (redesign).

Project Purpose

This project replaces the company's AI-generated anti-discrimination course with a scenario-based course that changes what employees do on the job.

The EEOC defines harassment as a form of employment discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This course focuses on that form of discrimination, harassment based on a protected characteristic, along with retaliation against anyone who raises a concern.

The current course organizes five lessons around legal categories: who is protected, which organizations must comply, prohibited practices, EEOC contact methods, and time limits plus federal contractor rules. It asks employees to recall facts such as which organizations are covered and which agency enforces federal contractor rules, and it never shows what discrimination or harassment looks like day to day.

Learner feedback and an audit of the course identified these problems:

- **No performance focus.** Nothing addresses what to do when you experience or see harassment, how to report it at work, or how to avoid retaliating.
- **Missing internal reporting.** The course sends employees straight to the EEOC and never mentions a manager, HR, or company process.
- **Accuracy errors.** Examples include a wrong employer-size threshold, a contradiction about whether email is an official reporting method, and a section built on Executive Order 11246, which was [revoked in January 2025](#).
- **Recall-based assessment.** Questions test definitions with obvious distractors, and learners reported broken interactions and menus.
- **Poor learner experience.** Repetitive text, flashcards, and generic AI imagery that undercut a topic about protected characteristics. The image alt text is the AI image prompts themselves, so screen-reader users hear them.

The redesign keeps only the knowledge employees need to make good decisions and lets them practice those decisions in realistic workplace situations.

Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Person	Responsibilities
Project Owner & Instructional Designer/Developer	Caitlin Bartholic	Needs analysis, design, scenario writing, development, visual design, evaluation plan
Subject Matter Expert/Stakeholder	Mark (HR)	Confirms company policies, reporting channels, and support resources; reviews scenarios for realism
Legal/Compliance Reviewer	Employment Council	Reviews any legal statements for accuracy before launch
Pilot Learners	5–8 employees from different roles	Test the course and job aid; flag confusing or unrealistic moments

Target Audience

All employees, at every level and in every department, complete this course annually.

Out of scope: Managers take this course as employees, but manager-specific responsibilities are excluded. These include responding to reports, employment decisions, accommodation requests, and formal retaliation. They would have a separate manager module to complete for legal compliance.

Project Goal

Business goal: Increase the share of discrimination and harassment concerns reported internally within 30 days of the first incident, and reduce substantiated retaliation cases, compared with a baseline HR collects before launch, measured at 12 and 24 months.

The goal measures when and where concerns are reported, not how many. A change in total complaints could mean less harassment or more silence, so a count could reward the course for silence. Early reporting to the company is what the EEOC encourages. It asks employees to report harassment to management at an early stage to prevent it from escalating. Retaliation is measured by substantiated cases rather than complaints, because the course also teaches employees to report retaliation. How it's measured: HR adds a "When did this start?" question to its intake, so every case records when the conduct began, when it was reported, and the channel used. An anonymous annual survey asks employees whether they experienced or saw conduct related to a protected characteristic, whether they reported it, how soon, and how. The survey is the only way to see concerns that never reach HR. HR collects both before launch to set the baseline, then sets exact targets.

Terminal objective (on the job): Employees recognize harassment based on a protected characteristic, report it early through a Larkstone channel when it is aimed at them, stop their own conduct when they learn it is unwelcome, and do not retaliate against anyone who raises a concern.

Learning Objectives

Twelve enabling objectives support the terminal objective, grouped under four actions. Learners see only the four action headings; the full objectives are for design and evaluation.

1. Recognize harassment based on a protected characteristic

- 1.1 Identify comments and conduct that target a protected characteristic, including those framed as jokes.
- 1.2 Recognize when repeated incidents form a pattern.
- 1.3 Recognize that conduct can be unwelcome even when the person targeted laughs along or doesn't object.
- 1.4 Stop their own conduct when someone indicates it is unwelcome.

2. Respond when targeted by harassment

- 2.1 When targeted, tell the person the conduct is unwelcome, or report it directly if they're not comfortable doing that.

3. Report harassment through a Larkstone channel

- 3.1 Report concerns early, before they escalate.
- 3.2 Report through a Larkstone channel (their manager, any HR team member, or the ethics line), choosing one that doesn't go through the person causing the problem.
- 3.3 Report harassment from anyone, including supervisors, coworkers, and non-employees such as customers and vendors.

4. Don't retaliate against anyone who raises a concern

- 4.1 Identify retaliation, including subtle conduct that might reasonably discourage someone from reporting.
- 4.2 Treat anyone who raises a concern or takes part in an investigation the same as before.
- 4.3 Refrain from speculating about who reported a concern or what is being investigated.
- 4.4 Report retaliation through a Larkstone channel.

Instructional Strategy

The course is one continuous, problem-centered story followed by a transfer assessment. Knowledge is delivered only at the moment a decision needs it. Learners do not need to track the entire story to understand individual situations.

Story concept: The learner works on a six-week project to clear Larkstone's returns backlog, alongside a recurring cast. Each scene is a moment in that project, and every protected characteristic is the focus of at least one full scene, so learners meet all of them in context. When something is happening to a coworker, the learner decides what that person should do, because the EEOC's guidance is written to the person experiencing it. When it's the learner's own conduct, the learner decides for themselves. One coworker's arc (sidelined after announcing her pregnancy, reporting it, then facing retaliation) carries the Report and Don't Retaliate chapters. Tyler, a likable coworker who thinks his jokes are harmless, is the recurring example of what not to do. The assessment uses new characters so learners transfer the skill rather than remember the story.

Course flow

1. Cold open: a meeting "joke" and one decision, no intro screens
2. The four actions and why they matter
3. Private reflection: a time a comment landed badly
4. Story sections: Recognize, Respond, Report, Don't Retaliate, with "need to know" tips at the moment a decision needs them and a "What to remember" card at the end of each
5. Decision points in each section, each option showing a verdict first (Good choice or Not the best choice), then its own consequence, then feedback tied to the EEOC sources or Larkstone policy
6. Assessment: 5 new scenarios, 5 of 5 to pass; a missed scenario can be retried once with a different version; then a results screen where learners download their certificate (or a summary of topics to review) and send it to HR
7. Acknowledgment of Larkstone's expectations, plus the job aid

Deliverables

Deliverable	Description
Scenario-based eLearning course	Self-paced, about 20–25 minutes, desktop and mobile. Follows the course flow above: cold open, the four actions, story chapters with decision points, a 5-scenario assessment, and a closing acknowledgment. A certificate of completion is awarded after passing the assessment.
Job aid: Recognize, Respond, Report Quick Guide	One printable page, linked from the course, organized by the four actions: signs to watch for, stopping when your own conduct is unwelcome, your options if it's aimed at you, company reporting channels, reporting harassment from anyone (including customers and vendors), what retaliation looks like, and the EEOC as an outside option, with its contact details.

Evaluation Plan

The course is evaluated at all four Kirkpatrick levels. Because it is compliance training, completion records are still kept, but completion requires passing a performance-based assessment rather than a recall quiz.

Level	What's measured	Method	When
1. Reaction	Relevance, realism, and confidence to act	3-question survey at the end of the course	Immediately
2. Learning	Ability to choose effective responses in new situations	5-scenario assessment (5 of 5 to pass); first-attempt results by objective show which actions need reinforcement	During the course
3. Behavior	Whether employees speak up, report early, and avoid retaliation	Anonymous surveys (90-day pulse and annual): whether employees experienced or saw conduct related to a protected characteristic, whether and how soon they reported it, through which channel, and confidence reporting without fear of retaliation	90 days and 12 months after
4. Results	The business goal: early internal reporting and substantiated retaliation cases	HR case data (when the conduct started, when it was reported, channel used) and substantiated retaliation cases, compared with the pre-launch baseline; the annual survey checks for concerns that never reach HR	12 and 24 months after

Limitations: Levels 3 and 4 rely on self-report and HR case data, so the course can't be credited with every change. A change in report numbers on its own shouldn't be read as success or failure. It should be read alongside timing and channel data, and leadership should be briefed on this before launch

Assumptions, Constraints & Risks

Policy assumptions

The company is fictional, so the course assumes these policies.

- Telling the person directly that the conduct is unwelcome is encouraged, never required before reporting.
- Company policy prohibits retaliation by anyone, including coworkers.
- No one has to report through the person causing the problem.
- Speculating about who reported a concern is treated as retaliation.
- The Employee Assistance Program offers free, confidential support.
- An employee who doesn't pass the assessment after the retry will notify HR, and they work out next steps together.

Constraints

- Mandatory annual training for all employees, with a certificate of completion.
- Must be able to complete in 30 minutes.
- Must meet WCAG 2.2 Level A and AA: keyboard navigation, screen-reader support, sufficient contrast, minimum target sizes, and captions for any audio.
- Legal statements limited to EEOC resources.
- Guidance on what employees should do comes from the EEOC sources or is presented as Larkstone policy.

Risks

Risk	Mitigation
The HR SME has limited availability to confirm policies and review scenarios	All policy questions gathered in one list (Policy assumptions) for a single review, review checkpoints scheduled early, pilot learners flag anything not working/not realistic
Legal inaccuracy, especially as EEOC guidance is under review	Keep legal content minimal; separate law from company policy; legal review before launch
Distress for learners with lived experience	Content note at the start; no graphic detail or written slurs; point to support resources
Scenarios reinforce stereotypes	Diverse cast, targets drawn from several groups, avatars instead of images to represent characters; pilot review
An unchanged course becomes a click-through instead of a real yearly refresher	Refresh scenarios each year and rotate assessment scenarios from a larger pool
A large cast raises cognitive load	Eight named people- role tags and avatars every time. Each scene introduces its people by role.