# Interns’ Last Day

## Description

**This simulation has three scenarios from which to choose**, each with different levels of difficulty. All scenarios involve ethical and procedural challenges that require communication among a group of interns. The focus is on problem-solving, conflict resolution and ethical decision-making.

## Notes to Facilitator

There can be four to eight participants, depending on class size, with at least one participant assuming each role. To prepare participants for the role play, we suggest starting with a warm-up exercise in which each participant introduces themselves in role (see Warm-up Exercise below).

What are your learning objectives for this exercise or course? What prompts could you add to extend or expand the simulation in that direction? What additional resources or assignments might you add?

Note: depending on the size of the group, you may consider having participants respond to your prompts during the role play.

### *Preparation*

Prior to the simulation, ensure participant contact information (e.g, emails, selected chat platform, or phone numbers for texting) is easily accessible on a list that includes their assigned roles (see [Appendix A: Sample Role Chart](#_Appendix_A)). During the simulation, you will need to contact certain characters, so advance planning is helpful. If online, you can copy and paste prompts using email or a chat function. If delivering the simulation in person, you could continue to use email or chat for hybrid delivery, or use cue cards or slips of paper to communicate. Not all characters will receive correspondence from the facilitator(s) in role; those with privacy concerns can be assigned non-contact roles. Be aware of your organization’s PIPA position. **Discuss privacy issues in advance and modify accordingly.**

## Foundational Scenario

You are a group of unpaid interns in a fifty-year-old, family-owned printing company with a core group of thirty employees. You work in administration, and report to the same Office Manager, Chris. Your contract is coming to an end, but traditionally those interns who have done well are offered full-time employment. Times are tough, and you’d all like to find stable, well-paid employment, with opportunities for career advancement. Your group is on a break together, as has become a tradition for the past six months you’ve worked together. Today is particularly exciting as it is your last day.

Determine who will portray Employee #1, #2, #3 and #4. Ensure the facilitator knows who is playing which role.

## Warm-up Exercise for all three scenarios

Decide what role you, as an intern, might play in the company (e.g., accounts receivable, shipping, contracts, inventory, human resources, etc.). Once you decide the roles, use your actual first names, but introduce yourselves **as if you are meeting for the first time**. Provide a brief history of your experience in your chosen role. Ask general background questions of each other.

## Scenario 1

*Warm-up recommended before starting.*

It’s Friday and the last day of your internship. You’re on coffee break together. Discuss your weekend plans individually and as a group. Consider any texts you receive individually and decide how you will proceed.

Considerations:

* Whom do you tell, if anyone?
* If you opt to reply to any communications, how will you word the message?

**For facilitator:**Communicate as the boss with Employee #1: *“Hi. It’s Chris. I’d like to discuss your future with the company. Drinks after work today?”*

Let the discussion go for a few minutes then send the following communication as the boss to Employee #3: *“Hi, this is Chris. I’m concerned about your behaviour today. I think we can work it out over dinner this weekend. Need to know now.”*

**[Watch a Video Example with Learners of Scenario 1](https://youtu.be/62gqpS1hfzw)**

## Scenario 2

*Warm-up recommended before starting, unless it has already been done during the session.*

It’s Friday and the last day of your internship. You’re on coffee break together. Discuss your weekend plans individually and as a group. Consider any texts you receive individually and decide how you will proceed.

Considerations:

* Whom do you tell, if anyone?
* If you opt to reply to any communications, how will you word the message?

**For facilitator:**These messages can play to or against traditional binary gender roles. Communicate as the boss with Employee #2: *“Hey, it’s Chris. Just tell the* ***guys*** *I’m taking you and them out tonight to celebrate*. *No gals allowed.* **OR** *“Hey, it’s Chris. Just tell the* ***gals*** *I’m taking you and them out tonight to celebrate. No guys allowed*.”

[**Watch a Video Example with Learners of Scenario 2**](https://youtu.be/oLm-vZwRMak)

## Scenario 3

*Warm-up recommended before starting, unless it has already been done during the session.*

It’s Friday and the last day of your internship. You’re on coffee break together. Discuss your weekend plans individually and as a group. Consider any texts you receive individually and decide how you will proceed.

Considerations:

* Whom do you tell, if anyone?
* If you opt to reply to any communications, how will you word the message?

**For facilitator:**Communicate as the boss to Employee #4: *“It’s Chris. No need to finish the accounts. I’ll get one of the interns to stay late. If they hope to return they’ll do what I say. Besides, those people are good at math and it won’t take them long.”*

Let the discussion go for a few minutes then send the following communication as the boss to Employee #4: *“Oops. Sorry, I sent that last message to the wrong person. Don’t share with anyone as this is confidential and puts you at risk.”*

[**Watch a Video Example with Learners of Scenario 3**](https://youtu.be/1eAFMlRfQWE)

## Debriefing

*Note: Debriefing is done* ***in role*** *either in groups or as a whole class.*

### Interpersonal

* Some of you may have received additional communications. Did you decide to disclose or not? Why?
* Those of you who did not receive messages, how did you feel situated with your peers and/or the company?
* Did these unexpected communications change the team’s dynamics?
* As your group discussed possible courses of action, did you encounter any loyalty, transparency, honesty and/or ethical boundaries?
* What personal/professional boundaries do you and your peers have? Are they similar or different? Do gender, age, race, sexual orientation or other personal factors play a role?
* Did your relationship with your peers change? Did it become more or less collaborative? Did it become more competitive?
* Where did power reside in your teams? Was it centralized or distributed?

### Issues

* What were the risks, individually or as a group, as a result of your conversation? Include potential threats to employment, reference letters, friendships, ethics, and physical.
* Did your opinions of the boss change? Do you think that Chris abused their power? Would you still like to work for this company?
* What assumptions were made from the brief messages received? Were actions planned based on these messages?
* How did the messages change the positions of power between the employer and employees? How did the messages change the levels of comfort between different interns?

## Extensions

* See scene [“Exits and Entrances”](https://mirrortheatre.ca/performance/entrances-and-exits-addressing-possible-interpersonal-issues-in-coop-placements/), a series of videos on co-op placements by Mirror Theatre
  + Discuss the many interpersonal issues that may be encountered during an internship.

## Assignments

The following suggestions could be undertaken either as a group or individually. They could be written as reflections, offered for discussion, or submitted as assignments for grading.

1. What are the descriptors of a well-functioning team? What structural and personal characteristics can foster or impede a well-functioning team?
2. Consider what factors make an employer desirable. In what ways would you be flexible to gain your dream job?
3. How do you respond to someone in a position of authority who might be perceived as crossing a professional boundary? To whom do you speak? Do you pretend nothing has happened? Do you leave the organization?

## Readings

[Belbin, M. (2022). The Nine Belbin Team Roles.](https://www.belbin.com/about/belbin-team-roles)

Campbell, D. T. (1976). Assessing the impact of planned social change*. Occasional Paper Series, 8*.

[TherapistAid.com. (2015). Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills.](https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/dbt-interpersonal-effectiveness-skills.pdf)

Tuckman, B. (1965). Development sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*, 384-399.

[Venditti, P. & McLean, S. (2012). *An Introduction to Group Communication*.](https://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/an-introduction-to-group-communication/index.html)

## Appendix A

Sample Role Assignment for Establishing a Productive Interprofessional Team

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Insert Actual Name | Group | Role | Scenario | Contact Information |
| Donald Westphali | 1 |  |  |  |
| Vijay Kochar | 1 |  |  |  |
| Jack Morrison | 1 |  |  |  |
| Annie Cavanero | 1 |  |  |  |
| Ellen Craig | 1 |  |  |  |
| Faith Yee | 1 |  |  |  |
| Shirley Daniels | 2 |  |  |  |
| Philip Chandler | 2 |  |  |  |
| Mark Craig | 2 |  |  |  |
| Paulette Kiem | 2 |  |  |  |
| Neela Rasgotra | 2 |  |  |  |
| Robert Romano | 2 |  |  |  |
| Yosh Takata | 3 |  |  |  |
| David Morgenstern | 3 |  |  |  |
| Chuny Marquez | 3 |  |  |  |
| Meredith Grey | 3 |  |  |  |
| Cristana Yang | 3 |  |  |  |
| Derek Shepherd | 3 |  |  |  |
| Lexi Grey | 4 |  |  |  |
| Callie Torres | 4 |  |  |  |
| Agnes Kao | 4 |  |  |  |
| Helen Sharpe | 4 |  |  |  |
| Vijay Kapoor | 4 |  |  |  |
| Jackie Peyton | 5 |  |  |  |
| Gloria Akalitus | 5 |  |  |  |
| Zoey Barkow | 5 |  |  |  |