

# 10 QUESTIONS TO BUILD A BETTER WORKPLACE AFTER AN INVESTIGATION



## A Forward-Looking Accountability Guide

Investigations shouldn't just close a case, they should open up opportunities for **insight, repair, and prevention**. No matter the remedial measure you implement to hold people accountable, use these 10 questions to **move beyond blame and start building a healthier, drama-free workplace**.

### 1. WHAT GAPS IN PERCEPTION DID THIS CASE REVEAL?

Is there a disconnect about professional and appropriate workplace behavior? If so, how can you address it systemically?

### 2. DID THE ENVIRONMENT ENABLE OR ESCALATE THE CONFLICT?

Was the "temperature" already high due to stress, poor communication, or lack of leadership presence?

### 3. WERE EARLY WARNING SIGNS MISSED?

Did anyone notice small problems but choose not to act? How can we better respond to low-level conflict before it escalates?

### 4. DID THE COMPLAINANT EXPERIENCE PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM?

Even in unsubstantiated cases, emotional impact can be real. What might be needed to restore trust or psychological safety?

### 5. IS THERE A CLEAR PATH FOR PEOPLE TO SPEAK UP?

Was the issue reported early, or only after things got worse? If reporting felt risky or confusing, how can you improve the process?

### 6. DID BYSTANDERS FEEL EMPOWERED TO INTERVENE?

Do employees know how to be active upstanders, not passive bystanders? Do they feel empowered or silenced by the current culture?

### 7. WERE HR OR LEADERSHIP ISSUES UNCOVERED?

Was the complaint mismanaged at an early stage? Are new expectations or training needed for those in authority?

### 8. DID THIS CASE SURFACE PATTERNS OR TRENDS?

Are multiple claims coming from the same region, leader, or demographic group? What deeper issues might need attention?

### 9. WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE STRUCTURALLY OR CULTURALLY?

Can you address policies, team norms, workload issues, or power imbalances to reduce risk?

### 10. HOW DO YOU TRACK THE LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED?

Who needs to know what you've learned—and how will you follow up?



*By Patti Perez, from the "Mastering Workplace Investigations" course  
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