Block 1, Assessment 3, Part 1: Case Study

You work for XYZ Legal where you will facilitate a workplace meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and resolve a difficult situation with a colleague.

The situation with the work colleague is as follows:

You are advocating for a client Henry Harris, whose case study is set out in Assessment 1.

One of the other paralegals at XYZ Legal, Anthea Andrews, is a first cousin of Henry's ex-wife, Annie.

One day at the water cooler you overhear Anthea talking to one of the volunteers in a loud voice saying that

"I can't believe we are representing that loser Henry Harris. He made my cousin Annie's life hell when they were together. He was drunk all the time and took no responsibility for his two children. I hope he ends up in jail and never gets access to those kids."

You are horrified to hear these comments as you believe them to be unprofessional and a breach of the legal service's duty to act in the client's best interest and a breach of client confidentiality.

You need to address the matter and decide to call a meeting in an attempt to resolve this difficult situation so that you and Anthea can continue to work together without conflict. You know on the one hand that Anthea in that moment clearly acted unprofessionally, and may even have breached her duties as a legal professional but, at the same time, you understand that she comes from a different cultural background from you and as such may be lacking in a certain amount of cultural understanding for your client's situation.

It is important to resolve the conflict at this meeting as both you and Anthea are valued members of the Legal service. You set up a meeting and invite Anthea plus two of XYZ Legal's lawyers and the Practice Manager to attend. You intend to discuss the following issues at the meeting:

- Organisational policies and procedures regarding work related conversations in public spaces
- Legal professional duties
- Conflicts of interest
- Cross cultural understanding between colleagues and clients.