

HELPFUL COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES & PERMITTED SUBCONTRACTORS



PROMOTING and PROTECTING ~ ***BULLY FREE and PROFESSIONAL*** ***WORKSITES***



***“HOLD YOURSELF TO A HIGHER STANDARD THEN
ANYBODY ELSE EXPECTS OF YOU”***

-Henry Ward Beecher

RESOURCEFUL FUTURES INTRODUCTION TO HELPFUL COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

Resourceful Futures has well defined policies such as; Code of Conduct, (Standard 1), Prevention and Response to Violence/Abuse (Standard 8), Communication,(Employees/Permitted Subcontractors Rights and Responsibilities Standard 11b), and Workplace Rules,(Standard 11c). The research information compiled in this pamphlet is intended for training and educational purposes to enhance these policies to create **Professional and Bully Free Work-Sites for ALL employees and permitted subcontractors of Resourceful Futures.**

The information enclosed provides clear guidelines about where to draw the line to avoid issues that make co-worker's uncomfortable. Such topics may include romance, physical appearance, health, race, religion, enquiring about others personal information, jokes, and so on that may provoke unprofessional conduct and/or be seen as bullying behaviour if boundaries are crossed or perceived to be crossed among co-workers.

You can further enhance your professional skills and bullying knowledge by utilizing the internet by typing in any one of the topics listed below or other related topics that you may think of.

- Professionalism Among Co-Workers
- Bully Free Work Environments
- Co-Worker Boundaries
- Conflict Resolution between Co-Workers
- Promoting Professional Etiquette Among Co-Workers

Should you find any related information that you feel would be pertinent to enhance the **HELPFUL COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES and PERMITTED SUBCONTRACTORS** please let one of the employee relations advisers or your coordinator know.

By practising these **HELPFUL COMMUNICATION TIPS**, we can and will become the “Employer of Choice” resulting in superior outcomes for each individual we serve.

Shelly Roach, Team Leader

Kendra Lee, CDSP, Chair, Employee Relations Adviser Committee

Safe



From Harm

RULES FOR PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

CHARACTER

Taking responsibility and maintaining accountability are key components of character. The professional with character arrives on time and admits and corrects mistakes. They are fair and truthful and follow through on commitments. The professional is someone people look up to for their personal integrity.

ATTITUDE

Attitude is just as important it is about respect and “doing good” for others and or “the best interest of others rather than self-interest, it is the rule”. Greed and arrogance are counter-professional. Misrepresentation, discrimination and harassing behaviours are unprofessional as well. Everyone should exhibit willingness, good humour and helpfulness.

EXCELLENCE

Excellence, or striving to be the best, drives professionals and keeps professions strong. Excellence is “a conscientious effort to exceed expectations and make a commitment to life long learning”. A professional striving for excellence is not content with being second-rated.

COMPETENCY

Competency includes self-awareness, self-confident and social skills. The competent professional is in control of their self and can display the skills to lead,decide, work together or inform others. Competent employees are up to the task of their profession-or will seek the resources necessary to be competent.

CONDUCT

This is the most important aspect of professionalism, the system notes “it's got to be more then words. Professionalism must translate into action”. The professional conducts him/herself in a manner that reflects well on their profession. Everyone maintains confidentiality and never acts abusively to clients, co-workers or others.



“YOUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON MANY THINGS, BUT MOSTLY ON YOU”

~Frank Tyger

TIPS FOR PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE AMONG CO-WORKERS

- Be Respectful at all times.
- Be professional at all times, not only are you representing yourself but also Resourceful Futures.
- Gossip can be very damaging to a team environment.
- Always assume that everyone is as busy and stressed as you are.
- Be punctual for meetings. If you must be late, apologize-but do not give long winded excuses.
- Listen to learn, seek to understand
- Celebrate with others. Special events that are not considered part of your “job description” may seem taxing or boring, however, ensure that you show up (even briefly) for these informal get-together s.
- Share your expertise without making others feel inadequate.
- Be sensitive to others need for privacy.
- Put your cell phone away at work.
- Be careful with humour. Not EVERYONE will appreciate your sarcasm or offensive jokes.
- Steer clear of conversation that may spark antagonism and create misunderstandings (ie. ethnicity, sex, religion, politics)
- Try to leave personal problems at home.
- Don't complain about the little things. Pick your battles and realize you can't always get what you want.



"Be kinder than necessary for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle."



KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES AT WORK

“The border's separating professional and person relationships isn't easy to patrol, especially at smaller work sites,” “But conversational boundaries help to determine the reputation of an employee and co-workers. Simply put, boundaries preserve integrity.”

Beware of feeling informal:

- Most gossip and other inappropriate conversations occur in places that feel informal, such as elevators, hallways, bathrooms, shopping malls, community events/activities etc. But co-workers should never get a false sense of security that they're off duty in these locations.
- “There's generally no clear rule about where to draw the line, so a good rule of thumb is to avoid issues that might make someone uncomfortable,” Such topics of conversation may include romance, physical appearance, health, race, religion and personal finance.
- “It's best to pretend your microphone is always on. Don't say something if you don't want it heard or repeated.
- “Making an unsuitable remark damages how others perceive you, and the negative effects on reputation and future advancement can be long-term.”
- While it's natural for co-workers to show interest in one another's lives, someone has to be courageous enough to cut off a co-worker when warranted. One strategy is to turn off-topic conversations back to work-related issues as quickly as possible. An unwillingness to reveal too much personal-information-or to listen to another person reveal it-shouldn't be seen as unfriendly. By smiling and simply saying, “lets not go there.” you can stick to suitable discussions without seeming like a stick-in-the-mud.
- Just as informal places can get co-workers into trouble, so can seemingly informal methods of communication. “Co-workers should treat email and/or text messaging as broadcasted words that can be read and printed,” “it's easier to pass around rumours, gossip and tasteless jokes to multiple people via email/text messages than by word of mouth. If you think before you speak, don't forget to think before you hit the send button.”

Forge co-workers friendship with care:

- When you're at work for around 2,000 hours a year, you're bound to develop friendships with co-workers. Some may become confidants with who you share personal details. “Make sure you know and completely trust this kind of co-worker friend.” It's a risk any time someone has knowledge about details you don't want to make public.”
- When co-workers friendships fizzle, the parties often have to see each other daily. So keep in mind that office walls are (sometimes literally) thin, so it is best to share personal information during non-working hours.

- A close friendship at the work-site can cause reluctance to express problems, Co-workers whose friendships interfere with objectivity need to create some distance.
- **Understanding co-worker's skills can be powerful- knowing their scuttlebutt can be problematic.**
 - e.g., Sally in Sales Refuses to back down from a challenge. She refuses to take no for an answer. Did you hear she refuses to breast-feed? Amber in Accounting leaves no stone unturned. She leaves the office late when necessary. Did you hear she's leaving her husband?

Expect boundary differences:

- Remember, the workplace not only combines people of different backgrounds, ages, talents and skills but also folks of different boundary types.
- Getting along at work is often a matter of being flexible and willing to compromise
- It's important to be tolerant of individual differences.
- Differences are widespread and co-worker's boundaries are subjective, work-site humour is risky, so tread lightly with jokes.
- People with “overdeveloped” boundaries often are brash and do not notice they're sharing too much information, while people with “underdeveloped” boundaries often believe it's NOT OK to protest such communication.



“Remember, those who talk to you about others will also talk about you to others”

INNOVATION, PERFORMANCE, AND HEALTHY COMMUNICATION FLOURISH “BULLY~FREE WORKSITES

Work-site bullying, like childhood bullying, is the tendency of people or groups to use persistent aggressive or unreasonable behaviour against a co-worker or subordinate. Work-site bullying can include tactics as verbal, non-verbal, psychological, physical abuse and humiliation. This type of aggression is particularly difficult because unlike the typical forms of school bullying, **work-site bullies often operate within the established rules and policies of their organization.**

Bullying Results in Real Physical and Emotional Injury:

Bullying behaviour leads to real and serious physical and emotional problems for the co-worker they target, including but not limited to damage to their self-esteem and confidence, anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal disorders, headaches, insomnia, exhaustion, poor concentration, substance abuse and often **suicide**. Bullying is not about being “tough” or insisting on high standards. It is “abusive disrespect.”

BULLIES FALL INTO 3 TYPES:

CONQUERORS

- Bullies are **ONLY** interested in power and control and protecting their turf.
- Bullies try to make others feel less powerful
- Bullies can act **DIRECTLY**, e.g., insulting and/or rude words or comments, (or tones) or **INDIRECTLY**, e.g., orchestrating battles and watching others disembowel each other.

PERFORMERS

- Bullies suffer from low self-esteem so belittle targeted persons can be obvious or subtle put-downs.

MANIPULATORS

- Bullies are only interested in themselves, (It's all about me)
- Bullies are easily threatened and vindictive
- Bullies are experts at lying, deceiving and betraying
- Bullies take or try to take the credit for the work of others
- Bullies never take responsibility for their own “errors” or “actions”, They always “blame” others for their errors.

Bullying is not about a “clash of personalities,” a “misunderstanding,” or “miscommunication.” But rather;

- Bullies use surprise and secrecy to gain leverage over the targeted co-worker's
- Bullies seldom want to meet their co-worker halfway
- Bullies routinely practice psychological violence against specific co-workers whom they intentionally try to harm which is devastating to the targeted co-worker's emotional stability and can last a long time.



PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE CAN TAKE ON MANY CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS SUCH AS;

The Constant Critic:

- Put downs, insults, belittling comments, yelling, screaming, blaming others, name calling, finger pointing
- constantly criticizes the targeted co-workers competence
- Glares at the co-worker or deliberately avoids eye contact when the targeted co-worker speaks
- Reacts negatively to the targeted co-workers contributions with signs of frowns or the “just sucked a lemon” look
- Constantly blames the targeted co-worker for fabricated errors
- Makes unreasonable demands

The Two Headed Snake:

- Pretends to be nice while sabotaging the targeted co-worker- one minute vicious the next minute supportive and encouraging
- Makes every attempt to ensure the targeted co-workers does not have the necessary resources to do the work
- Makes nasty, rude or hostile remarks to the targeted co-worker privately; puts on a friendly face in public
- Try to steal credit for work done by the targeted co-worker's
- Says one thing to the targeted co-worker and something completely different behind the co-worker's back
- Will kiss up the ladder and attack those below

The Gatekeeper:

- Purposely cuts the targeted co-worker out of the communication loop
- Ignores the targeted co-worker or gives that person the “silent treatment”
- Models isolation or exclusion of the targeted co-worker

The Screaming Mimi:

- Poisons the workplace with angry outbursts blaming the targeted co-worker for their anger
- Intimidates the targeted co-worker through body language/gestures
- Purposely interrupts the targeted co-worker during meetings and conversations
- Discounts/denies the targeted co-worker's thoughts or feelings



**“People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did.
But, people will NEVER forget how you made them feel.”**

TIPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT BETWEEN CO-WORKERS

While conflict is inevitable, it need not ruin your workday or cause unbearable stress. Try these conflict resolution tips to make Resourceful Futures work-sites a less stressful, more productive place while promoting and protecting **BULLY FREE and PROFESSIONAL WORKSITES**.

1. **Be specific** in formulating your concern/complaint before attempting to resolve
2. **Resist the temptation to involve yourself** in conflicts that do not directly involve you or your responsibilities. Even if someone has clearly been wrong, allow him/her to resolve the situation as he/she chooses.
3. **Try to depersonalize conflicts**. Instead of a “me versus you”, visualize an “us versus the problem” scenario. This is not only a more professional attitude, but it will also improve productivity and is the best interests of Resourceful Futures.
4. **Be open and listen** to another's point of view and reflect back to the person as to what you think you heard. This important clarification skills leads to less misunderstanding, with the other person feeling heard and understood. Before explaining your own position, try to paraphrase and condense what the other is saying into one or two sentences. Start with, “So your saying that ...” and see how much you really understood about your co-workers position. You might find that you are on the same wavelength but having problems communicating your ideas.
5. **Don't always involve your superiors** in conflict resolution. You'll quickly make the impression that you are unable to resolve the smallest difficulties.
6. If an extended discussion is necessary, **agree first** on a time and place to talk. Confronting a co-worker who's with a client or working on a deadline is unfair and unprofessional. Pick a time when you're both free to concentrate on the problem and its resolution. **Take it outside** and away from other inquisitive co-workers if they are not involved in the problem. Don't try to hold negotiations when the office gossip can hear every word.
7. **Limit you complaints** to those directly involved in the workplace conflict. Character assassination is unwarranted. Remember you need to preserve a working relationship rather than a personal one, and your opinion of a co-worker's character is generally irrelevant. “He missed last weeks deadline” is OK; “he's a total idiot” is not.
8. **Know when conflict isn't just conflict**. If conflict arises due to sexual, racial, or ethnic issues, or if someone behaves inappropriately, that's not conflict, it's harassment. Take action and discuss the problem with your supervisor or human resources department.
9. **Consider a mediator** if the problem gets out of control, or if the issue is too emotional to resolve in a mutual discussion. At this step, your supervisor should be involved. You can consider using a neutral third party mediator within Resourceful Futures or hiring a professional counsellor.
10. **Take home point: It's not all about you-** You may think it's a personal attack, but maybe your co-worker is just having a bad day. Take time to think BEFORE you speak in response to an insensitive remark. It may be that saying nothing is the best response.

“Your ability to carry a conversation is crucial in building relationships with fellow co-workers, but boundaries must exist.”



RFCSL HELPFUL COMMUNICATION TIPS

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“Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence”

~ Anonymous~