

RESPECT AND INCLUSION AT WORK



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

We should all expect to work in an environment that is accepting of each other and where we are all treated with respect. Working together across different cultural boundaries can sometimes lead to conflict, but with the right attitude and values shared by everyone, we can all maintain an inclusive workspace. People work best when they're free to be their full selves. But what if some people don't like every aspect of that? Conflict can arise when cultures clash or when values aren't respected.

We may really value our office humour and informal banter. Sometimes we see it as a way of showing that we get on with one another and that a particular person is one of us. However, we can fall into the trap of thinking people know "we don't mean any harm". The problem is harassment is not necessarily done on purpose. Impact is what counts rather than intention.

In this course the group will be shown that it's the manager's job to make sure everyone knows and upholds the values of the workplace so that these conflicts do not occur.

LOOK – watch the videos and reflect on the content and message.

THINK – activities and questions linking the videos to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER – a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the videos will last around 15 minutes.

PRACTISE – At the end of the series of videos there is a practical exercise which will bring the learnings together. Delegates should be encouraged to record any personal development actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

You may not be a Diversity, Equality or inclusion expert and this course is only intended to provide a framework to introduce the subject and encourage reflection and discussion. If you or any of the team need assistance with issues related to this subject, please use your organisations management structure Human Resources and DEI team to provide support.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Maintaining harmony & dignity
- One person's banter is another person's bullying

FILM 1 – MAINTAINING HARMONY & DIGNITY

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Set the scene for the group before showing the film. Creating inclusive working cultures means not waiting until someone has been made to feel uncomfortable.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Food is an indicator of our culture and a hygiene factor that contributes to our wellbeing at work. If people are made to feel self-conscious about something that is so important to them, they may feel they have to hide that part of themselves. People do their best work when they can bring their whole selves to work. Managers should challenge anything that undermines that.

Ask the group to discuss the video and highlight where things went wrong, and what should Shana, the manager, have done differently? After discussion, provide the group with this breakdown.

Where did it go wrong, and what should Shana, the manager, have done differently?

- At the start of the week, Shana doesn't like the smell of Halam's hot food, calling it a "Dehli Dustbin". Remarks like that can be offensive, and where they are linked to culture can be extremely inflammatory, so if you see this in your workplace you must challenge it immediately to stop it escalating.
- Shana's 'NO SMELLY FOOD' sign is another act of aggression towards Halam. He just wants to eat his lunch while Shana feels she can't put up with the smell. Gwen is asked by Shana to support her in banning Halam's food. While Gwen doesn't back Shana, she also doesn't intervene to make sure that all parties are happy. This is her first mistake that will ultimately come back to bite her. If she steps in now, she can quickly avert a bigger problem by reinforcing the workplace values and ensuring that Halam feels respected. Instead, she ignores the situation and tensions between Shana and Halam escalate through the week.
- Now both Shana and Gwen are telling Halam that his food is stinking up the kitchen. Halam feels like this is an attack on his culture, that anything outside of "normal" (as Shana puts it) is not acceptable. As the manager, Gwen needs to make it clear that the values of the workplace include making all people of all cultures welcome and comfortable, and offering solutions to the situation. Instead, she does not take responsibility and excuses herself out of the conversation. Again, neither Halam nor Shana are happy.
- Shana and Halam's continued conflict has driven Gwen to finally take action, but what she does is not an intervention at all. All Gwen does is remove the microwave from the equation, which means that nobody can use it and makes everyone unhappy. Avoiding conflict in this way only exacerbates the issue and doesn't make any of the parties involved happy.
- By Friday, bystander James has had enough. He makes it clear exactly what is respectful and dignified, which means that everyone involved has clear values to uphold. Without these shared values, people can't adjust their behaviour accordingly. If Gwen had set these out on Tuesday this week-long saga would have been quickly nipped in the bud.

Regardless of the problem or its solution, the manager needs to make sure that in a dispute all parties AND any bystanders can see that the workplace values are being upheld.

REMEMBER

- Make your own commitment to dignity & respect at work clear to your team.
- Ask those affected rather than relying on your own perception of impact.
- Remember witnesses to the behaviour are affected, not just the person targeted.

FILM 2 – ONE PERSONS BANTER IS ANOTHER PERSONS BULLYING

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Set the scene for the group before showing the video.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Harassment doesn't necessarily mean big, obvious acts of aggression. Spotting a single instance of these micro-inequalities can be difficult, but as soon as you notice one or a pattern of them occurring be sure to intervene and explain why these behaviours are not appropriate.

Ask the group to discuss how can you effectively challenge bullying and harassment?

When we're feeling bullied or harassed it can be difficult to concisely articulate what effect someone's behaviour is having on us or others, and that makes it difficult to challenge this behaviour directly.

Try using the Three F's method:

Fact

Describe the facts of the event(s) that led you to feel harassed or bullied.

e.g.

When you hug me...

When you call me 'sweetheart'...

When you don't look me in the eye...

Feeling

Describe how that behaviour affects you and how you feel.

e.g.

When you hug me... I feel uncomfortable.

When you call me 'sweetheart'... I feel very patronised.

When you don't look me in the eye... I feel like you aren't showing respect.

Future

Explain how you would like things to change in the future.

e.g.

When you hug me... I feel uncomfortable. I would prefer to just shake hands in future.

When you call me 'sweetheart'... I feel very patronised. Please just use my name in future.

When you don't look me in the eye... I feel like you aren't showing respect. In future, I'd appreciate you showing that I have your full attention when we are speaking.

When challenging harassment or bullying behaviour, the Three F's method helps us articulate ourselves properly by simplifying an emotional situation into a factual discussion that explains how you have been affected, and what needs to change in the future.

REMEMBER

- Immediately challenge sexual comments or jokes about employees' appearance. Consider the impact of your behaviour on bystanders.
- If you see something at odds with your values or policies, don't wait to see if someone is upset, challenge it immediately.
- Support your colleagues if you witness harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour.

GROUP EXERCISE

Finish the session with this quick quiz and ask them to select one or more answer from the options you give below. The suggested correct answers are highlighted.

What effect did the conflict between Shana and Halam have on James, the bystander?

- James became angry because Halam's food was upsetting Shana.
- James felt that there was an environment of disrespect and that people were not supported by the manager.
- James was upset that the microwave was out of order because of the squabble between Shana and Halam.

What is a likely consequence of bystanders seeing this behaviour going unresolved?

- They will not want to continue working in an environment where they feel that staff are not supported or respected.
- Productivity will go up as everyone ignores what is going on and goes back to work.
- They will really enjoy the awkward atmosphere created by the unresolved tension.

How do you set up your office to be an inclusive and respectful workplace?

- Have regular team bonding days.
- Communicate and reiterate the values that you want to be shared and upheld.
- Make colleagues who do not get on to work in teams, ensuring integration and mutual respect.

How can you set an example to your team to encourage inclusive and respectful practices?

- Speak to each member of your team individually about how they need to treat others the same as everyone else.
- Publicly make a commitment to dignity and respect as early as possible.
- Let your team work it out themselves; it's just common sense to treat each other respectfully.

How can you tell how an incident has affected someone?

- Ask them.
- Ask others.
- You can tell by assessing the situation from the outside.

Who is affected by public incidents of workplace hostility? (Select all that apply)

- The people directly involved.
- The manager.
- Witnesses to the behaviour.

What should you do if sexual jokes or comments about an employee's appearance are made?

- Check if the employee finds them funny.
- Speak to the person who made the comments separately later.
- Do not tolerate the behaviour and challenge the comments immediately.

If someone is upset by jokes or personal comments in the workplace, the intention of the person who said them is what is important rather than the impact.

- True
- False