

A respectful workplace is one where all employees are treated fairly, difference is acknowledged and valued, communication is open and civil, conflict is addressed early and there is a culture of empowerment and co-operation.

What's the hazard?

A hazard is something that may expose a person to a risk of injury. Some hazards are more obvious than others. Below are some examples of hazards that could contribute to a workplace where disrespectful behaviour is passively ignored or actively encouraged. Which could occur in your workplace? Are there any others that may be relevant in your workplace?

Examples of hazards that could contribute to a disrespectful workplace include:

- gossiping or spreading rumours
- yelling, swearing or other aggressive behaviour
- covert behaviour, for example, undermining an individual, withholding required information, underhandedness
- discrimination as outlined in human rights legislation
- sexual harassment
- reprimanding people in public
- offensive or inappropriate jokes, cartoons, emails, etc., for example, racial or ethnic jokes
- offensive or inappropriate comments, gestures, materials or behaviour
- vandalizing a person's belongings

What does a respectful workplace look like?

There are many steps **supervisors** can take to contribute to a more respectful workplace. Which of these would be possible in your workplace? Are there any others that may be relevant in your workplace?

Steps supervisors can take to contribute to a more respectful workplace include:

- leading by positive example
- listening actively
- recognizing individual strengths, weaknesses and opinions
- acknowledging workers' accomplishments
- investigating complaints promptly
- encouraging workers to resolve conflict in a respectful manner
- being inclusive and treating all workers fairly
- providing regular feedback to workers

Talk leader instructions:

- This is **background information ONLY**.
- Be sure to customize to your organization.
- Consider printing copies of this sheet for yourself and each participant.
- Lead a discussion with your workers about the materials on this sheet.
- Be sure to give real life examples whenever possible. Be open to questions.
- Conclude with a brief review of the main points or a summary based on the discussion.
- Fill in the name of your organization, location and the date on your sheet. Have each worker sign your sheet to confirm their attendance.
- File your sheet in your worker records to document the Safety Talk.

There are also many steps **workers** can take to contribute to a more respectful workplace. Which of these would be possible in your workplace? Are there any others that may be relevant in your workplace?

Steps workers can take to contribute to a more respectful workplace include:

- starting by following the "golden rule": treat others as "you" would like to be treated
- extending to following the "platinum rule": treat others as "they" would like to be treated
- not participating or engaging in activities, discussions, etc. that offend, humiliate or embarrass people
- speaking up! if you witness disrespectful behaviour, talk to the individuals involved or your supervisor
- offering support to an individual who was targeted. Encourage them to talk to the person(s) involved or their supervisor
- being kind and polite
- giving someone a pat on the back: recognize the work of your co-workers
- dealing with conflict in a respectful manner
- listening to what others have to say before expressing your own viewpoint

What are possible benefits of a respectful workplace?

Employers, supervisors and workers all benefit from a respectful workplace. Below are some examples of these benefits. Which of these could apply in your workplace? Are there any others that may be relevant in your workplace?

Benefits of a respectful workplace include:

- greater job satisfaction
- a more engaged workforce
- less stress both at work and at home
- improved morale and happier workers
- better teamwork
- fewer incidents, less sick time, reduced disability claims costs and employee turnover
- improved bottom line

Discussion questions:

1. Many workplaces are respectful, but what is something you do in the workplace that might be unintentionally contributing to a culture of disrespect?
2. What actions can you take today to create a more respectful workplace?

More information:

If you have more questions creating a respectful workplace, please contact:

- Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, 667-5450 or 1-800- 661-0443 or work.safe@gov.yk.ca
- Yukon Human Rights Commission, 867-667-6226

Safety Talk record:

Print and complete this page or fill in electronically, then save as a record of your Safety Talk.

Comments/suggestions

Organization name

Safety Talk leader

Date

Safety Talk participants

print name

signature
