

TOOLBOX TALK



DISCUSSION TOPIC: Respectful Communication

Respectful communication is vital for a healthy work environment. Creating a culture that fosters good, effective and respectful communication in the workplace can improve productivity, teamwork and employee engagement. Respectful communication is the responsibility of everyone, at all levels, in all interactions.

How to communicate more respectfully with your co-workers:

- Frame Your Communication in a Positive Way
- Be honest, open and polite

Positive and respectful communication reinforces the value of individual abilities, qualities, and achievements. Encouraging praise in a workplace and boosting motivation can lead to continuous improvement in teams and individuals.

Ideas Can Improve Businesses

Encouraging individuals to share ideas and opinions can lead to positive change in work environments. Creating a respectful dialogue can encourage others to express their opinions and ideas, which can bring about new initiatives and create an environment where employees feel respected and valued. However, not all opinions and ideas are aligned. Creating a respectful dialogue is when varying opinions are acknowledged and valued, with the aim of working collaboratively.

Speak the Truth, Fairly

Respectful communication is built on honesty and fairness. Adopting a respectful communication approach in interactions will allow all parties to contribute proportionally, creating a dialogue built on fairness. In the workplace, communication amongst team members and colleagues includes social dialogue which creates a healthy team cohesion but could also create a culture where gossiping is rife. Gossiping or sharing of information without facts may lead to a break down in team cohesion and a lack of trust. When sharing information or knowledge, ensure you are confident you are speaking the truth.

Active listening

Active listening is a powerful tool in ensuring respectful communication. Active listening means being engaged in the dialogue, setting aside distractions in our thoughts and environment. While many people attempt to multitask while listening to information being presented verbally, it is impossible to achieve. Receiving information from others in a respectful way requires stopping what you are doing to give the other person your full attention, not speaking over or interrupting and using words to encourage the speaker to continue.

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Body Language & Non-Verbal Cues

When communicating with others, they receive the information by more than just listening to what you are saying. Non-verbal cues play a key role in effectively conveying your message across and can include aspects such as:

- Demeanor
- Eye Contact
- Open Body Language
- Facial Expressions
- Head Nodding
- Smiling
- Tone

Inclusive Language

To be respectful, means to show courtesy and consideration for others and not to discriminate. When communicating, it is important that our language is free from words that exclude, such as stereotypes that identify or demean people on the basis of disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender.

- Use people-centric language that does not classify or label
- Don't make assumptions about others or their characteristics
- Be conscious of the implications of your language

Respectful communication is key in developing relationships and building a positive environment, be it in the workplace or broader community. Each of us share this responsibility and are dependent on one another to participate, to foster a respectful and inclusive society. As the saying goes, "treat others the way you would like to be treated."

