



BUILDING A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE



WHAT IS A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE?

A respectful workplace is one in which all employees feel safe, valued, and are treated with dignity. It is characterized by psychological safety, civil and professional behavior, a welcoming environment, and fairness for all. In a respectful workplace, inappropriate communication, rude behavior, discrimination, harassment, and bullying are not tolerated and policies and procedures for reporting incidences of disrespectful and harmful behaviors are enforced and well understood by all workers.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE?

Respect in the workplace is associated with many positive workplace outcomes including greater worker engagement, higher job satisfaction, reduced stress, and more cohesive teams. Respectful Workplaces can also improve the financial bottom line by improving productivity and reducing incidents, sick time, disability claim costs, and turnover.

WHAT ARE SOME ATTRIBUTES OF A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE?



- People are kind, courteous and professional
- Diversity is valued and a sense of belonging is promoted
- People are treated fairly and with dignity
- Bullying, mobbing and harassment are not tolerated
- Open, honest communication is supported
- People trust one another
- Conflict is resolved quickly in a healthy manner
- People appreciate and acknowledge the work of others
- People are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions

THESE DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIORS COMPROMISE SAFETY



- Discrimination or any type of harassment
- Bullying or mobbing
- Reprimanding people in public
- Offensive or inappropriate jokes, cartoons, objects, emails, etc.
- Gossiping or spreading rumors
- Rude or hostile behavior such as yelling or aggression directed towards another
- Covert behavior such as undermining an individual, withholding required information, and underhandedness

This tool has been developed by the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Science and is an adapted version of the BE4ALL Toolbox Talk 'Building a Respectful Workplace' by SMART and SMACNA (modified with permission).

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO CONTRIBUTE TO A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

- Be a role model: always treat people with courtesy and respect
- Speak Up! If you witness disrespectful behavior, talk to the individuals involved or your supervisor
- Make sure you read, understand, and follow the company's policies and code of conduct
- Lead by positive example of professional behavior
- Recognize when you have offended and repair the harm
- Ensure all crew members know they can come to discuss their concerns with you in private
- Complete the Respect Works Training Program modules and practice the different skills for better communication, engagement and support for your crew

CREW ENGAGEMENT

JOSÉ'S STORY

A senior journeyman has taken to regularly mocking a younger apprentice named José. The journeyman calls José “useless” and “slow” especially in front of other crew members. This repeated behavior has caused José to withdraw and stop interacting with crew members. When José notices that a scaffold plank looks unstable, he hesitates to speak up because he doesn't want to be disrespected again in front of his teammates. To protect himself from humiliation, he decides not to say anything about the plank. Later that day, the plank shifts. As a result, a worker loses footing and falls, causing serious injury.

ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK OR DISCUSSION

Talk about José's story with your crew. This is a real-world example of how disrespectful behavior led to a serious injury on a job site. Review with them what behaviors are considered disrespectful in this story or in other situations they have experienced or witnessed. Make sure everyone is on the same page about how harmful these behaviors are and how they can compromise safety (you can read the bullets from the previous page). Discuss which ways they believe everyone can contribute to keeping the jobsite free from these behaviors and how you, as a leader, can better address these issues. If time allows, use your active listening skills and have an honest discussion with your crew. You can ask:

- Besides safety, how can disrespectful behavior affect the work you do?
- What's the difference between good-natured joking/teasing and disrespect?
- Does everyone know what they are supposed to do when experiencing or witnessing harmful/disrespectful behaviors?

IN CLOSING THE TOOLBOX TALK: Remind everyone of the importance of working together respectfully and supporting fellow crew members. Let crew members know they should report disrespectful behavior to you when they see it.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Building a respectful workplace is a critical step in promoting a space where all workers can come together in an environment where everyone feels valued, heard, and excited to contribute to the success of the industry
- Respect in the workplace is a win-win situation for everyone. It is good for workers' physical, mental health and safety, and it is good for the business bottom line
- Everyone can contribute to a culture of respect and civility