Building Successful Working Relationships

Effective elements of a positive work environment

Agenda/Topics To Be Covered

- Civility
- Team Environment
- Equality vs. Favoritism
- Modeling Professional Behavior

- Effective Communication
- Gossip and Drama
- Conflict Resolution
- Contact for Assistance

What is civility and why should we practice it?

- Civility is polite, reasonable and respectful behavior.
- Entails honoring the personal values of others, while listening to varying points of views
- Involves pursuing shared ideas to reach common ground
- Prioritizing it facilitates effective communication, high functioning teams, inclusive and productive organizations

Team Environment

- A team is a collaboration of parties to achieve a common goal.
- Be committed to the leader of the team no matter who else is not.
- Consider everyone in your department a member of your team.
- One must deliver mutual respect for all team members in the work environment; this includes faculty, staff and students.
- Respect connects us all on a personal level.
- Honor all participants on the team.
- Clearly know each teammate's role and responsibility.
- Show commitment to team efforts and projects.

Team Environment

The University website proudly states that it offers 'meaningful employment in a welcoming environment'.

Think about what makes you feel welcome and portray those characteristics to your teammates.

- Kindness
- Engagement
- Acceptance
- Inclusion

Think about what makes you feel a part of a team and impose those same qualities to your team.

- Comradery
- Respect
- Honesty
- Loyalty

Equality vs. Favoritism

- Favoritism occurs when someone is favored not because he/she is doing a great job, but for reasons outside of work performance such as, but not limited to, looks, friendship, nepotism, race or gender.

- Favoritism can fall into illegal discrimination when job decisions are based on traits that federal and state governments have decided should not be the basis of employment actions.

- University policy states that all employees should be treated equaled without regards to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic information, disability or veteran status. The policy covers recruitment, employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, rates of pay and/or compensation, training and other terms or conditions of employment.

- Don't take anger out on the person who is being favored.

Modeling Professional Behavior

- Requires more than good manners and etiquette.
- Always give an acknowledgment of another person's presence, without regards to their position. A simple greeting is always in order.
- Exemplify courtesy, politeness and an overall awareness of the rights, feelings and concerns of others around you, including visitors.
- Acknowledge your mistakes and make amends to improve and/or repair.
- Do not discriminate against a particular group or individual.
- Do not discount employee contributions.
- Be consistent, punctual and dedicated.

Effective Communication

- Respectful of other people's feelings
- Refrain from judgments and listen to diverse ideas actively
- Positive tone of voice
- Apologetic when you offend someone
- Listen actively; take notes if necessary

- Be mindful of body language; obscene hand gestures, eye rolling, etc.
- Do not interrupt conversations
- Give the person speaking your attention
- Allow everyone to contribute to discussions
- Communicate expectations clearly

Gossip and Drama

- A good employee is one who exemplifies restraint.
- Avoid speech that could be rude, offensive, or demeaning.
- Ask yourself will the conveying of information build or tear down the team or an individual on the team.
- Avoid discussing your issue with everyone but the person with whom you have a problem.
- Do not sabotage an individual or their efforts.
- Save the venting for outside of the office; resist the urge to talk about your co-workers and/or supervisor.
- When in doubt or frustrated, wait to reply. Give yourself some time to think clearly.

Impact of Poor Civility

- Decreased creativity
- High turnover rate
- Decreased morale amongst individuals and/or the team
- Poor performance
- Productivity wasted in spending time to mend damages
- Frustration taken out on others, including visitors
- A decline in the organization's values and culture

What is workplace conflict?

- Webster defines conflict as a sharp disagreement or opposition of interests and ideas.

- When one or both parties are not able to secure what they need or want and are actively seeking their own personal goals.

- Conflict is normal and a natural part of any workplace.

- Although conflict can lead to hopelessness, job dissatisfaction, depression, aggression, violence, low productivity, stress, absenteeism, and culture deficits, it can also lead to more productive and innovative ideas.

What do you see?

Conflict Resolution

- Conflict avoidance and minimization does not solve the issue. Deal with issues as they arise.
- Keep in mind that your way is not always the right way.
- Keep in mind that your personality is not necessarily the "normal" one.
- Accept that people have different perspectives. All are valid.
- Find the source of the issue. Is it just a mere difference of opinion or a more serious underlying problem?
- If talking with the other party fails, talk with someone in management or Human Resources to report the situation and help resolve the issue.

Who to contact for conflict management

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"Without civility, we run the risk of acting as though we have no fellow passengers on the journey of life."

- Deborah Eicher-Catt