

Civility and Respect

Think of a time at work where you felt frustrated. How would it look like to others when you are frustrated or angry? Do you think your actions would be seen to be uncivil or disrespectful?

Even though we all have stress and moments when we aren't our best selves, it's important we make sure that we treat one another with civility and respect. This includes how we treat each other on a day-to-day basis, but also how we treat each other when CONFLICT arises. Do people try to calm the situation and explore solutions, or do they make things worse?

Civility and respect means showing appreciation, care, and consideration for EVERYONE, whether they're coworkers, management, or clients.

When someone is not civil, it can be distracting, annoying or irritating behaviours... things like eye rolling when someone is talking or using lots of negative sarcasm. In some situations, being uncivil can escalate to more threatening behaviours such as racial slurs, intimidation, or physical violence.

Let's look at an example.

This is Trung. Trung is new to Canada, and is learning to speak English. Trung has vast experience working with teams and projects. He has a lot of wisdom and perspective that he could bring to his team.

Now this is Sylvia. It's Sylvia's job to gather everyone's feedback about the project. Before wrapping up the team meeting, Sylvia asks each employee if there is anything they'd like to add. When she comes to Trung, she lets him know that he can just watch until he knows more about the project. Sylvia doesn't want Trung to feel pressured to add anything until he's settled and feeling comfortable in his new role.

Sylvia may not be aware... but to Trung and his co-workers, this MAY have been seen as a LACK OF RESPECT for Trung's abilities.

Trung has LOTS of experience. Even though he is learning to speak English, it's important to ask for his input. He may VERY WELL feel comfortable sharing.

If situations like this happen again and again, it could cause FRUSTRATION and lead to CONFLICT within the team.

In a psychologically safe and healthy workplace, people will work well in teams, and morale will be positive. This is because everyone has an underlying respect for each other. There will be less conflict and more effective solutions when conflict DOES happen.

As a supervisor or as an employee, we all need to be careful not to assume what people WANT or NEED. People see the world through different eyes.

We often say "Treat people the way YOU want to be treated"... but it's really about "Treating people the way THEY want to be treated."

Respect the differences in people. This could be someone's culture, religion, language, or even just their working style. Sometimes people are more direct. Sometimes people value the process more than the

outcome. For some, building a strong team or having a vision of the future means more than just doing the work.

Workplaces can also look into training and policies that help promote respect... such as:

A zero-tolerance policy for bullying,

Diversity training or

Conflict resolution training

What are some ways that YOU will help promote civility and respect? Write down one thing you intend to do in the next week.

Showing civility and respect is one of 13 factors that support psychological health and safety in the workplace. Learn more at: MentalHealthCommission.ca/NationalStandard

For more resources for your workplace, check out haveTHATtalk.ca

Developed in collaboration by Ottawa Public Health and the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

With content adapted with permission from Mindful Employer Canada

And support from Bell Let's Talk.