

Toolkit 6: Enhancing Respect

Purpose of Enhancing Respect:

Enhancing respect in our work areas is one way of supporting employees to feel valued. Respect can be demonstrated through our choices, delegation, behaviors, and verbal and non verbal communication. In addition to the Office for Institutional Equity's 2-hour interactive workshop, "**Enhancing Respect In A Diverse Workplace,**" there are several practices you can implement to increase the sense of respect in your work area.

Do's:

- Do make your expectations clear to employees regarding verbal and non verbal communication,
- Schedule at least 1 staff meeting a year to review how the work environment feels in terms of respect and solicit feedback from employees,
- Provide consistent feedback to employees who need further mentoring and support on their behavior,
- Reward respectful behavior when you see it,
- Manage conflicts and disagreements with respect.

Don'ts:

- Do not assume that all employees have the same definition of respect as each other or as you.
- Do not avoid conversations about disrespectful behavior in the hopes of the behavior stopping all by itself.
- Do not rely on someone else to provide vision and tools for respect in your department. This is part of your manager responsibility.

What are some specific behaviors that can convey respect?

- Although each situation is unique and not everyone may agree, some behaviors that we have found to convey respect at Duke University are:
 - Communication that is open and transparent.
 - Decision making that is transparent and inclusive whenever possible.
 - Information being shared in a timely and consistent way.
 - Disagreeing without losing one's temper or otherwise conveying disrespect.
 - Greeting employees and acknowledging colleagues verbally and non verbally.
 - Respecting people's time by arriving at meetings on time and ending meetings on time.
 - Maintaining appropriate personal space and boundaries.
 - Delegating assignments and schedules fairly.
 - Being open to criticism and feedback.

- Providing critical feedback in a manner which is caring and respectful.
- Taking responsibility for the impact of one's actions.

How can I provide feedback about disrespectful behavior?

Here are some suggestions for coaching an employee with problematic behavior:

- *Choose an appropriate time and place to offer the feedback. It is best not to let too much time pass, and also to be calm and not reacting to your own emotions.*
- *Seek out a space that is private.*
- *If this is the first occasion for the behavior, ask the person how they saw their behavior impacting the situation or the other person involved?*
- *Listen to their own self evaluation and give them feedback that encourages them to reflect more on their own behavior and choices.*
- *If this is a pattern or persistent concern, work with the employee to examine the long term impact this behavior has on the team, on the job tasks, and on their relationships with colleagues, clients, and customers.*
- *Ask the employee what their alternatives are when this type of situation occurs again?*
- *Develop a plan for changing the behavior.*
- *Follow up! Schedule a meeting 3 weeks to 6 weeks out and make sure to discuss this concern again.*
- *If need be, institute the disciplinary action process.*

Scenario: Disrespectful Behavior During a Staff Meeting

Joanne is facilitating the monthly staff meeting. The third item of the agenda describes a new initiative that Duke is embarking on. This project will require staff in Joanna's department to increase their work load considerable. At one point, Henry, a seasoned supervisor, interrupts Joanna to suggest that the administration is wrong about their current focus and that he's sick of having to switch gears every time there's a new "flavor of the month."

Joanna remains calm at Henry's comments and thanks him for sharing his concerns. She decides this is a good time to open up the meeting to other feelings, as she's aware that several more people may be feeling similarly to Henry. Joanna says, "Henry, I'm glad you're speaking up about your concerns. Thank you for opening this up for the team to reflect on. Let's take a few minutes to evaluate this new project and the impact it will have on us...."

Later, Joanna stops by Henry's office and gives him some feedback.

Joanna: Henry, I value you as a seasoned supervisor on this team and I know how much you care about the organization, and the welfare of your staff. I also appreciate that you are open and honest about your perceptions regarding the decisions that are made here. One piece of feedback I have for you is about the tone that you used in our meeting.

Henry: What do you mean?

Joanna: I felt disrespected by your interruption. Not because you were disagreeing with the initiative, but because of how you spoke to me. I also perceived the team reacting to your frustration. It was evident in people's body language and eye rolling. Sometimes, when you have criticism to offer, your message gets lost because I get distracted by how you're expressing yourself.

Henry: What should I do differently?

Joanna: Maybe the next time you have a response or a criticism, you could offer it in a less passionate tone? For example, I would have been delighted if you had come to be before the meeting and asked to facilitate a discussion with the staff about the new initiative. I think it's important to show the staff we care about their feelings, and I think there are constructive ways of doing this. As a supervisor, you need to be aware of how subtle things such as your tone of voice can convey disrespect without your intending it.

Process Points

- By not over reacting to Henry in the meeting, Joanna is able to turn his outburst into an opportunity for the team.
- Joanna chooses to give Henry the feedback in private, after the meeting. This helps him to save face and also to ask her for more coaching or advice, things he may be less likely to do in front of his peers.

Summary: Enhancing Respect means.....

1. Having a clear set of behavioral expectations that you can articulate to your staff.
2. Model these behaviors consistently.
3. Do not hesitate to provide feedback to staff as soon as you see a problem behavior.

Links and Other Resources:

Respect and Positive Communication in the Workplace:

http://oeo.od.nih.gov/about/news_notes62006.htm>

Toward a More Civil Work Place

<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/bosscoworkers/a/respect.htm>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/respect>

Please contact the Office for Institutional Equity to learn more about our Enhancing Respect workshop and many other offerings. 919-681-6435.