Building A Respectful Workplace

Belonging and Excellence for All (BE4ALL) is a joint effort by SMART, SMACNA, and the ITI to create an industry-wide culture where everyone is welcome and belongs, including those from historically underrepresented groups, and where we all strive for the highest standards of performance and professionalism, resulting in a thriving unionized sheet metal industry that affirms the dignity and worth of us all. These Toolbox Talks are in support of this mission.

Building a respectful workplace is a critical step in promoting a space where all employees can come together in an environment where everyone feels valued, heard and excited to contribute to the success of the industry.

What are some benefits of a respectful workplace?

• People are more satisfied with their job.
• The workforce is more engaged.
• Stress is reduced both at work and at home.
• Workers are happier and morale is improved.
• People work as a team. Incidents, sick time, disability claims costs and employee turnover are reduced.
• Improved bottom line.

What are some characteristics of a respectful workplace?

• People are kind, courteous and professional.
• Diversity is valued and inclusion is promoted.
• People are treated fairly and with dignity.
• Bullying 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 and they feel “heard” when they do.
In order to build a respectful workplace, it is crucial to understand of the behaviors that are considered disrespectful, these include:

- Gossiping or spreading rumors.
- Yelling, swearing or other aggressive behavior.
- Covert behavior - i.e. undermining an individual, withholding required information, underhandedness.
- Discrimination
- Sexual harassment.
- Reprimanding people in public.
- Offensive or inappropriate jokes, cartoons, emails etc. (i.e. racial or ethnic jokes).

**EXAMPLES: Things You can do to contribute to a more respectful workplace**

- Treat people the way that “they” want to be treated.
- Do not participate or engage in activities/discussions etc. that offend, humiliate, or embarrass people.
- Speak Up! If you witness disrespectful behavior, talk to the individuals involved or your supervisor.
- Offer support to an individual who was targeted. Encourage them to talk to the person(s) involved, or their supervisor.
- Be kind and polite.
- Recognize the work of your fellow co-workers.
- Deal with conflict in a respectful manner.
- Listen to what others have to say, before expressing your own viewpoint.
- Lead by positive example.
- Listen to understand.
- Recognize individual strengths, weaknesses, and opinions.
- Acknowledge other’s accomplishments.
- Offer support to an individual who was targeted. Encourage them to talk to the person(s) involved, or their supervisor.
- Report & if a supervisor, initiate investigations of complaints promptly.
- Encourage others to resolve conflict in a respectful manner.
- Be inclusive and treat all employees fairly.
- Provide regular feedback

**Member Conversation and Notes: Let’s hear from you!**

(1) What would be considered “disrespectful behavior”?

(2) What can members do to contribute to a more “respectful workplace”?

(3) What resonated with you most: resolving a miscommunication, active listening, or effective feedback?

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