**Peer Culture – Respect**

#### What to Know:

Demonstrating respect is all about the little things. Saying, “please,” “thank you,” and “how are you?” can go a long way. Listening and valuing the ideas of others is key to demonstrating that you appreciate the thoughts and perspectives of all.

#### Mythbusters:

Respect isn’t just about being nice and courteous. It’s also about valuing people enough to tell them what they need to hear to thrive and be successful. We often avoid difficult conversations because we don’t want to hurt feelings, yet the respectful thing to do would be to communicate honestly, directly, and with kindness.

**Questions to Ask:**

* What would you like your supervisor to know about what he/she could start, stop and continue doing to foster a respectful environment?
* Think of a specific time when you did not feel respected (there is no need to share the specific situation). Why did that happen? (The point is not to place blame, but understand what is getting in the way.)
* Are you comfortable speaking up when you do not feel respected? Why or why not? What options are available to share your concerns? Are they helpful? Why or why not?
* What gets in the way of listening within our group? What barriers have you observed? Why does that happen?
* Do you see that the team/organization values diverse ways of thinking? What is going well and what could be done better?
* What changes would need to happen for you to respond with a “5” on this item?
* What can we do as a team to ensure our concerns are heard? How do we do this in a way that is most beneficial to the organization?

**Best Practices:**

* Demonstrate positive communications by utilizing effective listening skills, thinking through how words and actions will impact others, and being aware of body language, tone of voice, and demeanor in all interactions.
* Encourage employees to share ideas, opinions, and concerns (even those who may be less likely to volunteer to share their thoughts). Utilize some of these ideas and be sure to recognize the employee who shared them.
* Look for ways to have diversity in meetings and committees, especially when important decisions will be made that impact the larger group.
* Implement policies and procedures consistently so employees feel they are being treated fairly. Provide equal opportunities for employees to participate in professional development, committees, and task forces.

#### What Managers Can Do:

Often times simple behaviors make all the difference when it comes to ensuring others feel respected. Take time for simple greetings, ask how people are doing and use common courtesy.

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#### What Employees Can Do:

Take time to get to know others on a personal level. Ask others (your peers, manager) about their hobbies, loved ones, or what they are focused on at work. Getting to know people in terms of their interests and motivations can go a long way to reduce misunderstandings.

When a misunderstanding or frustration with another employee arises, remind yourself to assume best intentions. Ask questions for understanding before jumping to conclusions.

#### What Leadership Can Do:

Demonstrate positive communications by utilizing effective listening skills, thinking through how words and actions will impact others, and being aware of body language, tone of voice, and demeanor in all interactions.

As much as possible, address people by their names. Try to remember and talk about details from previous interactions with people (or ask them questions to prompt your memory). This may seem like a small gesture, but it makes people feel known and recognized by you.

**Watch:**

* [Why good leaders make you feel safe | Simon Sinek](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmyZMtPVodo)

**Read:**

* [*Social Intelligence and the Biology of Leadership*](https://hbr.org/2008/09/social-intelligence-and-the-biology-of-leadership)
* *Inclusion: Diversity, The New Workplace & The Will To Change by Jennifer Brown*