

Maintaining Civility and Respect at Work



A healthy work environment is based on mutual respect, where people show a polite attitude and decent etiquette that creates a positive atmosphere. Mutual respect is also based on a shared belief in the benefits of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and viewpoints within a team.

Mutual respect empowers organizations, leadership teams, and individuals in many ways:

- Improved well-being and decreased absenteeism
- Positive and focused work atmosphere
- Trusted and open communication
- Collaborative decision making
- Increased loyalty among staff, leading to better retention of valued people
- A reputation for fairness and ethical strength
- Opens the door for new ideas, problem-solving, and innovation

Here are 6 simple strategies to create a culture of mutual respect:

1. **Get to know one another.** Take an interest in other people's beliefs, behaviors, preferences, and unique needs. Armed with that information, consider how your words and actions will impact others before you speak or act.
2. **Learn about your differences.** Some differences are harder to understand than others, particularly those rooted in unfamiliar cultures. Ask questions tactfully. Appreciate the value of diverse opinions in developing workplace structures and approaches.

3. **Promote good manners.** Simple, but true. Good manners are clear markers of your respect for someone. When in doubt, ask people how they want to be treated.
4. **Let people work differently.** Whenever possible, let employees work in ways they feel comfortable. In a culture of mutual respect, managers should consider encouraging their employees to find the approach that suits them best.
5. **Maintain boundaries.** It's important to know where the boundaries lie between sharing your experiences and views, on the one hand, and being confrontational, disrespectful, or causing embarrassment on the other. Think carefully about what's useful or necessary to share at work and be alert to any particular sensitive topics.
6. **Be a role model.** Whatever level you're at, your words and actions can influence others, so it's important to lead by example. Work on your self-awareness and manage your own biases, so that you don't unintentionally favor people who you feel a close affinity with. Model the accepting, inclusive, and welcoming attitudes and behaviors that you want to see other people adopt.

You don't have to do it alone. Your Assistance Program is here to help. Services are free, confidential, and available to you and your family members. You can access the EAP 24/7 by calling 855-775-4357 or [visit online](#).