Politics in the Workplace

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Prefer work to be a “Politics-Free” zone
- Insight Global, 2022

Talk about Politics at work
- Zety, 2023

85%

83%
Values and Politics
3 Part Plan

**PREVENT**
Add practices to your routine that increase connectedness, mutual respect, and understanding

**PREPARE**
Train Managers on laws, expectations and ways to handle
Build “muscle memory” through practice of the techniques

**RESPOND**
Focus on Behavior
Stay Neutral
Discipline Fairly
Prevent

Communicate Policies
Anticipate Conflict
Increase Respect and Understanding
- Model
- Expect
- Coach
- Create Routines that Build
20 Questions

**Objective:** Build connectedness, respect, and empathy through sharing.

**Debrief:** How did this activity feel? Did anything surprise you? Do you feel a different sense of safety at your table?
Prepare

Train Managers
- Laws: Protected Activities
- Expectations of their Role
- Ways to Handle: Re-directing Conversations, De-escalation, Conflict Resolution, Reflective Listening

Practice
Reflective Listening

**Attitude...**
Willingness to temporarily set aside your own perceptions, thoughts and feelings
Attempt to understand the perceptions, thoughts and feelings of someone else
A mindset of: “I want to understand your point of view as fully as I can”

**Skill...**
Restate the message of the speaker in such a way that they feel understood
Use reflective listening statements: “It sounds like you feel X because Y”

**Results in...**
The speaker feels safe, heard, and respected
The speaker is more likely to be willing to express their true feelings/opinions about the topic
The listener gets to fully understand the speaker, even if they don’t agree
The listener gets to demonstrate their understanding, helping the speaker to feel more fully heard
Reflective Listening

1. OPENING
   - It sounds like...
   - It seems as if...
   - What I hear you saying is...
   - I get a sense that...
   - If feels as though...
   - Help me to understand...
   - I imagine you might feel...
   - You’re having trouble with...
   - Can I just check? Are you saying...

2. FEELING
   - Annoyed...
   - Angry...
   - Worried..
   - Upset...
   - Afraid...
   - Frustrated...
   - Lonely/Isolated...
   - Misunderstood...
   - Conflicted...

3. TRIGGER
   - About...
   - When...
   - Because...
Reflective Listening Role-Play

Purpose: Listen to understand the underlying emotion and name it.

Instructions:
1. In pairs or triad: identify speaker, listener, observer
2. Speaker: share a work-related challenge or idea (2 min)
3. Listener: listen without interrupting, then respond with a reflective listening statement (1 min)
4. Observer: give the listener feedback on their reflective listening skills – note body language, focus, tone, non-verbal, and statement
Respond

Focus on Behavior
• Stay Neutral
• Intervene Early
• Discipline Fairly

We respect diversity of opinion, and we value what everyone brings to this organization. But we also tie it back to the fact that if behavior does not follow our policies, there will be accountability.
Stay Neutral

Set your own beliefs aside
Ensure Managers can do so as well
Intervene Early

Pay attention to subtle signs of brewing political discord

Redirect to issues that impact work life, not personal life

Remind of CSU DE&I Values
Discipline Fairly

If necessary:
• Separate workers
• Call security/Send workers home
• Document, document, document
• Discuss with HR

What is the appropriate response?
• Discipline process
• Be consistent – no favoritism
Recap

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THANK YOU

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