

Toolbox Talk Details

Title	A10 - Fairness, inclusion and respect (Respect)
Reason	Everyone needs to be aware of what respect in the workplace means. Workplaces are more productive and healthier in an environment free from bullying and harassment.
Outline	This talk covers legal and contractual rights and responsibilities regarding dignity in the workplace and will raise awareness of the issues that can affect good working relationships.

Types of bullying

1. **Physical bullying** includes any physical contact that would hurt or injure a person.
2. **Verbal bullying** includes name-calling or making offensive remarks or jokes.
3. **Indirect bullying** includes spreading rumours or stories about someone, telling others about something that was told to you in private, and excluding others from groups.
4. **Social exclusion**, where victims are deliberately excluded from group activities.
5. **Intimidation**, where someone is pressured into doing what the bully wants against what they believe to be right.
6. **Hostile work environments**, created by a boss or co-worker whose actions, communication or behaviour make doing your job impossible. This means that the behaviour has altered the terms, conditions and/or reasonable expectations of a comfortable work environment for employees (that is, any reasonable person would find the conduct abusive).
7. **Cyber-bullying** uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an internet service or mobile technologies (such as email, online forums, social networking, instant messaging, web pages or SMS (text messaging)) with the intention of harming another person.
8. It is also bullying if you feel hurt because of things said about your ethnic background, religious faith or beliefs, sex, sexuality, disability, educational needs, appearance or family issues.

Effects of bullying and harassment

1. On the recipient can include low self-esteem, antisocial behaviour, illness (such as stress, rashes and insomnia), reluctance to return to work, absenteeism, anxiety, depression and possible suicidal tendencies.
2. At the workplace can include time wasted dealing with negative behaviour and absenteeism, can affect recruitment and winning future jobs, and can create a hostile working environment.
3. The effects of bullying and harassment could give the company a bad reputation and put off potential new workers and future customers.

What does respect mean?

1. Respect is ensuring your behaviour towards teams, colleagues, clients or contactors is appropriate and does not cause offence.
2. It is about treating people how you would expect to be treated and maintaining an environment where individual differences are respected.
3. Most companies will have a policy setting out these standards of behaviour and will link them to their discipline and grievance procedures. Some are referred to as dignity and respect, while others may be known as anti-bullying and harassment policies.

What are harassment and bullying?

1. **Harassment** is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women – any actions or comments that are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.
2. **Bullying** is the deliberate action or behaviour directed towards another person that has the effect of causing pain and distress to that person.
3. Bullying or harassment can take many forms. It may be in a one-to-one situation or involve groups of people. Whatever the form of harassment, it will be unwanted behaviour that is unwelcome and unpleasant.

Harassment and the Equality Act – Protected characteristics

1. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act and applies to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). Harassment complaints related to these characteristics can be heard at an employment tribunal, and any that are upheld can lead to the harasser being held personally liable, as well as the company.
2. Most company anti-bullying and harassment policies apply to any form of harassment, whether related to a protected characteristic or not, and penalties for any breaches of the policy can be imposed internally through the company's disciplinary procedures.
3. The Equality Act allows employees to complain of behaviour that they find offensive, even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant protected characteristic themselves.
4. Sexual harassment is one of the most common forms of harassment and is specifically outlawed by the Equality Act.
5. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception (if others think someone possesses a particular protected characteristic) and association (if they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic (such as being a family member or friend)).

Revision Date	Assessed By	Signature
January 2021	Michael Reddan	