

Employee Assistance of the Pacific



Aloha and Respect at Work

Your daily actions signal to others the level of personal respect that you hold for them. Understanding that what you do matters can increase your personal awareness and give you more control over the direct, indirect, or unspoken signals you send to others. It can lead you to make improvements in your relationships and increase your happiness at work. This awareness is the key to minimizing strife and hostility, and to increasing the courtesy and mutual respect all of us want from each other.

Big Impacts from Small Stuff

The following are some common behaviors often considered disrespectful. Do you practice any of them? Have you been on the receiving end of some? You may notice some missing that you have experienced. Use the list to help you consider your role in helping maintain a respectful workplace.

- Communication:** Interrupting others while they are speaking; cutting someone off before he or she has finished expressing a thought; neglecting to say please and thank you; purposely avoiding an obvious moment to offer a compliment, to say good morning, etc.; criticizing someone in front of peers; using profanity to “be yourself” and making this other people’s problem if they don’t like it.

- Differences:** Participating in intolerant behavior or using language associated with racial, sexual, age-related, or other human differences that offends or contributes to a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment.

- Interpersonal:** Behaving in a way that invalidates someone else’s successes; spreading rumors, or not correcting rumors; talking about someone behind his or her back or taking credit for someone else’s work; criticizing a coworker’s character to another worker who has not formulated a firsthand opinion; labeling coworkers with personality or character traits you don’t like; habitually using cynical language or sarcasm; not sharing in the work.

- Big Issues:** Promoting religious and political views that others may not want to hear; repeating catastrophic and “doomsday” predictions about the company, the country, the world that create an atmosphere of anxiety for others. Some comments may not be directed specifically at one person and still be seen as disrespectful.

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- Privacy:** Asking personal questions of someone you do not know well; reading another person’s mail; peering at someone’s computer screen.

- **Boundaries:** Taking things from another person’s desk; not returning loaned books, supplies, or other property; standing too close or staring at another person; not stopping offensive behaviors after a reasonable request.

- Environmental:** Not cleaning up after yourself in the staff kitchen; having a loud conversation or playing loud music; keeping your work area unsightly, overly dirty, or dusty; displaying visual objects in your workspace that offend others or contrast heavily with what most people consider good taste or appropriate; using the last of something and not replacing it—food, supplies, toilet paper.



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Aloha and Respect at Work (Continued)

Your Respectful Workplace

Being respectful of others isn't about "censorship" or "walking on egg shells." It's about awareness so you can practice self-discipline—knowing the powerful impact we all have on each other and knowing that each person has a vital role in creating the type of workplace that we all want to share.



Thoughts on Character

- ◆ Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny. – **Unknown**
- ◆ Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power – **Abraham Lincoln**
- ◆ Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are. – **John Wooden**
- ◆ Men show their character in nothing more clearly than what they think laughable. - **Goethe**
- ◆ Character isn't something you were born with and can't change, like your fingerprints. It's something you weren't born with and must take responsibility for forming. – **Jim Rohn**

A Sweet Idea

Tired of counting to ten when you want to control your temper? Try this sweet suggestion from W. Doyle Gentry, PhD, author of *Anger Management for Dummies*.

The next time you find yourself angry, suck on a lifesaver until it's all gone before you respond in anger.

- ◆ This technique buys you some time to formulate a response, rather than just reacting. It takes about five minutes.
- ◆ It is an incompatible response to speaking out in anger.
- ◆ It takes advantage of the link between the sucking reflex and achieving a state of calm.
- ◆ It involves the ingestion of something sweet which the brain associates with pleasure, which is the opposite of anger.
- ◆ Patiently sucking a lifesaver runs counter to aggressive (biting, chewing) tendencies that are more associated with anger.



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..is a short term confidential counseling service, provided to you by your employer, that can assist in identifying and resolving issues that may be interfering with your job or personal life. Our experienced counselors are available across the Islands and can be contacted by phoning or emailing our Honolulu office.