

In a diverse workplace, respectful communication comes down to employees *caring* about the way they come across and *committing* to being respectful towards others. Here are:

5 STEPS TO RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

1. CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

Where there is diversity, there are varying cultures and generations – each with their own communication styles and habits. When you write or speak, take the time to consider how your audience would like to be addressed.

So go from this...

Hey Jules!
What's up with the hair?

...to this

Good morning, Julia.
Looks like you have a new hairdo.

2. TALK WITH SOMEONE INSTEAD OF ABOUT THEM

No one wants to be the victim of gossip, or have others complain about them behind their back. If you're upset about something, don't just stew about it – respectfully bring it to the attention of the person with whom you are upset.

So go from this...

Sam talks so loud; he drives me nuts!

...to this

Sam, can I talk to you for a minute? It's hard for me to concentrate when you...

3. CONFIRM YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT SOMEONE IS SAYING

Seeking clarity is the best way to avoid a misunderstanding. Listen actively to others and, when they're done speaking, feedback what you've heard.

So go from this...

I'm not sure what she meant. I'll just start working on it and hope I guessed right.

...to this

Seena, I THINK what you're asking me to do is summarize our data for the last 18 months. Is that accurate?

4. KNOW THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT'S APPROPRIATE TO TALK ABOUT

We all have boundaries. Notice how others respond to what you say or do, and alter your course if it is making people uncomfortable.

So go from this...

Josh, did you HAVE to complain to Sue about me sharing stories from my crazy college days?

...to this

Josh, I didn't realize that some of my stories make you uncomfortable. I apologize.

5. COMMUNICATE RESPECTFULLY DURING DISAGREEMENTS

Arguments happen in any workplace. When they do, show respect by toning things down, listening to the other side, and looking for a solution.

So go from this...

You WOULD say that Lisa! You NEVER think about anyone but yourself.

...to this

I know you're just trying to do your job. But I'm trying to do mine, too. There has to be some common ground.