

#9182

WORKPLACE MANNERS & BOUNDARIES, PART 1: CROSSING THE LINE

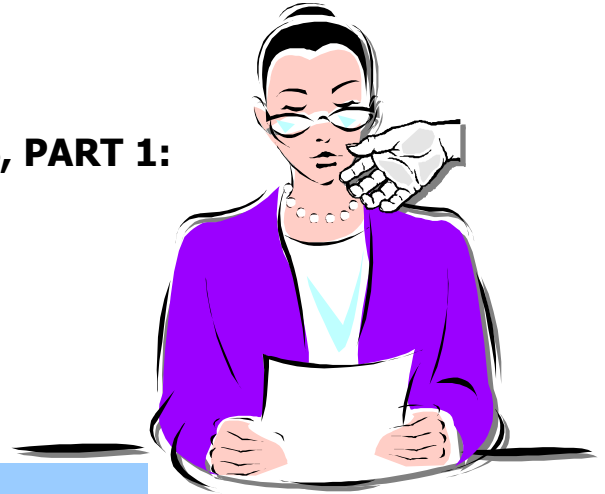
JAMES STANFIELD COMPANY, INC.

2001

Grade Levels: 10-13+

20 minutes

2 Instructional Graphics Enclosed



DESCRIPTION

Being friendly enhances work performance, but workers need to be aware of social boundaries. Skits show flirting, sexual harassment, and sharing personal problems. Inappropriate social behavior on the job can lead to dismissal.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Life Work

- Standard: Displays reliability and a basic work ethic
 - Benchmark: Chooses ethical courses of action
 - Benchmark: Uses appropriate language in work situations
 - Benchmark: Does not bring personal problems into work

Subject Area: Working With Others

- Standard: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills
 - Benchmark: Uses nonverbal communication such as eye contact, body position, voice tone effectively

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To illustrate that being casually friendly to coworkers while observing social boundaries promotes a healthy work environment.
2. To identify violations of social boundaries and code of friendliness.
3. To model a professional, friendly, impersonal manner in the workplace.
4. To observe that flirting on the job is unprofessional and too personal.
5. To identify flirtatious behaviors.
6. To emphasize that sexual harassment in the workplace is grounds for firing.
7. To identify appropriate and inappropriate topics for the workplace.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This program contains several segments, which focus on various workplace behaviors.

In the first segment of the video, it refers to social boundaries.

In almost every job you'll have, there will be coworkers. These will be people with whom you'll spend most of your days, and being on pleasant terms can make the difference between

job failure and success. In this segment, we'll see examples of "too rude" and "too personal" behavior by Hector and of casual, friendly behavior by Len.

In the second segment, it refers to the dangers of being a flirt.

Look at how flirting on the job is a type of boundary violation that can cause problems on the job.

In the third segment, it portrays examples of sexual harassment.

In the fourth segment, it discusses being too personal on the job, such as when you're telling things you would only tell a good friend or family member.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What did Hector do that was rude to his coworkers?
2. What did Hector do that was personally invasive to his coworkers?
3. How will Hector's boundary breakers affect his job survival?
4. When the boss gets reports of Hector's behavior, what will he assume?
5. How will Len's friendly behavior promote his job survival?
6. When the boss gets reports of Len's pleasantness, what will he assume?
7. What does Molly do that can be interpreted as flirtatious?
8. How does Aaron seem to feel about Molly's behavior?
9. What can be the consequences to Molly of flirtatious behavior?
10. What were these guys doing to Molly that could be considered sexual harassment?
11. What did the boss do when Molly reported harassment?
12. What are some of the consequences to men who are accused of sexually harassing a coworker?
13. What topics were brought up that were too personal?
14. What questions were asked that were inappropriate?
15. How is her "too personal" conversation threatening her job survival?
16. How did Heather keep her conversation casual, impersonal and appropriate the second time around?
17. How does keeping her conversation appropriate promote her job survival?

Applications and Activities

1. Read to the class: "This guy is a bull in a china shop. To come into a workplace and try to be chummy and everybody's friend, to disrespect everybody? Come on! That might work at home, it might work with your buddies, but you're at a workplace. The workplace is not like a house; it's not like being out there with your buddies. It's a formal place. Let me give you some advice. In the first 90 days, keep a low profile."
Include in your discussion the fact that different social rules apply to the workplace than what they're used to at home or with their friends.
2. Break up the class into groups of two or three. Ask students to develop skits that show social interaction at work, i.e., being rude vs. friendly (including nonverbal facial expressions, tone of voice and body language) and keeping vs. invading social boundaries ("in your face" behaviors and appropriate and inappropriate conversation). Complete the "A Pain or a Pleasure" graphic. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)

3. Divide the class into groups of four or five. Ask students to give five examples of appropriate and inappropriate topics of conversation in the workplace. Discuss group findings as a class. Complete the "Better Safe Than Sorry" graphic. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)
4. Read to class: "Don't be a flirt. At best, I'm going to see you as a major distraction. At worst, I'm going to see you as a sexual harassment lawsuit. And I don't want either of them."
Include in your discussion a consideration of the difficulties of assembling a flashlight under various high-stress conditions.
5. Set up a workbench (table) in front of the class. Ask a male student to come up and sit down and sort some miscellaneous items (papers, books, etc.). Ask female students to one by one sit next to him and show one example of a "flirt" (nonverbal as well as verbal examples should be given). Discuss why their behavior is not in the best interest of both workers.
6. Read to class: "Okay, you guys, behavior like that is committing career suicide. Not only do you put this company and myself in a liable situation, but also you're really asking for yourselves to be fired. And the problem with being fired under sexual harassment is that it will permanently go on your record and will follow you for the rest of your life. So cut it out."
In your discussion with students, tell them: Let's go one step beyond cutting it out—don't do it to begin with.
7. Ask the girls to break up into small groups and make a list of behaviors and words that they feel are sexually harassing. Ask the boys in the class to do the same thing. Compare lists.
8. Read to the class: "Here's another employee who forgot to leave her personal problems in the parking lot or at home. Your boss isn't there to be your psychiatrist. Your boss isn't there to be your best friend. They're there to direct you and motivate you to do a good job. So don't cross the line. The moment you cross the line, you jeopardize your position at the company. Your boss is going to wonder why somebody's getting so personal so fast and may take it the wrong way."
During your discussion, ask your students what "taking it the wrong way" would mean under the circumstances portrayed in the video.
9. Brainstorm with your class some examples of appropriate and inappropriate workplace conversational topics. Make a bulletin board showing the Top Five things not to talk about at work and the Top Five topics that are okay.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Workplace Manners & Boundaries, Part 2: Workplace Conduct #9183
- Workplace Manners & Boundaries, Part 3: Workplace Disposition #9184





World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and “kid safe” sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **CUES**

http://www.cues.org/fyi/n_103101.htm

This article explains that, based on a poll, there has been a decline in workplace manners. Offers some courtesy tips one can use in the workplace.

- **FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-sex.html>

From the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, lists what constitutes sexual harassment.

- **ABOUT.COM**

<http://www.about.com>

Search this directory engine for “workplace manners” and be led to several articles and Web links.

INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS

- A PAIN OR A PLEASURE
- BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

Captioned Media Program



A Pain or a Pleasure?



For job survival, it is important to be aware of personal space and boundaries. If you respect people's personal space, your boss and coworkers are more likely see you as a pleasure to be around; however, if you get too close and "touchy," they are likely to see you as a pain!

Directions: Read the following scenarios. Circle "a pain" if the employees cross personal boundaries, or circle "a pleasure" if they are respective of others' space.

1. *a pain* *a pleasure* Dave shows Donna a picture of his new baby.
2. *a pain* *a pleasure* Tanya greets Jane by tickling her.
3. *a pain* *a pleasure* Bo greets Kay each day with a lung-crushing bear hug.
4. *a pain* *a pleasure* Eric shoots staples at Nancy from across the room.
5. *a pain* *a pleasure* At the end of the day, Vera wishes everyone a good night.
6. *a pain* *a pleasure* Jose introduces himself and shakes hands with customers.
7. *a pain* *a pleasure* Haley leans on Michelle's shoulder as she types a paper.
8. *a pain* *a pleasure* Penny makes a card for Brent, whose uncle just passed away.
9. *a pain* *a pleasure* Justin refers to the women in the office as "the babes."
10. *a pain* *a pleasure* Jay holds the door open so Mark can push his wheelchair through.
11. *a pain* *a pleasure* Emma often swears when she talks with her coworkers.
12. *a pain* *a pleasure* Mitch greets Zack by punching him in the arm.

Captioned Media Program



Better Safe Than Sorry!

Casual small talk can make a workplace pleasant and enjoyable, but being nosy or too personal with questions can make others feel very uncomfortable or embarrassed. It's always better to stick to "safe" subjects than to pry and be "sorry" later!

Directions: Read the comments below. If it is appropriate for work, write SAFE on the line. If the topic is too personal, write SORRY on the line.

1. _____ "Good morning, Terri! Hey, I like your shoes."
2. _____ "Hey, nice shoes! Wow, you have sexy long legs!"
3. _____ "Is this a picture of your girlfriend, Austin?"
4. _____ "Austin, do you and your girlfriend have sex?"
5. _____ "Have you ever tried smoking pot?"
6. _____ "Have you ever tried water-skiing?"
7. _____ "Do you like Mexican food?"
8. _____ "Does Mexican food give you gas?"
9. _____ "I hope you go to the picnic, Katie. I can't wait to see you in a bikini."
10. _____ "Are you going to the company picnic on Saturday?"
11. _____ "Hey Bryan, how long have you worked here?"
12. _____ "Hey Bryan, how much do they pay you here?"