

HOW TO ACT IN THE WORKPLACE

(ADAPTED FROM THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR CAREER EDUCATION)

HOW TO TREAT PEOPLE

1. **Learn the names of people in the workplace.**

People know when you don't know their names and may think that you don't value them.

2. **Don't make value judgments on people's importance.**

3. **Treat your supervisor(s) and coworkers with courtesy.**

Do you show up on time and leave at the same time every day?

4. **Ask permission** to do things that are out of the ordinary. Make sure to ask permission instead of telling someone something. For example, "Is it okay to leave early tomorrow because I have a basketball game at 3:00?"

5. **Limit sharing things about your personal life and don't ask questions that are too personal.**

Is it possible that what you want to share may make your co-worker uncomfortable? If so that would be something that should not be shared on the job.

6. **Respect people's personal space.** This may be very different than your own.

COMMUNICATING

1. **Return phone calls and emails within a couple of days.** - even if only to say that you will respond at a later date.
2. **Emails at work should be professional.** They should not be treated like personal email.
3. **Emails should have a subject** so that you can find it later.
4. **Never say in an email anything you wouldn't say to someone's face.**

MEETINGS

1. **Don't arrive more than five minutes early**, as they may be prepping for your meeting.
2. **Don't arrive late...ever**. If you are going to be late, try to let someone know.
3. **When a meeting runs late** and you need to be somewhere else, always be prepared to explain where you need to be.
4. **Do not interrupt people**. This is a bad habit to start and a tough one to end.
5. **A meeting is not for confrontation**. Give people time and space outside of meetings to reflect on issues that need to be dealt with.

WORK SPACE

- **Keep the space professional** and neat with appropriate personal touches!
- **Respect others' space**. Don't just walk in; knock or make your presence gently known. Don't assume acknowledgement of your presence is an invitation to sit down; wait until you are invited to do so.
- **Don't interrupt people** on the phone, and don't try to communicate with them verbally or with sign language. You could damage an important phone call.
- **Limit personal calls**, especially if you work in a space that lacks a door.
- **Use your cell phone only in certain areas at certain times like break times**.
- **Food consumption should be done without mess** at appropriate break times.