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Getting Along With Others in the Workplace

I. Today's Workplace is a Melting Pot

- a. The workplace of today has changed drastically from the workplace of yesterday. Today there is great diversity in the workplace. People come to the workforce with varying backgrounds. We see differing ethnicity, race, religion, culture, and language. In addition, we have workers of various ages, not to mention gender difference, men and women working together in the workplace.
- b. We all *personally* bring different traits to the workplace. We all bring our talents and skills, different personalities, differing values, expectations, work ethics, preconceived ideas and prejudices.

II. The Benefits of a Harmonious Workplace

- a. Harmony in the workplace brings increased productivity.
- b. A harmonious workplace raises morale. When morale is high, people are inspired to achieve more.
- c. A harmonious workplace limits work stress and makes work more enjoyable! There is less absenteeism, less tardiness, less staff turnover.

III. Skills for Improving Interpersonal Relationships with Co-Workers:

Professionalism, Respect, Flexibility, Compromise, Cooperation, Communication!

- a. You are a professional. All your actions and interactions should represent the professional you truly are!
- b. Respect, Respect, Respect.....Be respectful in all your interactions at work.
- c. Be open minded. Respect that your co-worker may do things differently, but that doesn't mean their way is wrong.
- d. Cooperate and/or compromise when necessary.
- e. Communicate effectively and professionally. Good communication can improve all relationships.

IV. Resolve Conflicts Promptly.

- a. If a problem arises, you are usually better to address it as soon as possible, taking a direct approach.
- b. Seek assistance if necessary. Despite all your efforts, conflicts are often difficult to resolve, so if necessary go to your supervisor.

V. Harassment and Bullying: Not acceptable in the Workplace!

- a. Harassment can be defined, in its simplest form, as any improper conduct by any individual, that is directed at and offensive to another person or persons in the workplace. But keep in mind that it DOES NOT arise to a level of harassment until someone complains about it.
- b. Harassment and bullying are closely related. Bullying takes it a step above and beyond. Bullying often involves intimidation and humiliation.
- c. Both harassment and bullying have negative effects on individuals and the workplace environment. The individual who is being harassed and/or bullied may suffer from anxiety, reactive depression, loss of self esteem and self confidence. It can also evolve to include physical ailments caused by increased stress. In addition, there are negative effects on the work environment itself, which

- d. includes loss of morale, reduced productivity, increased use of sick leave, staff turnover, and possible legal ramifications.
 - e. There can be legal liabilities to both the individual who is committing the harassment and/or bullying, and to the employer (corporation) as well. The harasser/person who is doing the bullying can be held liable, both CRIMINALLY and/or CIVILLY, depending on what actions have taken place. In addition, the employer or corporation can be held liable if they don't have a system in place that handles these situations or if he or she knew of the situation or should have known of the situation and didn't take all appropriate measures to make the harassment/bullying stop and punish the person who committed the offenses. The employer needs to take "immediate, remedial action".
- VI. Conclusion:** Recognize the importance of getting along with others in the workplace. A harmonious workplace does wonder in helping the organization run smoothly. The better we get along with others and work as a team, the easier it is to achieve our common goal: to provide the best services we possibly can to the parents, families and children we service!