

## Network to Work Meeting

August 2018

### RESOURCE HANDOUT #3 – *WORKPLACE WELLNESS*

#### Steps For Having An Effective, Assertive Conversation

1. **Posture:** Make sure your body reflects confidence: stand up straight, look people in the eye, and relax.
2. **Tone of voice:** Use a firm, but pleasant, tone.

**Don't assume:** Don't assume you know what the other person's motives are, especially if you think they're negative.

3. **State the facts:** Practice stating the real issue in one or two non-emotional, factual, nonjudgmental sentences. Be accurate (don't judge or exaggerate) about the effects of this behavior.
  - a. Use I messages:
    - i. Saying "*I haven't seen . . .*" and "*I'm feeling . . .*" puts the focus on how you feel and how you are affected by the behavior. It shows that you are taking ownership of your reactions without attacking the other person. The other person should be better able to take in your point of view.
    - ii. Saying "*you're trying to . . .*", "*you have purposely*", and "*you are . . .*" casts blame on the other, making him or her feel under attack and defensive.
4. **Stop talking:** Make your initial statement and allow room for a response.
5. **Avoid arguing:**

Confrontation does not mean fight or proving one right or wrong. It means that you state what you have say and listen to what the other person has to say. Many times it actually ends right there.
6. **Know what you want:** Figure out the resolution you want before the confrontation.
7. **Stay on track.** Keep focused on the real issue of the confrontation and move the conversation toward the resolution you seek.

**Putting it together.** This is what an ideal conversation would look like:

**Scenario:**

You have been working with your colleague, Ryan, for a month on a project to develop new office procedures. You are upset because you don't think he's given your boss any idea about your contributions but instead is trying to take all the credit. This makes you feel angry, frustrated, disrespected, and even a little concerned for your job. In the face of all these emotions, you are struggling with how to confront Ryan to discuss this with him.

- **You say:** *"It looks as if I played no role in the project to develop new office procedures. I haven't seen my name anywhere on any draft documents or in your emails, nor have I been given credit anywhere that I can see. I'm feeling disrespected and disregarded."*
- **You then shut up.**
- **Ryan will respond however he chooses** – possibly by listening to understand, possibly by being defensive, arguing, and making accusations.
- **You avoid arguing and stay focused on your desired outcome. You say:**
  - *"I would appreciate if we use both of our names on any documentation, and include each other in all of the correspondence about the project."*
- **Together:** you negotiate a resolution. If Ryan is unwilling, you walk away. You've asserted yourself and said what needed to be said.
- **If necessary, you excuse yourself and walk away.**