Toolbox Talk:

Fairness Inclusion and Respect: Respect

Prepare: Location? Distractions? Talk aids?

Reason: Awareness of what respect in the workplace means.

Why: Workplaces are more productive and healthy in an environment free from bullying and harassment.

Outline: The talk will cover legal and contractual rights and responsibilities covering dignity in the workplace. It will raise awareness of the issues which can affect good working relationships.

What does Respect mean?

Respect is ensuring your behaviour towards teams, colleagues, clients or contacts is appropriate and does not cause offence. It's about treating people how you would expect to be treated and maintaining an environment where individual differences are respected.

Most companies will have a policy setting out these standards of behaviour and will link them to their discipline and grievance procedures. Some are called Dignity and Respect others may call them Anti - Bullying and Harassment policies.

What are harassment and bullying?

1. **Harassment:** is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women, any actions or comments which are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.
2. **Bullying:** is the deliberate action or behaviour directed towards another person that has the effect of causing pain and distress to the victim.
3. **Bullying or harassment**: can take many forms; it may be by a one to one situation or involve groups of people. Whatever the form of harassment, it will be unwanted behaviour which is unwelcome and unpleasant.

Q. What examples can you give of bullying or harassing behaviour that you have seen or experienced?

Harassment and the Equality Act 2010 – Protected Characteristics

1. Most company anti-bullying and harassment policies apply to any form of harassment whether related to a personal characteristic or not and penalties for any breeches of the policy can be imposed internally through the company's disciplinary procedures.

2. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 and applies to the protected characteristics listed below. Harassment complaints related to these characteristics can be heard at an Employment Tribunal, and any upheld can lead to the individual being held personally liable as well as the company.
3. Protected Characteristics:
    - Age
    - Disability
    - Gender reassignment
    - Race
    - Religion or belief
    - Sex
    - Sexual orientation
4. The Equality Act 2010 does not specifically prohibit harassment relating to Pregnancy and Maternity and Marriage and Civil Partnership. However, individuals subjected to detriment as a result of Pregnancy and Maternity or Marriage and Civil Partnership may be protected through other protected characteristics e.g. Sex or Sexual Orientation.
5. The Equality Act 2010 allows employees to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant personal characteristic themselves.
6. Sexual harassment is one of the most common forms of harassment and is specifically outlawed by the Equality Act 2010.
7. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception (if others think someone possesses a particular protected characteristic) and association (if they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic e.g. family member or friend).

Q. Can you think of any other characteristics that might be covered by company policies and disciplinary procedures?

Q. What would you do if you were being harassed?

Q. Why do you think it is important to challenge bullying and harassing behaviour?

Q. What do you think it may feel like to be on the receiving end of bullying and/or harassing behaviour?

Types of Bullying

Bullying takes on many different forms:

- **Physical bullying:** includes any physical contact that would hurt or injure a person.
- **Verbal bullying:** name-calling, making offensive remarks or jokes.

- **Indirect bullying:** includes spreading rumours or stories about someone, telling others about something that was told to you in private, and excluding others from groups.
- **Social exclusion:** where victims are deliberately excluded from group activity.
- **Intimidation:** where someone is pressured into doing what the bully wants against what they believe to be right.
- **Cyber-bullying:** this uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an Internet service or mobile technologies such as “e-mail, chat room discussion groups, social networking, instant messaging, web pages or SMS (text messaging)” with the intention of harming another person.

It is bullying...

It is also bullying if you feel hurt because of things said about your ethnic background, religious faith or beliefs, sex, sexuality, disability, educational needs, appearance or family issues.

Effects of Bullying and Harassment

On the recipient:

- Low self esteem
- Antisocial behaviour
- Illness – stress / rashes / insomnia
- Reluctance to return to work
- Absenteeism
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Possible suicidal tendencies

At the Workplace:

- Time wasted dealing with negative behaviour and absenteeism
- Possible affect winning future jobs
- Negative reputation

The effects of bullying could give a bad reputation for potential new workers and future customers.

Q. Do you have any questions for me?