

# Respectful Communication

## AVOID ASSUMPTIONS



When thinking about issues of diversity and interacting with others, check in with yourself by asking: Am I missing any part of the picture? What do I *think* I know, and what do I *actually* know?

## AVOID SPOKESPERSON SYNDROME



Use “I” language. If asked, speak from personal experience and not as the representative of an entire group. Be careful that you don’t ask someone to become a spokesperson.

## PLATINUM RULE



Many people know the Golden Rule – treat others as you would like to be treated. It’s also important to treat others the way they want to be treated.

## BE CURIOUS AND ASK RESPECTFULLY



The fear of inadvertently offending someone can become a barrier to asking the necessary questions. You might say something like, “*If you have a few minutes today, I’d love to learn more about your thoughts on \_\_\_\_\_.*” This approach communicates respect and that you are open to understanding new perspectives.

## LISTEN ACTIVELY



If you are mentally constructing what to say next while someone is still speaking, that signifies that you have stopped listening actively.

## DEBUNK STEREOTYPES



Stereotypes can be the worst culprit in creating conflicts and misunderstandings. Avoid words such as “all”, “always”, “never”, “them”, and phrases like, “those people”.

## ADDRESS BEHAVIOR, NOT BELIEF



All individuals are free to *believe* whatever it is that they believe. However, it’s critical that all employees *behave* respectfully toward one another in the workplace.

## ENCOURAGE LEARNING



Learn from every encounter, and use those insights to expand your knowledge base.

## ACKNOWLEDGE AND APOLOGIZE FOR MISTAKES



Mistakes in communication are learning opportunities that deepen our understanding of one another. Mistakes must first be acknowledged and then you take ownership and genuinely apologize for the mistake made.