Building/Keeping Professional and Respectful Relationships with Co-Workers/Students

Intent vs. Impact

Physical Boundaries - We all have an amount of physical space we need around us to feel comfortable – our “comfort zone”.

- This is different for each person, and varies from culture to culture.
- Stepping/leaning into someone’s physical space can feel threatening, sexual or just annoying.
- Sitting too close and standing too close need to be self-monitored but physical touching has to be avoided. Even some non-verbal gestures can be uncomfortable (staring or smiling too much, raised eyebrows, winking, etc.)

Interpersonal Boundaries – Includes conversations, emails, and texting interactions with students and co-workers and managers in the work place.

- Avoid becoming personally involved in their life as well as any comments that could be interpreted as sexual or personal (non-work related).
- Be aware of power relationships at work and the impact that may have.
- Limit communication to only during office hours and not on their personal time and keep it work-related.
- Sharing private or personal information about yourself or your interests – makes others uncomfortable.
- Friendly/cordial relationships can exist without getting into your personal life or theirs.
- Caution with choice of words or slang as you don’t know how it is going to be perceived.
- Avoid one-on-one social activities.

It is typically repeated/reinforced actions that bring on the uncomfortable reaction.