



PROGRAM SUPPORT NOTES

Playing Your Part 2 Workplace Relationships

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For Teachers

Introduction

This program looks at effective workplace relationships. When in the workplace, getting along with others will make work more enjoyable and less stressful. Here we explore how you can play your part in building such relationships with others.

The program uses a case study of a simulated workplace where different issues related to workplace relationships come up, and shows how they are dealt with. Key concepts covered include communication skills, the ability to identify and solve problems and the need to build trust and respect with colleagues.

Timeline

00:00:00	Developing effective workplace relationships
00:07:03	Contributing to workplace activities
00:12:54	Dealing effectively with issues, problems and conflict
00:19:22	Credits
00:20:13	End program

Related Titles

Playing Your Part 1 - Diversity in the Workplace
Workplace Training – Planning, Organising and facilitating
Meeting Management Challengers 1
Meeting Management Challengers 2

Recommended Resources

- <http://www.careernav.com.au/life-skills/key-skills>
- <http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/learning/diversity/roles/c-working.html>
- <http://www.ceonline.com.au/business/teamwork.shtml>
- http://humanresources.about.com/od/involvementteams/a/twelve_tip_team.htm
- <http://www.effectivemeetings.com/teams/teamwork/effective.asp>

Student Worksheet

Initiate Prior Learning

1. Communication is a key aspect of workplace relationships. Find out the definitions for 'communication' and 'relationships'. What common elements are there?

2. Explain why good workplace relationships make the work more enjoyable?

3. Think of a group of people that you know (it may be classmates, a social group or a workplace group). List the different personalities in the group and explore the different ways they work together with others.

4. Discuss how you think workplace relationships can be improved. What skills and abilities might be needed?

Active Viewing Guide

Developing effective workplace relationships

1. As you watch the team working together, make notes on each of the team members and some of the characteristics they show when working with others?

Team member	Characteristics shown when working with others
Dennis	
Nasim	
Stella	
Heather	
Andre	
Kevin	
Sam	

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2. Dennis and his team are working on the implementation of a new CRM system. What does CRM mean?

3. Dennis thinks that the reason his team is a 'cohesive and productive unit' is because of his good management.

a) What role do you think management plays in effective workplace relationships?

b) How important is this role? Explain your answer.

4. Reflect on the first team meeting:

a) How do you think Dennis handled the first meeting?

b) What do you think he did right or wrong?

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c) What suggestions would you give him to improve?

5. What is required for effective workplace relationships? Given examples from the program.

Contributing to workplace activities

6. How does Heather stop things getting out of hand when her team are discussing documentation?

7. What positive outcomes are there from the meeting between Dennis, Kevin and Sam?

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8. How can team members contribute to workplace activities?

Dealing effectively with issues, problems and conflict

9. Heather asks to speak to Dennis;

a) Why does Heather speak to Dennis?

b) Do you think Heather should have done so, or should she have kept quiet about the issues?
Why or why not?

10.a). what role does Nasim play when speaking with Andre and Stella?

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b) What do you think of the way she handled the awkward situation of having both Andre and Stella confide in her?

11. How can you deal effectively with issues that arise in the workplace?

Extension Activities

1. Using the notes you made during the program on the individuals portrayed in the program, make a chart that shows the workplace relationships between them. You might like to think about questions such as: What issues do certain individuals have working together? What characteristics of each individual might be causing these issues? What characteristics do certain individuals have that making working with others easier?
2. For each of the individuals, analyse their strengths and weaknesses in relating to others.
3. Stella and Andre had different personalities and communication styles. If each came to you for advice, what constructive advice would you give each of them on how to deal with each other? Role play this with two others playing the roles of Stella and Andre coming to see you.
4. There was potential for many conflicts between Kevin and Sam, due to their age differences. Do some research and come up with some suggestions about how older workers can effectively communicate with their younger colleagues, and also how younger workers can effectively communicate with their older colleagues.
5. Explain how important you think it is to have effective workplace relationships.

Suggested Student Responses

Initiate Prior Learning

1. Communication is a key aspect of workplace relationships. Find out the definitions for 'communication' and 'relationships'. What common elements are there?
Answers will vary, but the common thread is that people are involved with both aspects.
2. Is it true that good workplace relationships make the work more enjoyable? Explain why this is the case.
Answers will vary. In general, it is true, but the reasons why will depend on the individuals own viewpoints and experiences.
3. Think of a group of people that you know (it may be classmates, a social group or a workplace group). List the different personalities in the group and explore the different ways they work together with others.
Answers will vary depending on the group selected.
4. Discuss how you think workplace relationships can be improved. What skills and abilities might be needed?
Answers will vary but may include: good communication, openness to new ideas, sensitivity to other people's communication styles and considering others' viewpoints.

Active Viewing Guide

Developing effective workplace relationships

1. As you watch the team working together, make notes on each of the team members and some of the characteristics they show when working with others?
Answers will vary. This activity is continued in the extension activities, so responses should include some notes on each team member, if possible identifying some helpful and some unhelpful behaviours.
2. Dennis and his team are working on the implementation of a new CRM system. What does CRM mean?
CRM stands for ‘Customer Relationship Management’
3. Dennis thinks that the reason his team is a ‘cohesive and productive unit’ is because of his good management.
 - a) What role do you think management plays in effective workplace relationships?
Answers will vary but may include: good leadership and clearly defined direction for team to follow and clear expectations of each individual’s role, good rapport with team members, effective communications skills, including good listening skills.
 - b) How important is this role? Explain your answer.
Answers will vary but may include reference to the experience level of the team and how long they’ve been working together (i.e. more experienced and the role of management might be less crucial). The role of the manager might be seen as quite important in setting up a new and/or inexperienced team.
4. Reflect on the first team meeting:
 - a) How do you think Dennis handled the first meeting?
Answers will vary, but may include: Dennis could have been clearer in setting goals for the meeting.
 - b) What do you think he did right or wrong?
Answers will vary.
 - c) What suggestions would you give him to improve?
Answers will vary.
5. What is required for effective workplace relationships? Given examples from the program
Answers will vary but may include:
 - teamwork
 - being focussed on goals
 - understanding different responsibilities
 - considering different constraints
 - communicating clearly
 - providing feedback

Contributing to workplace activities

6. How does Heather stop things getting out of hand when her team are discussing documentation?
By steering them away from what happened in the past and suggesting they have a break.

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7. What positive outcomes are there from the meeting between Dennis, Kevin and Sam?

Answers will vary but would include:

They are all able to talk calmly to one another

There are positive suggestions made

Training and development opportunities are identified and addressed

There is encouragement to continue to support one another

8. How can team members contribute to workplace activities?

Answers will vary but may include:

- **all should contribute**
- **support others in their activities**
- **provide assistance with the workload where possible**
- **give feedback**

Dealing effectively with issues, problems and conflict

9. Heather asks to speak to Dennis;

a) Why does Heather speak to Dennis?

There are issues between Stella and Andre.

b) Do you think Heather should have done so, or should she have kept quiet about the issues? Why or why not?

Yes, Heather should speak up in this situation. Because Andre doesn't report to her, the issue needs to be passed to her manager. She needs to speak up because the issue needs to be resolved so that the team can work better together and so that both Andre's and Stella's working environment isn't adversely affected by continuing friction between them.

10.a). What role does Nasim play when speaking with Andre and Stella?

Nasim speaks positively of the other person, highlighting good points.

b) What do you think of the way she handled the awkward situation of having both Andre and Stella confide in her?

Answers will vary but may include: it is a positive thing that Nasim doesn't take sides or bad mouth one colleague in front of another.

11. How can you deal effectively with issues that arise in the workplace?

Answers will vary but may include:

- **recognise that there will be issues**
- **identify the issues as they arise**
- **take constructive steps to address the issues**
- **get assistance from others**
- **refer to manager/supervisor if required**

Extension Activities

1. Using the notes you made during the program on the individuals portrayed in the program, make a chart that shows the workplace relationships between them. You might like to think about questions such as: What issues do certain individuals have working together? What characteristics of each individual might be causing these issues? What characteristics do certain individuals have that make working with others easier?

Answers will vary; the following can be used as a guide

- **Dennis (manager) - well intentioned, sometimes gets it right while at other times doesn't, constantly trying to improve workplace for better or worse. Is endearing, likeable, geeky, quirky**
- **Sam (oversees IT) – young, techno-savvy guy, a good grip on what he does but also predominantly focused on his own area, willing to help share his knowledge**
- **Nasim (admin and customer service assistant) - pleasant, shows a bit of (healthy) attitude sometimes**
- **Kevin (sales manager) – older worker, hesitant to embrace technology and change**
- **Stella (reception and customer service) – has a way of working that is challenging – she's intense, enthusiastic, officious and tries to be a leader, motivator, keep the morale up; well intended but a bit cheesy and overbearing**
- **Heather (office manager) – air of quiet wisdom, the one who seems to have the best insight into things**
- **Andre (marketing manager) – prefers working alone, can be anti-social at times, especially when under pressure**

2. For each of the individuals, analyse their strengths and weaknesses in relating to others.

Answers will vary; the above can be used as a guide

3. Stella and Andre had different personalities and communication styles. If each came to you for advice, what constructive advice would you give each of them on how to deal with each other? Role play this with two others playing the roles of Stella and Andre coming to see you.

Answers will vary. Responses should be positive and constructive, aiming to build effective relationships

4. There was potential for many conflicts between Kevin and Sam, due to their age differences. Do some research and come up with some suggestions about how older workers can effectively communicate with their younger colleagues, and also how younger workers can effectively communicate with their older colleagues.

Answers will vary but may include: being mindful of the differences in experience and technological comfort level, a willingness to share information and learn from each other.

5. Explain how important you think it is to have effective workplace relationships.

Answers will vary but may include: generally very important relationships in the workplace are effective to ensure that the workplace functions properly and achieves its aims.