



"The United Nations is committed to promoting a work environment free of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority, in which all people are treated with dignity and respect."

"Reports of prohibited conduct in the workplace or in connection with work can be submitted by any person and against any person, irrespective of...contractual status with the Organization."

Excerpts from ST/SGB/2019/8

WHEN TO SPEAK UP

To support a fair and respectful work environment, take action whenever you witness behaviour that **may be or could lead to** prohibited conduct.

Examples include:

- **Unwelcome compliments**
Your colleague tells you their manager keeps complimenting them on their looks and they feel uncomfortable.
- **Unprofessional interactions**
In meetings, a colleague constantly shushes others, rolls their eyes when others speak, and immediately dismisses most ideas as absurd.
- **"Only Joking"**
A colleague constantly jokes about another colleague's _____ (appearance, accent, etc.)
- **Abuse of Authority**
You frequently overhear a manager making demands/threats such as: "If you don't complete this 10-page report in the next hour, I will not release you for the TJO."
- **Exclusion**
You have noticed someone is almost never spoken to by the rest of their team (when the rest of them seem to joke around a lot).

Doing nothing is NOT a good option.

Choose what feels possible and safe.

Never intervene in unsafe or violent situations.

RESOURCES

Unite Your Work Team

In a workplace, people are more likely to take bystander action in a supportive team. To support your team, share copies of the "Self Checklist" and "Team Checklist" - found in the United to Respect Toolkit - and discuss how to better support each other.

Learn More

Toolkit & Bulletin: hr.un.org/unitedtorespect



United to Respect

How to maintain a safe space

free of discrimination,
harassment & abuse of
authority

Bystander Action Tips

hr.un.org/unitedtorespect



SPEAK UP

DO SOMETHING IN THE MOMENT

This is the most impactful as it is visible to all and sends a clear message.

- **Do something**

Suggest a change of topic; show your disapproval; take the impacted individual away from the situation.

- **Say something**

"What do you mean?"

"I'm sorry, that is not an OK joke"

"Could we let him finish his point"

"That feels like too much to ask of them"

Show support for the impacted individual in front of others.

"That was a tough meeting – not sure I was comfortable. Are you OK?"

"Don't feel you have to laugh along – I don't find it funny."

TALK TO THE IMPACTED INDIVIDUAL

- **Tell them you are aware** of what is going on – to show you care.
- **Provide support** *"I saw what happened, are you OK?" "I am here if you want to talk about it"*
- **Listen with empathy** *"Thank you for sharing this with me", "I see it has been so tough for you" not sympathy "I completely agree"*
- **Provide perspective** *"How do you think the 'actor' saw it?" "Do you think they know the impact it has on you?" "What may be going on for them that may explain the behaviour?"*
- **Help think of ideas** for how to resolve this. Think of who else you or they could raise it with (the 'actor'? their FRO? SRO? Local HR? A UN mediation or mental health specialist?)
- **Suggest Staff Counsellor** if you feel they need that support.
- **Be discreet** – though if the conduct is serious, you may have to raise it formally.

TALK TO THE "ACTOR"

This is the most impactful as it is visible to all and sends a clear message.

- **Assume good intentions.** Remember they may not intend to cause offence.
- **Try to help them understand** the negative impact of their conduct
- **Focus on a positive outcome** that you hope this will lead to – "I want to make sure we work well as a group ..."
- **Be clear and specific** about the problematic behaviour. "When you shushed her in the last meeting"
- **Explain the impact** "it was uncomfortable for me"
- **Start with "I" rather than "You"**. "I think that when you interrupt her, that makes her feel undermined and makes the whole team more hesitant to contribute", not "You need to stop rudely interrupting people"
- **Avoid absolute terms** like "you always" or "you never"
- **Listen** – Be curious about their perspective.
- **Express empathy** "I understand how you feel" *not* sympathy "I agree".
- **Choose a time to bring this up** when they will be able to hear the message (not too busy, not distracted).
- **Use positive tone and body language**
The goal is to get the person to understand another point of view

KEEP RECORDS - JUST IN CASE

- A detailed description of the conduct
- The name of the actor
- The name of the affected individual
- Where and when the prohibited conduct occurred.
- The names of potential witnesses to the prohibited conduct.
- Available supporting documentation.

SEEK SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

Among colleagues or supervisors, you may notice a need to restore a harmonious work environment. SPEAK UP:

- **Be discreet and focused**
Who needs to know – and what?
- **Do not gossip** or spread rumors – that will only make it worse.
- **Describe the problem:** the behaviour and impact on target individual and others.
- **Think about what can be done:**
 - Who could talk to the "actor"?
 - Should we raise it formally?
 - Has anyone spoken to the impacted individual to offer support? If not, who should?
- **Seek support from someone helpful**
Avoid those who tend to blame or take sides.
- **Ask your supervisors or a UN specialist**
It can be helpful to seek advice from your FRO, SRO or local HR (at UNHQ, your EO) - or the Office of Ombudsman, a Staff Counselor, or Mediation Services.



USE FORMAL CHANNELS

If the options above haven't worked, or if the behaviour is especially serious or dangerous, you may need to start a formal process.

Your options include:

- Conduct and Discipline Focal Points
- Speak Up Helpline: **+1 917 367 8910**
PKO Missions: **+1 212 78910**
Email: speakup@un.org
- OIOS: oios.un.org/report-wrongdoing