

# Managing relationships



**The way colleagues interact and relate to each other affects the workplace environment, and conflict is a common part of working life. The impact of this risk factor is determined by how tension or disagreements are managed.**

Employees at all levels play a significant part in shaping workplace attitudes and the overall working environment.

This is reflected in the way people treat each other, work together as a team and get involved in workplace initiatives to promote health, safety and wellbeing.

## Key actions

- Ensure all employees have clear and realistic expectations of each other.
- Encourage employees to communicate openly with each other, particularly to resolve conflict as it arises. This may require some coaching/training on negotiating solutions or conflict resolution.

- Train managers to identify and respond to conflict as soon as it arises.
- Promote a sense of collectivity and a team culture where people look out for each other and support their colleagues.
- Assign tasks in a way that encourages collaboration.
- Ensure clear complaint processes are available.
- Celebrate differences of opinion as a way of generating new ideas and solutions.
- Create an environment where people feel confident communicating openly.
- Consider the physical environment and how this could be modified to promote positive relationships, ensuring employees are not isolated and have space to complete their work.
- Recognise collective achievements based on group performance to reinforce the benefits of teamwork.

## Recognition and reward

Recognising individual or team contributions is important for workplace relationships, as well as maintaining motivation and commitment. Any approach needs to be fair, equitable and achievable.

- Provide regular, constructive feedback that recognises achievements and reflects on areas for improvement.
- Provide employees with opportunities to develop their skills by acting in a more senior or advanced role when the opportunity arises.
- Consider the range of ways to recognise individual or team contributions:
  - thank people for their efforts
  - offer team-focused activities such as lunches, morning teas, team outings or social occasions
  - highlight achievements in team meetings
  - introduce a rewards/incentive program
  - communicate achievements to supervisors, management or the wider organisation through workplace communications, such as newsletters.
- Reward ingenuity and effort as well as activities that contribute to productivity.