Health Literacy in the Workplace

A guide to building an accessible and inclusive approach to facilitate health and wellbeing for **everyone** in the workplace

Better Health
at Work Award

What is health literacy?

Health literacy is about a person's ability to understand and use information to make decisions about their health.

Research shows that:

- more than 4 in 10 adults struggle with health content for the public (42%)

- more than 6 in 10 adults struggle with health content that includes numbers and statistics (61%)

- **the average reading age in the North East is lower than the national average at between 9 to 11 years*.**

- Health literacy is related to health outcomes and service use. Limited health literacy is linked with unhealthy lifestyle behaviours such as poor diet, smoking and a lack of physical activity and an increased risk of morbidity and premature death. (4b_Health_Literacy-Briefing (1).pdf)

(*To put that into context The Guardian Newspaper has a reading age of 14 and the Sun Newspaper has a reading age of 8.)

Understand the scale of the issue for your workplace

Do your research:

- **National tools:** The University of Southampton mapped where people in England are likely to struggle with health literacy. They based this on local literacy and numeracy levels.

You can find it and check your own local authority area on this link: http://healthliteracy.geodata.uk

- **In-house information**: interrogate your existing staff demographic data and associated information

 - Health literacy is also a health inequality issue. There is a close link between socio-economic deprivation and low health literacy.

- Consider undertaking a **skills audit** of staff (literacy, numeracy, digital skills)

Top tip: As with all other initiatives and actions ensure you are:

DATA-DRIVEN and PEOPLE-LED

Implementing health literacy

- **Produce/create Plain English written policies/ guidance notes**
 - ideally for everything and not just traditional health and wellbeing related topics
 - use tools like the checklist opposite and HL toolkit

- **Distil longer policies/guidance into a 'policy on a page'**
 - pick out the key elements
 - use bullets/text boxes
 - produce an infographic if possible

- **Make hard copies easily available, not just online**
 - create a policy on a page folder/noticeboard
 - situate in a high traffic area and/or where staff do not have regular access to a computer

Policy and Procedure Language and Tone Tips

Review these tips before you begin to write.
Then, when you have finished your document, compare your work to the checklist.

- [ ] Write to the reading level of the document users. If necessary, use only numbers, graphics, and photographs.
- [ ] Use short sentences with familiar English words and with one thought or concept per sentence.
- [ ] Use must or will if something is mandatory. Avoid ambiguous words such as may or shall.
- [ ] Use plain words that are commonly understood rather than jargon. If you must use specialist terms, explain them in the text and in your glossary section.
- [ ] Use terms consistently throughout your documents.
- [ ] Write the full name for acronyms when you first use them.
- [ ] Remove extra words. For example, use to instead of in order to.
- [ ] Use positive and inclusive language. Their, not he or she (gender-neutral), worker not workman (gender-inclusive).
- [ ] Use active voice rather than passive voice. For example, you must wash the dishes. (Active). The dishes must be washed. (Passive)
- [ ] Use present tense. When you finish your shift, you lock the cabinets.
- [ ] Use headings that clearly identify the content of each section.
- [ ] Use evergreen contact and referral information as much as possible. info@contoso.com rather than the phone and email address of a specific individual.

Before

Policy

The Employer offers a Work from Home policy to be applicable where deemed fit.

It is our policy to ensure we offer a flexible approach to employees work where the Company is able to do so.

Document review

This document should be reviewed every six months. If a change is made to the document a copy should be made and a summary of the change updated in the log below.

Working from Home

Employees are allowed to work from home, where it is deemed suitable and does not interfere with the day to day business conducted by the Company. We realise and understand that it is not always appropriate or acceptable for employees to work from home, so Manager discretion is always advised.

For the purpose of these Regulations:

The meaning of working from home (WFH) is all the time you spend working during normal office hours (either 9am – 5pm or 9am – 6pm) from your home or other location that is not a remote or flexible working arrangement.

Employees must notify the Employer if there is any other time spent working for the Employer that they consider should be treated as 'working from home' and they must keep records of it, and;

Employees must comply with any requests made, or measures imposed, to enable the Employer to monitor 'working from home'. Failure to do so will be dealt with under the Employer's Disciplinary Procedure

Rules for Working from Home

Working from home is a benefit that is offered to employees and is designed to help wellbeing and also those times when people may need to be home (to accept a delivery for example).

Rest breaks

It is important that rest breaks are taken only as provided within the employee's contract. These rest breaks also relate to anyone working from home and the Company may, within reason, determine when breaks should be taken so as to ensure operational efficiency.

After

Policy

It is our policy to ensure we offer a flexible working environment wherever we can.

We've designed this work from home policy to help your wellbeing and provide flexibility for times when you may need to be at home (for example, to accept a delivery).

If you agree with your manager that you can work from home, you must follow this policy.

Document review

We will review this document every six months. If we make a change to the document, we will make a copy of the previous version and summarise the change in the revision history table.

Working from home

You are allowed to work from home where we consider it suitable and where it does not interfere with ▢▢▢▢ day to day business.

We understand that it is not always appropriate or acceptable for everyone to work from home. For example, certain departments are unable to work from home due to the nature of their work. You should speak with your line manager about your individual circumstances.

Your line manager will have the final say on whether or not is appropriate for you to work from home.

What counts as working from home

The meaning of 'working from home' is the time you spend working during normal office hours (either 9.00am to 5.00pm or 9.00am to 6.00pm) from your home or any other appropriate location.

You must keep records and notify us of any time you spend working for us that you think should be treated as working from home.

Working from home is not a right, it is a benefit. If you need to work from home on a regular basis or for long periods of time for exceptional reasons (for example, if you are a carer) you should consult our flexible working policy and remote working policy in your employee handbook.

Rules for working from home

- You can only work from home for a maximum of two days per week - but your manager has the right to reduce this to one day a week or no days at all if they feel it is inappropriate or will cause disruption.
- You may not work from home during your probation or notice period.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

What employees need to know

Every employee is responsible for helping to create a fair, safe, and respectful workplace. Positive cultural change can only happen when all employees recognize and interrupt harassing and bullying behaviors, support coworkers, and affirm coworker experiences. Take the following actions to help build a sexual harassment-free environment at your workplace.

Trust yourself.
Sexual misconduct is often disguised with "just kidding" or "lighten up!" If you think it's harassment—patronizing, taunting, or predatory behavior—chances are it's worth taking seriously.

Speak up.
Prudent employers will have common-sense and effective processes in place so you can confidentially report sexual harassment without fear of retribution.[1]

Know your options.
Know your company's sexual harassment policy and, more importantly, exactly what protocols and channels exist to report misconduct.

Be thoughtful.
What you do and say matters. Your actions can help create a fair, safe, and respectful work culture free from sexual harassment.

Stand up for yourself and others.
Personal boundaries should never be crossed. Call out harassing, bullying, or shaming behavior by saying it makes you, or someone else, uncomfortable.

Make no excuses.
Alcohol increases the likelihood of sexual misconduct.[4] It should never be used as an excuse or a source of blame. Know and stick to your limits.

Be curious.
You might find it surprising what some people find okay and others find discomfiting. Ask questions. Learn to listen closely and educate yourself on the real-life consequences of sexual harassment.

Don't make assumptions.
Never force a conversation or try to badger a colleague into a different viewpoint on what is acceptable behavior—especially when it relates to their body or sex.

Embrace a deep appreciation of equality.
Treat everybody with the same level of respect, curiosity, and engagement. Aside from personal friendships, maintain a constant standard of how casual or friendly you are, applied to everyone.

Be authentic.
Maintain genuine relationships with colleagues. A hug or light physical contact can be okay as long as it stays appropriate and consensual.[5] We can be professional **and** human.

Be inclusive.
Don't give into the notion that people will get the wrong idea if you meet with certain colleagues. Shutting people out hurts their careers and your work.

Respect everyone's story.
Work may be the only place in your life where you interact daily with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Learn from the varied experiences, perspectives, and attitudes of your colleagues.

SOURCES:

1 Stanford University, Sexual Harassment Policy Office, "Myths and Misconceptions."
2 Lindsey Joyce Chamberlain, Martha Crowley, Daniel Tope, and Randy Hodson, "Sexual Harassment in Organizational Context," Work and Occupations, vol. 35, no. 3 (August 2008): p. 262-295.
3 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Harassment Policy Tips."
4 Antonia Abbey, Tina Zawacki, Philip O. Buck, A. Monique Clinton, and Pam McAuslan, "Alcohol and Sexual Assault," Alcohol Research & Health, vol. 25, no. 1 (2001): p. 43-51.
5 Jeffrey O. Polsky, "6 Things Sexual Harassment Lawyers Want You to Know About Hugging," California Employment Law, September 17, 2015.

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CATALYST
WORKPLACES THAT WORK FOR WOMEN

TYPES OF LEAVES IN LEAVE POLICY OF ENTERPRISES

Casual Leaves
Casual Leaves cover urgent personal requirements that are unplanned. Not mandatory for businesses and are often clubbed with sick leaves.

Sick Leaves
Sick Leaves are mandatory and are granted on account of sickness or an accident. Also referred to as Medical Leaves (ML).

Earned Leaves
Earned Leaves are called so because the employees "earn" it at the end of every month. Also known as Privilege Leaves (PL), EL has to be planned in advance.

Maternity Leave
Maternity Leave is mandatory for the female employees who have worked for at least 80 days in the year preceding the expected delivery date. The duration may vary but is usually 26 weeks.

Paternity Leave
Paternity Leave is offered to expectant fathers after a child is born. It's not mandatory but is very common in organizations today. Can vary from a few days to upto 4 weeks.
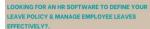
Bereavement Leave
Bereavement Leave is not very common and is granted to help employees cope with the loss of a loved one. It allows time for participating in the last rites or funeral services.

Compensatory Off
Compensatory Off/Comp Off applies when employees are required to work on weekends or a holiday to meet an urgent deadline. The employee is allowed to take leave on a working day.

Leave Without Pay
Leave Without Pay (LWP) applies to instances where the leave balance is exhausted but the employee needs to apply for leaves. The employer may grant the leave with loss of pay.

LOOKING FOR AN HR SOFTWARE TO DEFINE YOUR LEAVE POLICY & MANAGE EMPLOYEE LEAVES EFFECTIVELY?.

VISIT WWW.DIGITALHRMS.COM.

DIGITAL HRMS

Employers
a more positive workplace culture begins with you!

Define civility
Engage everyone in conversations and educational opportunities, like discussion groups, about what civility means to them. Consider posting a code of conduct that outlines respectful and civil behaviour, relating it back to your organization's values and ethics.

Train and develop
Provide training and resources on listening, giving feedback, conflict resolution, interacting with customers, recognizing uncivil behaviour and how to address it.

Incorporate civility and respect in communications
Adopt non-discriminatory language and maintain the confidentiality of personal information in all communications. Ensure that communications are easy to find and accessible to all.

Address uncivil behaviour
Create and enforce policies detailing consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Allow for constructive problem-solving. Manage conflicts in an effective and timely fashion, and follow-up with all parties involved.

Be a role model
Promote and reinforce respectful leadership behaviour and recognize everyone's respectful behaviours. Provide managers, supervisors and staff with ongoing training and supports, and ensure that they are available, present, and in contact to recognize and resolve issues.

CIVILITY and RESPECT
in the Workplace

Where everyone is **respectful** and **considerate** in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients and the public.

Better teamwork

Enhanced relationships

Improved morale

A civil and respectful workplace

Greater job satisfaction

Greater perceptions of fairness

Reduced sick leave and turnover

Engagement in problem resolution

Greater interest in personal development

Tips
for everyone

Give your full attention
Focus on the conversation at hand. Turn off your cell phone or any distracting device.

Value others' time
If you're going to be late for a meeting, let the organizer know in advance.

Say "hello"
Next time you pass a colleague in the hallway, say hello. Acknowledgement and courtesy help build positive morale.

Use respectful language
Simple words such as 'please', 'thank you', 'excuse me', and 'I'm sorry' are easy ways to establish civility.

Be considerate when you speak
Before making a joke, consider the audience. Humour is great but may not be appropriate in all situations.

Be inclusive
Bridge social barriers by looking for opportunities to include others. Invite them to lunch, chat about the weekend, or ask for their input.

Practice humility
Elevate people around you by giving them credit when they do a good job. Share in the satisfaction.

CCOHS.ca
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Inclusion and engagement

- **Make a concerted effort to reach all staff, consider and make provision for harder-to-reach groups,** including:
  - Remote staff
  - Non-desk-based staff
  - Part-time staff
  - Carers
  - Digitally excluded staff
  - Staff with English as a second language
  - Staff with disabilities and long-term conditions

- **Make 'reasonable adjustments' to your HWB approach and comms.**
  - in-person roadshows, adoption of plain English and visuals
  - Offer training/lifelong learning opportunities to improve skills: e.g. functional literacy & numeracy, digital skills
  - **facilitation is key**

Communications

Key point: Use mixed comms methods – don't just rely on digital and/or written

Deploy demonstrations/stands or stalls/ spoken presentations or talks

Underpin information with activities to provide active learning

Include visual aids and tangible resources to support (graphics/pictures/models/props/displays)

Tailor your information/messaging for different groups – one size does not fit all

Have a constructive two-way dialogue with your audience(s) to ensure information/content is fit for purpose; consultation and co-production

Communications