



# MAINTAINING A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE DURING ELECTION SEASON

During election periods diverse viewpoints often come to the forefront. This document outlines quick, actionable strategies to help foster a respectful and safe workplace during this period. These suggestions are designed for immediate implementation and support a culture of inclusivity, respect, and professionalism. While Vibrant Pittsburgh is providing these samples as a starting point, we encourage you to adapt them to align with your organization's unique culture, values, and goals.

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## REINFORCE CORE VALUES AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

**Communicate Core Values:** Remind employees of your organization's mission, vision, and values. While diverse perspectives are respected, professionalism and respect remain core standards.

**Behavioral Expectations:** Share a brief reminder about maintaining respectful interactions, especially regarding sensitive or politically charged topics.

**Quick Action:** Send an email or internal memo reinforcing behavioral expectations and encouraging respect across differing viewpoints.

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### SAMPLE: EMAIL REMINDER ABOUT CORE VALUES AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

**Subject:** Maintaining Respectful Workplace Interactions

Hello [Team/All],

As election day approaches, we recognize that personal perspectives may be at the forefront of our minds. At [Organization Name], we embrace diverse opinions and remain committed to fostering an environment where everyone feels respected and safe.

As a reminder, let's continue to:

- Respect differing viewpoints and engage with professionalism.
- Focus on the shared goals and values that bring us together.
- Demonstrate empathy and kindness in all interactions.

I appreciate your commitment to making [Organization Name] a respectful and welcoming place for all.

Best,

[Leader's Name & Title]

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## PROMOTE RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

**Provide Conversation Guidelines:** Offer guidelines for respectful communication, emphasizing active listening, avoiding assumptions, and respecting boundaries. Focus on frameworks that encourage open dialogue without escalating tensions.

**Quick Action:** Share a one-pager on "Guidelines for Respectful Dialogue," highlighting neutral language, constructive questioning, and de-escalation tips.

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### SAMPLE: GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE ONE-PAGER

#### **Guidelines for Respectful Dialogue During Election Season**

1. Listen Actively: Focus on understanding rather than responding. Avoid interrupting and consider others' perspectives.
2. Use Neutral Language: Avoid divisive words or phrases that may escalate tensions. For example, say, "I appreciate your perspective" instead of challenging statements.
3. Respectfully Set Boundaries: If a conversation feels sensitive, it's okay to set limits. Try phrases like, "I'd prefer to keep our conversation work focused."
4. Agree to Disagree: It's okay if others don't share your views. Focus on common ground and respect differences without pressuring others to agree.

***These guidelines help ensure that our workplace remains inclusive and focused on shared respect.***

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## PREPARE FOR CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS

**Scenario Training:** Provide quick guidance on managing potential election-related conversations with customers.

**Quick Action:** Equip customer-facing staff with ready-made responses to diffuse politically charged topics. Focus on maintaining neutrality and redirecting conversations to business matters.

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### SAMPLE: NEUTRAL SCRIPTS FOR CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS

#### **If a customer brings up political topics:**

- "I appreciate your interest! Here at [Organization Name], we're focused on providing great service, so let's explore how we can help you today."
- "Thank you for sharing your perspective. Let's focus on how we can best assist you now."
- "I understand a lot is happening, and we're here to ensure your experience with us is positive. How can I help you today?"

***These responses help maintain professionalism while gently steering conversations back to the business at hand.***

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## ACKNOWLEDGE STRESS AND SUPPORT WELL-BEING

**Emotional Support Resources:** Remind employees of available resources, such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other wellness resources for stress management.

**Quick Action:** Share a list of mental health or stress-relief resources, encouraging employees to prioritize self-care.

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### SAMPLE: EMAIL WITH LIST OF MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS-RELIEF RESOURCES

**Subject:** Taking Care of Yourself During Election Season

Hello [Team/All],

We recognize that the election season may bring stress. Please remember that taking care of your well-being is essential, and [Organization Name] is here to support you. Here are some resources:

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Confidential counseling and support for emotional well-being. Access at [EAP contact info].
- **[Mental Health Hotline]:** Available 24/7 at [hotline number].
- **Stress Management Tips:** Practice deep breathing and short breaks, and limit news exposure if it feels overwhelming.

Your well-being matters. Don't hesitate to reach out for support.

Best,

[Leader's Name & Title]

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## ENCOURAGE PEER SUPPORT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

**Create a Supportive Atmosphere:** Leaders should encourage employees to share concerns in a safe, non-judgmental space.

**Quick Action:** Hold a brief team meeting or check-in to acknowledge the importance of support and respectful communication.

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### SAMPLE: MESSAGE FOR TEAM CHECK-IN ON RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

#### **Team Meeting Script:**

"As we approach the election, I want to recognize that everyone may be experiencing different feelings about this time. We value the diversity of perspectives here and are committed to maintaining an environment of respect and support for each other.

Please know I'm here to listen if you ever feel uncomfortable or need someone to talk to. Let's continue focusing on what brings us together and keep our interactions respectful and kind. Thank you all for your commitment to this."

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- **GEOGRAPHIC SPECIFIC VOTING INFORMATION:** <https://vote.gov/> provides up-to-date federal and state-specific voting information, from registration to voting locations.
- **ON-DEMAND WEBINAR: BUILDING BRIDGES:** Transforming Political Polarization into Positive Workplace Culture: <https://lp.springhealth.com/building-bridges-transforming-political-polarization-into-positive-workplace-culture>
- **SHRM CIVILITY STARTER KIT:** <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/topics/civility?linktext=DOWNLOAD-THE-CIVILITY-STARTER-KIT>

Please feel free to reach out if additional support or resources are needed.

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