Language Job Aid

A guide to language in the workplace



UTHealth Houston Standards of Conduct

UTHealth Houston is committed to providing a working and learning environment that is inclusive and respective of everyone's differences, including cultural differences. UTHealth Houston recognizes that Irelated conversations are included in those conversations. Below are some scenarios to assist with situations that may arise involving language in the workplace. Managers and employees who have questions on this subject are urged to contact Employee Relations or University Relations & Equal Opportunity to discuss.

Scenario 1

What should Lisa do? Can Lisa require the workers to speak English?

Answer: Josh has expressed concern to Lisa about both work-related and potentially personal conversations. Lisa should gather more information from Josh and his co-workers. If Josh's co-workers are engaging in conversation that he does not understand regarding lab work he is involved in, Lisa can require that a common language, in this case English, be spoken in these instances. If Josh's co-workers are speaking to each other regarding lab work that Josh is not involved in, Lisa cannot require that Josh's co-workers speak in a language that Josh also understands. Josh's co-workers may have personal conversations that are professional and respectful in Chinese.

Scenario 2

Robert and Alicia currently work in cubicles in an open setting environment. The team recently had a team meeting where Nicole presented on project management systems. Afterward, Robert and Alicia are in their work area

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about Nicole, management can address that behavior under the conduct policy, and counsel Robert and Alicia about appropriate workplace conduct.

Scenario 3

Courtney and Stephanie are working in a clinic and are discussing patient information in French. Donna is nearby and will relieve Courtney when Courtney goes on lunch break. Donna does not speak French. Courtney is about to take a break and is going to handoff the patient to Donna who does not speak French and did not understand anything Courtney told Stephanie. When Courtney meets with Donna to do the handoff, she explains everything in English to Donna and goes on break.

Should Courtney and Stephanie be allowed to speak French to each other when discussing patient information?

Answer: It depends. In this scenario, Courtney relayed the necessary patient information to Donna in the language that Donna understands, allowing Donna to safely perform her duties ()1.30626 s()Tj0.)10.p

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