

FRIDAY: Build a Community Day

Main Activity: Introduce workers to *Neighbour @ Work* approach

Introduction

An approach based on Martin Shain's Neighbour @ Work™ philosophy has been shown, in a recent Health Canada sponsored study, to be able to produce advances in creating healthy cultures. The Health Canada study showed evidence that Neighbour @ Work™ is capable of increasing adaptability to change, improving relationships, and reducing conflict in the workplace. When people at work behave as "neighbours", we see a tremendous reduction in stress and an increase in personal health and organizational productivity.

Goal of the activity

This activity is designed to encourage neighbourly behaviour in the workplace so that everyone in the organization feels that they are being treated fairly, regardless of their position.

Implementation of activity

1. Educate employees on the philosophy behind the Neighbour @ Work™ approach. Visit www.wellnessmatters.org for further information about the Neighbour @ Work™ philosophy and implementation process.
2. Provide employees with the "How Healthy is my Work Culture?" self-assessment tools. The assessment tools are meant for individual reflection to give employees an idea of their personal work situation. The survey is two-part. Encourage employees to interpret their scores using the assessment tools provided and look to the Call to Action for strategies and suggestions to improve your work culture. Another option would be to have work teams collectively fill out the survey, followed by a team discussion about the most important issues to focus on.
3. Provide your employees a checklist that gives suggestions on ways to act "neighbourly" at work. Ensure employees take an active role in participating and encourage them to check off anything they do at the workplace.
4. On a long-term basis, encourage employees to write stories that describe how someone, or how a group of people made a difference to one another by acting in a neighbourly manner and post them on a visible bulletin board. In addition, ask individuals and/or work teams to anonymously hand in their completed 'Self-scoring assessment tools' sheet so that the information can be compiled and the organization can gain valuable insights about the culture of their workplace.

Materials Needed

- Background information on Neighbour @ Work Approach
- Self scoring assessment tools (2 parts)
- Message board for posting neighbourly stories on
- Checklist of neighbourly suggestions to hand in

Supplemental Activities

- A Shift of Attention (2005 Archive activity)
- Enhancing Team Productivity by Sustainable Leadership Solutions (2006 Archive activity)
- Provide suggestions to employees on how to build a community within their workplace. For example, encourage employees to take a walk with a fellow co-worker friend during lunch hour.
- Create a fun game where you hand out a sheet to all employees with names of their co-workers and a blank space beside each name. Each employee must fill in the blanks with a "positive because" statement about the person. *For example, I appreciate Jane's creativity because it adds value to the work we do.* Collect the forms, compile the comments creatively on a sheet and give a copy to each employee to put up in their workspace.
- Organize a Food Drive in each department and have some healthy competition going! If you have an Intranet or newsletter that you produce for your workplace, the department with most donations can be featured on the main page of the Intranet or the cover page of your newsletter.



How *Neighbourly* is Your Workplace?

Background

When people at work behave as “neighbours” we see a tremendous reduction in stress and an increase in personal health and organizational productivity. Neighbourly behaviour is for everyone in the organization no matter what their position – we all need to be treated, and to treat others, as neighbours.

What does neighbourly behaviour look like? Dr. Martin Shain, SJD, Senior Scientist for Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, and Founder and Director of the Neighbour @ Work Centre, says that:

“When people at work think and feel that they are being treated fairly, they tend to also act in a “Neighbourly” fashion. That is, they:

- Try to foresee how their words and actions will affect others
- Actively seek and make use of reasonably available information that will help them do this
- Listen attentively to other’s points of view
- And in so doing, try to understand the needs, claims, rights and interests of others
- Share information that is of material importance to others in a timely manner
- And expect to be treated the same way.”

What you can do in your Workplace

During Canada’s Healthy Workplace Week and/or as part of the Five Alive Reviver Challenge, managers, team leaders or the Healthy Workplace Committee in your workplace can invite people to gather neighbourly stories and post them throughout the workplace.

For ideas on how to make an enduring difference, see Long-Term Strategies – Neighbour@Work Initiative.

The [Neighbour@Work](#) Sample Story

My story goes back more than one year but is something I wish to tell. At the time, I was providing Health Promotion consulting to Women’s College Hospital in Toronto. One day while at work, I received a call from my sister who lived in Calgary, saying that she had just received confirmation of a diagnosis of cancer. In the days and weeks that followed, I found a bottomless well of support from my coworkers, my manager and the unit as a whole. People around me were very understanding as I flew back and forth between the two cities to assist my sister – a single parent with two young daughters. We lost the battle to cancer but were able to maintain our wholeness as a family. The hospital granted me as much time as needed – full emotional and salaried support (remember I wasn’t an employee but was a contractor, and never was I penalized for being by my sister’s side). I later returned to work and completed my project – which won the Commonwealth Secretariat Award for Innovation. I feel a great deal of loyalty to Women’s College Hospital; they contributed to smoothing out an aspect of my life while the rest was in chaos.

From Geri in Toronto, Ontario



SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL - HANDOUT

How Healthy is my Work Culture? An Introduction to the Neighbour@Work™

Approach

This survey is founded on "The Neighbour Principle" rooted in our common-law understandings of citizenship in a democracy. Since we are all "citizens" of the workplace, then, as neighbours at work, we can choose to be considerate, do no harm and even promote the health of others in our realm of influence. The healthiness of a job depends not only on how others act toward you, but also how you act toward others.

The following self-assessment tool is meant for individual reflection, not for comparison with others. The scores give an idea of your personal work situation.

This is a two-part survey. Part One is for you as a "receiver" of working conditions, whether you are an employee who has a supervisory role or not. Part Two is for you as a "sender" of working conditions, whether you are a supervisor or not. We all "send" conditions of work to others, regardless of whether or not we are supervisors.

Part One: "Receiver" of Working Conditions

Instructions: For ease in scoring, each statement is answered either "yes" or not at all. If you cannot say "yes" wholeheartedly, do not answer at all. At the end, simply tally up the "yes" responses and read the interpretation that follows. All questions refer to your life at work.

Question	Yes
It is clear to me what I have to do and when I have to do it.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can talk openly and honestly with most of the people I work with on a regular basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can talk openly and directly to my immediate manager/supervisor about any work-related matter that concerns me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel free to laugh out loud here.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the amount of involvement I have in decisions that affect my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I trust my direct manager/supervisor to take my interests into account when decisions that affect me are being made.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am well rewarded (in terms of praise and recognition) for the level of effort I put out for my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My workload is reasonable and fair.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am confident that any concerns I have about work will be seriously considered by my direct manager/supervisor.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My employer has a sincere interest in the well-being of its employees.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the fairness and respect I receive on the job.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My direct supervisor shows an understanding of my need to have a life outside of work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My employer has good "work/life balance" policies in effect.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that my direct manager/supervisor values what I do.	<input type="checkbox"/>



I have enough information about the purpose and context of my work to do my job properly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mostly, I trust the people I work with to avoid doing or saying things that might harm me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am proud of what we do here.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My employer supports me in acquiring the new skills I need to keep up with changes in my job and in the environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My work environment stimulates me to be creative and imaginative.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The culture of this workplace is one that values consideration for others.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your score:	<input type="text"/>

Interpretation of Total "Yes" Score

Scores are interpreted according to their probable influence on your mental and physical health.

15-20:	You work in a generally health-promoting work environment. However, if any or all of the items 5, 7, 8 and 11 are not among the items you checked, the outlook is less positive.
10-14:	You work in a basically health-neutral environment, subject to the same qualifier as above. However, if any or all of the items 5, 7, 8 and 11 are among the items you checked, the outlook is more positive.
5-9:	You work in a basically health-neutral environment even if any or all of items 5, 7, 8, and 11 are checked.
0-4:	You work in a profoundly health-threatening environment.

Part Two: "Sender" of Working Conditions

Instructions: For ease in scoring, each statement is answered either "yes" or not at all. If you cannot say "yes" wholeheartedly, do not answer at all. At the end, simply tally up the "yes" responses and read the interpretation that follows. All questions refer to your life at work.

Question	Yes
I think carefully about how my words and actions may affect others.	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important to me that I am fair in my dealings with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I listen carefully to other people's points of view.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take pains to check whether my expectations of other people in my group are reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give praise and show appreciation to others in my work group.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I try to give others in my work group the discretion they want to do their work in the ways they prefer.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I expect from others only what is reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>



I share with my fellow employees any information I have that will enable them to do their jobs better.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe that loyalty is a two-way street.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I try to behave to others as I would wish them to behave toward me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your score:	<input type="text"/>

Interpretation of Total "Yes" Score

Scores are interpreted according to your probable influence on the health of others and to the health-promoting qualities of the work environment as a whole.

7-10:	You are a generally health-promoting influence, contributing to the "neighbourliness" of the environment.
3-6:	You are a health-neutral to moderately negative influence, tending to detract from the neighbourliness of the environment.
0-2:	You are a toxic influence, hostile to the concept of neighbourliness.

A Call to Action

Don't be discouraged if your scores aren't as good as you would like them to be. Consider this a call to take action. On an individual basis you could sign up for stress management courses, personal development training or leadership development opportunities offered by your organization or a nearby educational institution.

Another effective option is to engage your work team, or business unit, in completing the N@W Survey and responding to the results by having a group meeting to decide the most important issues and engaging people in providing their ideas and implementing solutions. Along the way front-lone managers and team leaders may identify the need to build their capacity by training in such topics as:

- ✓ Respectful listening
- ✓ Open, transparent communications
- ✓ Involving employees in decision making
- ✓ Empowering communication
- ✓ Collaborative problem solving
- ✓ Coaching employees on workload/stress
- ✓ Facilitating participative meetings