

The Positive-Workplace-Through-Kindness Program: Implementation Steps

Summary of Eight-Step Guide

This eight-step implementation guide can be used to increase kindness and positivity and decrease incivility and negative behaviors in the workplace. The guide includes a workplace assessment survey, training exercises, and other tools to enhance positive behaviors at work. Rationale for understanding the value of positivity/kindness and optional trainer's tips make using the guide easy, informative, and practical.

Introduction

Many ingredients are required to make an organization healthy and successful. One ingredient is a positive work culture, which can be developed by increasing kindness and decreasing incivility and negative behaviors. **Kindness** is helping, being friendly, showing appreciation, and reaching out to those in need with no expectation of return. Research shows that positivity in the workplace, which is fueled by kindness, increases profits, productivity, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction. More specifically, a positive workplace can improve job performance, increase employee motivation and well-being, lengthen employee tenure, reduce sick leave, and improve relationships among staff and with suppliers and clients.

Adults spend more time at work than in any other activity. As kindness becomes more valued and prominent in the minds of the work force, its benefits are likely to transfer to other aspects of workers' lives away from the workplace—to family, friends, and the community as a whole.

The Choose Kindness Foundation has developed the, "The Positive Workplace Through Kindness Program" to help private and public organizations determine their level of positivity, which means the degree to which civility and kindness characterize their workplaces. It includes an assessment to gauge the current levels of kindness and incivility/negative behavior in your organization, and recommendations to both increase positivity and decrease incivility and negativity. The program can be implemented across eight steps, discussed below.

The Positive Workplace Through Kindness Program:

1. Present rationale
2. Offer online training about the value of personal kindness
3. Assess and Identify areas needing improvement and plan improvement steps
4. Share initial findings with staff
5. Provide workplace instruction
6. Monitor effects of workplace learning
7. Integrate, sustain, and reassess
8. Report findings and celebrate improvements

This document provides **only** a brief overview of the eight steps. To understand the specifics of the substantive resources for each step, please use the hyperlinks embedded within the resources section of each step.

Step 1: Present rationale

Management or an outside consultant convenes a workshop that presents the characteristics and benefits of a kind and positive workplace. They help staff identify how these values manifest in their own work environments. A manager or consultant introduces the Program and explains why the organization has chosen to increase kindness and decrease incivility and negative behavior to benefit the staff as individual, the organization, and the community.

Resources:

- [Trainer's notes](#) for presenting rationale and getting started.
- [PowerPoint](#) on the Triple Power of Kindness, based on a *Harvard Business Review* article that identifies the six characteristics of a kind workplace and four ways managers can nurture these characteristics.
- [PowerPoint](#) explaining how too little kindness in a workplace can lead to incivility and negative behaviors.
- [Bulleted list](#) of the six characteristics of a kind workplace and the four ways managers nurture the six characteristics
- [Effects of Kindness and Unkindness in the Workplace](#) article by Dr. Douglas Carnine, Ph. D., from *The Bottom Line*.
- Additional [Research, advice and video on kindness in the workplace](#) and [Research on Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Positivity/Kindness](#).

Step 2: Offer online training about the value of personal kindness

This optional training step covers the value of personal kindness and its positive impacts on physical and psychological wellbeing. Personal kindness refers to kindness exercised in one's personal relationships with friends, family, and loved ones outside of work.

Trainees have two options for engaging with these lessons: (Option 1) Watch a 30-minute video that covers the three secrets to making deeper connections. While watching, follow along with the companion worksheet which outlines the video's key ideas and offers mindful kindness exercises to engage the trainee. (Option 2) Watch a series of five video lessons, which range in length from 13 to 23 minutes and which cover the same material as the 30-minute video, but in greater depth. There are companion worksheets containing key ideas and lesson questions for the video series as well. Links to all videos and companion worksheets can be found in the resources section below.

Resources:

- Option 1: [Three Keys to More Meaningful Connections video](#) (30 minutes), [key ideas](#), and [lesson questions](#).

- Option 2: Series of five sequential lessons on personal/mindful kindness and companion worksheets:
 - [Lesson 1 video](#) (17 minutes), [key ideas](#), and [lesson questions](#).
 - [Lesson 2 video](#) (17 minutes), [key ideas](#), and [lesson questions](#).
 - [Lesson 3 video](#) (13 minutes), [key ideas](#), and [lesson questions](#).
 - [Lesson 4 video](#) (13 minutes), [key ideas](#), and [lesson questions](#).
 - [Lesson 5 video](#) (23 minutes), [key ideas](#), and [lesson questions](#).
- Collated list of all the [video lessons plus additional video resources](#) for Personal/Mindful Kindness Training.
- Folder containing all of the videos' [companion worksheets](#).

Step 3: Assess and identify areas needing improvement.

In the assessment phase, employees complete surveys—anonously on their computer—to measure their perceptions of positivity and kindness, as well as incivility and negativity, in their workplace cultures. The surveys are designed to gauge perceived levels of kindness/positivity among management and employees, as well as the prevalence of incivility/negative behaviors. The Alternative Employee-Centered Survey of Workplace Positivity/Kindness measures the perceived importance of the kindness/positivity behaviors. This survey enhances the training's potential for impact by establishing employees' enthusiasm. In this way, it helps manage expectations.

If an organization wishes, the Choose Kindness Foundation can administer the survey to assure employees of anonymity. If the Foundation administers the survey for an organization, the findings will be securely held with only the persons designated by the organization having access to those findings.

One survey—Four Ways Management Can Nurture the Six Characteristics of a Positive (Kind) Workplace—evaluates management specifically. Management must decide whether this section should be completed about each manager separately, by name. If requested, the Foundation can create a survey with the managers named. Managers or facilitators must decide whether the session includes a sufficient number of employees to protect anonymity.

Finally, we recommend administering two simple measures to employees as pre- and post-tests to determine the degree to which the training reduces their stress and increases their satisfaction with life.

To identify areas needing improvement, management analyzes responses to the surveys, and, if needed, conducts confidential interviews to develop a more refined understanding of the

problems that need to be addressed. Throughout this step, it is important to retain participants' anonymity.

Resources:

- [Trainer's notes](#) for administering the assessment surveys.
- [Collated Survey](#) assessment measuring positivity, kindness, incivility and negative behaviors in the workplace.
- The three components of the Collated Survey, presented separately in three Google Form surveys:
 - [Six Characteristics of a Positive \(Kind\) Workplace](#)
 - [Four Ways Management Can Nurture the Six Characteristics of a Positive \(Kind\) Workplace](#)
 - [Incivility and Negative Behavior in the Workplace](#)
- Alternative [Employee-Centered Survey of Workplace Positivity/Kindness](#)
- [Stress survey](#)
- [Satisfaction with life survey](#)

- [Trainer's notes](#) for administering surveys and conducting post-survey interviews.
- [Examples of Incivility and Negative Behaviors in the Workplace](#). This document provides examples of what incivility and negativity can look like in the workplace. Reviewing this document may alert managers about the types of negative and incivility behaviors in their workplace.

Step 4: Share initial findings with staff

Management shares findings from surveys and intentions to conduct workplace learning with staff.

Resources:

- [Rationale and tips](#) for sharing survey results.

Step 5: Provide workplace learning

Management provides workshop sessions for staff and management that focus on areas needing improvement. At the end of the session(s), employees and management are asked to

sign a commitment to kindness. Training Evaluations for workplace learning courses for managers and employees are provided in the resources below.

Resources:

- [Checklist](#) for planning workplace learning
- [Employee Handout](#)
 - [Trainer's notes for training employees](#)
- [Management Handout](#)
 - [Trainer's note for training managers](#)
- Positivity/kindness [commitment pledge](#) for employees and managers.
- [Recommendations](#) for coping with the unkind behaviors of others.
- [Training evaluations for employees](#) to complete
- [Training evaluations for managers](#) to complete

Step 6: Monitor effects of workplace learning and adjust workplace learning as needed

Management or consultants determine how to measure changes (increased kindness and or decreased incivility/negative behavior) in the areas identified as needing improvement.

Resources:

- [Trainer's notes](#) for explaining monitoring of progress and continued learning.
- [Suggestions and tips for counting acts of kindness/unkindness](#)

Step 7: Re-assess

Within *about* six months of the initial assessment, management determines if the workplace learning has been effective by re-administering the initial collated survey or some of the component surveys from Step 2, in addition to the stress and satisfaction with life surveys. Management or consultants then decide whether further workplace learning is needed. Trainers may propose providing refreshers as needed. Finally, managers and employees complete a questionnaire about the value of the learning process.

Resources:

- Assessments from Step 2.
- Administer the [Participant Process Evaluation](#) to collect feedback from staff and managers about their experience with the Workplace Kindness Program.
- Administer the [Manager Process Evaluation](#) to collect feedback from managers about their experience with the Workplace Kindness Program.

Step 8: Report findings and celebrate improvements

This final step occurs after the completion of step 7, which could take several months. This step involves sharing the results from the second-round of the original surveys and from the evaluations by staff and management of the value of implementing the “The Positive Workplace Through Kindness Program.” Of particular importance is the shifts from the first administration of the surveys to the second. To be specific, to what degree, looking at the summarized results, has positivity/kindness increased, incivility/negative behaviors decreased, stress has decreased, and satisfaction with life has increased. Note: Individuals will not be shown the degree to which their responses have changed as a consequence of protecting employee anonymity.

You may also want to recognize individuals or teams that have reached goals and improved the culture within their workplace.

Resources:

- [Reporting Findings and celebrating improvements](#)