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Food Service Management on the Go

#96 *Passively Creating a Hostile Work Environment*

Teachable Moments

Most leaders readily understand the negative impact of a hostile work environment on employees. Employees who aren't properly trained, who aren't given the tools and resources to do their jobs, and who are demeaned by the abusive actions of supervisors or other employees, cannot contribute effectively to the team effort and the success of their organization. Often the hostile work environment is created by bullying, teasing, or insensitive remarks or actions that center on:

- Gender – sexually suggestive remarks, posting inappropriate pictures in the workplace
- Race or ethnicity – "Polish" jokes, making fun of accents or racial and ethnic stereotypes
- Religious beliefs – not respecting a person's religious or moral values by telling "dirty" jo… making fun of another's religious symbols or practices
- Age – "over the hill" comments or pranks …
- Sexual orientati… …ion
- Diffe… …meone who …

When a … …ot afford fo… …that exclude… …ey don't ge… environ…

A more … …supervisor who does not commu… …or who doesn't pay attention to what is going on in his or her s… …ent. Consider that:

- Individuals in any group setting rarely have neutral feelings toward or about the others in the group. They like some and dislike others, usually for their own, sometimes hard to discern, reasons.
- People are naturally attracted to and spend time with those they like and avoid those they don't. This results in cliques of the included and, outside the cliques – the excluded.
- The excluded often feel jealous, resentful, and fearful because of their exclusion.
- In the absence of ongoing timely and accurate information, fearful people assume the worst. Fearful people can be paranoid and perceive discrimination and favoritism where it may not exist.
- A fragmented work team cannot perform effectively.

When a supervisor does not engage daily with team members, … …egarding who is to do what, and communicate thoroughly about … …team, the fragmented team will gossip, backbite, and bicker … …will they work together and often their antagonisms affe… …ive-aggressive – trying to sabotage the efforts of …

SAMPLE

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Discussion Points: If a … …and interact daily with all employees, he or she may be responsible for passively creating a hostile work environment. Such inattention to the daily functioning of the organization is just as destructive as a supervisor who actively engages in demeaning, disparaging, and abusive behaviors.

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