

Recognizing Early Signals

Even subtle behaviours can become hazards if left unaddressed:

- Feeling anxious, disconnected, or dismissed after interactions
- Being repeatedly interrupted or excluded from communications
- Dismissive comments framed as humour
- Ongoing tension that is never addressed

Key hazards (WorkSafeBC)

- Harassment or violence
- Interpersonal conflict
- Lack of respect and civility
- Unclear conflict resolution processes
- Team incompatibility

Preventing Interpersonal Hazards

Healthy vs. unhealthy responses

Healthy	Unhealthy
Focus on the issue, not the person	Personal or accusatory
Mutual respect	Escalated emotions
Active listening	Generalizations (“always/never”)
Emotionally regulated	Avoids accountability
Seeks shared solutions	Shuts down dialogue

Tip: If you feel emotionally heightened, pause, regulate, and prepare before responding. Prevention starts with awareness and your ability to address the situation respectfully.

Shared Prevention Responsibilities

Employers

- Define and reinforce behavioural standards for respect and civility
- Proactively create team-building opportunities such as collaborative projects, recognition programs, or social/team events
- Maintain clear reporting procedures and ensure staff understand them
- Provide training in conflict resolution, respectful communication, and bystander intervention
- Respond promptly and consistently to interpersonal hazards

Managers/Supervisors

- Monitor team dynamics and address early signs of conflict, incivility, or exclusion
- Facilitate regular team check-ins, collaborative problem-solving sessions, and peer recognition moments
- Model emotionally regulated, constructive conflict resolution
- Ensure employees feel safe raising concerns
- Follow up on incidents to prevent recurrence

Employees

- Communicate respectfully and listen actively
- Engage in team-building activities, mentorship opportunities, or collaborative learning
- Address minor interpersonal concerns before they escalate
- Speak up against harassment or exclusion
- Report persistent issues through proper channels
- Contribute to a culture of trust, psychological safety, and inclusion

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- Monitor trends in interpersonal hazards
- Consult with workers to identify subtle or recurring risks
- Recommend strategies to reduce hazards
- Support evaluation of policies and preventive practices

Prevention is not about eliminating disagreement; it's about creating conditions where concerns can be raised safely, behaviours are accountable, and relationships remain respectful and productive.

Practical Prevention Actions

- Reflect before each interaction: do your words invite dialogue or shut it down?
- Address issues early rather than letting tension accumulate
- Listen actively and focus on solutions
- Model respect, inclusion, and accountability consistently
- Encourage and participate in team building, collaboration, and peer recognition activities
- Encourage safe reporting and discussion of interpersonal concerns

Remember: Small, consistent actions prevent hazards and build a safe, supportive, and productive workplace.