

# What is etiquette?

Etiquette is a set of unwritten rules that apply to social and professional settings. In other words, they are the norms and expectations around behavior in workplaces. Organizational etiquette is important because it creates a professional, **mutually respectful** atmosphere and **improves communication**, which helps an office serve as a productive place. Your etiquette impacts the way you are perceived by others and how much you are respected and trusted in the organization. Organizational etiquette is determined by the values and beliefs of the organization.

## Values

- Values reflect what an organization feels is important.
- These values may be the guide for “appropriate” behaviour in the workplace.

## Beliefs

- Beliefs govern the organizational culture, i.e. the unique social and psychological environment of an organization.

As peer workers, you may come across and work with people from different backgrounds, different perspectives, different behaviors, and different values. Organizational etiquette is important for EVERYONE because it creates a respectful atmosphere and improves communication which in turn helps us be more productive. It also helps with relationship-building within the organization. Etiquette promotes kindness, consideration, and humility.

## Common etiquette tips

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### PUNCTUALITY

- Use a calendar to note down your shift time
- Give yourself buffer time. Account for traffic, transit delays, etc.
- Communicate with your manager if you’re going to be late or will miss your shift.
- Check your organizational policies which may highlight what needs to be done in case you’re running late or will miss your shift.



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### RECORD KEEPING

In your day-to-day peer work, you may be required to handle different kinds of records and paperwork. These could include: Incident reports, Inventory records, Service logs, Surveys and evaluation records, Timesheets, and Staff records. Some records can be considered sensitive and confidential.

- Do not leave any revealing information on paper, on voicemail or text which can be accessed by others.
- All confidential notes must be stored in a private, locked cabinet, as determined by your organization.
- Follow organization guidelines on appropriate disposal of records



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### MEETING ETIQUETTE

- Be punctual
- Come prepared
- Be respectful
- Take notes
- Be attentive

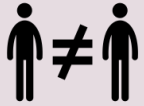
#### For online meetings:

- Mute your microphone
- Use the chat function for questions
- Keep the camera on



## Inappropriate behaviors at work

There are some behaviours we should avoid such as discrimination, bullying and violence, purchasing and selling substances at work, accepting tokens of appreciation and bribes, and overlapping personal and professional lives.



### DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOR

- Any behavior that could be considered **harmful** to service users as unacceptable at the workplace. This includes use of violent and discriminatory language making the listener feel unsafe, verbal threats, intimidation and baiting.
- Also avoid sexualized language and un-solicited comments about service users' physical appearance.



### BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

- Bullying refers to acts or verbal comments that could psychologically or 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person.
- Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behavior that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people.



### PURCHASING AND SELLING SUBSTANCES

- Some organizations may consider making dealer referrals at work inappropriate.
- While some organizations allow peer workers to use during breaks, others may encourage peer workers to wait till the end of their shift.
- Most organizations prohibit purchasing and selling of substances at work.



### TOKENS OF APPRECIATION AND BRIBERY

- It is inappropriate to receive free substances or sex as tokens of appreciation from service users
- It is inappropriate to offer bribes to others in exchange for special favors



### DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

While on shift, peer workers must separate their personal lives from their professional lives. Some behaviors to avoid are:

- Using office equipment such as phone, fax, and email for personal use
- Borrowing money or other tradeable goods from service users
- Treating clients different based on your personal relationships with them

***Refer to your organizational policies for guidance on what is considered inappropriate.***