

**BELA Asia Pacific
Roundtable:
Practices to Create an
Inclusive Virtual
Workforce—Harassment,
Disrespect, and Bullying**



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CULTURE



Working Hours & Embracing a non-linear workday

Communicate Preferences

- Adopting flexible scheduling means communication with your manager, team and collaborators
- **Communicate your preferred working hours** and break them into:
 - Responsive
 - You're going through emails and a call/message will not break your flow
 - Focused
 - You're working on churning out a deck and interruptions would be detrimental to productivity
 - Unavailable
 - There's a pressing need to deal with family or home issues that would enable you to be more productive once it's out of the way
- Work within your agreed working structure while still delivering your desired outcomes
- **Respect the boundaries** that has been set up by your team members and understand that work has invaded the home environment and as such, greater **empathy** is needed in the new WorkPLAYce 2.0

CULTURE



Remote Work Manifesto

Be Adaptable

- Be **nimble** and have an open mind to changes
- Experiment and find new ways in optimizing your productivity

Be Accountable

- With reduced work visibility, take initiative to be accountable
- Be **curious** and take charge of your own learning and managing of tasks

Open Communication

- Be **courageous** and do not be afraid to ask questions and question assumptions
- Understand that people learn in different ways (Audio, Sensory and Visual); Don't be afraid to ask for what you need
- Over-communicate with your manager and team to prevent miscommunication

Asynchronous Work

- Making use of remote facilitation tools, we don't have to work at the same time but rather work at each person's convenience on the same project

Documentation is Key

- Document processes, meetings and recap key agreements



Availability

Intentional Communication

- Communicate your work preferences with your team
- Be more intentional in [revealing your availability using Microsoft Teams](#)
 - E.g Available, Busy or Do Not Disturb
 - Block off meeting times in Outlook if your meeting is not reflected on your calendar
 - Make use of 'My Analytics; on Microsoft Outlook to set **'Focus Time' blocks** that automatically sets your Microsoft Teams status to 'Focusing'
 - Do not feel apologetic to take your lunch break and focus on yourself





Message from Dennis

We concluded our **2020 Ethical Culture Survey** results last month with a **76% participation rate** – thank you to everyone who participated and shared your honest feedback.

Overall, we saw healthy improvements across the various pillars - namely Awareness of Programme and Resources, Perceptions of the Function, Organisational Justice and Leadership Team Perceptions. On the other hand, **bullying and discrimination** were cited as leading issues reportedly observed by our employees in the past 12 months. This is disappointing news, but I am confident we will address this together as one Prudential. An inclusive workplace starts with every single one of us.

As the majority of us continue to work from home, it is important that we ensure this working arrangement does not lead to a hostile or less respectful work environment. It might be easier for some people to bully or harass someone from behind a computer screen than in person. An abusive person may also feel more confident that he or she can get away with inappropriate behaviour outside of the earshot of other colleagues.



On this note, I want to emphasise that **we do not tolerate any form of bullying or discrimination in our workplace**, regardless of our working arrangement. I expect all of us to treat one another with care, respect and inclusiveness. Our position on bullying and discrimination and our policies are applied with equal force even in a remote working arrangement.

Along with the rest of the Chiefs and the Leadership Team, I remain accessible if you would like to raise an issue with us. Of course, our various channels including the Ethics Advisors, DORight reporting channels, your HR business partners and our global Speak Out channel remain open and available.

If you've experienced or witnessed any wrongdoing or unethical behaviour, **please be brave and speak up for yourself and for others.**

Let us continue to be **courageous and do the right thing.**

- Dennis

CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT

Last month, a **team lead was issued with a letter of warning, including the removal of supervisory role**, for using harsh words and tone, and openly correcting subordinates in front of others.

In addition, a second **employee was issued with a letter of warning** for sharing employee performance information with other team members at a level of detail that was inappropriate.



HOW MIGHT WE CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE?



"Planning and leading by example are key factors. **Be the shield for your team**, ensure their work-life balance, and respect their right to rest."

Xavier Martin
Principal Engineer



"**Shed the superhero image** - don't suffer in silence. Ask for help when you need it. Be accountable for your work, but don't let it spill into your personal life."

Franca Giamberini
Associate Manager
Strategic Advisory



"**Look for the beauty inside.** When you look past external appearances to see the positive qualities of a person, prejudice and disrespect will fall away. When you see the beauty inside other people, they will see the beauty inside you too."

Rosanna Basso
Lead Policy Writer



"Workplace inclusivity is not about getting everyone involved in everything, but **getting the right people to do the right thing at the right time.** Respectful leaders are those who deliver more than they promise and not those who promise more than they can deliver."

Tan Kah Yin
Head of Talent Governance



"It's vital that we recognise that people have their individual needs, interests, and strengths. By taking time to **understand them and their view of the world**, we can be better placed to make a positive difference."

Paul Williams
Senior Operational Risk Manager



"Give people time and space to get themselves back together. For many, they need **understanding and not judgement.**"

Aneke Rogiers de Gooijer
Senior Acquisition Partner



"**Create an environment that celebrates differences** - a safe space where all can thrive and feel valued, accepted, respected, and included."

Louise Ho
Head of Emerging Affairs and Mass Segment



"Speaking with each other face-to-face, bumping into each other in the office, or sharing a casual conversation - these informal interactions are **irreplaceable.**"

"We need to look out for each other - especially when feelings of economic anxiety, impatience, or frustration creep in."

Nelson Raj
Lead, Learning and Development Delivery

As mentioned, this year's Ethical Culture Survey results revealed that incidents of bullying reportedly observed have increased as the boundaries of our workplace have evolved.

While the working from home (WFH) arrangement provides many advantages such as fewer commutes, more family time, and greater flexibility, **it has its shortcomings.**

When the lines between personal and work are blurred, there is a tendency to become more relaxed in our conduct and communication. **This could lead to inappropriate jokes or remarks made in meetings or calls, and can be exacerbated further by miscommunication. The lack of non-verbal expression may result in misunderstood or insensitive messages.** Furthermore, one-on-one communication and the lack of bystanders makes it easier for a bully to single out their victim without witnesses, with nowhere to escape. As the physical distinction between work life and personal life is further eroded, there's nowhere to flee to go at the end of the day to relax and decompress.

During the Great Recession of 2008, there was a fourfold increase in the number of harassment charges filed compared to the preceding years. Stress arising from profit loss and job uncertainty can directly influence tensions within workgroups and contribute to hostility.

When working remotely, it's easy to forget that the person on the other end of the call or email is a human being with feelings, and not just a voice or words on a screen. Here are some tips on how we can make our workplace more inclusive and respectful:

- **Overcommunicate** to prevent any miscommunication
- **Listen for what is not being said and be empathetic** - sometimes someone could be going through a personal challenge at home
- **Replace blame with curiosity** - find out what went wrong and learn from mistakes
- **Be polite** at all times
- Being under pressure does not mean you have to act like a jerk, you can still be nice and get your points across
- **Tackle the issue, not the individual**

*EthicsAdvisor | 17 June 2020 | "No Work-From-Home News, No Resignation" #working

Find out more on **Anti-Bullying here.**



Help and Guidance

- Discuss with your direct line manager
- Speak with a member of the Leadership Team
- Reach out to your HR Business Partner
- Talk to an Ethics Advisor
- DORight reporting channel and hotline
- Speak Out channel

DORight Reporting Channels

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For more information, visit the PACS Ethics Team Sharepoint site by clicking [here](#).