

Speak up for a workplace where jokes never cross the line

Overview

It's just a harmless joke. Or is it? It may be easy for some to dismiss complaints about inappropriate humour. Some may say they were just trying to lighten things up a bit. But more often than not, jokes that are inappropriate, whether they are sexual, sexist, racist or prejudiced, make others feel uncomfortable, excluded or demeaned. And when this behaviour is considered "normal" in a workplace, it can be overwhelming to think that there is no change in sight. That's why it's important to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable speaking up.



Insights

- Studies have shown people continue to be subjected to inappropriate humour in the workplace
- Many workers admit that they would not complain about inappropriate humour out of fear of being stigmatized as being overly sensitive, a prude, a troublemaker, or not a team player
- The long-term effect of being subjected to derogatory and demeaning jokes may have a significant [impact on individuals](#)



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Discussion

What is your personal experience with this topic?

- Have you had any experience with this topic? Have you ever witnessed this behaviour? Did you do anything in the moment?
- Do you think people are becoming more aware of the negative impact this has on a workplace environment or community?
- Have you ever felt that complaining about a joke would damage your reputation or your social standing?



Strategies to combat inappropriate jokes

- Talk about the end goal. Namely, creating and maintaining a safe environment for everyone
- Give everyone permission to speak up without fear of reprisal
- Lead by example—speak up in the moment [to demonstrate your commitment](#)

To learn more, visit [the RBC Inclusion Learning Centre](#)



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