

## 9 SPEAK UP AT WORK

### PURPOSE

Young workers often feel uncomfortable raising concerns in the workplace. One way to encourage speaking up at work is to address how professional communication skills can help young workers be heard. This fun, interactive activity teaches young employees how to engage in appropriate workplace dialogue.

### ACTIVITY TIME

Approximately 15 minutes

### PREPARATION

- Scripts are included in the activity book on pages 9–11. Alternatively, you can print the activity scripts from the website. They can be found at:  
**[www.promotingusafetyhealth.com](http://www.promotingusafetyhealth.com)**  
Click on "Start the Conversation Activities," then find the "Speak Up at Work" activity and click on the "Handout" link. Print the scripts handouts letter size, single sided,
- Print PUSH Cards.

### DIRECTIONS

Supervisor reads out loud

**Supervisor reads out loud**

#### SUPERVISOR READS QUESTION

- ✘ *Do not read out loud*



PUSH is an Oregon Healthy Workforce Center Project funded through the NIOSH Total Worker Health Center of Excellence Grant U19OH10154.

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## BACKGROUND

Today we will be talking about how to speak up at work when you are asked to do something you think is unsafe.

At some point, you may be asked to do work that makes you feel unsafe. Instead of forging ahead, it is important to pause to ask for help and voice your concerns!

### WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE DON'T SPEAK UP WHEN THEY ARE ASKED TO DO SOMETHING THEY FEEL IS DANGEROUS OR RISKY?

✘ *Call on staff to answer.*

#### Reasons could include:

- ☉ They are afraid to admit they don't know how to do something.
- ☉ They are worried about getting fired.
- ☉ They think their supervisor or manager knows best and wouldn't ask them to do anything that is unsafe.
- ☉ They are nervous about talking to a manager.

#### Very good.

✘ *Call on staff to answer. If workers don't call out any of the answers below, read them to them.*

Remember that your bosses are people too! They don't want you to get hurt. Most likely, they will be understanding of your concern and glad that you spoke up.

## ACTIVITY

I will need two volunteers from the audience. You will be reading a script that shows different ways to speak up to your boss, manager, or a coworker.

✘ *Ask for two volunteers. Hand each volunteer one of the two scripts found below. Designate "Volunteer A" and "Volunteer B." Give them a minute or two to read through the script.*

I will read through the scenario and have each of the volunteers respond.

It will be your job as the audience to decide which worker spoke up the right way and tell me why it is correct.

## SCENARIO 1

You work on the clean-up crew for the city's Parks and Recreation Department. I am your supervisor. One day it is in the high 90's outside and you've been working hard for several hours. You begin to feel really hot and tired, and worry that you might faint. What do you say?

### Let's hear from Volunteer A.

- ✘ *Ask Volunteer A to read their response. Volunteer A will say in an angry voice: "Hey boss man! I am sweating so bad. You better give me a break!"*

### That is one way to ask for a break. Now let's hear from Volunteer B.

- ✘ *Volunteer B will say in a normal voice: "Hey boss, it is very hot outside today and I have been working for a long time without a break. I'm starting to feel a little faint. I'd like to take my break and sit in the shade until I feel better, please."*

### WHO ASKED FOR A BREAK THE RIGHT WAY?

- ✘ *Call on audience*

**Volunteer B asked the right way.** They were not rude and explained why they needed a break. If you are feeling unwell at work, speak up! Your boss needs to know so they can help you avoid an accident or an unnecessary trip to the hospital.

Good job volunteers. Can I get two new volunteers to help me?

- ✘ *Give scripts to new volunteers.*

## SCENARIO 2

Your job is to assemble parts at a local factory. You've heard that factories can be dangerous, and it seems like there are lots of hazards on your job. I am your supervisor. When you first started this job, I gave you some written materials on safety to read, but they had no information specific to your new workplace's policies and job hazards. Now I want you to sign a paper saying that you have been trained about safety. What do you say to me?

- ✘ *Ask Volunteer A to read their response.*
- ✘ *Volunteer A will say in a professional voice: "This is my first job in a factory, and I don't think that these materials have given me all of the information I need to stay safe at work. I'd like more safety training on the hazards in this workplace that I will encounter in my job before I sign a paper saying that I have been trained."*

### That is one way to ask. Now let's hear from Volunteer B.

- ✘ *Volunteer B will respond in an angry voice: "What are you trying to do, kill me!?!? How am I supposed to be safe by reading a piece of paper? I am not going to sign anything until I get hands-on training!"*

### WHO ASKED FOR A BREAK THE RIGHT WAY?

- ✘ *Call on audience.*

**Volunteer A asked the right way.** Getting angry and demanding things is never the right way to get what you want. Many times, injuries in the workplace occur in new workers and workers who haven't been properly trained on safety procedures in their workplace. Employers are required to give you appropriate training—it's the law! If you ever have a safety concern at work, protect yourself, and talk to your supervisor about it.

Okay, one more set of volunteers, please.

- ✘ *Pick two new volunteers.*

### SCENARIO 3

Last month, a new woman was hired to help in the deli department at your local grocery store. Both of you are over 18 and legally allowed to use the meat slicer. You notice the new staff member doesn't put the guard down when she is slicing meat for customers. Your safety training was very clear to always use the guard on the meat slicer, otherwise a serious injury could occur. She's older than you, and has worked at another deli for several years. What should you say?

- ✘ *Ask volunteer A to read the script.*
- ✘ *Volunteer A will say under their breath in a low tone, "You're going to cut your hand off."*
- ✘ *Ask volunteer B to read the script.*
- ✘ *Volunteer B will say clearly in a professional tone, "I noticed when you were slicing meat for a customer that the guard wasn't down. Our boss is a real stickler about always putting that guard down. I wouldn't want you to get yelled at or injured. I can show you how the guard works if you want me to."*

### WHOSE RESPONSE WAS CORRECT?

- ✘ *Call on audience.*

**Very good, Volunteer B was correct**, because they used a professional tone, informed the new staff member about the workplace policy, and asked the staff member if they could show them how to operate the guard. Sometimes people don't follow safety procedures because they don't know them or don't know how to follow them. It's important to take care of your co-workers and speak up if you see them doing something unsafe.

**Very good, let's give our volunteers a round of applause.**

### PUSH FORWARD

- ✘ *Pass out PUSH cards.*

On your card is a link to the Promoting U through Safety and Health page ([www.promotingusafetyhealth.com](http://www.promotingusafetyhealth.com)). If you follow this page you can learn about other ways to stay safe at home and at work.

# 9 SPEAK UP AT WORK SCRIPTS HANDOUT

