Toxic Talk

What Would You Say?

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Facilitator Guide

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Introduction

Gossip, gripes, rumors, and made up stories to entertain coworkers have become a national past time in the workplace. Unfortunately, these forms of toxic talk have serious repercussions for your employees, your managers and supervisors and the profitability and productivity of your entire organization.

Toxic talk has become a serious issue that organizations need to address before it gets out of control. The effects include: loss of productivity, negative work environment, undermining teamwork. There is even a breakdown of trust within the organization.

Whether your organization already has a policy on toxic talk or you're just beginning to look at the effects damaging communication has on your productivity, this program is designed to give your organization a chance to discuss some real issues affecting your workforce.

It's important to note that this program is not advocating a "silent" workforce where employees and managers don't talk to one another. In fact, relationships and camaraderie at work are essential for an engaged workforce. However, the examples depicted in this program have crossed the line and have become damaging to employee relationships, employee morale and productivity.

The program, ***Toxic Talk: What Would You Say?,*** consists of three short open-ended scenarios. Two scenarios are video based and the third is done as a listening case study. The scenarios are open-ended to provide organizations with a tool to initiate discussion.

This program focuses on how to respond if you become engaged in toxic conversation and helps participants to redirect potentially hazardous communication. The program also helps participants understand the different perceptions of those involved in the toxic talk and how others are affected by this behavior.

As with many issues surrounding the human dynamic there are few clear cut answers. Depending on the culture, policies and procedures of your organization, it's a good idea to determine how you'd like your managers and employees to approach these challenging situations.

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Program Overview

Toxic Talk: What Would You Say? provides three universal scenarios that could take place in any organization, in any industry. The scenario:

- **Gossip** – this scenario depicts five characters: Doris, Mattie and Richard who are actively seen in the scenario and Christine and Carol who are seen, but never heard from. The characters are colleagues in a busy office. Participants should look at the situation from all five of the characters' perspectives.
- **Gripes** – this scenario depicts four characters. Cedric who is griping to Mark about the boss, Suzanne and another coworker Chan who is working alongside Cedric and Mark. Participants should look at the situation from all four of the characters' perspectives.
- **Rumors** – This listening exercise, contained in the PowerPoint on the Training Materials CD, is a discussion that is "overheard" by participants. Max stops by Melody's office to update her on the latest rumors he heard from Jim. As soon as Max leaves to get more information Melody calls Dan to spread the word. Participants should look at the situation from all four of the characters' perspectives.

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There are two parts to this scenario:

- *The Situation* shares the storyline and the interesting human dynamics affecting the characters.
- *The Perceptions section in the Gossip scenario* provides additional insight by allowing participants to hear each of the character's inner self-talk. This self-talk sheds light on their inner feelings, motivations and backgrounds.
- *The Perceptions section for Gripes and Rumors* will be completed by participants to allow them to empathize and look at the situations from the characters' perception. This will help participants to see how toxic conversation can occur even if the person isn't intending any harm.

A PowerPoint™ presentation is also provided to help you facilitate your program. Simply add or delete slides as appropriate.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this program, participants will be able to:

- Define toxic talk
- Identify the negative effects of toxic talk in the workplace
- Recognize when their communication has turned toxic
- Respond proactively when others are engaged in toxic talk in the workplace

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How to Use This Program

This program is designed to allow for facilitator flexibility and customization. Here are a few suggested uses for this program:

- Communications Training – This program is a great addition to an effective communications training program.
- Harassment Training – If you have already started a harassment prevention initiative in your organization this is a great next step. It allows you to discuss how toxic talk can easily become an issue of harassment. Toxic talk creates a negative work environment and what may have started out as harmless office chatter becomes the basis for a lawsuit.
- Management/Supervisory Development Training – Toxic talk is not a topic typically seen in management development programs. However, managers and supervisors are often the ones on the front line expected to deal with this type of behavior in the workplace. Your organization should take a stand on toxic talk in the workplace and educate your managers and supervisors on how they should handle this issue. This program can be a stand alone lunch and learn or it can be an addition to another management development program.

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Possible Session Agendas

Option 1

3.5 Hour Agenda

Introduction	10 min
Defining Toxic Talk	15 min
Gossip: Situation Discussion	20 min
Gossip: Perceptions & What Would You Say?	20 min
Break	15 min
Recognizing When Communication Turns Toxic	20 min
Gripes: Situation Discussion	15 min
Gripes: Perceptions & What Would You Say?	20 min
Break	15 min
Rumors: Situation Discussion	15 min
Rumors: Perceptions & What Would you Say?	20 min
Action Plan	15 min
Session Debrief	10 min

Option 2 –

1.5-Hour Agenda - Use each scenario as its own program

Introduction	10 min
Exercise (Either Defining Toxic Talk or Recognizing When Communication Turns Toxic)	15-20 min
Break	10 min
Situation Discussion	15-20 min
Perceptions & What Would you Say?	15-20 min
Debrief	10 min

Option 3 –

1-Hour Agenda

View each situation and use a few of the discussion questions from each scenario to discuss with your large group.

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Preparing for Your Session

Here are a few things for you to consider as you prepare for your session.

Prior to Your Session

- Read the facilitator's guide and determine how you will use the scenarios.
- Because the scenarios are open-ended and no definitive answer is provided, it is a good idea to discuss these scenarios with others in your organization. Based on your organization's mission, vision, values and culture, consider an appropriate approach for managers and employees to reference for this situation in your organization.
- Review any organizational policies or procedures that may apply to the scenario. Use the program as an opportunity to discuss how your organization's policies and procedures would affect this situation.
- Review and edit the PowerPoint™ as appropriate. Remember to add any organizational specific information.
- Arrange for the appropriate equipment/supplies:
    - DVD player, projection screen, laptop, flipchart, markers

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During Your Session:

- Establish ground rules on a flip chart.
- Limit discussion to the allotted time so you stay on schedule
- Draw out managers with open-ended questions (e.g., What do you think? How would you have handled that situation?, etc.) and direct managers' questions to other members of the group.
- Encourage managers to apply the workshop experiences and learning to their specific workplace or situation.
- Keep discussion focused on the intended topic.
- When appropriate, offer your opinion and share your experiences. But remember, your role is to facilitate, not to lecture.

Facilitator's Materials

Introduction and Overview

Time and Materials Needed:

- 10 minutes
- PowerPoint Screens 1-2

1. **DISPLAY PowerPoint (PP) 1** and have it showing as participants arrive.

2. **WELCOME** participants to the program and make any necessary introductions

3. **DISPLAY PP 2**. **REVIEW** the learning objectives.

4. **DISCUSS** the agenda and take care of any housekeeping issues such as: breaks, bathroom locations, etc.

5. **ACTIVITY –** Divide participants into groups of two. Have participants take two minutes to interview one another. Tell participants that their goal is to be able to introduce their partner to the group and be able to tell a story about their partner—preferably something unique that we don't already know about them.

   This activity gets participants interacting and disclosing some information about themselves. But, most importantly, it's a great opportunity to explain how some social discussion in the workplace is not only acceptable, but encouraged. It's how we build relationships and camaraderie at work. Unfortunately, some discussions in the workplace can cross the line on what is appropriate and becoming damaging to the employees and the organization.

6. **TRANSITION – SAY** something like:

   We have each learned a little about one another. We have probably found some similarities and differences among us, but our discussion and topics have stayed professional and appropriate. This leads us to our next discussion, which is to identify when our discussions turn toxic.

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Defining Toxic Talk

Time and Materials Needed:

- 5 minutes
- PowerPoint Screen 3

1. **EXPLAIN** to participants that it is important to have a consistent definition of toxic talk.

   PLEASE NOTE: if your organization has already communicated specific definitions of damaging communication to your workforce, it is important that you replace the program definitions with your organizational definitions.

2. **DISPLAY PP 3** and **DISCUSS.**

   Toxic talk – Toxic talk is any communication that becomes damaging to either the employees or the organization. The three most typical types of toxic talk are gossip, gripes and rumors.

3. **EXPLAIN** the differences between gossip, gripes and rumors to participants. It is important that you make a distinction between gossip and rumors. Although these terms are often used interchangeably, for the purposes of this program gossip is of a personal nature and rumors are about the organization. Gripes are complaints that are unproductive and directed at the wrong person.

4. **ASK** participants the following:

   - **Can you think of other forms of toxic talk in the workplace?**
   - **How does being a part of these types of destructive conversation make you feel?**
   - **How are the people that constantly participate in these types of conversation perceived by others?**
   - **What are the negative effects of toxic talk in the workplace?**

5. **TRANSITION – SAY** something like:

   Now let's take a closer look at one of the most prevalent forms of destructive communication in the workplace—Gossip.

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Gossip – Situation Discussion

Time and Materials Needed:

- 30 minutes
- DVD, ***Toxic Talk: What Would You Say?***
- PowerPoint Screens 4-5

1. **DISPLAY PP 4** and **DISCUSS.**

   Gossip–

   Gossip is conversation of a social nature that is personal, sensational and usually derogatory.

2. **DISPLAY PP 5** and **DISCUSS Quote:**

   There is so much good in the worst of us,
   And so much bad in the best of us,
   That it hardly becomes any of us
   To talk about the rest of us.
   Anonymous

3. **ASK** participants:
   - **What do you think this quote means?**
   - **Why do you think people spend so much time gossiping?**
   - **Have any of you ever been hurt or negatively affected by gossip in the workplace? How did it make you feel?**
4. **EXPLAIN** to participants that the scenario depicts five characters: Doris, and Mattie are gossiping about Richard and Christine. And a coworker, Carol, who is working nearby is able to hear everything. The characters are colleagues in a busy office. Participants should look at the situation from all five of the characters' perspectives.
5. **VIEW** the first situation, **GOSSIP**. Pause the DVD when the screen goes blank or when the word "Perceptions" is at the bottom of the screen.

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6. After viewing the first situation, **GOSSIP**, take a few minutes to discuss participants' observations of the scene. Ask the following questions:

   - **How would you describe the work environment in the scenario?**
   - **How is each of these characters affected by the gossiping behavior?**
   - **What were some of the problem behaviors Doris exhibited in the scene? What messages do these behaviors send to others and what is the impact in the workplace?**
   - **What was Mattie's reaction to Doris?**
   - **What was Carol's reaction and response to the interaction?**
   - **What effect did the gossip have on the productivity of the department.**
   - **How do you think Richard and Christine will feel when they find out what is being said about them?**

7. **TRANSITION – SAY** something like:

   Another important point to make is that if the Gossip gets out of hand and actually damages someone's career that person could have a defamation suit on their hands. Therefore it's best to stop gossip situations before they potentially damage someone's career.

   Now we have looked at the situation from the outside. Let's take a few minutes to understand the different perceptions of some of the people involved in this scene.

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Gossip – Perceptions & What Would You Say?

Time and Materials Needed:

- 15 minutes
- DVD, ***Toxic Talk: What Would You Say?***
- PowerPoint Screens 6-7

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1. **EXPLAIN** to participants that they are about to view the perceptions of several of the characters in the **GOSSIP** scenario. These will be short monologues directed at the camera that share the characters internal thoughts and feelings.
2. **VIEW** the next section of the **GOSSIP** scenario, "**PERCEPTIONS**."
3. **ASK** participants the following:
   - **Were any of their personal perceptions surprising to you?**
   - **Did hearing their personal perceptions affect how you see the situation?**
   - **What did you learn about Doris, Mattie, and Richard from listening to their internal thoughts?**
   - **What do you think Christine's and Carol's perception would have been?**
4. **DIVIDE** participants into five groups. **SHOW** and **DISCUSS PP 6**.

   What Would You Say?

   - **To Doris**
   - **To Mattie**
   - **To Richard**
   - **To Christine**
   - **To Carol**

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5. **EXPLAIN** to participants that they are now responsible for making a recommendation about how to address this behavior with their assigned character. Participants should answer the questions, "What would you say?" Allow participants 5-8 minutes to discuss their recommendation; each group should be prepared to discuss their answer with the large group.

   NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR: There is no right or wrong answer to the "What would you say?" question. Depending on your organization's policies and culture, any number of responses may be appropriate. Prior to the training, it's a good idea to discuss the scenario and determine how your organization would prefer participants to approach a similar scenario in your organization. If you'd like a recommended approach on how to address toxic talk, then discuss PP 7 with participants or replace PP7 with your organization's expectations.

6. **DISPLAY PP 7: Recommended Approach**

   - **Arrange to meet in a private place where you won't be interrupted**
   - **State the problem and the effect it has on you, others and the organization**
   - **Get agreement there is a problem**
   - **State your expectations and get commitment**

7. **EXPLAIN** to participants that it's important to take personal responsibility for eliminating toxic talk in the workplace. So, they should have this discussion in a private place where additional gossip doesn't occur. Employees should be prepared to state the problem using specific examples of how and why this kind of behavior is harmful. Ask the employee to share their perspective and listen. Then, get agreement that problems have resulted from this form of toxic talk. If they don't see there is a problem, their behavior will never change. Finally, tell the employee clearly that you expect no more negative comments, gossip, gripes, and rumors about others. You should be clear that this also includes innuendos either spoken or inferred by a facial expression, body language or tone of voice. Then, get commitment that the behavior will stop.

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Recognizing When Communication Turns Toxic

Time and Materials Needed:

- 15 minutes
- PowerPoint Screens 8-11
- Flipchart

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1. **ASK** participants the following questions:
   - **How do you know when your communication has turned toxic?**
   - **What do you think are the signs that you have crossed the line?**

2. **SAY** something like:
   It can be a real challenge to know when you have crossed the line. Here are a few things to keep in mind when you are interacting with others.

3. **Show PP 8-9** and **SAY** the following:
   Ask Yourself:
   - **Is what I am about to say true?**
   - **Is it harmless?**
   - **How would I feel if someone said something similar about me?**
   - **How would I feel if the person I was discussing suddenly happened upon my conversation?**
     - **Would I be embarrassed?**
   - **How would I feel if I saw my words quoted in tomorrow's newspaper?**
   - **How am I going to feel later if I say this? (or listen to this?)**
   - **Am I directing my comments to the right individual?**

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- **Can this person do something about my concerns or am I just griping?**

4. **STATE** the following:

   Now, let's use these criteria to determine if some common topics of conversation are just social conversation at work or toxic talk.

5. **DISPLAY PP 10-11** and review each statement. In the PP, on the first click of the mouse the statement will appear in black. On the second click of the mouse, the statement will appear green if it is normal social conversation at work and red if it is toxic talk. The answers are provided for you below.

   Social Conversation or Toxic Talk?

   - **Shelly had her baby yesterday, it's a boy! SC**
   - **The baby Barb is carrying isn't her husband's! TT**
   - **I drove by Third Street last night and guess whose truck was still outside the bar? TT**
   - **Mr. Thompson had a heart attack last night and will be out of the office for the next few weeks. SC**
   - **We need to come up with a more efficient process for handling errors. SC**
   - **Bob said that Jim is going to choose Carol for the next team lead position, but it hasn't been announced yet. TT**
   - **Greg doesn't know what he's doing asking for all this information, he's wasting our time. TT**
   - **Did you see the all employee memo, we are getting out today at 3:00 p.m. for the holiday? SC**

6. **TRANSITION – SAY** something like:

   Now that we have learned to better identify toxic talk, let's take a look at another challenging situation.

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Gripes

Time and Materials Needed:

- 15-20 minutes
- ***DVD, Toxic Talk: What Would You Say?***
- PP Screen 12

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1. **DISPLAY PP 12** and **DISCUSS.**

   Gripes–

   Gripes are complaints that are discussed with individuals who can do nothing to change or effect the situation or problem.

2. **EXPLAIN** to participants that the scenario depicts four characters. Cedric who is griping to Mark about the boss, Suzanne. Also, there's another coworker, Chan, who is working alongside Cedric and Mark. Participants should look at the situation from all four of the characters' perspectives.

3. **VIEW** the situation; **GRIPES.** Pause the DVD when you see the words *"What Would You Say?"* at the bottom of the screen.

4. After viewing the situation, **GRIPES**, take a few minutes to discuss participants' observations of the scene. **ASK** the following questions:

   - **What's going on in this situation?**
   - **What is Cedric's real issue?**
   - **Is Mark part of the problem or the solution?**
   - **How is Chan affected by the interaction?**
   - **Why do you think Cedric is upset with Mark?**
   - **How is the work environment affected in this situation?**

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Gripes – Perceptions & What Would You Say?

Time and Materials Needed:

- 15 minutes
- DVD, ***Toxic Talk: What Would You Say?***
- PowerPoint Screens 13 & possibly 7

1. **DIVIDE** participants into four groups. Assign each group a character.
2. **EXPLAIN** to participants that in the last example, **GOSSIP,** at the end of the scene, we learned the perceptions of several of the main characters. This time, participants will be assigned a character and it will be their job to create the perception of the character. This will help participants to empathize and identify with how the characters are thinking and feeling. Sometimes participants will identify and connect with the characters and other times they will find it difficult to justify the character's behavior. Allow participants to explore the perceptions of each character. It is also acceptable for the groups to have more than one take or vantage point on a character's perception. This will widen the worldview of all participants about the perceptions of others.
3. **DEBRIEF** the exercise by having each group share their character's perceptions with the group.
4. **ASK** participants the following:
   - **What did you learn about these characters by looking at the situation from their perspective?**
   - **Are there other issues that need to be addressed in this situation besides just the Gripes issue?**
   - **Why do you think people choose to gripe about issues versus addressing the issues with someone who can actually do something about it?**
   - **What stops people from bringing up important issues?**
   - **How can we create an environment that supports productive conversation but eliminates griping?**

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5. **DISPLAY PP 12 – What would you say**?

   - **To Cedric**
   - **To Mark**
   - **To Chan**
   - **To Suzanne**

6. **EXPLAIN** to participants that they are responsible for making a recommendation on what should be said to these different characters to make the conversation more productive. Allow participants several minutes to discuss which of the options they would recommend, each group should be prepared to share "What they would say" with the large group.

7. **NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:** There is no right or wrong answer to the "What would you say?" question. Depending on your organization's policies and culture any one of the options could be considered appropriate. Prior to the training it is a good idea to discuss the scenario and determine how your organization would prefer participants to approach such a similar scenario in your organization.

8. If you used the recommended approach (PP 7) with participants the last time then see if they applied the approach to the scenario this time. If they did apply the approach be sure to provide positive feedback. If they did not follow the approach, then it may be helpful to go over PP 7 with participants again.

9. After their discussion, ASK the following:

   What will you say the next time someone comes to gripe at you?

10. **TRANSITION, SAY** something like:

    One of the most powerful ways to diminish gripes in the workplace is to take personal responsibility and address the behavior as soon as it happens. Now that we have discussed griping, let's see what happens when RUMORS about what's going on in the office go through the grapevine.

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Rumors - Discussion

Time and Materials Needed:

- 15-20 minutes
- ***DVD, Toxic Talk: What Would You Say?***
- PP Screen 14 & 15 (Listening Situation "Rumors")

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1. **DISPLAY PP 14** and **DISCUSS: Rumors**
   - Rumors are bits of unverified information that circulate through the office grapevine
   - They are most common in environments that are confronted with uncertainty.

2. **EXPLAIN** to participants that the scenario depicts four characters. Max is sharing a rumor that he heard from Jim with a coworker, Melody. Also, there's another coworker, Dan, who is also brought into the situation. Participants should look at the situation from all four of the characters' perspectives.

3. **DISPLAY PP 15** and play the listening situation: **RUMORS.**

4. After listening to the situation, **RUMORS**, take a few minutes to discuss participants' observations of the scene. **ASK** the following questions:

5. **ASK** participants the following questions:
   - **Who started this rumor?**
   - **What are the chances the rumor is true?**
   - **Who could be negatively affected by this rumor? How?**
   - **Is it ok to pass the information along if it turns out to be true?**
   - **What could the damage be if the rumor turns out to be untrue or only partially true.**

6. **TRANSITION – SAY** something like: **Now let's take a look at the characters' perceptions.**

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Rumors – Perceptions & What Would You Say?

Time and Materials Needed:

- 15-20 minutes
- DVD, ***Toxic Talk: What Would You Say?***
- PowerPoint Screens 16 & possibly 7

1. **DIVIDE** participants into four groups. Assign each group a character.
2. **EXPLAIN** to participants that each group will take one of the characters and try to see the situation from their perspective. How do they think the characters are justifying their behavior?
3. **DEBRIEF** the exercise by having each group share their character's perceptions with the group.
4. **ASK** participants the following:
   - **What did you learn about these characters by looking at the situation from their perspective?**
   - **Are there other issues that need to be addressed in this situation besides just the Rumors issue?**
   - **Why do you think people choose to spread rumors?**
   - **How can we create an environment that stops rumors from spreading?**
5. **DISPLAY PP 16: What Would You Say?**

   - To Melody

   - To Max

   - To Jim

   - To Dan
6. **EXPLAIN** to participants that they are responsible for making a recommendation on what should be said to these different characters to make the conversation more productive. Allow participants several minutes to discuss which of the options they would recommend, each group should be prepared to share "What they would say" with the large group.

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7. **NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:** There is no right or wrong answer to the "What would you say?" question. Depending on your organization's policies and culture any one of the options could be considered appropriate. Prior to the training it is a good idea to discuss the scenario and determine how your organization would prefer participants to approach such a similar scenario in your organization.

8. If you used the recommended approach (PP 7) with participants the last time then see if they applied the approach to the scenario this time. If they did apply the approach be sure to provide positive feedback. If they did not follow the approach, then it may be helpful to go over PP 7 with participants again.

9. After their discussion, ASK the following:

   What will you say the next time someone tries to share a rumor with you?

10. **TRANSITION – SAY** something like:

    Let's take a few minutes to plan how we will handle these types of situations in the future.

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Action Plan

Time and Materials Needed:

- 10 minutes
- ***Action Plan Handout*** (page 26)

1. **DISTRIBUTE** the *Action Plan Handout* to participants.

2. **EXPLAIN** to participants that they will be filling out an action plan to determine how they can use some of the insights and information they learned in the program and apply it to their work environments.

3. Allow participants several minutes to fill out their action plans. Then ask participants to share some of their action steps.

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Session Debrief

Time and Materials Needed:

- 10 minutes
- PP Screen 17
- ***Post Test*** Handout (page 27-28)
- ***Session Evaluation*** Handout (page 29)

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1. **SHOW PP Screen 17**

2. **DISTRIBUTE** the ***Post Test*** handout and give participants a few minutes to fill it out.

3. **DISTRIBUTE** the ***Session Evaluation*** Handout to participants.

4. **EXPLAIN** to participants that they will be filling out a session evaluation to provide you feedback on the program.

5. Allow participants several minutes to fill out their session evaluations.

6. Before participants walk out the door, recap for them any ah-ha moments that you observed during the course of the training.

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Post Test Answers

1. c
2. b
3. c
4. d
5. a
6. b
7. False. Getting to know your coworkers and having relationships is encouraged as long as the conversation doesn't turn toxic.
8. c
9. True. You want to have the conversation in a private place where additional gossip doesn't occur.
10. c

Action Plan

1. List below three things you learned about how gossip, gripes and rumors affect the work environment.

2. What action steps will you take the next time you are dealing with toxic talk?

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3. The next time you observe two employees having a toxic conversation, what will you say?

Post Test

Circle the correct answer:

1. **Toxic Talk is:**
   a. The use of profanity in the workplace.
   b. A medical condition.
   c. Is any communication that becomes damaging to either the employees or the organization.
   d. None of the above.

2. **Gossip is:**
   a. Harmless and everyone does it.
   b. Conversation of a social nature that is personal, sensational and usually derogatory.
   c. Conversation that happens only in the workplace that focuses on work issues.
   d. Illegal to engage in at work.

3. **Gripes are:**
   a. Necessary in order to get things to change.
   b. Personal issues that should not be discussed in the workplace.
   c. Complaints that are discussed with individuals who can do nothing to change or effect the situation or problem.
   d. None of the above.

4. **Rumors are:**
   a. Bits of unverified information.
   b. Circulated through the office grapevine.
   c. Common in environments that are confronted with uncertainty.
   d. All of the above.

5. **Which of the following questions should employees NOT ask themselves when trying to determine whether conversation has turned toxic?**
   a. Is communicating this going to make me more popular?
   b. Is what I am about to say true?
   c. Is it harmless?
   d. How would I feel if someone said something similar about me?

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6. Which one of the following statements is NOT considered Toxic Talk?

a. I heard John got fired for stealing company funds.
b. Kelly's daughter made the honor roll again.
c. Dave and Molly were seen together having dinner last night.
d. Both a and c.

7. True or False. It is not safe to talk or get to know your coworkers anymore. It's better to mind your own business.

8. The following are examples of toxic talk:

a. Gossip, rumors and whistle blowers
b. Gossip, social conversation and rumors
c. Gossip, gripes and rumors
d. Gossip, social conversation and whistle blowers

9. True or False. When addressing toxic talk you should always do so privately.

10. When addressing an issue of toxic talk, you should:

a. Be vague so that you don't hurt their feelings
b. Talk about something positive first so that the other person doesn't get defensive.
c. Provide specific examples of inappropriate behavior
d. All of the above.

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Session Evaluation

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The program objectives were explained.					
I can define toxic talk					
I recognize when my communication has turned toxic					
I understand that I need to take personal responsibility for my own communication at work					
I recognize how toxic talk affects communication, relationships and ultimately productivity in the workplace					
The opportunity for participation was sufficient					
The facilitator connected the information to my job					
I found the questions and discussions helpful					
The facilitator was well prepared					
I would recommend this program to others					

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RUMORS SCRIPT

Max: Hey Melody, did you see the entire executive team is in the upstairs conference room…again.

Melody: Yea, they go up there thinking we won't see them and won't know what they're talking about. Can you say downsizing?

Max: Right…ya know, I was talking to Jim in accounting and he was telling me that Ted is retiring early.

Melody: The executive VP, Ted? No way. I thought he was at least 3 or 4 years from retirement.

Max: Not from what Jim said, but that's not all.

Melody: What do you mean?

Max: From what I heard, he's being encouraged to retire early and they are going to bring in someone new. And, if it's who I think it is, then there is going to be some major house cleaning going on.

Melody: Really, who do you think it is?

Max: Well, last week I saw Richard Ames in the lobby waiting to meet with the president.

Melody: The Richard Ames. The guy that took over our competition.

Max: Yep, he's the one.

Melody: Then, fired the entire management team and replaced them with his own people. Do you think that's what's gonna happen here?

Max: No clue. But given what Jim said and what I saw. I think the writing is on the wall.

Melody: Oh that's just great just when I've been promoted to management.

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Max: Yea, I know it will affect all of us. But, the worst will be poor Dan. He just got married and bought a house.

Melody: Oh, Max, that's awful—someone should really give him a heads up about what's going on.

Max: No, Melody, you can't tell anyone what I told you, OK?

Melody: Um, yea, OK.

Max: Hey, I'm gonna head up stairs and see if Patty's heard anything. She sits right outside the conference room.

Melody: OK Max, well keep me posted.

Max: You got it. Catch ya later.

Melody: See ya. Hmmmm…aw somebody's gotta warn him. (dials phone)

Dan: This is Dan in fulfillment. I can't take your call right now, but please leave your name and number at the tone and I will return your call as soon as possible. Beep.

Melody: um…Dan, this is Melody. Give me a call when you get this. You are not going to believe what I just found out. Call me as soon as you get this or better yet—stop by my office.

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