

Vitamin T: Healthy Touch at Work

Presented by Bob Czimbal

Touch at work is a "touchy" issue. How do we handle the disparity between the need for healthy touch and the prevalence of unwanted touch? This workshop will present a precise system of healthy touch guidelines for interacting with students, patients, clients and colleagues. Participants will learn how to teach others to prevent verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse. They will derive ways of establishing a code of conduct to promote healthy, vital, supportive, life-affirming touch at the workplace. This will be a comprehensive training session including an optional Healthy Touch lab.

The workplace can provide us with a source of people with whom to exchange Vitamin T. Since people spend so much time at work, it makes sense to take care of each other while taking care of business. Healthy touch creates good morale, caring relationships and a productive work environment. The appropriateness of touch at work depends on three factors:

- the individual relationships between employees
- the formality or casualness of the workplace
- the amount of visibility to the public.

Touch at work needs to be non-threatening and non-sexual. By adhering to the guidelines of healthy touch, sexual harassment can be prevented. Vitamin T can be used to communicate support, appreciation, respect, encouragement and congratulations. The challenge is to separate out unhealthy forms without losing the positive benefits of Vitamin T.

The Code of Conduct listed below establishes a clear policy for promoting healthy touch at work. It is recommended that employee groups meet with management to discuss feelings about touch and appropriate forms of touch between co-workers.

1. Create an atmosphere conducive to healthy touch.
2. Ask permission before touching if there is any uncertainty.
3. Honor the personal space of others.
4. Exercise the right to refuse touch.
5. Resolve differences in touch comfort levels by direct communication.
6. Exchange only non-sexual forms of Vitamin T at work.
7. Avoid invading another person's personal space.
8. Eliminate ouches.
9. Respect individual touch needs and values.
10. Incorporate the principles of Leveling and the R.I.T.ual of touch in all touch exchanges.

In this era of controversy and confusion about inappropriate touch, we need to maintain the courage of our convictions about the importance of Vitamin T in our daily lives.

Handouts:

Vitamin T

Guidelines for Healthy Touch

These concepts were taken from the book **A Guide to Healthy Touch: Vitamin T** by Bob Czimbal and Maggie Zadikov.
To order: \$18.00

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