

Insensitive Small Talk



- **Some small talk in the workplace is good** – it can help build relationships, make you feel like part of a team, and in turn you work harder to see that team succeed. Or, while you and a colleague chat, you may hear new ideas for that problem you have been stuck on for days.
- At the same time, be careful not to overstep. Always read the other person’s body language. Are you making them uncomfortable? If so, end the conversation. **Some conversations are best left outside the workplace.**
- We are all different. **You may not realize you are being offensive** simply because you have not had the same life experiences as another person.
- Here are some examples of **comments which may be offensive** to certain groups of people:

Women

“Are you pregnant?”
“Don’t be so emotional”
“My wife stays at home with our kids.
Where are yours?”
Referring to her as “sweetie”,
“honey”, “cutie”, etc.
Any kind of sexual comment.

Transgender

“What’s your real name?”
“What did you used to look like?”
“Which bathroom do you use?”

African Americans

“I don’t even think of you as being black.”
“Are you from Detroit?”
“You speak so well for being black!”

Gay or Lesbian

“Wow, I never would have guessed that you’re gay!”
“I suspected you were gay.”
“I have a friend who is gay that you should meet”

People with Disabilities

“What’s wrong with you?”
“How do you go to the bathroom?”
“I’m so sorry”

Veterans

“Thank you for your service, but I don’t think we should have been there in the first place.”
“Have you ever killed anyone?”
“How could you leave your family?”

*For more examples of offensive language, please visit:
<http://www.diversityinc.com/topic/things-not-to-say/>*