

Reducing Stigma and Tolerance and Increasing Responsiveness

Module 3 of Team Awareness Training for Substance Abuse Prevention



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We strongly encourage that trainers review the manual for this module before using the overheads. The manual is available in downloadable PDF (Acrobat Reader) format from www.ibr.tcu.edu

Sequence Notes for Facilitator on TOLERANCE

STEP 1 - Present Purpose and explain objectives (Next Slide)

STEP 2 – Define Tolerance – OVERHEAD #1

STEP 3 - What do you / don't you tolerate? – OVERHEAD #2

STEP 4 - Administer handout, individuals complete (see Notes to Overhead #3) – STEP 5 – Group Discussion (Reach Consensus) on Handout/ REVIEW

STEP 6 - INCREASE RESPONSIVENESS (4 TOOLS CAN BE USED HERE)

TOOL # 1: DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DOING SOMETHING / DOING NOTHING

TOOL # 2: DISCUSS DRINKING CLIMATES - Faces of Tolerance"

TOOL # 3: DISCUSS CAUSES & CONSEQUENCES OF TOLERANCE

(SUGGESTION TO ALWAYS END SESSION WITH TOOL # 4)

TOOL # 4: IDENTIFY WAYS IF BEING MORE RESPONSIVE

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Understanding Tolerance

PURPOSE OF SESSION

Recognize and reduce risky levels of tolerance...

By identifying both personal & group levels of tolerance...

And generating alternative responses to problem coworkers.

STEP 1 –

>> **Introduce the session topic.**

(You may use your own words, but cover the three main ideas below)

- 1) "This session will focus on our attitudes toward real or imagined coworkers who have problems with alcohol or drug use. Specifically, the session examines the attitude of unhelpful or harmful tolerance."
- 2) "Sometimes we tolerate problems because there is nothing we can do about them, we feel helpless about them, and decide that the best attitude is to just "put up with" or tolerate the situation."
- 3) "This session is designed to increase awareness of this unhelpful attitude and to help participants generate alternative, more helpful, and more responsive attitudes."

>> **Show Purpose of Session Overhead.**

You can elaborate with specific objectives (below).

- 1) Identify both personal and group attitudes toward coworkers with alcohol, drug, or other behavior problems.
- 2) Recognize and potentially reduce risky levels of supervisor and coworker tolerance (stigma, enabling, codependence).
- 3) Increase responsiveness to problems

Definition

1: capacity to endure pain or hardship:
ENDURANCE, FORTITUDE, STAMINA

2: sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices
differing from or conflicting with one's own

Overhead # 1

STEP 2 –

Prepare flipchart; record responses to following.

ASK participants what “tolerance” means or what does it mean to “tolerate” a situation or a particular person.

LISTEN for and write down responses and examples that participants provide. Individuals might say “put up with” or “ignore” or “endure” or “stomach.”

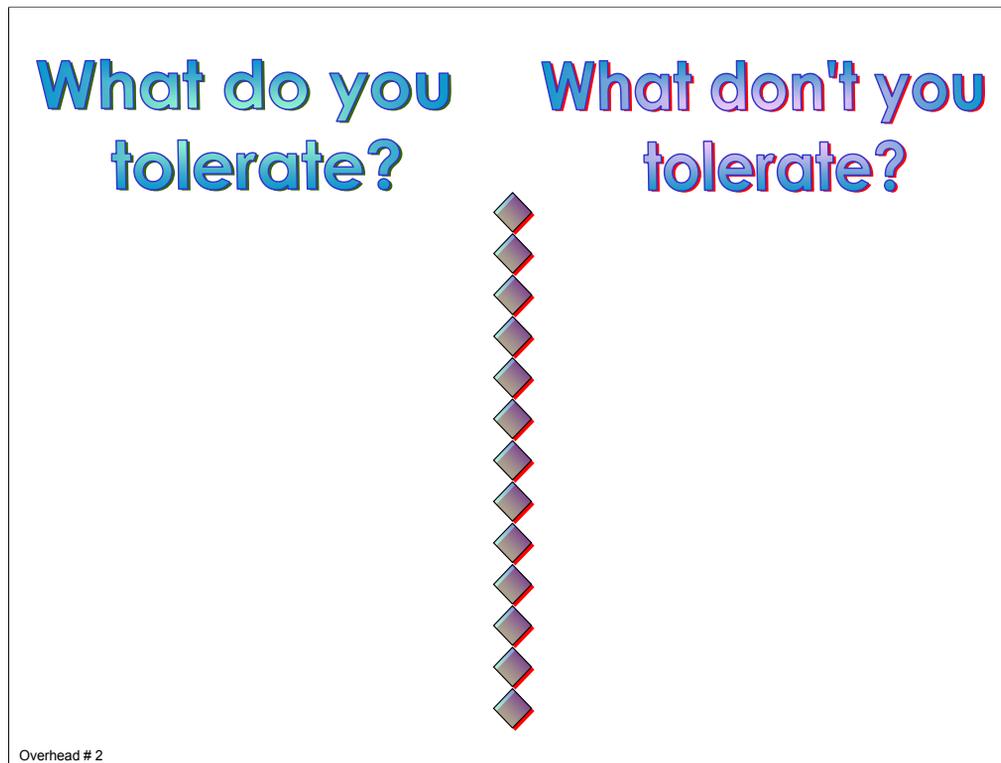
SAY and CONVEY ACCEPTANCE:

“The ideas and definitions you give are all accurate and acceptable. This is because tolerance **can be a very personal feeling or attitude**. Very often when we tolerate something it is because it is causing us pain or discomfort.”

“We also tolerate something because we believe that taking action to correct the situation would cause us pain, discomfort, and anxiety. Instead of taking action, we resign ourselves to the situation.”

“In fact, the dictionary definition of tolerance reads:”

(then put up overhead # 1)



Step 3- What do you / don't you tolerate?

> **Introduce this exercise** by encouraging participants to think about all the different situations and people that they tolerate and that they do not tolerate. Set the tone by encouraging a fun atmosphere and giving some examples. For example, in some sessions participants have come up with the following items that they do or don't tolerate:

- Toilet paper rolled under or over the toilet roll.
- People who take more than 10 items on the "Quick Checkout" 10-item grocery line.
- A certain style or genre of music (e.g., rap, opera, electronic, etc.).

> **Distribute Handout 1 (copies of Overhead #2) or Flipchart**

Format the exercise by using any one of the following, or starting out with individual/solo work, moving to paired exercises, and then to large group:

Individual: Ask people to complete on their own.

Paired or trio Exercise: Break the group into groups of two to three and provide them with one hand-out.

Large Group Participation: Work directly off the prepared flip-chart or blackboard or use the overhead.

> **To begin the exercise SAY:** "Please list what you do and what you don't tolerate"

⌚ Take 3 minutes for each list (maximum).

GROUP TOLERANCE	Highly Tolerable										Highly Intolerable									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. A co-worker comes to work late several days in a row in the past few weeks, and explains that he/she has problems at home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
2. A co-worker comes to work late with a hangover on Monday mornings for the past month.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
3. A co-worker has a drink or two of alcohol at lunch while meeting with someone on city business.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										

Overhead # 3 (part 1)

>>STEP 4: Individuals Self-Assess Tolerance At Work

> **Randomly assign participants into groups of four to six people.** Ask participants to number themselves out loud ("1" or "2" or "3") as they go in sequence around the room. Indicate that all "1s" go to one area, all "2s" go to another area, etc.

> **Distribute Handout "Individual Tolerance" (shown in Notes of next slide)**

> **SAY:** "Please complete the six items on this (*hold it up*) questionnaire on your own. Circle the number that shows your degree of tolerance. When you are done turn the survey over and look up. This should take no more than 5 minutes."

>> STEP 5: Group Decision-Making & Tolerance

Distribute Handout– one to each of the newly formed groups, immediately following Step 4.

> **SAY:** "In this next exercise, we would like each of your small groups to discuss the six-items one at a time. Your objective is to reach consensus and come to total agreement about each item. Please circle the number that best fits the overall agreement or consensus for the group."

> Prepare Overhead #3 and have an erasable marker to write down (circle or mark) scores for a participating group. (See diagrams below)

> After all groups are done, ask for one group to report it's final scores.

> Circle or mark these scores on the overhead. Ask participants in the group the following questions:

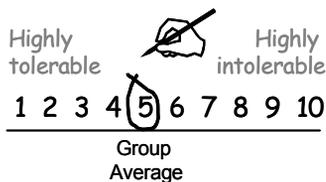
[Write responses on flipchart or blackboard]

Who changed their original scores? Did you become more or less tolerant?

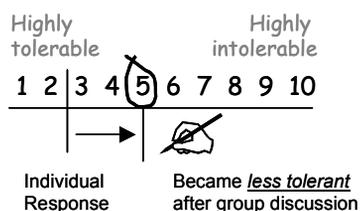
• **KEY QUESTION: What factors influenced you to change your scores?**

As time permits, ask other groups the same questions.

1. Circle on Overhead



2. Show change of individual response (example)



**GROUP
TOLERANCE**

Highly
Tolerable

Highly
Intolerable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. A co-worker often smokes marijuana away from work on the weekends. This person works with heavy machinery when at work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. A group of hard-working employees get together for a few beers on a regular basis after work. Sometimes they drink so much they get drunk & have to get rides home.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. A very efficient and productive co-worker has recently become withdrawn and isolates him or herself. This person sometimes talks about trying to kick a cocaine habit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Overhead # 3 (part 2)

STEP 5 Continued: This is the handout to be distributed to all individual participants in STEP 4. Ask each to complete ON THEIR OWN before Proceeding to group discussion in STEP 5. Then give each group one copy.

Highly
Tolerable

Highly
Intolerable

1. A co-worker comes to work late several days in a row in the past few weeks, and explains that he/she has problems at home.
.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. A co-worker comes to work late with a hangover on Monday mornings for the past month.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. A co-worker has a drink or two of alcohol at lunch while meeting with someone on city business.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. A co-worker often smokes marijuana away from work on the weekends. This person works with heavy machinery when at work.
.....

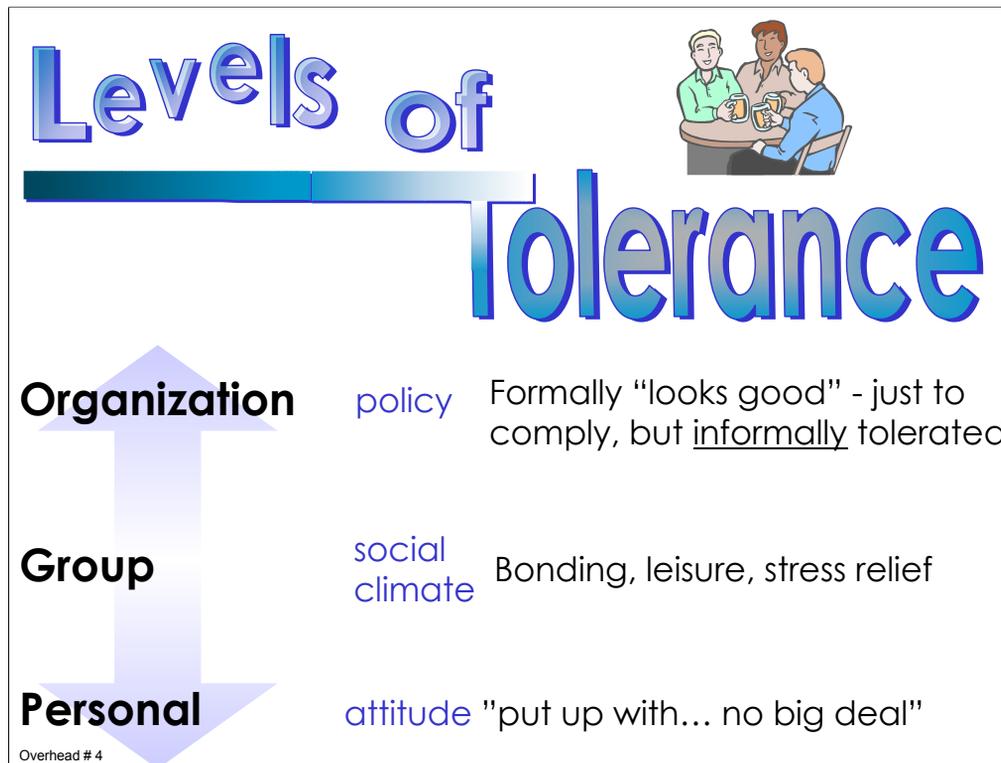
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. A group of hard-working employees get together for a few beers on a regular basis after work. Sometimes they drink so much they get drunk & have to get rides home.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. A very efficient and productive co-worker has recently become withdrawn and isolates him or herself. This person sometimes talks about trying to kick a cocaine habit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



STEP 5 CONTINUED

> **ASK "There are several main points to get from this exercise, what do you think they are?"**
 [Write responses on flipchart or blackboard]

After listening and writing, stress or re-emphasize two additional points:

> **Explain:**

1. Sometimes tolerating other's problems can put us at risk. (If this is not clear, review the six scenarios and ask "How do these scenarios involve risk?")

2. Tolerance can occur at the group level. You may believe or feel one way but—in order to conform with the group—you go along with the **majority** opinion.

> **OVERHEADS # 4 and # 5** (for reviewing ideas if necessary)

The following two overheads can be used to help emphasize two points:

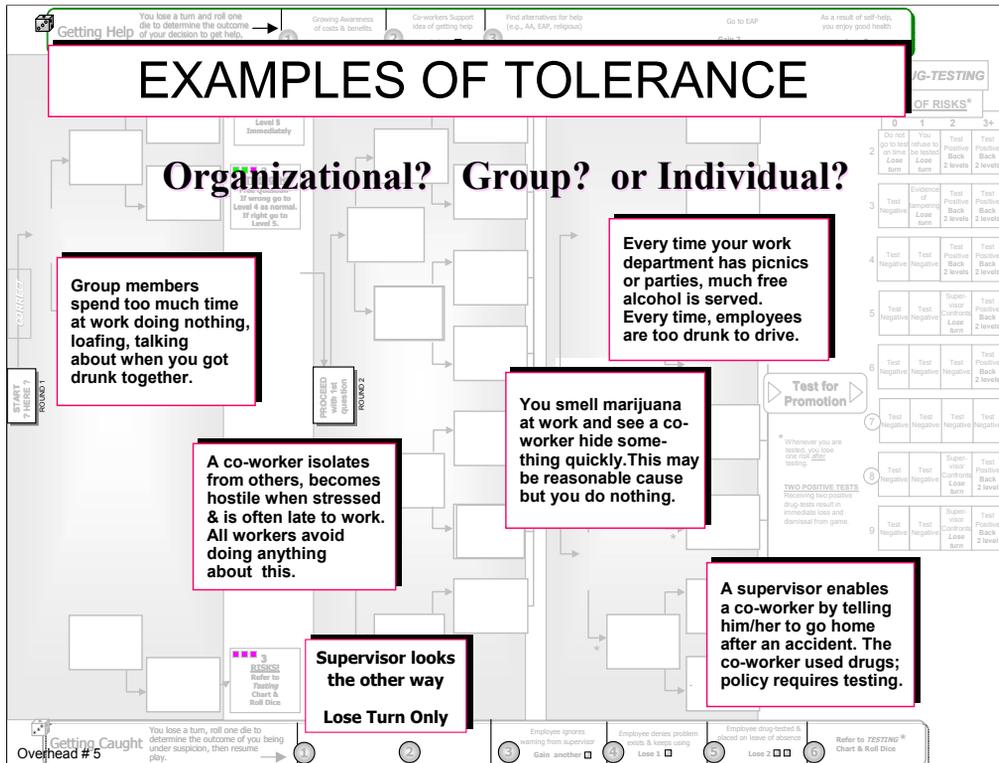
- (1) that groups can sometimes tolerate problems and
- (2) the force of group opinion can cause individuals to ignore important signs of risk or danger.

Overhead 4 "Levels of Tolerance"

Explain: "Just as individuals can tolerate problems that put them at risk, so can work groups, and entire organizations. For example, a company could have a formal policy that says drinking alcohol is not permitted. In reality, there are some situations where employees drink during lunch and everyone knows about it but no one says anything. Informally, people tolerate problems that formal policy would not allow." So a policy can be "in name only" and help the company to "look good".

Also, people in a group want to get along, no one wants to rock the boat,

No one wants to be a whistle blower, so sometimes people just tolerate problems.



Overhead 5 "Examples of Tolerance"

(relates to the "Risk & Strengths" game – see Module 2)

Using the overhead, SAY: "Recall the "Risks & Strengths" game. I am going to read the game spaces and ask you to identify the level of tolerance:

○ Individual, ○ Group, or ○ Organizational.

Read the different boxes in the overhead and ask the group whether it show individual, group, or organizational tolerance

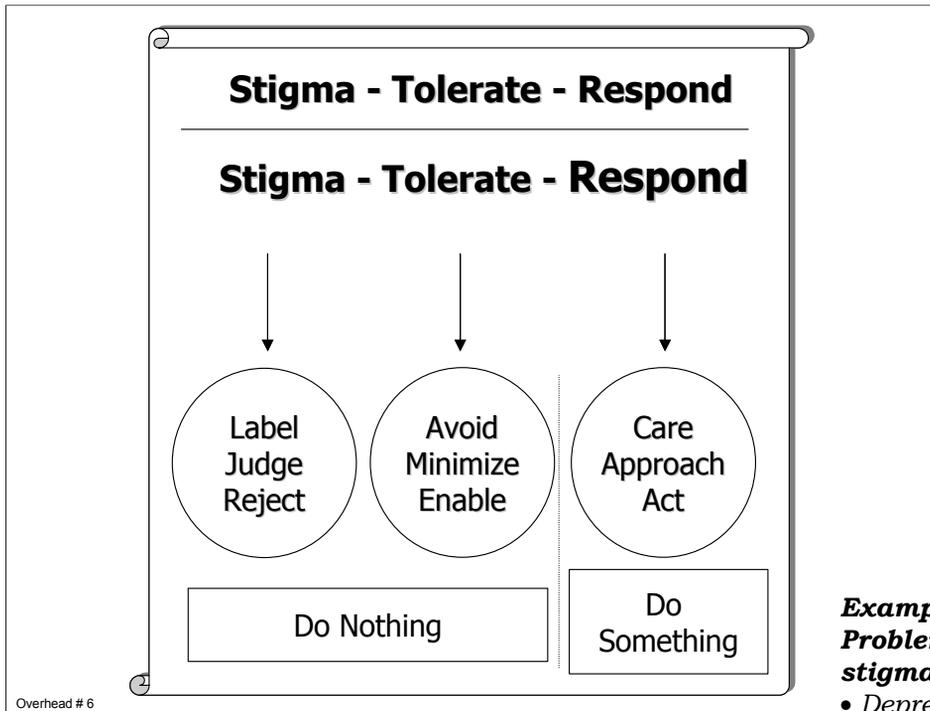
INDIVIDUAL & GROUP: (INDIVIDUAL PART) A co-worker isolates from others, becomes hostile when stressed & is often late to work. **(GROUP PART)** All workers avoid doing anything about this. **GROUP:** Group members spend too much time at work doing nothing, loafing, talking about when you got drunk together.

ORGANIZATION: Every time your work department has picnics or parties, much free alcohol is served. Every time, employees are too drunk to drive.

INDIVIDUAL: You smell marijuana at work and see a co-worker hide something quickly. This may be reasonable cause but you do nothing.

INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL: A supervisor enables a co-worker by telling him/her to go home after an accident. The co-worker used drugs; policy requires testing.

(The supervisor tolerates as an individual, BUT BECAUSE the supervisor represents the organization, the ORGANIZATION tolerates as well).



Examples of Mental Health Problems that we may stigmatize or tolerate

- Depression
- Personality Problems
- Overly Angry or Anxious
- Substance Abuse

STEP 6 – INCREASE RESPONSIVENESS (TOOL #1)

>> **NOTE TO FACILITATOR:** In this last exercise you have **several tools to use and options for using them**. The main goal is to **reinforce any awareness of unhealthy tolerance** that was expressed in the session. You may **SAY** that:

“Sometimes tolerance is appropriate as long as we don’t put ourselves or others at risk or in danger. The main purpose of this session is to increase your awareness of unhealthy levels of tolerance and increase responsiveness when appropriate”

TOOL 1: Overhead 6 or Prepared FlipChart

>> **NOTE TO FACILITATOR:** This flipchart or overhead can be helpful in making participants aware of how their attitudes keep them from responding to problems before they become crises (molehills before mountains). In the case of alcohol and drug abuse, 12-Step programs for friends/family of people who are dependent on alcohol or drugs say:

“You didn’t cause it, you can’t control it, and you can’t cure it”

However, at work, YOU have benefits (EAP, counseling, mental health benefits) + you can use community resources (12-step, family services, local alcohol & drug councils). In addition, policy should encourage people to **“GET HELP” before they “GET CAUGHT” -->Policy is designed to help us BE RESPONSIVE**

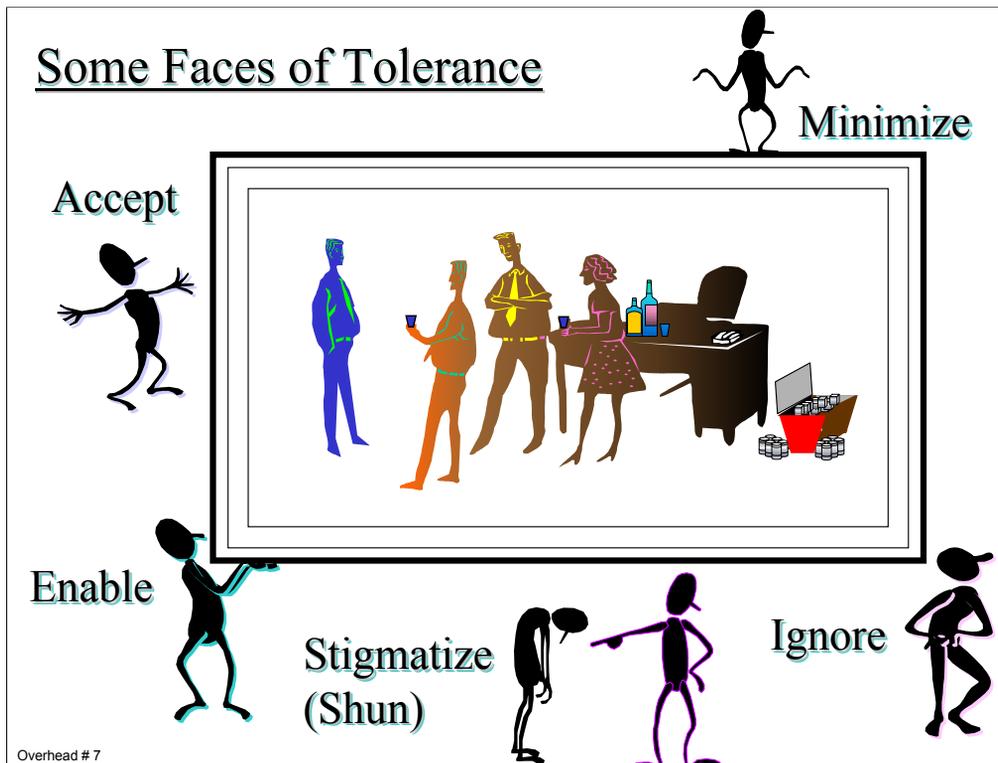
SEQUENCE of FLIPCHART(or OVERHEAD 6):

1. **Show the top portion only** (Stigma > Tolerate > Respond), and ask: How do these differ?”

[[**Note.** Stigma is associated with shaming, discrediting, judging, ostracizing, labeling. Tolerate is associated more with enduring, indulging, sympathizing. Generally, stigma is harsher and more overt].

2. **Show the circled text** and **ASK:** “When you think about people with mental health problems: What is your typical response, Which of these three is most like you?” Are you more likely to stigmatize some problems more than others?”

3. **Show the bottom** of the flipchart, and **SAY;** “The bottom line is whether we do nothing or do something”



STEP 6 – INCREASE RESPONSIVENESS (TOOL #2)

This introduces the concept of "Drinking Climates." **EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING**

DEFINITION of *Drinking Climate*:

"A social situation, usually ongoing, where *coworkers drink together* for leisure purposes or stress relief and develop tolerant attitudes toward drinking problems".

Drinking climates can serve helpful functions for workers:

1) Express solidarity and bonding with the group, 2) Excuse for relaxing together, 3) Help shift task-defined relationships into expression-defined relations; that is, fellow workers are more willing to share attitudes and personal interests as well as personal problems themselves, these things can be good for people. The problem is that *over time or in certain situations*, we can come to tolerate problems that can be a risk for the work group.

>> SEQUENCE of OVERHEAD:

1. > **ASK:** "What is going on in this situation? What are the people thinking and feeling and doing? What about the person to the left?"

(Note. If there is no response, you can say "This looks like an office party because of the work desk...This may not happen in your work setting...but have fun with this)

> **ASK:** "What are the different cartoon figures –Screen Beans—doing? (Ask participants to use their own words but you can help with information below). "Are these realistic?"

- **Minimize:** "It is no big deal...everyone does it...We have done it a long time"
- **Accept:** "It's OK.. It gives people a chance to have fun"
- **Enable:** "Sounds like a great idea...I'll get the beer"
- **Stigma:** "You're an ALCOHOLIC. What's wrong with you?!"
- **Ignore:** "I don't want to have ANYTHING to do with it"

TOLERANCE

Causes

Consequences

"I am not my brother's keeper"
(apathy)

"Nothing is ever done about it anyway"
(learned helplessness)

"They are just under stress..."
(excuses)

No one takes responsibility

Perception that policy is inconsistent (may be real)



Enhanced Risk

Lack of Group Responsiveness

Potential harm

Teaches, models, or socializes others (newcomers)

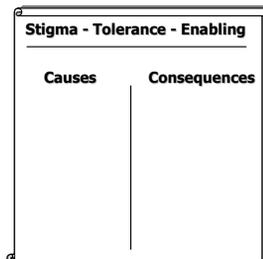
Undermines authority

Overhead # 8

STEP 6 – INCREASE RESPONSIVENESS (TOOL #3)

NOTE TO FACILITATOR: This flipchart or overhead provides a more in depth look at why we tolerate problems.

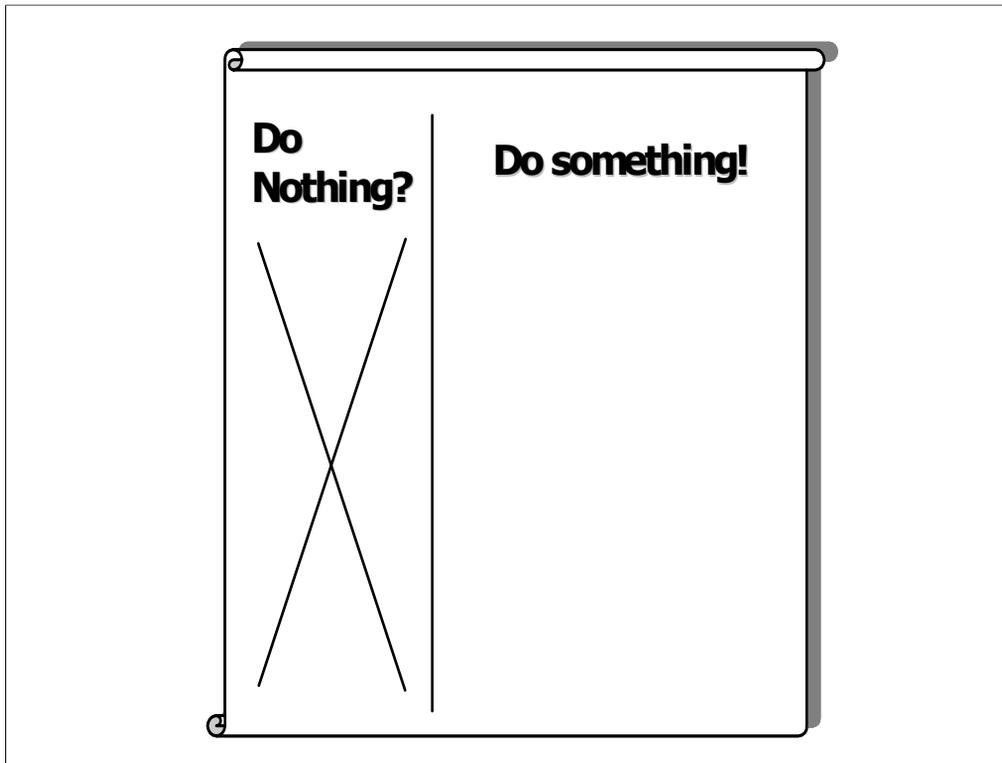
It is best to first place up the blank flipchart, shown to the right →→→→→



Prepare by reading through responses shown on Overhead 8 (see below)

SEQUENCE of FLIPCHART:

1. ASK **"Having discussed all these different aspects of tolerance, why do you think it occurs in the first place. What are some CAUSES of tolerance?"**
2. Record Participant responses on the flipchart.
3. ASK **"What are the CONSEQUENCES of tolerance?"**
4. Record Participant responses on the flipchart.
5. Put up Overhead 8 and explain.



END SESSION (You may prefer to flipchart responses)

TOOL 4: Overhead or Prepared FlipChart 9

NOTE TO FACILITATOR: This flipchart or overhead is a good way to end the session. Simply ask participants to generate a list of ways of responding when confronted with a coworker who has a behavioral or mental health problem.

SEQUENCE of FLIPCHART:

1. ASK "So..what are some ways that you or your work group could be more responsive?"
2. Record Participant responses.

OPTION: Ask participants to generate this list in pairs or small groups.



Sometimes we tolerate problems because "dealing with it" may seem more stressful than not dealing with it



This is an added overhead to help segue into other modules to make an additional point about stress.