

Lunchtime in the Office



A Social Story



Today I will be eating lunch in the cafeteria with my fellow workers.



Lunchtime in the office is a time for people to eat and talk with one another.



It is a great time to interact with other people in the office.



In order to feel comfortable during lunchroom interactions, I will keep the following concepts in mind:

1. Small talk is important



Although it may not seem important, people enjoy engaging in small talk. It functions as a way to get involved in a conversation without having to reveal too much about oneself.

2. Make eye contact



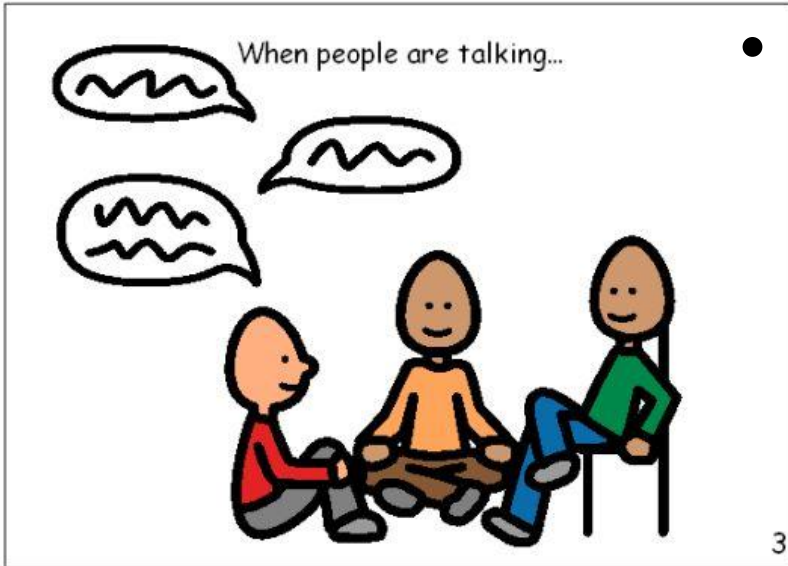
I will make sure to keep good eye contact when communicating with others: Good eye contact is associated with good listening skills. People like good listeners.

3. Observe others



Some language may offend others at my lunch table: I will pay attention to the kinds of language those around me use to know what kind of language is acceptable to use around them and what will make others uncomfortable (watch and listen).

4. Don't interrupt

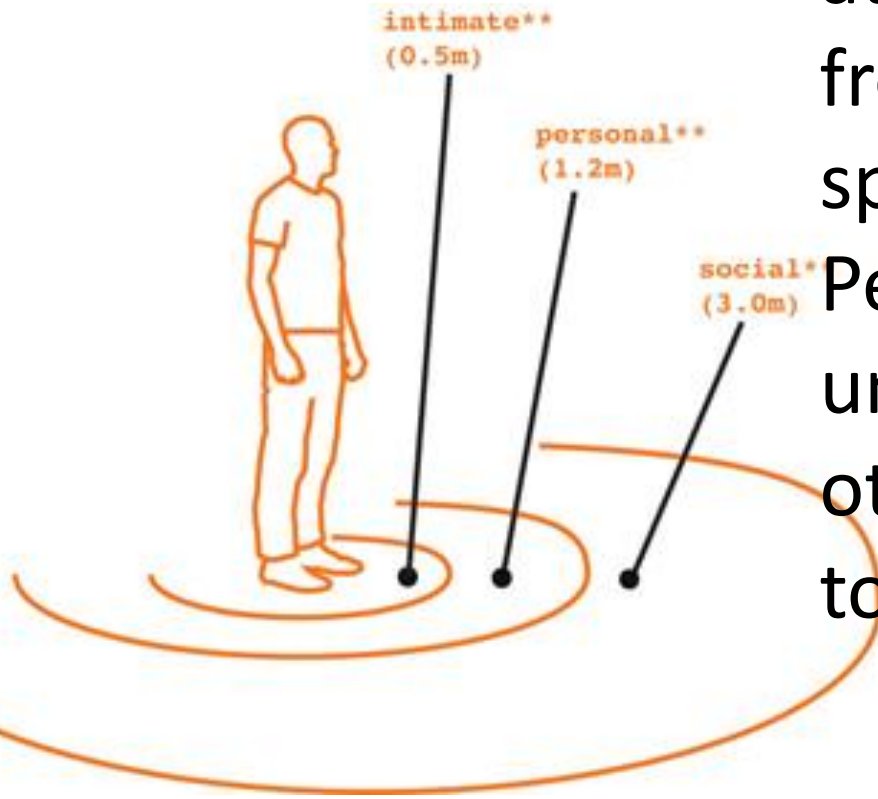


- If I have something I would like to add to the conversation, I will write it down or make a mental note of it and say it after the person is done talking. This way, I will not forget what I wanted to share and the other person will not think that I am rude for interrupting them.

Avoid invading personal space

I will make sure to stand at least 3 feet away from people when speaking to them.

People become uncomfortable when others stand too close to them.



Spend limited amounts of time with others



Spending prolonged periods of time with others can cause me to become anxious. This, in turn, causes me to start acting awkwardly. People do not like when I start acting this way: if I limit the amount of time I spend with them, I will have less opportunity to become anxious. I will also have less opportunity to start acting awkwardly as a result of my anxiety. People will like me more because they will not see how anxious being around others makes me.

Stick to one-on-one interactions



Reading nonverbal cues from multiple people can be really tough: In order to make things easier, I will try to stick to chatting with one person at a time. This will make it so that I can focus more energy on their nonverbal cues, thereby making me less anxious and more responsive to their responses to my behaviors.

Be myself



When I am speaking with someone one-on-one instead of in a larger group, I am more myself, and, therefore, more likable.

Following these rules will show people that I am a likable co-worker and will make them happy to be around me.