

Office Decorations

Conversation 1:

Carol: Hi Kiaan, how are you?

Kiaan: I am well, thank you.

Carol: What is all this?

Kiaan: Oh, it's Diwali this week so I thought I would decorate my office area.

Carol: Oh that's great. I'm not sure if it is allowed though - you know with all the health and safety protocols we have to follow. Jason in HR won't allow it. Also, I think it's a little distracting to the other people in the office. We don't usually hang decorations unless it's Christmas. We occasionally do at Easter.... that's always fun.

Carol walks away. Kiaan starts to take down the decorations. He felt it was unfair to celebrate some holidays and not others that represented him and some of his team members. He felt Carol was rude and flippant and did not respect or understand Diwali.

Over the next few days, Kiaan avoided Carol. Carol noticed his behaviour but did not say anything further to him.

Kiaan did not come to workover Diwali – he called in sick.

When he returned, he spoke to HR and said that he felt undervalued at work and did not “fit in”.

HR want to consider some options to help Kiaan feel valued. The company also values itself on its diversity initiatives. What are some of the things HR can do?

Gibson Chowdhury - Clear Collaborative Mediation.

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The Following year, Kiaan was excited to celebrate Diwali and brought festivities into the office.

Conversation 2:

Maurice: Hi Kiaan. How are you?

Kiaan: I am well, thank you.

Maurice: This looks exciting. What is it all for?

Kiaan: It's Diwali this week so I thought I would decorate my office area.

Maurice: Ah yes, I saw that on the diversity calendar that's hung up in the Kitchen. It's the Festival of Lights, right?

Kiaan: Yes. It's a very auspicious time for me, my family and friends. I'm looking forward to going home and preparing for the week.

Maurice: That's right. It's for 5 days so I bet there is a lot of preparations to take.

Kiaan: Yes, it is. There is lots of fun to be had in the preparation too. The whole family gets involved and we have a great time.

Maurice: Well, I think we should celebrate. I wondered how you would feel about me talking to the rest of the staff about Diwali and maybe we could celebrate together over lunch and you can tell us more about it?

Kiaan: That would be great.

Maurice: Excellent! I'll send an email around. I'll also let Jason in HR know about the decorations. He might need to do a quick health and safety check. Is that okay?

Kiaan: Absolutely!

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