

HUMAN

Rights Day 21 March

WALKING THE TALK ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Be part of building a better South Africa by recognising the humanity of every person who crosses your path – no matter how different they are to you.

The **Bill of Rights** is a human rights charter that protects the civil, political and socio-economic rights of all people in South Africa. It is found in Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution and is widely acclaimed as one of the most progressive in the world. In its own words, it is **'...a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.'**

The Constitution mandates that the state must uphold the Bill of Rights, but it's up to each of us to uphold these rights to achieve the welcoming, inclusive South Africa we all long for – both at work and in our communities. This **Human Rights Day (21 March)**, let's seize the opportunity to live up to these ideals.

These tips will help you become a human rights champion.

Good manners make good societies

Sawubona, in isiZulu, is a beautiful greeting that means 'I see you'. When we feel seen, we feel valued and respected, and that's a wonderful way to bridge gaps. Basic good manners, greeting people and asking how they are, saying please and thank you, showing kindness, compassion and patience are ways of showing people that you see them. These things may seem trivial but they are important to build an inclusive, functioning society. Remember the essence of *sawubona* in your future interactions.



Build empathy

The ability to understand others and share their feelings is a powerful way to connect and treat others fairly. However, our society has seen a steep decline in empathy in recent years. The good news is that empathy can be developed by being willing to grow, exposing yourself to differences and finding common ground.



Embrace the differences

We're fortunate to live in a gloriously diverse society and the result is a wealth of varying experiences and approaches to life. How boring the world would be if everyone were the same! Embrace each person's uniqueness rather than using difference as a motivation to judge others and make decisions.



Remember the similarities

It may sound clichéd, but we should always remember that we're all human beings with hopes and dreams, joys and sorrows. This is not about pretending that we 'don't see differences.' It means recognising that these differences exist, but they don't affect how we should treat others, or how we should be treated.



Challenge prejudice

It's human nature to gravitate towards those we perceive to be 'like us,' be it a shared love for a sports team or an entire belief system. As good as it is to feel part of a group, if we're not careful, we may start to favour those in our group and exclude others. By becoming aware of this, we can challenge ourselves and each other and aim to get to know people from other walks of life.



Pause to consider how you would want your children, parents, siblings, or partner to be treated. Now remember that everyone is someone's loved one. As Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* character, Atticus Finch, said: 'You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.'

Reflect on your biases by trying one of the **Harvard Implicit Association Tests**.

You deserve to be treated with respect. Reach out to our employee health and wellness programme if you are concerned that your human rights have been violated. The programme offers FREE and confidential psycho-social counselling, support and advice.

References

- American Psychological Association
- Karger Journal
- South African Government

- ▶ Education department toll free: **0800 111 011**
- ▶ Send a USSD to: ***134*664*38#**
- ▶ Email: **wced@mhg.co.za**

Let us stay mindful of caring for one another and ourselves

