



Therapists Helping Businesses Combat Tension from Politically Charged Water Cooler Talk

BY ASHLEY MICHELS JANUARY 17, 2018

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. -- Political talk at the water cooler is causing major stress for America's workforce.

"What we're seeing now is beyond anything that we've seen before," diversity consultant Jody Alyn said.

Alyn works with businesses and organizations in the Colorado Springs area to improve diversity, inclusion and team building.

She said political diversity has always caused tension in the workplace, but in the past year and a half, she said she has seen a spike in the number of clients asking for help with politics.

“It’s become a more in-demand kind of service in the last 18 months because of the political rhetoric in our sphere has gone way out of control and that has affected the workplace,” she said.

A study from the American Psychological Association claims more than a quarter of workers feel stressed out because of political water cooler talk.

While no businesses or organization agreed to speak about these issue, Alyn said she has seen it cause poor productivity, verbal abuse against co-workers and in one extreme case, threats of violence.

“People wanted to create a ground rule of no physical violence because they were afraid of that,” she said.

Alyn believes the increased tension in the workplace can be traced back to trash talking on social media and television.

“We’ve seen public figures, people who we look to as leaders engaging in behavior that most of us consider absolutely inappropriate,” she said. “When we see incivility and disrespect all around it becomes the norm.”

She says the best thing to do is talk about the tension with offices as a group.

“It’s very tempting to avoid conflict. And many of us look the other direction. When we do that, we become complicit with the bad behavior,” she said.

The bottom line is, you are stuck with your co-workers no matter what politician is in office, so you have to find a way to agree to disagree.

Watch the story video:

<http://kdvr.com/2018/01/17/therapists-helping-businesses-combat-tension-from-politically-charged-water-cooler-talk/>