

Pierce - Bullwer

Confidential Information for Employee

Participants: Director
Receptionist

Summary

The director has been the receptionist's supervisor for three years at ERG, a consulting firm with 60 employees. ERG advises companies about what to pay their executives and how to handle tax and cost of living questions while overseas. The receptionist greets clients when they arrive at the office and referring them to appropriate staff. The two have had a decent working relationship, and the director has been very pleased with the receptionist's work.

The director is a 55-year-old conservative businessperson. The receptionist is 20 years old and enjoys alternative music and going to clubs. In the last two months, the receptionist has had piercing of the nose, tongue and left eyebrow and wears gold studs in each place. The director has expressed disapproval about the receptionist's appearance, but the receptionist feels strongly about the right to self-expression. When the receptionist suggested they try mediation, the director agreed.

Employee's perspective

Lots of young people have pierced ears, noses and tongues. If only the director went out every once in a while and understood how the world has changed, they would realize how out of touch they are.

You're good at your job, and the director has given you favorable job performance reviews in the past. The piercings clearly aren't affecting your performance, so you don't think it's anyone's place to tell you to remove them. You don't think that any client who gets to know you will not do business with ERG because of your appearance.

You feel that the First Amendment protects your right to wear what you want. People in other cultures pierce their faces and present themselves differently. What would the director say to them if they worked at ERG?

You are encouraged that the director agreed to your suggestion to mediate. You think that the director would see where you are coming from if they were away from work and could really listen to what you're saying.