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EAP NEWS

A worksite newsletter for supervisors provided by your Employee Assistance Program.



EAP Support for Supervisors

There are a number of challenges posed to you in the workplace by the coronavirus. As a leader in your organization, you are dealing with your own emotional reactions and personal issues. The EAP is a confidential place to talk through your situation and get the advice and support you need.

Q. I know my employees are experiencing more stress as we transition to the new normal. I want to be sensitive to their needs but also need to know the most important consideration to keep in mind when meeting with an employee to correct behavior or performance so the employee is cooperative, appreciative, and motivated to change?

A. More than two-thirds of workers say this pandemic has resulted in the most stressful time of their careers. The manner in which you speak to employees when confronting them about their performance plays a big role in facilitating cooperation and correcting their problems. Speaking down to the employee will elicit one type of response. Speaking “up” to the employee will elicit another. So approach any problem as though both you and the employee have a stake in its resolution, and as though it is a problem you mutually desire to resolve. This does not mean you as a supervisor will resolve it. It is still the employee’s responsibility to correct noncompliant performance. However, this “mutual desire approach” aids cooperation, motivation, and focus. And it decreases defensiveness. This approach does not minimize the importance or severity of the problem. Share with employees that the EAP is a resource to help them find the solution, and obtaining a signed release of consent from the employee in the case of a formal referral is a way to facilitate appropriate communication.

Q. I have questions about how to best support employees in the coming weeks and months. How should a supervisor act when they are new and know the least about the details of the work unit?

A. There are a number of challenges posed to you in the workplace by the coronavirus as you take on your new role as a supervisor. As a leader in your organization, you are dealing with your own emotional reactions and personal challenges. You must learn to elicit from subordinates the knowledge necessary to make decisions or choose courses of action. The words “I don’t know” or “What is your opinion?” are perceived by subordinates as compliments. Employees see such statements and questions from managers as respectful of their knowledge, thereby eliciting trust and respect. Unfortunately, some supervisors experience great anxiety with this approach. Admitting what they do not know makes them feel incompetent and exposed. They unnecessarily fear subordinates will take advantage of them and disrespect their leadership role. They then believe they must resort to a “do what I say because I am the boss” approach. This has consequences. Employees feel ordered around, less responsible and less focused on outcomes. Remember, the EAP is a confidential place to talk through a challenging situation and get the advice and support you need.

Go to ibhsolutions.com to learn more about EAP benefits, and to access promotional materials, newsletters, trainings, work-life balance resources, Personal Advantage, webinars and more.



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Q. I have been under a lot of stress at work due to the pandemic. I was referred to the EAP for bullying because I yelled at my employees. Can the EAP help me learn how to cope with my behavior and effectively communicate with my employees?

A. You can make millions leading a football team, and the more you yell, the more you might be loved and paid — if you're successful. But context, tradition, and work culture are everything. Typically, employees in these big-mission and charismatically led organizations don't feel subjected to a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment, at least not in large group meetings. With respect to you as a manager, yelling affects others adversely, demeaning people and humiliating them. When you yell, employees don't hear you more clearly and more deeply. Fear and anxiety cause them to comprehend less of what you are trying to communicate. Your workers won't engage with the organization more effectively if you scream. They will only tune out. You're yelling because you want to move your employees to action. There are many ways to inspire your employees that will leave you feeling more satisfied about your position, and the EAP can show you how.

Q. I referred my employee to the EAP. He had a great telehealth experience, but last week told everyone about it during a Zoom meeting. He did not mention that he was referred by me. I kept silent to maintain confidentiality. It was awkward. Some saw my silence as disapproving. Any thoughts?

A. You did the right thing by not involving yourself in the public conversation about his EAP participation. Doing so may have turned the discussion toward you and the supervisor referral of your employee. The positive testimonial offered by your employee will not be diminished by your lack of commenting on the program. Although you did not publicly praise the worker for his participation, you can still encourage EAP attendance at any time through a memo to all staff or other communication channels. Doing so periodically is advised, along with mentioning the free and confidential nature of the program. EAPs rely upon word-of-mouth promotion to help keep their utilization rates high, so what occurred was a positive thing.

Q. We are work-remote at my organization since the pandemic. My employee is logging in late to work, and I am about to write a corrective letter as a first-level warning. What negative effects of tardiness can I insert into this documentation?

A. Effects of tardiness include resentment from coworkers, which can result in conflicts. This in turn affects productivity. Morale also suffers. Being chronically late has ripple effects for almost any part of the organization's operation, including customer service. Chronic tardiness is the type of problem that frustrated employees often end-run to the next level of management to lodge a complaint. You want to avoid management's coming to you, and instead be proactive with this problem. Failure to do so will earn you a reputation for playing favorites, being unfair, and being a pushover. If employees believe you don't care about tardiness, they may begin to ignore other rules and standards of excellence, and be less concerned about their productivity.



We All Matter: Diversity in the Workplace

Diversity and inclusion are more relevant than ever in the new normal workplace. In the face of adversity, diversity and inclusion thrive, because when different kinds of minds work together, challenges are much easier to overcome. For your organization to succeed, everyone needs to be on the same page and working towards the same goal. This training is designed to assist in creating cultural awareness and inclusion for all employees.

Log-in any time this month to watch the webinar and ask the expert questions!



College Corner

College Planning USA offers our thoughts to all who have been impacted by Covid-19.

We also offer our congratulations to the graduating classes of 2020! Whether college or high school, this year's graduating classes will have unique experiences compared to the pomp and circumstance of "traditional" graduations. But these seniors face added stresses.

College: The job market that awaits is one thing. College loans will soon need to be repaid...that's another. **High School:** "Where to go" in the fall is the big one. "Will colleges be open" is a close second. And to what degree? There are numerous scenarios for how colleges can proceed.

On the parents' end, if college seemed "unaffordable" in a good, stable economy, how about now? If you recognize that your stress level is building, be sure to use tools to help you cope. Remaining positive is most important in times like these. And remember this is only temporary. When we get back to "normal", this is but another memory in the rear-view mirror.

IBH and College Planning USA are here to help manage your stress. Go to <https://ibhcollege.com/> to learn more about the college planning program and to book a free consultation.