



THE SUPERVISOR/HR NEWSLETTER

Public Employee Benefits Alliance

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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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January Online Seminar

*Everything in Its Place:
Getting Organized*

When we are not organized, we waste precious time and create chaos in our lives. Minimize the stress and maximize the tranquility that comes from putting everything in its place.

Available on-demand starting January 16th at www.deeroakseap.com

2018 Supervisor Excellence Webinar Series & Leadership Certificate Program

Schedule

February: *Preparing to Lead Effectively*
April: *Relationship Excellence for Managers*
June: *How to Motivate Employees from Different Generations*
August: *How to Effectively Delegate Tasks & Responsibilities*
October: *How to Become a Better Coach*
December: *Strengthening the Team*

Links to sign up for each session are provided on the Supervisor Excellence Webinar Series & Leadership Certificate Program Flyer.

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Celebrating Diversity at Work: Cultural Variety

Diversity has replaced the melting pot as the American ideal. Cultures, races, and religions are no longer expected to meld into one. But all this individuality can create conflict when those different people get together. And one place they meet is at work. You probably have a microcosm of society right in your workplace. Is that a problem?

Well, it can be, unless you create a work culture that accepts, respects, and understands differences. People are proud of their cultural and ethnic backgrounds and don't want to stifle these feelings for 8 hours each day. Managers face the challenge of building a harmonious and productive work environment.

Today's workforce features a remarkable range of diversity. People work together despite their differences in

- Religious beliefs
- Ethnicity
- Varying degrees of physical ability
- Sexual orientation
- Economic and educational background
- Cultural preferences (expressed through such things as dress, hairstyles, and jewelry)
- Diet (from religious restrictions to dietary choices)

Mix those together and you have one tall order. But if managed well, the company will have accomplished more than political correctness. A diverse staff can better serve customers and clients who also come from diverse backgrounds.

Diversity can lead to profits, too: Previous research has shown a link between superior corporate performance and senior management teams that included different genders, ethnic backgrounds, and ages.

Source: *Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2017). Celebrating diversity at work: Cultural variety. Raleigh, NC: Author.*

How Well Do You Manage Diversity?

The questions below can be helpful in assessing how well you manage diversity. It's important to be able to attract and maintain a diverse workforce. Aside from legal and ethical considerations, diversity is simply good business. The variety of perspectives and traditions it brings will provide your company with a rich source of creativity and problem-solving to help reach your business goals.

Your company's human resources department will most likely be your first stop for information about diversity. Another great source for learning more about implementing and sustaining a diverse workforce in your company is the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Civil Rights. Please visit their Web site at <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo> for more information.

- Do you have a good understanding of institutional “isms” such as racism and sexism and how they manifest themselves in the workplace?
- Do you take immediate action with people you supervise when they behave in ways that show disrespect for others in the workplace, such as ethnic jokes and offensive terms?
- Do you ensure that assignments and opportunities for advancement are accessible to everyone?
- Do you make good faith efforts to meet your affirmative action goals?
- When you have open positions, do you insist on a diverse screening committee and make additional outreach efforts to ensure that a diverse pool of candidates has applied?
- When you hire a new employee, do you not only explain job responsibilities and expectations clearly, but orient the person to the campus and department culture and unwritten rules?
- Do you rigorously examine your unit's existing policies, practices, and procedures to ensure that they do not differentially impact different groups? When they do, do you change them?
- Do you believe there is only one right way of doing things, or that there are a number of valid ways that accomplish the same goal? Do you convey that to staff?
- Are you willing to listen to constructive feedback from your staff about ways to improve the work environment? Do you implement staff suggestions and acknowledge their contribution?
- Do you have honest relationships with each staff member you supervise? Are you comfortable with each of them? Do you know what motivates them, what their goals are, how they like to be recognized?
- Are you able to give negative feedback to someone who is culturally different from you?
- Do you test your assumptions before acting on them?

Source: Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2017). How well do you manage diversity? Raleigh, NC: Author.

Ask Your EAP!

The following are answers to common questions supervisors have regarding employee issues and making EAP referrals. As always, if you have specific questions about referring an employee or managing a workgroup issue, feel free to make a confidential call to the EAP for a management consultation.

Q. I referred an employee to the EAP two years ago. A lot of problems with absenteeism occurred at the time. Things have gone great since then, but suddenly, he is not coming to work. He is missing some days and is late on others. What is my next step—call EAP?

A. Speak with your employee in a corrective interview and find out why he is missing work. Refer to your documentation. Note that asking why your employee is coming late to work is not an intrusion or diagnostic query. The employee may disclose something personal, but do not attempt to engage in solutions. Leave that to the EAP. Regardless, it is your decision about how you wish to proceed. A formal referral back to the EAP may return another two or more years of great work, or based on the history, your organization may have a disciplinary action in mind. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis that weighs returning your employee to a satisfactory level of performance versus an action that would include dismissal. Sometimes the understandable frustration management feels toward relapses leads to decisions not fully in management's own interest.

Q. My employee is at home recuperating from a back injury. I stay in touch by phone to communicate, offer support, and encourage him to come back. I hear from coworkers that domestic quarreling exists and that he is depressed. Can I refer him to the EAP?

A. Yes, suggest that he visit the EAP. Last year, a research study now posted at the National Institutes of Health examined 94 other studies in an attempt to discover what contributes to positive return-to-work results following a worker's injury. More than half such injuries were back problems. Also studied were factors interfering with employees coming back to work. Among many factors, the ones that could be influenced from the workplace were return-to-work coordination and multidisciplinary interventions that include the workplace and stakeholders. One type of stakeholder is the supervisor, so your communication and support are impactful. Depression is a factor in why employees do not return to work, so encouraging your employee to visit the EAP and get support is a smart move. Domestic conflict to the extent that it interferes with wellness can also be addressed by the EAP. Source: Google "PMC5015229" to locate the research study.

Q. I have two employees who don't get along. It's starting to create friction within the department. I don't want battle lines to be drawn among the others. This is my last shot to end the problem, but how and when do I involve the EAP?

A. Personality conflicts can lead to quarrelsome relationships. They typically do not respond to classic attempts at problem-solving and negotiating like other workplace conflicts. Ending the quarrelsome pattern requires self-discipline and resolve because it has typically become habitual. The warring parties must believe management is determined to take action if the two employees do not. That's your most important role if the pattern of behavior you are describing is long term and you unwittingly enabled it by counseling, threatening, and not following through. These problematic dyads often follow a progressive path: mini-crisis, counseling or pleading by supervisors, periods of calm, and a repeating cycle. Make employees aware that change is nonnegotiable and that you are committed to an administrative or disciplinary solution to help the employees change if they don't make progress. This message may instill the needed sense of urgency. The EAP can assist at any point along the way.

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