



THE SUPERVISOR/HR NEWSLETTER

Public Employee Benefits Alliance

HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Oct.
19

October Online Seminar

Emotional Wellness: Building Better Mental Health

Gain coping strategies for dealing with adversity in a constructive way, and develop structured mechanisms for building better mental health.

Available on-demand starting
October 15th at
www.deeroakseap.com

Helpline: 866-327-2400
Web: www.deeroakseap.com
Email: eap@deeroaks.com

Deer Oaks 2019 Supervisor Excellence Webinar Series *Employee Engagement*

A series of practical educational programs designed to help supervisors and managers to build more engaged and productive work teams. This series is available to all supervisors, managers, and other interested employees and does not count toward your organization's training hour bank.

Webinar # 4: How to Motivate Your Employees to Be Engaged in Their Work

Motivated employees are engaged and productive. This important session discusses research on employee motivation, identifies the three primary needs that employees seek to meet at work, and discusses management approaches to help create and maintain a motivated and engaged team.

Friday, December 6th, 1:00 – 2:00 PM CT

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4945543224289664771>

Monday, December 9th, 1:00 – 2:00 PM CT

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/774233603019167491>

When Tragedy Strikes at Work

Imagine that you, as a manager, are busy with your many daily responsibilities, when tragedy strikes:

- You hear a commotion down the hall, respond, and discover that an employee has swallowed a lethal dose of drugs in the presence of his coworkers.
- An irate individual storms into your section's work area and shoots an employee while you and other employees look on, shocked and helpless to intervene.
- A dazed-looking employee walks into the work area, bruised and disheveled, collapses at her desk, and reports that she was attacked while conducting a routine business call.

Initially, your responses will probably be almost automatic. You will notify the proper authorities and take whatever steps are necessary to preserve life and safety. After the paramedics and the investigators leave, the hard questions begin for you as a manager:

- How do you help your employees recover from this event, so their personal well being and professional effectiveness will not suffer long-term effects as a result of trauma?
- How do you get your staff moving again after employees have suffered from injury, bereavement, or emotional trauma?

As you would expect, there are no easy answers, and each situation presents its own set of challenges. However, there are some general guidelines to help you in most situations.

Stay firmly in charge.

Let all employees know that you are concerned and doing all you can to help them. You represent the organization to your employees, and your caring presence can mean a great deal in helping them feel supported. You don't have to say anything profound; just be there, do your best to manage, and let your employees know you are concerned about them. Be visible to your subordinates, and take time to ask them how they are doing. Try to keep investigations and other official business from pulling you out of your work area for long periods of time.

Ask for support from higher management.

Relief from deadlines, and practical help such as a temporary employee to lighten your burden of administrative work can make it easier for you to focus on helping your employees and your organization return to normal functioning. Let people know, in whatever way is natural for you, that you are feeling fear, grief, shock, anger, or whatever your natural reaction to the situation may be. This shows your employees you care about them. Since you also can function rationally in spite of your strong feelings, they know that they can do likewise.

Share information with your employees as soon as you have it available.

Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Particularly in the first few hours after a tragedy, information will be scarce and much in demand. If you can be an advocate in obtaining it, you will show your employees you care and help lessen anxiety.

Ask for support from your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The EAP is available to offer professional counseling to those who wish it, and to provide debriefings to groups affected by trauma. Encourage your employees to take advantage of the EAP as a way of preserving health, not as a sign of sickness.

Encourage employees to talk about their painful experiences.

This is hard to do, but eases healing as people express their painful thoughts and feelings in a safe environment, and come to realize that their reactions are normal and shared by others. You may want to have a mental health professional come in to facilitate a special meeting for this purpose. Or your group may prefer to discuss the situation among themselves. Don't be afraid to participate, and to set a positive example by discussing your own feelings openly. Your example says more than your words.

Build on the strengths of the group.

Encourage employees to take care of one another through such simple measures as listening to those in distress, offering practical help, visiting the hospitalized, or going with an employee on the first visit to a feared site. The more you have done to build a cohesive team, and to foster self-confidence in your employees, the better your staff can help one another in a crisis.

Build on your team's prior planning.

If you have talked together about how you, as a group, would handle a hypothetical crisis, it will help prepare all employees, mentally and practically, to deal with a real one. Knowing employees' strengths and experience, having an established plan for communication in emergencies, and being familiar with EAP procedures can help you "hit the ground running" when a crisis actually strikes.

Be aware of the healing value of work.

Getting back to the daily routine can be a comforting experience, and most people can work productively while still dealing with grief and trauma. However, the process of getting a staff back to work is one which must be approached with great care and sensitivity. In particular, if anyone has died or been seriously injured, the process must be handled in a way that shows appropriate respect for them.

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (1993, December). When tragedy strikes at work (Chapter 1). In A Manager's Handbook: Handling Traumatic Events (OWR-15). Retrieved January 11, 2019, from <https://www.opm.gov>

Start a Green Team

One person cannot do it all! So when it comes to making your workplace greener and more energy efficient, nothing beats a team. Forming a green team is a great way to help reduce office waste and increase energy efficiency. Follow these tips to hit the ground running.

Organize your green team.

To get started, meet with management to get approval for the idea. Not only does support from management add legitimacy to your team, some of the measures needed to “green” your workplace might require an investment of time, money, or both. Next, encourage coworkers from different levels and parts of your organization—from senior management and interns to facility managers and human resources personnel—to get involved. A team approach improves participation from all levels of the organization, which helps to ensure greater support and success. Once you have recruited a core team, conduct a kickoff meeting to develop a plan of action.

Start your green program.

Careful planning and effective outreach at the launch of your program creates momentum for your green team. Identify project areas and opportunities, develop work plans, and prepare for an official launch or kickoff event. Consider implementing a pilot project to showcase at the program’s kickoff. Small steps such as encouraging employees to replace at least one incandescent light bulb at their desks with a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) can make a big difference and motivate employees to become more involved.

Raise awareness.

Share tips and advice on how to save energy and reduce waste with your coworkers. Place posters and other materials about energy conservation in your workplace’s kitchen, break room, conference room, or other places your coworkers gather. Add information about energy efficiency and its benefits to your intranet, newsletter, or employee bulletin board.

For Earth Day in April, Energy Awareness Month in October, or other special environmental occasions, hold an event to teach employees about energy efficiency and other green habits. You also can help motivate colleagues by organizing a green competition between offices, or hold brown bag lunches and invite in-house and outside technical and operational experts to speak about energy efficiency or other green topics. Organize an employee training session using the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) interactive tool, “ENERGY STAR @ Work”, to help your coworkers learn what they can do at work to save energy and help fight global warming. You can find information about this program at <http://www.energystar.gov>.

Once your green team has gained momentum and management support, consider working with your company’s energy team to conduct an energy review or audit of your office space to identify areas for improvement that do not require large investments. Additional information about business participation in Bring Your Green to Work with ENERGY STAR* programs can be found at <http://www.energystar.gov>.

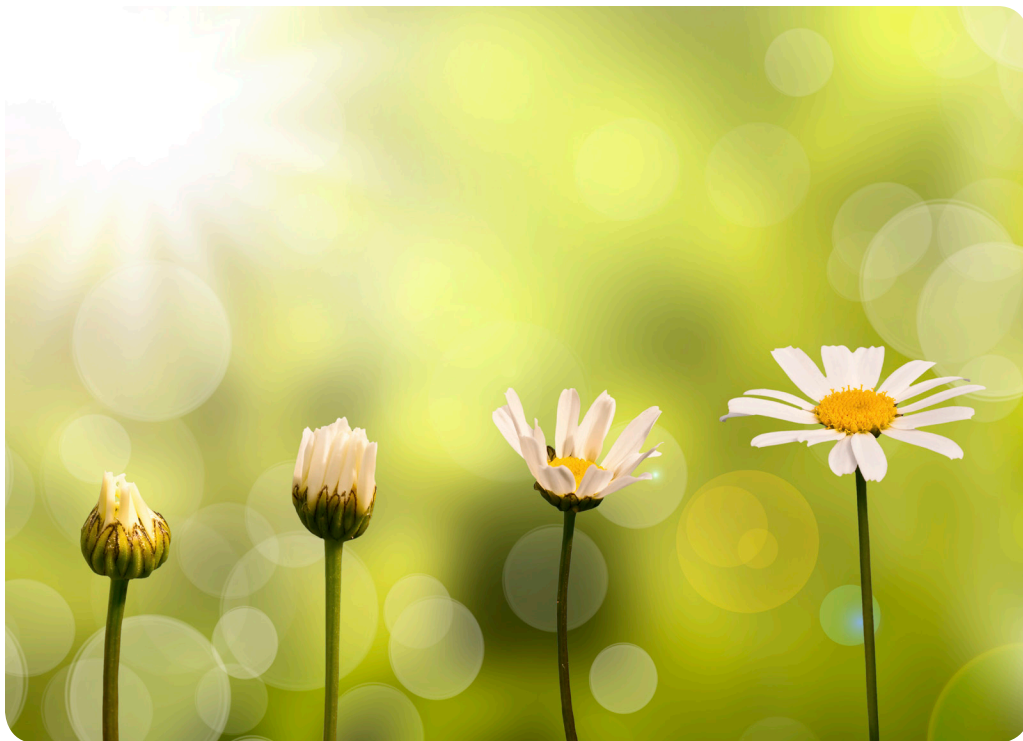
Recognize success.

Who doesn't like rewards? Recognize the contributions of teams and individuals to reinforce the value of energy efficiency and encourage even greater improvements. Acknowledging success will help sustain motivation. Simple gestures such as a thank you and a handshake go a long way; a public e-mail or newsletter acknowledgment are other ideas to consider. Depending on the resources available, your green team might also work with management to explore the possibility of coffee mugs, certificates, plaques presented at award ceremonies, gift cards, bonuses, salary increases, and stock options, among others.

The long-term efforts of your green team can lead to happier and more productive employees, while benefiting the environment—an achievement of which your entire organization can be proud. For additional information the EPA's guide, *Teaming up to Save Energy*, is available at <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/tools-and-resources/bring-your-green-work-green-team-checklist>. This tool provides step-by-step instructions for forming an energy team—many of which apply to green teams, too—as well as real-world examples from other businesses and organizations committed to saving energy, saving money, and fighting global warming.

*ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that is designed to help people save money and protect the environment through energy-efficient products and practices.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (n.d.). In Teaming up to save energy: Protect our environment through energy efficiency. Retrieved August 16, 2016, from <http://www.energystar.gov>



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. My employee is late to work quite often, but I am helping him with ideas and suggestions, hoping to put an end to this practice. I know that lateness can be caused by personal problems, so how long should I offer this help before making a referral to the EAP?

A. Make a referral to the EAP now. Presumably you had urged your employee to come to work on time before you started offering tips. So, it is time for your employee to use the available resources. You can still offer tips for getting to work on time, and there is nothing wrong with doing so. However, recommending the EAP now and then making a formal referral later if needed is the fastest route to resolving this problem. Chronic attendance problems are often associated with lack of enthusiasm, not severe personal problems. And it is the EAP that can most quickly identify either of these issues.

Q. I am a new supervisor for the first time ever. I am not well-versed in the subject of “supervisory skills.” Can you recommend important tips I should follow? I do not have time to read a bunch of books.

A. Here are a few tips to get you started, but they are not a substitute for more education. Be sure you know what your job entails and the performance expectations your manager and her/his manager have for you. Ask for a week to shadow a seasoned supervisor who is in good standing with your organization. This will allow you to model priorities, communication, and leadership style. Think about who can mentor you later when the going gets tough. Take time now to read company policies, the handbook, and the performance review system so later you are not caught off guard by violations, either employees’ or your own. Use the Employee Assistance Program when conflicts arise and you need a listening ear or input. Your relationship with the EAP will also be confidential, like it is for any employee. Know who and where the experts in your organization are located, and create an easily accessible list of these individuals.

Q. Can the EAP work with an employee who is having trouble as a proper “work culture fit” in our organization? Although hired with great expectations, things aren’t working out so well. We believe this employee will eventually leave because of not being in tune with our workplace values and style of work.

A. Employers are often concerned about work culture fit in hiring. There is a good rationale for desiring employees whose temperament complements that of the organization. However, when cultural fit does not appear after hire, working with the EAP may help discover whether issues of concern are symptoms of treatable conditions resolvable with counseling or coaching. Culture fit in many organizations is not well defined, and it can be a reason for loss of valuable talent. Many job interviews help identify employees who are adaptable, articulate, and able to persevere or show high energy, confidence, and passion for the products or services offered by the organization. If evidence of these attributes diminishes later, could an underlying problem exist that the EAP can help resolve? An assessment is the way to find out. Turnover is costly and disruptive, so it is a smart move to discuss your employee’s performance issues and hope for an equitable solution that prevents loss of the worker.

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