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EAP NEWS

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



EAP Support for Supervisors

The workplaces of the 21st Century are becoming increasingly diverse. Most organizations employ a variety of people of different cultural backgrounds, religions, sexual preferences, nationalities, and others. The EAP offers support and tools for creating a more diverse workplace including webinars, online life-balance resources, consultations and more.

Q. Is it okay for supervisors to discuss psychological techniques for feeling better when employees are having a bad day, or offer employees tips on coping with stress? What about sadness over a relationship breakup? Sometimes referring them to the EAP does not feel like the right response.

A. Conversations with employees may broach personal challenges faced at work and at home, relationships issues, or internal personal struggles. Offering practical tips for coping with stress that you have personally found useful, or demonstrating empathy along with suggesting stress-relieving ideas, does not interfere with your role as a manager or cross boundaries that would impede your employee seeking help with a personal problem at the EAP. Suggesting employees take a break, calm down, look at things a different way, or check out a book you have found helpful is not what's referred to by those who suggest "avoiding diagnosing or counseling workers." Do promote the EAP, however, and discount your suggestions as ultimate solutions, and avoid ongoing advising on problems. Never hesitate to contact the EAP with a question about your role and what's appropriate, and for guidance on what to say or do next with an employee's concern.

Q. Many supervisors don't appreciate the value of performance reviews in developing workers. Many view the process as a chore, which leads to its being postponed or delayed. What can help supervisors feel excited or feel more urgency about completing them?

A. All employees have unique gifts and skills waiting to be discovered. Much of this is a lifelong process of discovery, and supervisors are in a unique position to spot these abilities and encourage and develop them. Reviews offer these opportunities, and employees are cheated without an effective relationship with the supervisor that helps discover their true potential. Many employees will not spot how much they have learned, be able to articulate their skills, or grow in confidence without feedback. The payoff for the company is having employees who desire to take more initiative, along with increased willingness to take risks, including bringing forth their own great ideas to solve problems. In addition, review time invariably brings up the topic of roadblocks, and often these are personal. The EAP can then be a resource for problem resolution.

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



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Q. I am a new supervisor. Do you have suggestions on how I can encourage workplace diversity among my employees?

A. The workplaces of the 21st Century are becoming increasingly diverse. Most organizations employ a variety of people of different cultural backgrounds, religions, sexual preferences, nationalities, and others. Regardless of your personal biases or fears, the workplace is changing. It's important for you to understand that your professional reputation and future success will depend on your ability to accept and embrace the differences of others. It's important to remember that variety can also lead to miscommunication and disagreements that might lead to conflicts in the workplace. For example, if you accidentally offend someone by not understanding the element that makes that individual a diverse member of your workforce, offer an immediate and sincere apology.

Through the development of the working relationship, professionalism, and workplace coaching and open communication those differences will fade, allowing positive working relationships to form. Here are some basic rules of communication:

- Avoid commenting on the cultural, ethnic or racial background, or sexual orientation of a coworker.
- Actively listen to what's said, pay attention to others, and look out for the visual cues that indicate how well the exchange is going. Be responsive and engaged in the conversation.
- Avoid casual, off-color comments or jokes that might be offensive or that poke fun at others.

No matter what the element is that makes someone diverse, every individual in the workplace wants to be judged for his or her performance, professionalism, and personal success. When labels and stereotypes are allowed to become "workplace identities," they can impede the sense of accomplishment anyone wants to feel.

Encouraging diversity includes giving diverse employees the opportunity to "fit in" with the rest of the workforce. Involve diverse employees in your life. You can invite them to lunch, talk to them in the break room, and even ask how things are going outside of work. Inclusion is a very powerful tool when supporting diversity.

Q. Can I refer an employee to the EAP for being too much of a perfectionist? He turns projects in late. I will admit they are of high quality, and in fact are better than most, but they are not worth the delays. He calls himself a perfectionist, but I think it's an excuse.

A. Employees who claim to be perfectionists have an advantage: Who can blame them for wanting to be perfect? This reaction offers the clue to their motivation. Typically, the main motivation is avoiding criticism. Perfectionist employees may spend inordinate amounts of time tweaking the last 10% of a project, thus causing delays in delivery. Not all are motivated by the same goals, so avoid diagnosing them. Telling your employee that "done is better than perfect" may allow the worker to make the necessary behavioral shift. In practical terms, there are no true perfectionists who live up to their view of what they would like to achieve. Refer your employee to the EAP based upon performance issues, not perfectionism. (You may discover that this is an easily corrected behavior.) The EAP will help your employee. For example, fear of criticism may be an issue, but the real problem may be fear of vulnerability in work and personal relationships.

August Webinar



Home Ownership Program Overview

Buying and selling a home is a big decision. We know the emotional and logical process to help you make this a smooth transition. Join us for this informative webinar where our consultants will answer your questions and provide an overview of the free Home Ownership Program benefits available to you through the EAP.

Register for this month's webinar.



College Corner

Once your college student turns 18, you will not automatically be granted access to his/her academic, medical, or financial records, even though you may be paying the bills. The following authorizations will help:

- FERPA - to find out your student's grades and other academic information.
- HIPAA - to obtain your student's medical information.
- Medical Power of Attorney (Health Care Proxy) - to act on her/his behalf in the event s/he can't speak for her/himself.
- Durable Power of Attorney - to access student's financial information, including bank accounts in the event s/he cannot speak for her/himself.

We would like to think that there will never be an issue with our kids, or a need to access their information. However, once they become an "adult" in the eyes of the law, without these precautions taken, you may find yourself unable to help or intervene on their behalf should something happen. This could add stress to an already stressful situation.

Your EAP can help. They can also help if you are overwhelmed with college related debt. Go to <https://my.timetrade.com/book/N62GH> to arrange your free consultation to plan for college, or to see how much you can lower your college related debt (without refinancing).