

# THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

*Wellness, Productivity & You!*

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## Working with Difficult People

Much has been written about “dealing with difficult people,” but the foundation for much of this advice includes the following steps for making most “people problems” more manageable:

- 1) Decide it is time to talk. Communication is still the key to resolving most interpersonal problems.
- 2) Discuss what's bothersome. Point out the difficulty you are having with a coworker's behavior rather than let it become a resentment.
- 3) Ask for change. The most common response by another to assertiveness is accommodation, not rejection. (Books on assertiveness sell because it works.)
- 4) Remain calm and take a deliberate approach to resolving people problems. This will reduce stress and help you feel more in control of your reaction to people you cannot change.

## Boundaries & Limits

**Q.** I want to file a grievance. Can the EAP represent me and argue my case?

**A.** An EAP cannot help you present a grievance against your employer because this would be inconsistent with fundamental principles that govern the role of the EAP. However, the EAP can meet with you to discuss personal problems, issues, and concerns that may be associated with the matter of the grievance.

## Your Job is a Garden

Treat your job or career like a garden—weed it and let the sunshine come through:

- 1) Know what your organization values, and ensure that you are working to make your skills, interests, and work goals match.
- 2) The people who depend on your productivity inside and outside the organization are customers. Work toward positive, high-level service relationships with them.
- 3) Be your own best advocate. Document successes and be the person primarily responsible for ensuring that the organization understands your value.

## Honest Communication = High Morale

According to OfficeTeam® and Robert Half, Intl., employees and managers agree that a lack of honest communication takes a heavy toll on morale. Executives and workers both claimed a “lack of honest communication” was the #1 morale buster in a survey about factors that negatively affect the workplace mood. It outranked “excessive workloads for extended periods” as something that can zap morale. When it comes to informing employees about bad news, the message is that they can handle it. Giving only partial information can make employees more anxious than giving them the whole story. When financial rewards aren't in an organization's budget, rebuilding morale is best accomplished by team-building and opportunities to talk.

Source: [www.OfficeTeam.com](http://www.OfficeTeam.com)

## Feel the Balance

Pay attention to your feelings for clues about whether you need to tinker with balancing your home and work-life in order to be healthier and happier. Ask yourself:

- 1) Am I frequently feeling anxiety and stress from too many demands placed upon me?
- 2) Am I feeling guilty because of complaints from family members that I don't spend enough time with them?
- 3) Do I feel "normal" only when I am working and awkward and anxious when participating in leisure activities?
- 4) Do I feel angry that I cannot find time "just for me?"
- 5) Do I feel like I am ignoring my favorite leisure time activity? Remember, balancing home and work-life is an ongoing process, not a "one-shot 10-pin strike."

## Become a Change Agent

Would you be a bystander to an incident of sexual harassment in the workplace, or an "agent of change" willing to speak up or appropriately intervene? Coworkers can exert a powerful influence that can reduce incidents of discrimination and offensive behavior, making it more likely that everyone benefits from a respectful workplace. Remember that a respectful workplace is everyone's responsibility. Resist the "bystander syndrome." Don't wait; act quickly and respond to offensive behavior and disrespect in the workplace. Know the organization's policies that support a safe and respectful workplace.

## Couples Counseling

Couples therapy doesn't save a marriage, many experts say; it's the couple in therapy that does the saving through hard work.

Couples therapy is about acquiring healthier communication habits, letting go of old pain and unnecessary expectations, and getting to the root of some of your personal issues. To give couples therapy the best shot at success, follow these important tips:

- 1) Don't expect miracles in the first few sessions. Hard work will usually precede the excitement and anticipation of realizing that your relationship is going to make it.
- 2) You will learn new relationship skills of sharing, receiving, and affirming each other. These skills must be practiced.
- 3) Your therapist must be someone with whom you both feel comfortable. This is crucial to helping you share feelings, take risks, and get vulnerable.
- 4) Be patient, but expect progress and discuss goals with your therapist.
- 5) Ask the EAP if it is familiar with therapists in your area. It may have a recommendation and can offer valuable input.

## The Stress Link to Workplace Injury

Is resolving psychological stress as important as wearing a hard hat to prevent the risk of serious injury? Apparently, other issues beyond fatigue and poor safety practices can contribute to an increased risk of being injured on the job according to research reported in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. The study investigated the relationship between specific types of worker stress and increased risk of injury. The study ruled out factors such as type of work environment, fatigue, age differences, and inexperience. One hundred eight workers out of a group of 7,000 reported being injured in an occupational accident for which they consulted a medical specialist. The findings: The likelihood of being injured on the job increases when your psychological stress is high. Risk of injury may increase if you perceive a lack of coworker and supervisor support, and more so if conflicts with the supervisor or coworkers exist. Poor job satisfaction also is correlated with increased risk of injury. Can the EAP help you resolve stress and interpersonal issues and thus help you prevent on-the-job injury?

*Source: Psychosocial Work Characteristics as Risk Factors for Being Injured in a Occupational Accident, JOEM, June 2004*