

NOVEMBER NEWS

2021

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

Q + A for Supervisors

Q. Our company engages in a lot of after-hours socializing. It's part of our work culture. Customers are always included. Drinking and a bit of rowdiness are not unusual. I'm nervous about sexual harassment. No incident has occurred, but I would prevent one every happening. Any tips?

The casual atmosphere and drinking may be a risk issue for your organization, especially if there are expectations that employees participate. It's important that employees be aware of the sexual harassment policy and their responsibilities. There must be prompt reporting and communication with a trained manager if an incident occurs. Customers are the lifeblood of your company. If they act inappropriately, you will be at risk of minimizing their behaviors out of fear of offending them. This is an important awareness. Employees who experience behaviors they believe are offensive or unwanted should not be subtly discouraged from complaining. There is much to consider when employees and managers socialize after hours. Boundaries may feel loosened, but corporate responsibility is not. Have your EAP provide sexual harassment refresher training yearly to help employees and to demonstrate your commitment to a safe and positive workplace.



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Support & Resources

Q. Why does enabling of alcoholic employees happen even if coworkers are well-educated about these behaviors? Everyone in our company has had alcohol and drug awareness training. Enabling was thoroughly discussed. A few of my colleagues socialize with those they know are alcoholics but say nothing.

Those most familiar with an alcoholic's personal life will naturally practice more enabling behaviors. Coworkers may benefit socially from the drinking pattern, excitement around it, and the social leadership an early-stage alcoholic may exhibit. Parties are livelier, jokes louder, and creative ideas for fun may always be at the ready. These enabling friends may hesitate to confront the alcoholic because they know change will jeopardize their social life and prompt loss of what has been valued. Enablers may explain away this unwillingness to confront the alcoholic by viewing the drinking pattern as "functional alcoholism," which is characteristic of the enabler's own denial. On the positive side, these same individuals often have great influence when a crisis occurs and treatment becomes necessary. Their ability to speak directly and convincingly can motivate the alcoholic to accept help. They are valuable players in the intervention.

Q. I think most employees don't like hearing negative feedback, even if they are sitting calmly and listening to it. This awareness, in my opinion, causes supervisors to avoid giving feedback or even avoid annual reviews. This is not fair to employees. Any tips for this problem?

Few employees enjoy negative feedback, but your goal as a supervisor is not to make negative feedback painless but to make it understood and effectively communicated so it is useful. Follow these steps. 1) Be sure your employees know the goals and objectives of their position. A complaint commonly heard by EAPs is "I don't know what my boss wants me to do." 2) Make corrective feedback tangible and measurable so employees can gauge their progress. 3) Don't lecture or criticize employees personally. 4) Give feedback soon and often so your employees never "wonder" what you are thinking about their performance. 5) Always mention the positive aspects of an employee's performance. Doing so will not undermine the corrective feedback. Just the opposite. It will increase your employee's receptivity to the negative feedback. 6) Discuss what change and success will look like if the feedback is acted on. This gives the employee a specific goal to work toward.



The EAP can help.

Q. Is there research that points to marijuana’s adverse effect on productivity in the workplace? Most people know about the impact of alcoholic workers and the high costs associated with alcohol abuse. Cannabis does not seem to have the same amount or degree of information.

Research on the adverse impact and cost of cannabis use in the workplace exists, but it is not as plentiful or as widely shared as research on alcoholism and alcohol abuse. This is explained in part by the large difference in research funding related to alcohol abuse and alcoholism and the length of time such funding has been available. Additionally, there is no “alcohol lobby” with a substantive goal of discrediting alcohol research, unlike the marijuana lobby, which actively seeks to discredit unfavorable research on cannabis. A 2020 research study on the adverse effects of marijuana use in the workplace showed that cannabis use before and during work negatively relates to task performance and organization-aimed “citizenship behaviors” (willingness to help others), and it contributes to counterproductive work behaviors. The study was published in “Group and Organization Management Journal” May 2020. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1059601120917590>

Q. I am the manager of a library in a fairly large city. Periodically, homeless people wander in and may behave in disturbing ways. One threw a book on the floor recently. It was upsetting, and one employee took a sick day later because of it. Can the EAP help us manage this sort of stress?

Although most people think of libraries as quiet and serene job settings, they are public places subject to periodic problems like disturbances associated with people who are homeless and people with mental health problems. For employees who are upset, suggest seeing the EAP, or refer employees whose performance has been negatively affected in the aftermath of a “patron incident.” Ask the EAP to visit with your staff and educate them about mental illness. This can demystify and educate employees about mental illness in general and boost their resilience. It can be scary facing someone experiencing psychosis. They may become agitated, or have unpredictable behaviors. The EAP can offer suggestions for interacting with problem patrons, or you can discuss these incidents as a group to generate a set of protocols if such a plan does not currently exist.

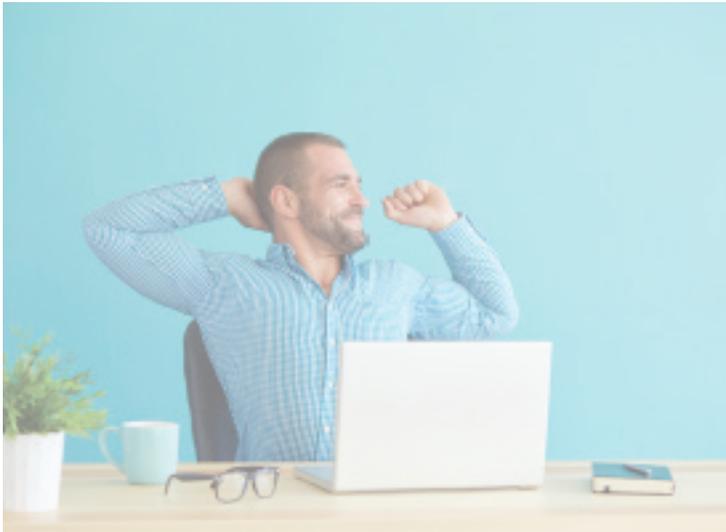
The EAP is a confidential place to talk through a challenging situation, ask questions, and get guidance.

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This Month's Featured Webinar

Relaxation RX

Wed, Nov 10, 2021 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM EST

Most of us feel too busy to even think about taking time out to relax. But the reality is that regular relaxation is crucial-if we don't stop regularly to "refuel," we risk emotional and physical burnout. Even a small investment of 5-10 minutes a day can have a huge return. This interactive workshop will include demonstrations of relaxation techniques that provide immediate as well as long-term benefits. We'll also learn how to detect burnout "triggers" and discover ways to regain a sense of balance and motivation. We'll leave feeling recharged and better able to tackle daily demands.

Register using the link below:

<https://uprisehealth.com/resources/uprise-health-november-webinar-2021/>

This Month's Featured Blog & Podcast

Diabetes & Mental Health

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Becoming a Leader Worth Following - Part 3

Abraham Gin discusses calibrating your actions to become a liberating leader

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