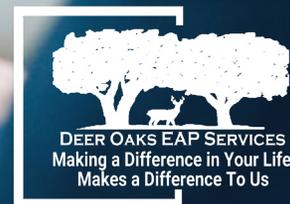


THE SUPERVISOR/HR NEWSLETTER



HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FEB.
2021

FEBRUARY ONLINE SEMINAR

Setting Goals for Your Future

Learn how to strategically set short-term and long-term goals to help you succeed in all areas of your life.

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

UPCOMING WEBINARS

2021 Pandemic Support Webinar Series

How to Maximize Productivity and Job Satisfaction While Working Remotely

This timely session will review the benefits and challenges of working from home, and provide several tips and strategies that can help remote workers to maximize productivity and job satisfaction. Areas to be discussed include identifying the best workspace, planning/structuring your day, self-discipline, managing distractions, and meeting your personal/social needs.

Date/Time: April 5, 2021, 1:00-2:00 PM CT

[REGISTER NOW](#)

2021 Supervisor Excellence Webinar Series

How to Effectively Supervise a Remote Work Team

Supervisors who are responsible for managing remote workers face several unique challenges. This important session will review the core management and leadership skills necessary to ensure that remote employees are engaged and productive. Areas to be discussed include methods for keeping remote workers connected, the importance of establishing a communications rhythm, and strategies for effectively coaching and managing remote worker performance.

Date/Time: February 22, 2021 1:00-2:00 PM CT

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Handling Political Conflict at Work as a Manager

First, adhere to your employer's policies, and follow the guidance of your HR department. Beyond that, here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

- **Apply the rules consistently.** If you prevent the expression of views from one side of the political spectrum, apply the same restraint to the expression of views from different sides.
- **Set an example.** Model respect and civility. Avoid talking politics with your subordinates. As a manager, you are in a position of power. Your opinions might be interpreted as pressure to agree or as the position favored by your employer. When appropriate and helpful, show how to have a conversation with open-minded listening, self-reflection, and a desire to understand another person's point of view. Don't make jokes about controversial topics.
- **Monitor political discussions, and step in before emotions overheat.** Calm, thoughtful, and mutually respectful discussions on any topic aren't generally a problem at work, as long as they don't cut into productive work time. Angry, emotional, and disrespectful discussions and one-sided diatribes are a problem. They can cause lasting damage to work relationships and team productivity. Step in before discussions escalate to this level of hostility.
- **Watch for talk or behavior that crosses the line into harassment or bullying.** This can include an employee forcing a political discussion on a coworker who would prefer not to engage. It might be an employee continuing a conversation beyond the point where it's welcomed. It certainly includes hostile and demeaning comments. Intervene with firm warnings or disciplinary action as needed. Follow up quickly on complaints of harassment or bullying from your employees. Work with your HR representative to understand your role in handling these situations.
- **Have one-on-one conversations with your employees.** Show that you care about them as individuals. Ask them about their reactions to political differences on the team. Coach them on how to make difficult conversations more productive and how to discourage unwanted conversations. Respond promptly to any complaints of intimidation, bullying, or harassment.
- **Manage performance issues.** If political discussions at work cut into work time or diminish work output, manage the problem as a performance issue. Your employees are paid to do a job, satisfy customer needs, and meet performance targets. If an individual's political beliefs and behavior are interfering with their work output, you need to deal with it as a performance issue. Even when an individual is performing well, if their interactions with others are hurting morale and reducing work output, they are causing a performance problem that you need to address.
- **Seek help.** When you're unsure how to handle political tension and conflict on your team, ask for suggestions from other managers, HR, or your employee support program. If you're concerned about harassment or bullying on your team, ask for guidance from HR right away.

For More Information

"How Should HR Handle Political Discussions at Work?" Susan Milligan, HR Magazine (February 26, 2020)
<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/spring2020/pages/political-talk-in-the-workplace.aspx>

"Managing a Team with Conflicting Political Views," Rebecca Knight, Harvard Business Review (HBR) (October 22, 2020)
<https://hbr.org/2020/10/managing-a-team-with-conflicting-political-views>

"Demonstrators in the Midst? Handling Political Activity in the Workplace," John Birmingham, Jr. and Jeffrey Koop, National Law Review, Volume XI, Number 19 (January 19, 2021)
<https://www.natlawreview.com/article/demonstrators-midst-handling-political-activity-workplace>

Source: Morgan, H. (2021, January 19). *Handling political conflict at work* (C. Gregg-Meeker & B. Schuette, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.

Time: A Special Resource

Time is a special resource, because it takes time to accomplish anything. The way you manage time, like the way you manage your money, energy, and other resources, plays a large part in determining the goals you can accomplish and the satisfaction you receive from everything you do.

You really manage yourself with regard to time. There are many ways to make the most of your time.

Time is...

Measured—by clock or calendar, by season, by life stages

Limited—Everyone has 24 hours.

Unique—You really manage yourself in relation to time.

Perishable—You cannot save it for future use.

Money—It has a monetary value.

The key—to finding satisfaction and enjoying life

Time is a special resource for anyone trying to meet family, work, community, and personal needs. Some say time is the most valuable of all resources, because it is limited. Others think time is endless—thinking they can always do their tasks at another time. Most busy people have to plan carefully to meet all their time demands. Jobs, schools and other events require you to be on time, even though you would prefer a more relaxed schedule.

Time itself is not the real problem: The key is how you use your time. Time cannot really be managed; you manage yourself in terms of time use.

Think about time.

Time is unique. It is the only resource every person has in equal amounts: Everyone has 24 hours a day.

Time is perishable. You cannot really save time. You can “lose it or use it.” A problem with time as a resource is that you cannot borrow minutes from one day and use them the next day. Although time cannot be saved, you can use your time effectively through careful planning and action.

Time is a measure. When time is discussed, many people think first of the clock. Most developed countries tend to be a clock-and-calendar centered society. Being on time for work, school, and appointments, and for payments such as rents and bills, is a necessity for almost everyone today. In other cultures, time may be measured by the sun and the seasons.

Time has a monetary value. An old proverb says, “Time is money.” It takes time to earn money. It takes time to develop new resources. It takes time to get the most from your shopping money. Sometimes you choose whether to “buy time” in the form of convenience foods or household repairs.

Time has other values. People look for “quality time” to spend with children and other family members. Everyone needs time for rest, leisure and personal renewal, as well as for friends, neighbors, and your community.

Balance your use of time.

Plan to balance your life and share time with family, friends, neighbors, paid work, and volunteer work (e.g., with your place of worship, neighborhood, or community). Every person invests time, wastes time, and uses time. Think carefully about your use of time. Make sure you invest time in the things that are important to you.

Source: Walker, D., Mark, E., & Kiss, E. (Ed.). (Updated 2016, February). Time: A special resource (pp. 18–19). In Essential living skills: Time management skills (Pub. No. S-134F). Manhattan, KS: Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. Retrieved October 5, 2017, from <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/>

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 have a new employee with whom I don't get along. The chemistry or temperament between us isn't right, and I'm afraid down the road that we are going to have conflicts. Can the EAP help?

A. Your description of "bad chemistry" is one to explore with someone in your EAP. As you might guess, bad chemistry is not a mysterious occurrence. You are describing characteristics of personality differences that influence communication, both verbal and nonverbal. The important aspect of this problem is any resistance to trusting your employee. Trust is crucial to your achievement or to your work unit goals. You may be inclined to micromanage this employee's work. You may give less positive feedback about their work. You may be more naturally resistant to giving them attention, tending to ignore their contributions. Would you be inclined to avoid inviting this person to important meetings, have less empathy for their request for a raise, or criticize this person more? All of these issues can lead to turnover along with the other problems this sort of schism you are describing naturally creates. The EAP will help you examine the situation and arrive at a personal coping and change strategy that can guide you toward greater understanding and compatibility.

Q. Should I refer an employee to the EAP if he or she tests positive for COVID-19?

A. Yes, consider recommending self-referral to the EAP. The coronavirus has tremendous controversy associated with it, and misinformation abounds. Unfortunately, people who are diagnosed with the illness often suffer from anxieties in addition to their other symptoms, including an anxiety about whether the illness will be terminal for them. Victims of the disease may wonder how they got it, who they passed it on to, or whether anyone they know with medical problems or who is aged could contract the disease and die from it. This can obviously create feelings of guilt and concern. What are the long-term side effects? What information should I trust? Does this disease cause heart problems or other body organ damage? The EAP will offer help or obtain the support needed to help your worker overcome these dreads.

Q. Why are EAPs considered a means to help supervisors manage stress? Does this refer to our self-referral to the program to help ourselves or does this refer to the mechanics of EAPs and how they remove the burden of managing difficult or troubling employee behavior?

A. It is both. EAPs help managers with personal stress, and the EAP process helps remove the stress of managing the problematic behaviors of employees that may be linked to their personal problems. There is one part of the process that many managers forget, however. Any performance issue that is not improving is a potential referral to the EAP. This step is a de-stressor because the EAP can share the burden of helping an employee correct a performance problem. When supervisors refer employees to the EAP, they are, in fact, referring them to correct performance issues, not mental health issues or other personal problems. Frequently, it is determined that some personal issue impedes performance (but not always). In those cases, EAPs have been known to then refer employees to every sort of help imaginable, even language classes, pet sitters retirement planners, public speaking courses, reading improvement programs, and local colleges to finish degrees or acquire courses to improve skills and abilities.

Information contained in this newsletter is for general information purposes only and is not intended to be specific guidance for any particular supervisor or human resource management concern. Some of it might not apply to your particular company policies and available programs. This information is proprietary and intended only for eligible EAP members. For specific guidance on handling individual employee problems, consult with Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.