

CLAREMONT EAP

IMPACT

Manager Supplement

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Managers and Stress

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- Free “Simple Will” Kits are available from Claremont EAP
- A free credit report is available once per year
- Claremont EAP provides legal referrals for family law, consumer issues, traffic violations, and personal injury
- Referrals are available for child care, adult/eldercare, adoption assistance, school/college selection, and pet care

Claremont EAP

800.834.3773

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Managers and Stress 1

Guidelines for Handling Employee Absenteeism, Tardiness, and Distractions 2

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Think back to the jobs you held before you became a manager. You can probably remember worrying about whether you were doing your job well and whether your work would get done on time. Now that you're a manager and responsible for the work of other people as well as your own, you may suddenly experience a higher level of anxiety than you did before.

Although you may feel isolated by your managerial responsibilities, know that you are not alone in your concerns. Higher level management has the same type of stress you do, only on a larger scale.

Avoid Unproductive Worrying

At times, it may seem overwhelming to accept responsibility for the performance of other people, over whom you can really exercise only limited control. One of the risks of being a manager is succumbing to the temptation to worry constantly about your department and your job. In order to avoid burnout, however, it is essential to minimize the unproductive time you spend

worrying. Instead, focus on one task or problem area at a time. While you are concentrating on one area, don't let all the other concerns you may have flood your mind and leave you feeling frustrated and impatient.



Encourage Communication

Be sure that your employees understand that they have a responsibility to do their work in accordance with company standards and in a timely fashion. Tell your employees that you should be alerted to any problems they may have while there is still ample time to correct them. Let them know that you will work with them on any problem, even those that seem trivial. It is much better to have information – even bad

news – than to be caught off guard at the eleventh hour. No employee should struggle with an assignment only to submit something at the last minute which is partially or improperly done. Monitor each employee's progress frequently. Some employees may be hesitant to ask for help when they need it. So emphasize that you not only want but need to know of any problem before it gets out of hand.

Follow Your Own Advice

Most managers today know the importance of good nutrition, adequate rest, and exercise in reducing stress. It's easy to forget these basics during peak work periods, however. In this respect, emergencies at work have certain similarities to “real life” emergencies. You will be in no position to guide your staff through the complexities of their jobs if you don't first take care of yourself, and your own work.

Guidelines for Handling Employee Absenteeism, Tardiness, and Distractions

Managers who truly want to create a work environment that is conducive to employees with family responsibilities will find positive and motivational ways of interacting with their employees. This means that dealing with problems such as absenteeism, tardiness, and distractions should not result in tension-filled exchanges which leave both manager and employee unhappy. Let the following guidelines provide a framework for working through these problems with your employees.



Send Employees to Seminars

When appropriate, suggest that the employee attend a seminar to gain a sense of assertiveness and communication skills. These kinds of seminars may be valuable

for employees who are having trouble communicating effectively with any of the important people in their lives – caregivers, children, spouse, or supervisor. When all is said and done, give the responsibility for resolving the attendance problem back to the employee. Make the employee responsible for developing a plan of actions and a timetable. Let the employee know that you have confidence in his or her ability to create a solution.

Use Good Communications Skills

Open a dialogue positively. Speak directly and openly about the problem. It's especially important to use active listening skills – decode the message your employee is sending and rephrase it for him or her to verify.

Focus on the Behavior in Question

Resist the temptation to bring unrelated problems or complaints into the discussion to bolster your position. It will only put the employee on the defensive and make it more difficult to resolve the problem at hand.

Adopt Management Strategies

Show the employee how managerial techniques such as setting priorities, delegating, planning ahead, and developing outside resources can be applied to a particular problem.

Deal with Issues Creatively

Your goal is a win/win plan. This means conveying to the employee that you are genuinely interested in resolving the problem to your mutual benefit, as opposed to arbitrarily enforcing regulations or imposing discipline.

Assess the Problem

Know your company's policies with regard to formal sanctions for attendance problems. Exercise discretion before you use these sanctions but be sure that everyone is treated fairly. Check your own records to verify the actual extent of the attendance problem.

Open a dialogue positively. Speak directly and openly about the problem.

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Managers can call Claremont for consultation regarding employees who appear to be experiencing personal problems, whether or not work performance has become an issue. The purpose of this consultation is to help formulate an approach that effectively facilitates the person receiving appropriate help. The Claremont consultant will review the do's and don'ts for handling these often delicate situations and suggest things you can say and do which are most likely to be helpful.