

EMPLOYEE COUNSELING PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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So that's Bullying?



Bullying is becoming a major focus of concern in America's workplaces. Unlike a child bully, an adult may use more subtle strategies to produce negative psychological effects on the victim. Help for victims begins with awareness of bullying behaviors. The appropriate type of support or intervention can then be determined. Common, but often subtle, examples of bullying: 1) a pattern of statements meant to degrade an individual's work status or personal standing; 2) isolating a worker to prevent access to information, opportunities, and social interaction within the organization; 3) undermining the individual by demeaning his or her standard of work, not giving credit, setting up projects to fail; and, 4) persistently reminding the person of his or her mistakes.

Give Coworkers the *Right Start!*



Coworkers play a crucial role in helping new hires feel good about their position and the organization. Make your coworker's first day of work a good one. 1) Share information about procedures and customs of the work unit — written and unwritten — that will help prevent mistakes. 2) Step forward early to introduce yourself. 3) Offer to be a mentor or show the person around and make other introductions. 4) *Most important:* Don't let a new employee be in the lurch about lunch plans the first day.

Kitchen Timer Technology



A basic tenet of effective time management is having an awareness of the passage of time. One great technique for accomplishing this is to use a kitchen timer. The ways to use it are limited only by your imagination. Key principles:

- 1) Don't use the one in your kitchen! Buy several and stick them where you need them.
- 2) Set the timer for short periods depending on your past pattern of distractibility or procrastination.
- 3) Use the timer to help you remember to do something, to stay focused on a task, as an incentive to start a task (i.e., "...in 10 minutes, I will begin exercising."), and to end an activity at a specific time.

Elder Abuse Next Door?



Elder abuse is an umbrella term used to describe physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial exploitation, or willful neglect of an elderly person. Although surprising to many people, 90% of elder abuse is perpetrated by a family member. This may explain why 80% of elder abuse cases are believed to go unreported. All 50 states have some type of law to prevent elder abuse. To report elder abuse, contact the Adult Protective Services agency in your area. The EAP can help you locate the proper agency in your community.

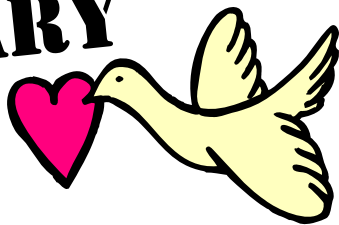
Source: Source: U.S. Administration on Aging,
1998 National Elder Abuse Incidence Study

Shine If You Resign



Resign correctly and you may leave the door open, while making it easier for new opportunities to come your way. Resign incorrectly, and you could burn bridges and be remembered for decades in ways that you will regret. Beyond following policies and customary practices within your organization: 1) Remember that a resignation often goes in your personnel file. What you put in writing stays there, possibly for future employers to read. 2) If things are ending on a “bad note,” showing that you can keep a cool head and remain composed will be remembered by your employer and coworkers. 3) If you feel the need to negotiate a counteroffer or “vent” hard feelings, don’t use a letter of resignation to do it. 4) An expression of gratitude for opportunities and sincerity in your resignation is a smart move. 5) Don’t forget to include highlights of your best accomplishments.

Remember the MILITARY



Holidays can be tough times when a family member in the military is deployed. If not overseas, military personnel may still be stationed far from home, making it difficult to join loved ones. The National Military Family Association at www.nmfa.org offers programs to support military families. For a list of great ideas to help military families, visit (www.familyfirst.net/familife/military.asp). To send a greeting or message to someone in the military (any branch of service), anywhere in the world, go to: (<http://anyservicemember.navy.mil>).

Your Family's DISASTER PLAN



Disasters — hurricanes and tornadoes, fires, floods, earthquakes, chemical spills — can strike anywhere. Do you have a family disaster plan? A great resource guide to help you assemble one is the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s guide, “Your Family Disaster Plan.” The free guide walks you through four steps: understanding disasters that could affect your area, creating a family plan so you work together as a team, completing a checklist, and practicing and maintaining the plan. To learn more, contact FEMA, www.fema.gov, at 1-800-480-2520.

Staying Up When Income Drops



When circumstances — layoffs, divorce, a disabling injury, or other unanticipated events lead to abrupt reduction in individual or family income — resist panic. Instead, take control and act with a plan.

- **Take stock of family and financial resources.** Get a complete picture of your financial resources and assets, non-tangible assets, and family skills. Identify anything that can help cut costs, can be traded for needed goods and services, or can be used to produce income. Examples include the ability to work part-time, a room that can be rented, things that can be sold, etc.
- **Take stock of community resources.** Tax-supported public services usually exist to help people cope with reduced income. You may be eligible for these services. These include income and food assistance, job training, medical assistance, and more.
- **Set priorities for spending.** Create a spending plan. Examine anticipated income, minus fixed expenses, and evaluate the flexible dollars left over. Have a family meeting to get commitment for sticking to the plan and get agreement on what constitute essential items.
- **Protect family welfare.** If bills overwhelm income, you may have to prioritize. Decide which ones can be deferred or renegotiated. Pay bills with consequences like late penalties, repossession, foreclosure, or reconnect charges. Be proactive in speaking with creditors, especially your mortgage company. They usually want to work with you.
- **Manage stress.** Guard your mental health, maintain stable family relationships, and treat your body right during a time that may be extremely stressful. Rely upon the EAP to help you cope with stress and find resources to help you through a temporary but difficult period.