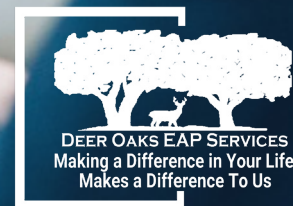




THE SUPERVISOR/HR NEWSLETTER



HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

JULY
2021

JULY ONLINE SEMINAR

Maximizing Your Summer Break

Learn some straightforward and effective ways to make the most of your summer holiday and maximize the moments and memories for you and your family.

Available on-demand starting
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UPCOMING WEBINARS

2021 Pandemic Support Webinar Series

How to Deal with Anxiety in the Midst of Stressful Circumstances

This past year, our world has been faced with a series of difficult and stressful circumstances that have left many of us feeling anxious. This timely session will discuss several practical approaches to dealing with anxiety including managing our self-talk, expressing our emotions, and seeking appropriate support from others.

Date/Time: July 12, 2021, 1:00-2:00 PM CT

[REGISTER NOW](#) 

2021 Supervisor Excellence Webinar Series

Helping Your Team Find Work-Life Balance During Stressful Times

During these difficult times, many employees are experiencing higher levels of stress. This important session will provide supervisors, managers, and HR professionals with practical strategies to help them encourage their employees to live more balanced lifestyles so they can remain healthy and productive.

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

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A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace

Part 1

What is postvention?

Postvention is psychological first aid, crisis intervention, and other support offered after a suicide to affected individuals or the workplace as a whole to alleviate possible negative effects of the event.¹ A suicide death of an employee is only one type of suicide that could affect the workplace. The suicide death of a client, a vendor, or a family member of an employee can also have a profound impact.

Managers play the following critical roles in setting the tone for how the rest of the workplace will respond to a suicide:

1. First, managers need to approach the situation with compassion for the bereaved. Public and private communications need to reflect a respectful tone of empathy and support and offer permission for people to take care of themselves.
2. Second, managers need to listen carefully to the needs of various employees, as these may differ from employee to employee:
 - Some workers who are more distant acquaintances of the decedent might be able to return to work very quickly, while others may need more time to adjust to the loss. Workers might need to vent anger, guilt, sadness, or other emotions, and thus, a structured group session might be helpful in increasing coping and support. Having counseling staff with coping resources on hand during such group sessions might be useful if future referrals need to be made to support groups and professional mental health services.
 - Further, some workers may express their psychological reactions to the death verbally, while others might express their reactions behaviorally, as in showing excessive absenteeism or “presenteeism.” Managers need to be attentive to all forms of communication and document when they are problematic for the workplace. Some accommodations may be warranted given the undue stress to members of the workplace, but usually standards of workplace behavior and accountability can be maintained while providing this level of support.
3. Third, managers should take the lead in applying corporate human resource (HR) policies designed to help surviving family members with practical matters. This behavior will model for others that it is all right to reach out beyond the confines of the work environment to help.
4. Fourth, managers should recognize their unique role. On one hand, they may be impacted by the tragic loss and in need of support, while on the other hand they may be the targets of anger and blame by other employees.
5. Finally, managers should be sensitive to anniversaries, notable events (e.g., holiday parties, traditions the deceased always enjoyed, achieving a milestone of a project to which the deceased contributed), and other major dates that might trigger reactions from staff and during which it might be appropriate to acknowledge again the loss of that person's presence.

10 Action Steps for Dealing With the Aftermath of a Suicide

The list below highlights the action steps that will assist with the above-mentioned roles and goals of the manager. Each point will be covered in more detail in the sections that follow.

Immediate, Acute Phase

1. *Coordinate*: Contain the crisis.
2. *Notify*: Protect and respect the privacy rights of the deceased employee and his or her loved ones during death notification.
3. *Communicate*: Reduce the potential for contagion.
4. *Support*: Offer practical assistance to family.

Short-Term Recovery Phase

5. *Link*: Identify and link impacted employees to additional support resources and refer those most affected to professional mental health services.
6. *Comfort*: Support, comfort, and promote healthy grieving of the employees who have been impacted by the loss.
7. *Restore*: Restore equilibrium and optimal functioning in the workplace.
8. *Lead*: Build and sustain trust and confidence in organizational leadership. Demonstrating leadership in times of crisis is always an opportunity to build trust, confidence, and workplace cohesiveness.

Longer Term, Reconstructing Phase

9. *Honor*: Prepare for anniversary reactions and other milestone dates.
10. *Sustain*: Transition from postvention to suicide prevention.

Reference

Smith, K., Rivero, E., & Cimini, D. (2010, June 8). Postvention as a prevention tool: Developing a comprehensive postvention response for your campus [Webinar]. Retrieved May 20, 2016, from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center website: <http://www.sprc.org/>

Carson J Spencer Foundation, Crisis Care Network, National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, & American Association of Suicidology. (2013). A manager's guide to suicide postvention in the workplace: 10 action steps for dealing with the aftermath of suicide. Denver, CO: Carson J Spencer Foundation. Retrieved August 13, 2018, from the Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention website: <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/>

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. No supervisor wants to shortchange an employee who divulges a serious personal problem by not offering some advice. I think most supervisors are good listeners and problem solvers; otherwise, we would not be leading others. Still, how can we show support but still refer [an employee] to the EAP?

A. To show your support, be available, interested, and empathic when an employee shares something personal. Doing this much will help prepare your employee to take the next step toward accepting an EAP referral. To be empathic, acknowledge the stress or anxiety shared by the employee. Tell the employee you are glad he or she felt comfortable enough to share the information with you. Don't rush to get the employee off to the EAP, but instead share how offering your own tips and advice would deprive the employee of a more complete answer and assessment provided by the EAP. Keep a supply of EAP business cards, or least a phone number, handy. Invite the employee, based on the urgency of any emergent issues, to phone from your office to make the appointment. Use this approach for problems associated with health and safety risks such as depression, domestic violence, or other safety-related concerns (if it is not an emergency.)

Q. I notice some firefighters are resistance to self-referral to the EAP. Confidentiality concerns a few, but others think asking for help will tarnish their macho image. How can I help reduce this resistance?

A. To overcome myths and misconceptions about EAPs and getting help, mention the EAP to your personnel often, and have periodic awareness programs arranged by or with EAP staff. Encourage use of the program. Making the EAP "ever present" and attempt to have personnel see it as part of the "fire culture." This will have significant impact on reducing resistance to using the program. In effect, this type of visibility has a marketing effect that normalizes the idea of getting help. Regarding your role as a supervisor, be careful about language. If you are involved in a "bad call" or a horrific event, model reaching out to personnel, follow critical incident stress management protocols, and don't make statements that reinforce the macho mentality among personnel, like "Suck it up, it's your job." Be aware of the role alcohol plays among personnel, and how it is used to manage stress within your department. Discuss with the EAP strategies that educate about and encourage healthy behaviors for managing stress.

Q. I referred my employee to the EAP, but he says he won't go because his neighbors work in the same office building and he might get spotted, thereby losing his confidentiality. This sounds like a good excuse. What can I do to persuade him to go?

A. EAPs are familiar with these unusual circumstances that may cause a few employees to be hesitant about visiting the program office. Phone the EAP and discuss this situation. The EAP will then tell you what to recommend. Some EAPs will discuss personal problems with an employee over the phone; others may meet select employees at a different location or meet after hours with the worker to decrease the likelihood of his or her crossing paths with someone who would possibly recognize the person's reason for being on the premises.

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