

Testimonials

Here are some quotes from HR Managers who recently called on CONCERN for a Management Consultation:

"The Clinical Manager was an invaluable help to our employees and the HR team during this crisis."

"Our Clinical Manager really went above and beyond to help me try to help an employee in my group. Thanks so much!"

"Thank you for the prompt and professional response from phone call to site visit. This service was very beneficial and appreciated by everyone involved. Thank you again."



FAQs for Managing Employees Maintaining a Positive Work Culture

A positive work culture benefits both employees and the company. It starts with better health due to reduced stress and other negative factors. Better health leads to less employee absenteeism, which can have a negative impact on productivity and the bottom line. It also increases morale and contributes to employee retention. A positive work culture is like a well-tuned automobile—it requires preventive maintenance—and everyone has a role to play. Do you participate in the “preventive maintenance” of your work culture? Here are ways you can help your work culture thrive: 1) Encourage employees to place a high priority on mutual positive regard for one another. 2) Lead with honesty, integrity and vulnerability to help employees feel safe. 3) Dignify differences among employees and give attention to how their personal and interpersonal communication reinforces or diminishes a positive work culture. 4) Seek ways to promote resolution of conflicts quickly. Stopping toxic work behaviors or practices before they affect productivity and morale is essential. 5) Reinforce a positive message of unity. Encourage and model traditions of praise and rewarding successes. 6) Be proactive about removing barriers to communication. 7) Encourage employees to practice self-awareness and understand how attitudes affect others.

Q. I once read that one of a supervisor’s most important jobs is to help every employee find his or her gift. What does this mean?

A. Leadership literature isn’t always about the technical skills leaders must possess, such as documenting properly, resolving conflicts, praising, and inspiring others. Instead, it often emphasizes passion, values, self-awareness, having or developing a personal vision, integrity, wanting to teach others, and the desire to make a difference. With the personal awareness and energy that flow from these values and attributes, great supervisors demonstrate enthusiasm in helping subordinates discover their potential. This approach to supervision is positive and optimistic, and it is full of curiosity about what great things might lay hidden and undiscovered in the employees they supervise. This desire to invest in people and to champion their uniqueness is what separates great leaders from other managers, and it is easily spotted by those who hire and promote in great companies.

Q. Do supervisors have any responsibility for helping employees manage anger in the workplace? Or is this a problem to address primarily by referring to Concern? I see angry employees, and sometimes I step in because I worry about where anger might lead—for example, to a fight.

A. Witnessing displays of anger in the workplace is a common experience for supervisors. Although Concern is a key avenue of help for employees, your ability to properly intervene or positively influence angry employees is crucial. There is a financial and safety rationale for your role because it can prevent workplace altercations and conflicts that can lead to undesirable occurrences such as injuries, lawsuits, downtime, and decline in morale, high turnover, and violence. Although you have no counseling role, you can practice effective communication with employees, understand and address their frustrations, empathize with their angry feelings, keep promises you make to them, and, of course, know when to make a referral to Concern. As a person with authority, what you say can have a powerful effect. Don't minimize it. For example, say, *I understand your frustration* rather than *I am tired of hearing your complaints*. A consultation with a Concern Clinical Manager can help you acquire or improve upon these empathic and relational skills.

Q. It seems like bullies in the workplace often have some type of power, even if only imagined. Is this correct? What's the supervisor's role in prevention? Would training for employees help reduce risk?

A. You're correct. Employees who bully often possess some degree of power—supervisory, tenure, delegated, indirect, or team leadership. Some bullies may perceive

or mistakenly believe they have power or authority, and this alone is enough to prompt their aggressive behavior. Obviously bullies can exist anywhere in the organization, so conducting general education and awareness is helpful. This should include self-assessment for the potential perpetrator or victim. Throw in a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying and a significant reduction of the risk can be accomplished. Supervisors should also be aware that a bully is often a trusted employee who is relied upon by the immediate supervisor for knowledge, expertise, and skills. He or she can be passionate and loyal to the organization. However, if a supervisor becomes overly dependent on this "right-hand person" relationship, bullying behaviors may emerge, aided by the protection or special relationship the bully feels exists with the supervisor.

Q. How can I hold employees accountable without making them feel that I am beating up on them or having them getting overly defensive?

A. Willingness to be personally accountable for one's life is learned and supports accountability in the workplace. However, you can have better success with holding employees to account if you have an effective relationship with them. Your view of accountability is important, so help your employees anticipate being held accountable. Always be sure there is no ambivalence about the results you expect. Some supervisors see accountability as a measure of "blameworthiness" when things go wrong. Do you approach your employees with this orientation? If so, you may also communicate less effectively and less frequently. Remember, you can make willingness to be accountable a performance measure. Then if issues remain, make a supervisor referral to Concern.

CONCERN: EAP teams with Human Resources to provide another resource for managers and supervisors to consult about how to manage issues with individuals, within and between work groups, and across departments. When you call CONCERN: EAP, ask for a Management Consultant or request to speak to a Clinical Manager.

Call: 800.344.4222
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