

# Workplace Employee

December 2016

## Testimonials

**Here are some quotes from employees who recently called on CONCERN for a Counseling Consultation:**

*“Very easy to use --I spoke to a very helpful call center specialist and was able to find a great counselor. I had an appointment within a day or two.”*

*“I received practical, real suggestions on how to implement changes for positive results.”*

*“Thank you for all your help. It is making a big difference in my family.”*

*“Quick follow-up; appropriate referral based on location and preferences. Great therapist!”*



## Tips for Success

### Soft Skills to Know: Managing Conflict

All workplaces experience conflict, but not all employees know how to manage conflict well. Some avoid conflict, while others make conflict worse. Since conflict is considered normal and expected in work organizations, employees with conflict management skills are valued. Knowing how to manage conflict is a learned skill with specific elements. Understanding what these elements are will allow you to see conflict as an opportunity, fear it less, and move quickly to turn conflicts into positive outcomes for your organization. There are hundreds of books and source documents on conflict management, and nearly all of them discuss some or all of the following conflict management principles:

- 1) awareness and early recognition of a problem that may lead to conflict, and seeing most conflicts as opportunities;
- 2) willingness to be proactive and bring the problem to the attention of others;
- 3) gathering players to engage in the discovery of solutions;
- 4) engaging willing and reluctant persons to become equal participants in identifying solutions;
- 5) recognition of emotional aspects of conflicts and the capacity to move beyond emotions to find mutually satisfying solutions;
- 6) formalizing agreements that implement solutions; and
- 7) monitoring results of agreements efficiently and intervening early to make adjustments and reinforce positive outcomes.

Knowing these steps and making them part of your job skill repertoire will allow you to conquer your anxiety and fear of workplace conflict to advance your organization's goals.

### Know Your Positive Personal Attributes

Employers not only want employees with the right skills and abilities, but also they want positive personal attributes. Could you describe your positive attributes? The ability to discuss them shows your personal insight and adds energy to any job interview, making you stand out in ways that many other applicants do not. Examples of personal attributes are the following: being flexible and adaptable, the ability to work without supervision, taking initiative, getting along well with others, being willing and eager to learn, communicating effectively, being thoughtful and reflective about issues/problems, the ability to be self-critical, seeking unique ways around problems, asking questions, and tolerating uncertainty well.

### Incivility Begets Incivility

Discourteous and rude behaviors, such as making derogatory remarks, ignoring coworkers, and using a condescending tone, are examples of incivility at work. These behaviors have grown worse in the past ten years. Being victimized by uncivil behavior places you at risk of “paying it forward”—that is, also participating in these behaviors. The earlier in the day incivility occurs, the more likely it is

passed along. Incivility causes victims to lose attention at work and expend emotional energy, because they ruminate about the intentions of the perpetrator, mull over how to respond, or spend time thinking or talking with others concerning what to do about it. This frustration and emotional burden, according to one research study, costs \$14,000 per employee per year in lost productivity based on the amount of incivility experienced in the average workplace! Remembering how incivility takes its toll can help employees participate in it less. **Source:** <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/304498950>

### Hot Tip for Resisting Holiday Overeating

Here come the holidays—and the eating and the guilt. Wait! Here's an idea from research conducted by Vanessa Patrick, Ph.D. During the holidays, when you come face to face with tempting food, try saying, "I don't eat that!" Research discovered that 80 percent of women who used those words stuck with their good eating habits compared with 10 percent of women who said, "I can't." Amazingly, saying "I can't" gives you less of a sense of empowerment than saying "I don't." **Source:** <http://www.bauer.uh.edu/vpatrick/docs/DontversusCant.pdf>

### Is Pessimism Bad for Your Heart?

A pessimistic attitude increases the risk for death from heart disease, a new study reports. For 11 years, researchers in Finland followed thousands of men and women ages 52 to 76. They discovered that pessimism toward life events and circumstances doubled the chance of dying of heart disease, and that optimistic people had fewer cardiac deaths. To be less pessimistic, don't focus on stopping pessimistic thinking. Instead, practice optimistic responses to both positive and negative events in your life. Positive thinking may not help you live longer as this study showed, but it may help insulate you from poor cardiac health by giving you response reflexes that improve resilience to life stressors. **Source:** <http://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com> (search "pessimism")

### I Can't Sleep!

Seventy-five percent of adults have reported experiencing sleep problems at least a few nights a week or more within the past year. This continues a nearly 20-year upward trend in the number of adults reporting sleep problems. See your doctor about persistent sleep troubles. Evaluate whether the following suggestions from the National Institutes of Health can aid you in getting more quality sleep: 1) Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. 2) Don't sleep in on weekends. Keep your weekday schedule. 3) One hour before bed, stop work, wind down, and relax. Try taking a hot bath. 4) Avoid heavy eating before bedtime. 5) Avoid alcoholic drinks, nicotine, and caffeine before bed. 6) Try exercising five or six hours before bedtime. 7) Keep your bedroom cool and dark, and keep smartphones out of your room. **Learn more:** <http://www.ninds.nih.gov> (search "sleep tips")

### Marijuana: Proceed with Caution

In Colorado, the number of fatal car crashes with drivers testing positive for marijuana has doubled in the past six years. Colorado now ranks No. 1 out of 50 states in marijuana use, with more of its young people ages 12 to 17 using cannabis, according to the report titled "The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact," which was released this September. Although not widely reported, dozens of adverse effects from marijuana legalization have been cataloged, including risk of respiratory illness, dependence, mental health-related problems, and other issues affecting public health, including impaired driving. The American Medical Society on Addiction Medicine, the country's leading expert on addiction, opposes legalization, stating that 61 percent of all drug-addicted persons (other than alcoholics) use marijuana. The message? Like with alcohol, legalization does not equate to a reduction in health and safety concerns. The contrary may be true. **Sources:** 2016 Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado Report at <http://www.rmhidta.org> (search "reports"); ASAM.org (<http://www.asam.org/advocacy/find-a-policy-statement>)

Employees and eligible dependents can request CONCERN: EAP counseling and work/life services 24/7 by calling or visiting our website.

**Call: 800.344.4222**  
**[www.concern-eap.com](http://www.concern-eap.com)**