

## MANAGING EMPLOYEE DISRUPTIVE TENDENCIES

Last week's article was about some selective and common employee disruptive tendencies. It is necessary to recognize some common negative work tendencies (not intended to be a diagnosis) to appreciate positive work tendencies and discourage disruptive work tendencies.

A person's behavior tendencies are often repeated regardless of the situation or place. The work setting is the premier testing ground for personal behaviors—positive and negative. People/employees naturally continue to do what they think “works” for them in all situations. An informed leader recognizes and disrupts negative employee “workings” and supports positive employee “workings.” Overall, a work leader has the opportunity to encourage employees toward a lifetime of healthy and productive behavior/tendencies through caring and thoughtful leadership.

Following are selective leadership and management techniques related to disruptive work behaviors.

1. **MANIPULATION:** (Attempts at changing behavior or perception of others through abuse, deception, or underhanded tactics)

Do: Be firm with a “Yes” or “No.” Stand firm on your leadership decisions. Do your research to substantiate what is needed to be known (and truthful) about the situation.

Don't: Always trust what is said!

2. **PASSIVE AGGRESSION:** (Indirect expression of negative feelings)

Do: Determine and validate the exact behavior that exhibits passive aggression. Try to determine the negative tendency and state only the behavior observed—then wait for the response. Encourage communication about what is bothering or concerning the employee. Share thoughts or issues through appropriate private conversation. Remain open-minded, listen actively, and be empathetic. Watch for validation of persistent passive-aggression. Have short encounters/communications which are sometimes more productive than long discussions. Set boundaries that show employee respect. A third-party mediator regarding issues to be discussed might be helpful.

Don't: Dismiss the employee's feelings as unimportant. Refrain from isolating an employee because of a preconceived assumption of passive aggression.

3. **NARCISSISM:** (Excessive self-centeredness)

Do: Speak up for yourself as the leader. Make positive and careful comments about the work expectations. Stay calm.

Don't: Argue, confront, expect a person to see your point of view, or expect meaningful communications. Explore past negative issues.

4. **SOCIOPATHIC AND PSYCHOPATHIC:** (Antisocial personality tendencies resulting in blaming others and having excuses for non-conforming behavior) FYI—Sociopathic behaviors show antisocial tendencies—Psychopathic behaviors show personality traits including lack of empathy and regard for others.

Do: Set and maintain strong boundaries (job performance standards/job description) using assertive communication (not passive or aggressive communication). Be skeptical about what you are told. Avoid complaining. Research important claims that impact employment success. Stand your ground with no show of emotion.

Don't: Argue or take criticism personally. Share your personal information.

5. BORDERLINE PERSONALITY: (Impulsive behavior, mood swings, difficulty with stable relationships)

Do: Set clear limits by stressing proper workplace conduct. Remind and support (as necessary) about the need for task completion. Listen actively and be empathetic by focusing on emotion, not words.

Prevent arguments--especially in meetings. Document behavior and what seems to calm behavior.

Distract to another work assignment as needed. Encourage proper treatment and understanding of other employees. Provide and encourage breaktimes.

Don't: Expect consistent positive work behaviors/outcomes that produce positive feelings of cooperativeness.

6. SCHIZOPHRENIA: (Breakdown in thoughts, emotions, and behavior—a chronic mental disorder)

Do: Support and encourage a physician's medication and regime plan. Discourage the use of alcohol and harmful drugs. Manage work stress. Encourage specific positive work experiences. Understand work limitations related to a particular job(s).

Don't: Place in high-stress jobs requiring interpersonal skills or high demand of time. Expect accurate decision-making and concentration.

Outstanding leadership is an acquired skill through knowledge, application, and personal aptitude!

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