



# THE SUPERVISOR/HR NEWSLETTER

HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR  
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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## December Online Seminar

### *Diversity in the Workplace: Maintaining an Inclusive Environment*

Each member of the workforce brings unique skills, background, and experience vital to the successful organization. A diverse workforce is a rich source of creativity and problem-solving.

Available on-demand starting December 19th at [www.deeroakseap.com](http://www.deeroakseap.com)

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## Supervisor Excellence Webinar Series & Leadership Certificate Program

Below are recordings of the webinars presented so far this year as part of this series. Attendance is tracked for both the live and recorded sessions; therefore, viewing the below recordings will count toward the Leadership Certificate requirement of attending 5 out of the 6 webinars.

### *Thinking for Success*

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/7693502043189076739>

### *How to Motivate Your Employees*

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/1311003071536328962>

### *Five Steps to Building Trust with Your Team*

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/3879793188239462914>

### *Advanced Coaching Skills for Leaders*

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/741751819608174595>

### *Maximizing the Productivity of Your Team*

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/9148304366229275138>

# Cost of Workplace Incivility Can Be a Rude Awakening

*Bad behavior hurts the bottom line.*

One manager carries a small, souvenir baseball bat in his back pocket as a symbol of his authority. He never brandishes it, but his boss tolerates it, which sends a message to his employees.

Employees call another manager “Black Widow” (behind her back) because she constantly berates her coworkers in front of customers. Employees warned each other that if you did something to upset her, “You’re as good as gone.” And yet there was no consequence for her behavior.

These may be extreme examples of bad behavior, but rudeness and disrespect remain too common in today’s workplace. Every day, colleagues fail to share credit for collaborative efforts, supervisors walk away while subordinates are talking to them, and employees repeatedly arrive late for meetings. Rudeness in the workplace takes many other forms, as well.

Angered by poor treatment at work, employees are retaliating. At the office, they’re quietly reducing productivity, quitting, and even suing. Outside of the office, they’re badmouthing their employers to friends, headhunters, the media, and the dozens of Web sites that provide forums for employees to tell the world what they are not telling their employers.

## **Incivility Hurts the Entire Organization**

Such bad behavior costs businesses in terms of

**Legal costs**—Bad behavior can force an organization to fight lawsuits filed by employees. Leading labor and employment attorneys agree that workplace incivility is the seed from which many employee-generated lawsuits grow, including discrimination and harassment cases. In civil and respectful environments, such lawsuits are less likely.

**Higher turnover**—Recruiting and retention experts estimate that losing an employee costs an organization between 70 percent to 200 percent of that person’s annual pay.

**Lower productivity**—Efficiency and productivity depend on teamwork, cooperation, trust, and respect, behaviors that are undermined by incivility. As a result, productivity suffers due to lost work time, reduced employee commitment to the organization, and decreased employee efforts.

Every participant in a study, conducted by the University of North Carolina, reported having experienced rude or disrespectful behavior in the workplace. The employees who said they were mistreated reported that they

- Lost work time worrying about the incident or future interactions (53%)
- Believed that their commitment to the organization declined (37%)
- Lost work time avoiding the instigator (28%)
- Reduced their effort at work (22%)
- Decreased the amount of time that they spent at work (10%)

Of those who said they had been targets of bad behavior, more than half reduced their workload and half said they thought about quitting to avoid the situation. Another 12% actually quit, but didn't tell their employers that rude behavior was the reason they left.

Managers cannot afford to tolerate incivility in the workplace. Senior managers should develop policies and methods of reporting such behavior. Organizations need to create environments that say, "We do not tolerate bad behavior, and here is a safe way to report it."

## **Rid Your Workplace of Rudeness**

Here are several things managers can do to minimize workplace incivility:

- In recruiting and selection, check references thoroughly, especially regarding potential patterns of incivility; make sure people match organizational and worksite culture; and consider people skills that may be required in current or future jobs.
- In orientation and training, communicate your expectations about interpersonal behavior to all new employees; and provide sensitivity training and instruction in listening skills, stress management, and conflict resolution, if necessary.
- In evaluation, document behavior that crosses the line regarding incivility; provide feedback to instigators; and offer opportunities for subordinate and peer feedback.
- In termination or exit of an employee, have a third party present if terminating an instigator; and do not transfer people who should be fired.

When dealing with someone who doesn't treat people civilly

- Clarify expectations regarding interactions with colleagues
- Establish a clear code of conduct
- Watch for patterns of incivility
- Document incidents of incivility and note inappropriate behavior in evaluations
- Deny instigators further influence over people if they do not improve after receiving feedback
- Order counseling if needed

When leading an organization

- Heed warning signs of incivility
- Recognize that such behavior can hurt the entire company
- Do not punish the person who reports incivility
- Do not make excuses for your managers
- Do not transfer employees who should be fired

*Source: Schmidt, K. (Reviewed 2017). Cost of workplace incivility can be a rude awakening. Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.*

# 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. My employee complained to human resources about my bullying. I am not a bully, but I use humor with my employees, and I guess my dry humor didn't sit well with this worker. I was not considered a bully by HR, but I am trying to change my style. Hasn't bullying in the workplace as a problem been overblown?*

A. Bullying in the workplace is pervasive and is now viewed as a serious occupational hazard by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety. The 2017 survey on workplace bullying was released recently by the Workplace Bullying Institute. Their key findings: 19% of Americans are bullied at work, and another 19% witness it; 61% of Americans are aware of abusive conduct in the workplace; 70% of perpetrators are men; 60% of targets are women; 61% of bullies are bosses; 40% of bullied targets are believed to suffer adverse health effects. The above reflects the serious human and economic costs of bullying. Although you were not found to be a bully, making employees the target of jokes can be intimidating and lead to a host of other employment-related complaints like harassment. Since you are desirous of having meaningful relationships with your employees, the EAP can help. Start with altering your communication style so you nurture more satisfying workplace relationships.

*Q. How can the EAP help my employees with customer service stress?*

A. Consider surveying employees to see where their "pain points" are regarding customer service stress. This is a broad topic and could include burnout, physical demands, dealing with angry customers, training needs, resources issues, and pressure to meet management expectations versus customer satisfaction, or feeling unsure about one's role, performance review issues, and more. A quick search for "types of customer service stress" can lead you to a good list. Use these to query your group, and with this needs analysis in hand, you can meet with the EAP and better discuss how the EAP can meet the needs of your group or individual employees. Retaining good customer service workers by helping them deal with stress is a smart move—and a cost-beneficial one that could help you retain your stars.

*Q. Lately, we have been discussing police stress in our organization. I would like to see more officers self-refer and take advantage of the EAP for personal problem, but they resist. Do officers avoid self-referral because of fear that it will make them appear weak?*

A. It is a myth that police officers do not visit EAPs via self-referral. Many journal articles discuss police stress and avoidance of asking for help over concern for how this is perceived by others. However, experience shows that a decision to self-referral is more closely aligned with safety and willingness to be vulnerable. This is influenced by perceived competence of the EA professional, program capability, confidentiality, and convenience. Motivation to use an EAP depends on assurances of confidentiality, of course, but this must be communicated strategically in numerous ways that create a solid perception of believability. Word-of-mouth promotion is essential, but this can only be influenced and aided by factors such as clearly written and frequently promoted assurances of confidentiality. Other factors include visibility, tenure, and familiarity with the employee assistance professional likely to meet with officers, physical location, counseling times, and ability to visit the program at convenient times in civilian clothes. Critical for management is strict adherence to the nondisclosure of information associated with a signed release. The above are interlocking pieces. Examining and nurturing each allows an EAP to maximize utilization and reduce skepticism.

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