

FrontLine Leader

Employees — Your most valuable asset

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Q: There is usually a lot of tension when I conduct annual reviews. If employees are surprised by the results or if their scores are less than they imagined they would be, I often face hostility and anger. How can I reduce this tension?

A: Follow the performance review process

of your organization, but make the effort to increase communication. Meet with your employees at the beginning of the year and discuss with them what they would like to achieve in the coming year, along with other measures of performance consistent with the goals of your work unit and the organization as a whole. These goals should be achievable, measurable, and

include defined criteria for outstanding performance and lesser achievement. Meet several times during the year and coach employees toward success. Ask employees each time, during these meetings, how they would grade themselves against the performance criteria they set. At year's end, you should see far less angst at performance review time, more satisfied workers, and higher levels of achievement that benefit the organization.



Why is it important for supervisors to understand “psychological safety” in the workplace? Is this just a passing fad? Isn't it a new burden for supervisors and a way of taking too much care of employees when it comes to their happiness and well-being?



A

A psychologically safe workplace is another way to describe a work climate that encourages employees to be vulnerable and authentic, present their talents and abilities, and do so without fear of disapproval from managers or peers. There is a business case for psychological safety in the workplace as a tool that produces a positive influence on the bottom line. From a supervisory perspective, one key practice in promoting a psychologically safe workplace is to continually notice what appears to inhibit employees from sharing their ideas, notions, and concepts for improvement and change regarding products, services and systems. This could be almost any tangible or intangible obstacle, from physical barriers in an office to employee meetings and co-worker behaviors that discourage creative expression. It can also be your own lack of modeling risk-taking behaviors or failure to make psychological safety a tradition in your work unit that is continually reinforced by what you say and do.

Q: I read that great leaders are eternal optimists, along with many other traits. I would like to be more optimistic in my leadership style. Can the EAP help me? I realize how powerful this can be for employees, so I am open to whatever it takes.

Yes, you can learn to be more optimistic.

Optimistic leaders exude positive energy because their attitude is one of hope and confidence about the work unit's direction and success of its goals. The good news is that optimism is a habit of thinking, acquired by changing a few beliefs, practicing new skills, and seeing the results from doing so. For example, you can learn the habit of challenging negative thoughts. You can also learn how to focus more on the solution to a problem than on the negative ramifications of it. You can act and behave optimistically — even if you don't feel like it — and then observe the positive results for yourself and others. These exercises and more will, over time, flip the switch to help you practice a more optimistic leadership style. Read about optimism, discuss your goal with a Continuum EAP professional, journal your results, and watch the positive effects on those you lead.

Q: My employee went into treatment after he was referred to Continuum for attendance issues. He has a severe opioid addiction. He left treatment against medical advice after about a week. He seems to be doing OK, but I'm worried this won't last. What should I do?

Speak with a Continuum EAP consultant to discuss your role in monitoring your employee's performance. Absenteeism is the original problem you addressed, so it will be important to continue monitoring the employee's attendance. It is tempting to focus on the information you have regarding his addiction, but you need to stay focused on your role as his supervisor. This involves providing encouragement and support related to the tasks of his job as well as monitoring his on-the-job behaviors and performance. You can always encourage him to utilize resources available through the EAP or other community resources, but ultimately you need to manage him as you would other employees. If you have concerns about his job performance or behaviors he exhibits at work, talk with your HR advisor about next steps in your organization's corrective action or fitness-for-duty policy.

Qualities of great LEADERS

This concludes our monthly feature. To view each of the six qualities, visit eliv8group.com.

#6 helps others

Act with generosity and gratitude by influencing positive change in people's lives.



You should find pride in helping others succeed.



It's up to you to set your team up to be successful.



Nurture people to become better professionally and personally.

Source: Eliv8