



Healthy Horizon

Employee Newsletter Summer 2009

Connections Count

How important is it to have friends at your job? Recent studies show that your connections at work can mean a great deal:

- Scientists at the University of Rochester Medical Center report that people who feel socially-connected at work suffer fewer episodes of depression.
- Gallup studies show that people who have close relationships with a few co-workers are more productive, committed, and are likely to have more satisfied customers as well.

Studies like these support the old adage that “no man is an island.” In fact, it seems that most of us are better off building bridges than moats!

WORKPLACE LONELINESS

Many people who are dissatisfied with their jobs may actually be suffering from workplace loneliness. Some jobs are very isolating, preventing workers from meeting others and establishing relationships. Shyness or cliques can also make workers feel like “outsiders” at their jobs. Departments can sometimes be so separate that it is hard to get to know others outside your own work group. So what can you do to do to create connections that can be key to workplace happiness?

MAKING FRIENDS AT WORK

Here are some tips for sparking friendships at work:

- Take advantage of lunchtime. Lunches and breaks are good times to “scope out” others who seem to be people you’d like to get to know better.

- Be a good listener. People are naturally drawn to those who are not just self-involved, but are sincerely interested in listening to others, too.
- Have a sense of humor. There is often stress in a workplace setting -- but is there enough laughter? Maybe you can start a comic-a-day or joke-of-the-day bulletin board at work.
- Be an initiator. Suggest a “potluck” lunch where everyone brings in a favorite dish. Ask if anyone wants to start a walking club at lunchtime. Try to find people who are interested in things that interest you. They are most likely to be good friend prospects for you.
- Stay away from gossips. Those at work who are known for talking behind each other’s backs are definitely not the people to seek out unless you want to risk being hurt. Stay clear of backstabbers and gossips – everyone knows who they are!

REMEMBER THE RULES OF FRIENDSHIP

When you make friends at work, remember that they are like any other close connections. They deserve honesty and respect. Often they want privacy, too. Personal boundaries are important in any friendship, but especially so in work situations where people may not want confidential matters widely known. To make a friend...be a real friend!

Ask Your EAP Counselor

My 8-year old son has a learning disability. He receives specialized help from our school district. I've also visited my pediatrician to talk about it, and she feels that he is doing well. But I am really worried about how his learning disability may affect him later in life. Can you suggest any other steps I might take to help him?

It sounds like you've done a terrific job of tackling this challenge so far for your son. You've put together a great team in your pediatrician and school learning specialist, and it sounds like you are a wonderful advocate.

One further step you might want to take is to contact Horizon EAP to get names of agencies in your community – and even on a national level – that can offer you additional information about learning disabilities and resources to help your son. You can also find out about support groups where you can meet and share ideas with other parents who are dealing with similar situations. In the meantime, just keep on being supportive and positive – your child will benefit from your encouragement and sense of confidence in him.

Summer Webinars

Check your EAP calendar or visit the website for details. The summer quarter's topics are:

JULY - Social Networks for Healthy Living

AUG - Understanding Learning Styles:
A Handy Workplace Tool

SEPT - Communicating to Get What You Want

Bear in mind that new webinars are added frequently – to help keep you informed of important topics in our ever-changing world. All webinars are free of charge. Don't miss out: go online, view all the current offerings, and register today!

You're Connected to Your EAP All the Time!

Remember, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is always available to help you or your eligible household members with any type of personal, family or work-related concern. We're available to speak confidentially with you 24/7. There is no charge for this benefit. Call us!