

FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS:

Supporting Employees During a Time of Crisis

Traumatic events that occur in the workplace can clearly be distressing for employees. However, catastrophic events that occur outside the workplace can also be upsetting and disruptive. The following suggestions may prove helpful in supporting your employees during these times:

Acknowledge what has occurred. Be willing to use the term “crisis” as appropriate. Recognize that employees may be very upset and may have a wide range of reactions (e.g., anger, guilt, fear, sadness). Encourage employees to talk with and support each other freely, and realize that productivity may slip temporarily.

Think about individual employee needs. It is common for people to feel numb, tired, or “off-balance” following an incident that is out of the range of ordinary experience. Employees’ needs, however, may vary a great deal depending on their individual reactions. Reactions, in turn, can be influenced by factors including past trauma or loss, coping styles, other current stresses, and degree of direct involvement in the current crisis.

Identify employees who may have lost or had loved ones injured. Pay particular attention to employees who may have relatives or friends directly impacted by the crisis - they might need special consideration. Ask them how you can help (e.g., time off, temporary assistance with their work, etc.). Ask them what information they would like shared with their co-workers and what information they would like kept private. Offer the assistance of the EAP as appropriate.

Be aware of employees who may be indirectly affected. It is common for a situation to affect not just those who were directly involved in the crisis, but also those who may be thinking, “This could have happened to me!” Be alert to the reactions of employees in similar situations, as well as those who were friends or co-workers of individuals who were directly affected. It is important to acknowledge this, and give all of those who may need to heal, time and permission to do so. The EAP can be offered as a resource for these individuals as well.

Remind all employees that the EAP is available for their individual use. Give out our EAP’s phone number. Mention that services are confidential, at no charge, and available at numerous convenient locations. Employees can call us for information or to schedule an appointment, and master's level counselors are available 24 hours a day/7 days a week for crisis intervention and support.

Employee Assistance Program
1.800.451.1834

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