Healthy Communication Can Help Ease Workplace Conflicts

Success on the job means liking your work environment as well as liking your work. Maintaining harmony with the people you work with is critical. The key is good communication. Is there someone who rubs you the wrong way? Better communication can help.

The first step toward improving things is to forget where the fault lies and to realize you can only control yourself which includes changing your attitude.

For personality conflicts, an effective strategy is to:

- Make a list of the person’s abilities, talents, positive character traits and personal interests. Examples: energetic, good with details, punctual, etc.
- Choose a common ground and share some thoughts or information.

For other conflicts, try presenting a new proposal or solution to the problem. Then you will be perceived as a problem solver, not a problem maker.

When communicating your position, choose the right time, right place and right mood leaving out items that could make matters worse.

Learn to be positive. Try not to gossip or talk negatively about others; be complimentary and encouraging; rely on humor whenever possible. These are small efforts that go a long way.

Resources Are Available

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at www.MagellanHealth.com/member.

“Take Five” to Simplify Your Life

How do we break the spell and accept the invitation to a freer life-style? Simplification is the key. You must first let go of the attitudes that continually deny your health and happiness in an effort to be responsible.

Try simplifying your work and/or home life with these techniques:

- Set realistic goals; simplify your expectations. Life is filled with flaws and imperfections.
- Mark one day off your calendar a month to “catch up.”
- Give yourself permission to play; schedule “Joy Breaks”—fun in small doses. Get as good at planning fun as you are now at scheduling work.
- Blend rewarding work with time for personal refreshment.
- Plan a day to work at home once in a while.
- Schedule a breather. If you live by a calendar, schedule one hour a day to allow some breathing space.
- Schedule time to work on specific projects.
- De-clutter. Divide your desk or room at home into sections. Pick one section and start de-cluttering.
- Delegate. Stop trying to do everything yourself. Let your spouse and children help with family responsibilities.
- Rid yourself of old commitments and goals. Stop to think about everything you’re doing or working towards. Does it still fit your life today? If not, stop doing it or get rid of it as a goal.
- Take a “well” day. Enjoy doing what you enjoy the most.

For most of us, work is an inescapable fact of life. Everyone needs to renew, recharge, and relax. You don't need to set aside hours to reap the benefits of “Taking Five” — try building little blocks of fun into your day.
Suicide Prevention…
Communication Is Key

Studying many famous Americans, one name comes to mind: Helen Keller. She had once stated, “Blindness separates you from things; Deafness separates you from people.” She often battled depression because she could not easily communicate with anyone.

A main reason why people choose suicide is depression. Do you know anyone who may have difficulty communicating with people? Do you know anyone that seems to be by themselves often? Why not reach out to them and start a conversation? The topic of conversation does not necessarily matter as much as showing that you care. You just may save a life.

Look around you and see if there is anyone that tends to be a loner. Reach out and strike up a conversation. Communication is something that we all need to have and is something that may save someone’s life.

May Seminar: Conflicts in Relationships

Ever wonder how a discussion can turn into a conflict in a matter of minutes? Could it be related to your personal communication style and style of others? We all want to have peaceful relationships with our loved ones and others. This seminar will focus on how and why conflicts develop based on our communication skills.

Schedule

| 5/4  | 5/12 | Nashville |
| 5/5  | 5/13 | Murfreesboro |
| 5/6  | 5/18 | Nashville |
| 5/7  | 5/19 | Chattanooga |
| 5/11 | 5/20 | Cookeville |
| 5/12 |      | Knoxville |

Registering is easy. Just go to the EAP website at www.tn.gov/finance/ins/eap.html. But don’t wait, the deadline to register is two days beforehand.

Fighting Fairly

No one gets along all of the time. A major stumbling block in any relationship is settling disagreements, which often reduce to emotional shouting matches. Basic ground rules for effectively facing conflict can help:

- Maintain a spirit of good will. Remember you care about this person.
- Avoid attacking one another. Discuss behavior, not personalities.
- Share your feelings. Explore and discuss them.
- Focus on the present. Past disappointments cannot be changed. Concentrate on here and now.

Specific Techniques

- Choose a time to have the discussion. Make it an appointment. Avoid those times when either of you are fatigued, ill, or under pressure.
- Be specific. Take time to reflect on what you are upset about and focus on specific actions, feelings, and attitudes.
- Listen carefully. Allow each individual uninterrupted time to explain his or her viewpoint.
- Work on one issue at a time.
- Ask for reasonable change. Determine what you really want from the person and then ask yourself if it is realistic.
- Try to accept. Be open to the other person’s feelings and accept them without being judgmental.
- Be willing to compromise. Avoid trying to win. Try to find a solution that is satisfying for you both.
- Realize the need to accept an incomplete resolution of a conflict.
- If you have difficulty expressing your feelings, write them down.
- After the discussion is over, express your appreciation for the other’s listening to and discussing the issue with you.

These strategies can help you establish an atmosphere of cooperative problem solving. If you feel the relationship has deteriorated to a point where these methods can’t be tried, you may want to consider a neutral, third party to mediate the discussions.