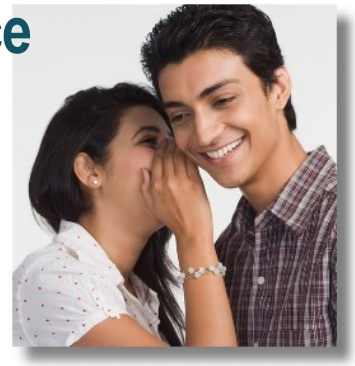
PATHWAYS
March 2022

Stopping Rumors in the Workplace



Rumors are stories that are doubtful or of uncertain truth. In the workplace, the first victims of rumors are trust and morale. Misinformation and gossip fuel rumors, and each time a tale is shared, it acquires additional layers of untruth. What a mess! Since rumors can be disruptive, it makes sense to understand how to quash them. Rule #1 is don't participate. Many rumors are associated with astonishing, amusing, interesting, or spicy information. You may feel an earnest need to repeat the information. This is a signal you're caught in the rumor mill. Rejecting participation will dampen the motivation of your coworkers to further repeat the rumor. Asking, "Is it true?" will often end the progression of a rumor by exposing its lack of confirmable information.

Find a Hidden Networking Group to Boost Your Career

There's a group of like-minded colleagues with your job expertise meeting somewhere, but you may not know where they are or how to reach them. They're not all on Facebook, LinkedIn, or MeetUp. The Northern Virginia, Hotel and Motel, Human Resource Managers Association" isn't found in any directory, but did meet at one time as an education support group. The best part about networking is not the possible opportunities to leverage your connections as resources when you are changing jobs, but rather the ideas you discover to improve your current job satisfaction and value. To find an association that could be nearby, start by searching www.directoryofassociations.com and also try Googling "[your profession] + association + organization + academy." Ask about informal groups meeting near you. They could be hidden gems that can be used for networking that will take you to the next level!

Make Your Clique a Positive Force

Employee cliques are natural associations of employees, but they sometimes get a bad rap. In the workplace, self-awareness is key to helping ensure any clique you find yourself part of remains a positive force. Cliques have power as a group. They can play a positive role in workplace productivity when they reinforce the contributions of members and use their creativity collaboratively. To enhance your work climate, avoid using your clique's influence to bully, ostracize, withhold information, reject inclusiveness, dominate, or share gossip that can hamper focus and productivity.

Stress Management Skill: "Planning"

A study of over 3,000 people in 29 countries a decade ago showed that about 25% of perceived happiness is accounted for by how well we manage stress. The skill delivering the most impact was *planning*! Planning is acting ahead and paying attention upstream to see what needs doing. The New England Centenarian Study of the Boston University School of Medicine finds stress management to be a leading skill among participants. Whether paying a parking ticket before it doubles or having that conversation with your boss sooner rather than later to iron out a growing communication issue, heading stress off at the pass by planning can literally be a health practice to add years to your life. Learn more at time.com (search "plan happiness").

Avoid the Term "High-Functioning Depression"

"High-functioning depression" is not a real clinical subtype of depression, but it may be tempting to use this term as a descriptor for a person we suddenly discover suffered with the disease and took his or her own life. Such was the case with beauty pageant queen and attorney Cheslie Kryst, whose suicide was widely reported in the national news recently. As with alcoholism, symptoms of depression can be very real but masked or unseen by others, except possibly by those who are close associates, friends, or loved ones. Every person's presentation of symptoms is unique. Some loved ones may play a role in minimizing or protecting the victim, which allows us to believe all is well. The ill person may complement this enabling with denial, along with minimizing symptoms as the illness grows worse. Mustering this willpower can only last so long, however. The Kryst tragedy brought to national attention the importance of avoiding terms like "high functioning" in describing chronic diseases or in this case, falsely portraying a different type of depression that is unlike the "normal" depression others experience. Just as "functional alcoholic" also enables continuation of the disease by reinforcing denial, the phrase high-functioning depression signals a special case exception that can fuel denial, resistance to self-diagnosis, and delay treatment.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Hours: Available 24 Hours 800-273-8255

Early Birds Might Be More Productive

"I'm a morning person." "Not me. I work better at night." Which is better? The jury is back: Research seems to point to early birds being more productive. With over 100 peer-reviewed neuroscience articles, Robert Carter, Ph.D., author of "Morning Mind," argues flipping your routine to become a "morning person will have a profound impact on your life. Research has shown only an extremely small percentage of people are actually night owls who are more productive at night than during the day—about 1 percent. Among other reasons, research shows that your brain, which has received more body fluid being level all night, is actually prepped for more productivity upon wakening!

Early-Stage Alcoholism Virtually Unnoticeable

Early-stage alcoholism can be so deceptive that even the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) dedicates considerable space online to helping supervisors understand it. The goal is to help employees earlier rather than losing them because of performance or attendance issues. Ironically, early-stage alcoholism is not necessarily characterized by noticeable problems with alcohol, due to the tolerance and adaptation often seen in those who have this disease. Early-stage alcoholics may experience the same or even higher social and occupational functioning than their peers for a period of time. It's later that the pattern reverses. Past drinking efficiency wanes, and problems grow worse. The good news with early-stage alcoholism is about its treatability. A shorter history of problems and less practice at denial and defending drinking can make accepting the diagnosis easier. Are you concerned about your drinking pattern? The EAP or a knowledgeable counselor can help.

BOCES Employee Assistance Program

1741D North Ocean Avenue, Medford, NY 11763 (631) 289-0480
154 Commack Road, Suite 210 Commack, NY 11725 (631) 218-5445
188 W. Montauk Hwy, Ste. E1, Hampton Bays, NY 11946 (631) 728-2008

Eastern Suffolk BOCES

BOCES Western Suffolk