

# Employee Advisory Service Newsletter

## Helpful Resources for Supervisors and Managers



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

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## Be A Great Boss When You're Swamped

When you are overwhelmed with work, you may unknowingly take your stress out on your employees. You become more demanding, curt or rude. However, no matter how stressed out, frazzled or overwhelmingly busy you are, you still have to be a great boss. Follow these tips to do just that:

- Schedule time to talk with staff. Specifically when it comes to addressing performance or behavioral issues, meet with employees within 48 hours. If you wait too long, your feedback won't be meaningful.
- Additionally, block off time in your schedule to walk around and connect with employees. First thing in the morning is ideal. You can discuss any concerns and answer any questions, ensuring that everyone is more productive throughout the day.
- Respond to emails quickly and thoughtfully. Employees may be choosing email to communicate because they sense you don't want to be disturbed in person. Read their messages carefully, and follow up as soon as possible. Don't respond with gruff one-word answers either. Instead, answer all of their questions carefully to avoid another round of emails.
- Apologize for your behavior. Everyone becomes stressed out—and turns into a jerk—from time to time. When you catch yourself raising your voice, acting impatiently or demanding more than is fair, say: "I'm sorry for being so scattered/tense/busy/absent this week. It's been incredibly hectic, but things will be back to normal very soon."

However, don't make a habit of apologizing every week for your bad behavior. If you are constantly overwhelmed, you may need to assess your time-management skills and make some changes.

Source: <http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/44753/be-a-great-boss-when-youre-swamped>



## Four Strategies for Being Assertive

Colette Carlson, the founder of Speak Your Truth and columnist for Administrative Professional Today, shares her four key points to being assertive, yet professional, to communicate what you want at work.

#1: Assertiveness is rooted in respect — respect for yourself enough to speak up, but also respect for the person you’re having the conversation with. You want to make sure that the words you choose and your tone are appropriate.

#2: You always want to make sure that you stick to the behaviors and facts — things that you can actually see with your own eyes versus opinions or hearsay. It always seems to be more effective, plus nobody can really say, “Well, that’s not true!”

#3: Make sure you ask clearly and directly for what you want. Too often we tell people what we don’t want, but we never are clear on what we do want.

#4: You want to make sure that the person you’re speaking to has an understanding. Ask this person if he or she is clear on what you’ve shared or if he or she would like to add to the conversation. That way, it creates a meeting of the minds.

Example: Let’s say that you want to attend an off-site meeting and that hasn’t happened for you in quite a while, and you want to go to your supervisor and have this conversation. Start with the facts. Say to your supervisor, “You know, in the three years that I’ve been working here, I’ve yet to be able to attend an off-site meeting.”

Now, ask for what you want: “There’s a great conference that I’ve done the research and homework on that I’m interested in attending, and I’d like to share more about it with you.” Now, look for agreement: “Is this something you’re open to having a conversation about?”

In that moment, you’ve clearly, directly asserted yourself, asked for what you want with grace, and you’ve also opened up the conversation to learn more.

Source: <http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/34909/4-strategies-for-being-assertive>

### *Webinar Reminder*

#### **Fall Supervisor/Manager Webinar Series- How to Effectively Coach Employee Performance**

*Employees respond better to managers that coach and encourage, rather than dictate and micro-manage. This important session provides managers with insights into what motivates their employees, shares strategies for becoming more of a “coach” than a “boss”, and provides techniques for utilizing a coaching approach to improve employee engagement and performance.*

Monday, November 21st  
2:00-3:00 PM

Register here:  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4892212494713802498>



# Ask EAS!

The following are answers to common questions supervisors have regarding employee issues and making management referrals. As always, if you have specific questions about referring an employee or managing a workgroup issue, feel free to make a confidential call to the EAS for a management consultation.

**Q. My employee discusses many personal problems at work. One day it's health issues, the next day it's problems with her sister-in-law. It's bothersome to coworkers, and I fear it could influence some to leave the agency. Should I refer her to the EAS? Is this a performance matter?**

A. Meet with your employee in private, express your concern, share your observations about the frequency and effect of her multiple problems, and suggest the EAS as a resource. If no changes are forthcoming, and self-referral to the EAS is declined, encourage her more strongly to participate. If needed, express your concerns more directly about the work environment. Use documentation based on your observations of her interactions. The goal is to help her make changes and get help if issues in her life are serious enough to need counseling support. Always keep in mind that as a supervisor you can refer your employee to EAS for performance issues but his/her participation is voluntary.

**Q. I am a new supervisor. I am sure there will be many challenges, but with all the different personalities of employees I supervise, how can I best help each one perform to his or her peak?**

A. Understanding that each of your employees will see you differently, will relate to you differently, and will need different things from you is the place to start. Many managers make the mistake of seeing their employees as "the troops." As such, they communicate with them as though they are Marines in a barracks waiting for orders. Take the opposite approach. It takes time, but over months and years, pay attention to how your employees are unique in five key ways: 1) Communication style and needs, 2) Career goals, hopes, dreams, education desires, 3) Motivation triggers and reward preferences, 4) Limitations, avoidances, and dislikes, 5) Leadership and problem-solving capacity. There are more, but these five hit most of the bases. Growing to understand each one will help maximize employee job satisfaction and productivity.

**Q. How can I help employees cope with workplace demands that I don't have any control over? I can't manage their stress for them, so can you suggest what role I should play?**

A. Stay engaged - don't be a manager or supervisor who disappears on the job. When employees are stressed, feelings of isolation can set in. Your energy as a manager and your influence can play a powerful role by breaking a naturally negative self-talk script employees are prone to playing under stress. Also, be sure to develop relationships with your employees. Each one is different, and they will handle stress in different ways. Understanding workers under your supervision will allow you to offer support tailored to their individual needs. The managerial behaviors described above don't eliminate stress—they simply facilitate and allow the employee's natural ability to cope with stress to come forth.

*Information contained in this newsletter is for general information purposes only and is not intended to be specific guidance for any particular supervisor or human resource management concern. Some of it might not apply to your particular company policies and available programs. This information is proprietary and intended only for eligible EAS members. For specific guidance on handling individual employee problems, consult with the EAS.*