

The Successful SUPERVISOR

2010

April

Tips from  LifeSolutions

For much of the past year *The Successful Supervisor* has been exploring issues impacting the workplace that often go undetected or present a challenge to address. The focus continues this month with the topic Partner Violence (PV) ... also called "Intimate Partner Violence" or "Domestic Violence." The business community is greatly impacted through direct medical costs as well as absenteeism and presenteeism rates. However, the viewpoint that partner violence is a personal issue has gotten in the way of businesses developing a plan to ensure safety and reduce costs. In part one of this two-part series, *The Successful Supervisor* defined partner violence and the costs to employer and employees alike. In this issue, the second and last of the series, the focus is on developing a plan of action.

We are interested in your feedback to *The Successful Supervisor*. E-mail your questions and comments to the EAP at ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com.

Sandra Caffo, LCSW/MFT, CEAP, LifeSolutions

Standing Firm, the Southwest Pennsylvania business coalition to end partner violence, describes the key elements of successful organization efforts: (1) engaging company leaders, (2) upgrading policies and procedures, (3) focusing on managers and supervisors, and (4) informing employees. This issue focuses on managers and supervisors.

— Patricia Cluss, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh, and Director of Standing Firm.

Leadership Support Is Essential

As with any major initiative, leadership support is essential. Creating a policy to address partner violence is a good first step. The Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence is a source of sample policies. While this is not your job as a supervisor, suggesting this resource to your managers is one thing you can do to raise awareness of this workplace concern.

The Supervisor Plays an Important Role

Partner violence is not easy to address. The supervisor plays an important role in providing support and direction to the affected employee as well as to co-workers who may be anxious and unsure of what to do. Let's look at the examples from last issue.

(1) *An employee of several years comes to work with a swollen jaw. She says she fell, but you recall past bruises and other reasons for being late over the past 6 months. She hasn't come to you for help or talked about this at all. What should you do?*

- ◆ Employee privacy needs to be balanced with concern for safety. A suggested approach is to speak with the employee privately and share your concern, citing your observations over the past 6 months. Reinforce that you are not trying to pry, but want her to know you are available to listen if she would ever need that. And, this is the time to give her the LifeSolutions phone number, 1.800.647.3327. Let her know you are not suggesting she needs counseling. Rather LifeSolutions has access to both online and personalized searches for work-life resources of all kinds. This *free and confidential service* is a source for whatever she or he may need.

A word of caution... if the issue is partner abuse, it will likely take the employee a long time to take action. Those who haven't experienced this kind of abuse may not understand why she "doesn't just leave." The situation is complex and leaving can be very dangerous. So, the role of the concerned supervisor is to provide support and offer resources over time.

(2) *Your employee is getting harassing phone calls at work, 25 or 30 a day. It used to be 2 or 3. Now it's affecting the entire work group. What should you do?*

- ◆ First, call the employee into your office. Tell her you're concerned about her, given the number of phone calls that you and other have noticed. Let her know you are open to listening if she's interested in talking about anything.
- ◆ Also let her know that co-workers are beginning to get worried about something happening at work, and that you, as the supervisor, need to help everyone be safe.
- ◆ Speak calmly and slowly and pause frequently to give the employee a chance to open up.
- ◆ Encourage her to keep any threatening e-mail or voicemail messages if they exist. These could potentially be important in developing a plan of action. (See policy and procedures for details.)
- ◆ Secondly, regardless of whether the employee opens up or not, inform HR of the situation and your conversation. HR is an important partner in determining a plan of action.
- ◆ Also contact LifeSolutions for support and consultation. A LifeSolutions professional can assist in thinking through next steps with the employee and the work group.

(3) *A co-worker comes to you about a team member. She's concerned because this employee is talking about being afraid to go home. She will only say things are not good, and turns down an offer to stay with the co-worker.*

- ◆ Safety issues need to be explored. Thank the co-worker for coming to you. Tell this person you need to let the employee know the co-worker came out of concern.
- ◆ Calling HR is another step in the process. It is important to operate within appropriate policies and procedures as you proceed.
- ◆ Next, call LifeSolutions immediately and get consultation regarding how best to approach the employee. It is likely to include the EAP professional confidentially talking with the employee after you do.

Whatever the employee behavioral issue and whenever it occurs, LifeSolutions is thereto support you. Give us a call at 1.800.647.3327.

Online Leadership Support



As leaders, what we do and say can have significant impact on those around us. *LifeSolutions* offers a series of self-guided online courses specifically developed to equip managers and supervisors with the appropriate tools to help make a positive impact in the workplace.

In keeping with the theme of this month's The Successful Supervisor, we offer the following Skill Builder courses:

Conflict Intervention

Defuse a potentially morale-draining work environment through successful conflict intervention.

In this course you will learn:

- ◆ How to assess the climate of a conflict
- ◆ Methods to help set the stage for a positive outcome
- ◆ Techniques to broker a resolution and follow-up advice

Managing Disagreement

As an effective leader, you can set the stage for individuals to handle their differences over workplace issues and decisions.

In this course you will learn:

- ◆ The principles and styles
- ◆ How to apply a four-phase process
- ◆ Ways to refine your skills

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Emotional intelligence is a set of skills that enables leaders to understand, anticipate, and deal with our automatic reactions in the workplace.

In this course you will learn:

- ◆ Intelligent thinking about emotions
- ◆ The keys to behaving wisely
- ◆ Techniques for fostering emotional intelligence in others

Follow the steps below to learn more and to get started:

- ◆ Access www.lifesolutionsforyou.com.
- ◆ Click on *WorkLife* login at the top right.
- ◆ Enter your company code. If you do not know your code, call 1.800.647.3327.
- ◆ Locate *Working* on the left-side menu.
- ◆ Click on *Effective Manager*.
- ◆ Click on *Skill Builder*.
- ◆ Click on the title that interests you and review the highlights of each course.
- ◆ You will be able to click on link at bottom (within the Skill Builder highlight) to get started.

If you have questions, call **1.800.647.3327**.
