

# The Successful SUPERVISOR

2010

January

Tips from  LifeSolutions

*With increasing frequency, LifeSolutions receives calls from supervisors, HR, and employees requesting support to resolve situations that can best be described as some variation of workplace bullying or intimidation. This is the fifth in a 6-part series in which The Successful Supervisor provides suggestions for recognizing and managing these behaviors in the workplace. The focus this month will be on “Steps for Promoting Civility.”*

*Material is adapted from Namie, G. and Namie, Ruth. *The Bully at Work*, Naperville, IL, Sourcebooks, Inc., 2000, 2003. Material is also adapted from Sutton, Robert, *The No Asshole Rule – Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't*. NY, Boston: Warner Business, 2007, and from SHARP, Department of Labor and Industry, Olympia, WA. We are interested in your feedback to *The Successful Supervisor*. E-mail your questions and comments to the EAP at [ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com](mailto:ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com).*

**Debra Messer, MA, CEAP, LifeSolutions**

As noted in the December issue, managers play a significant role in the creation and maintenance of workplace culture. The prevailing culture will largely determine what employees view as acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Managers shoulder much of the responsibility for promoting civility and for addressing behaviors that do not support a respectful workplace. Disrespectful behaviors can become so ingrained in a culture that employees may not recognize that they are treating each other in ways that are hurtful. Part of a leader's job is to set and maintain standards for employees.

Managers should encourage employees to watch out for and stand up for each other in positive ways. Workshops, team meetings, and coaching can help accomplish this.

- ◆ Other facets include managers' modeling desired changes, mentoring of new staff by experienced staff, sharing appreciation, training in communications skills, and creating an environment where employees can openly share their feelings without fear of retaliation.

## Key Activities to Create a Culture of Civility

### Step 1: Policy Development

- ◆ Formal recognition of “workplace bullying” is relatively new and many companies do not have written policies addressing it. Ideally, the first step in promoting civility in the workplace involves the development of a policy that clearly defines acceptable and unacceptable behavior and outlines how unacceptable behavior will be addressed. Policy development, however, is not a job for managers. Guidelines need to come from HR and senior management. In lieu of a formal policy, it is important to remember that guidelines for behaviors need to be clear and presented to staff in a way that everyone can understand and refer to them. Managers should consult with their HR leaders to determine how to present these guidelines to employees and what language to use.
- ◆ Educating leadership staff is equally important. Managers need to know how to present the organization's expectations around workplace behavior. This includes a basic understanding of bullying behaviors, how to intervene when necessary, and the steps to take to support all parties involved.

### Step 2: Engaging Employees

- ◆ Once managers are prepared, it is time to meet with employees. The goal is to increase employees' awareness and understanding and engage them in the mission to build a civil workplace. Expectations should be reviewed and employees should learn how to recognize and handle bullying when it occurs. Questions such as “What do I do if I see one person bullying another person?” should be raised and answered.

### Step 3: Direct Intervention

Managers need to be prepared to address any bullying/intimidation or disrespectful behaviors **on the spot**. Making sweeping promises while overlooking moment-to-moment episodes of disrespect will quickly undermine the process. An Intervention may be a supportive statement to someone whose feelings have been hurt, pulling a bully (bullies) aside immediately and saying, “I overheard what you said to Sue,” or coaching bystanders how to respond appropriately.

Remember, culture change happens over time. Managers must hold firm to the vision, maintain consistency, and never ignore or “let it slide this one time.” Like the engineer, the manager's hand must always be on the throttle or the train will derail.

**Next month we will talk about steps to help the victim, the bystander, and the bully. In the meantime, call LifeSolutions or your HR consultant with any questions.**

## 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 potential 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, we 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 the 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](http://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 Smarter* on left-side menu.
- ◆ Click on *Effective Manager*.
- ◆ Click on *Skill Builder*.
- ◆ Click on 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, please call **1.800.647.3327**

---