

The Continuum Edge

RESOURCES FOR EVERYONE

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Avoid workplace communication landmines

Many organizations view communication problems as their biggest and costliest challenge. Virtually nothing happens without communication, so this leaves a lot of room for trouble. Regarding impact on staff, employee conflicts, hard feelings, resentments, and even a desire to leave the employer entirely are consequences associated with problematic communication. How many of the following communication landmines do you recognize?

- **Misreading the tone of text** — misinterpreting a received message creates unnecessary tension.
- **Lack of clarity or information when given an assignment** — leads to confusion, frustration and delay; or possibly fear of asking for further clarification.
- **Failure to validate** — not giving the speaker verbal confirmation that the message is being received and understood, causing frustration and tension.
- **Withholding information** — deliberately withholding information or excluding co-workers from important discussions leads to feelings of exclusion and resentment.
- **Failure to use nonverbal cues** — such as facial expressions or other body language during a conversation meant to convey feeling and meaning (the person speaking feels the listener is disinterested or lacks empathy, creating tension).

If there is one overarching strategy for preventing or overcoming communication challenges, it is promoting a workplace culture that fosters respect. This positive workplace lays the groundwork for better communication by promoting trust, collaboration and mutual understanding among employees. Respectful workplaces solve conflicts faster because employees are more willing to speak up, dialogue about issues and find solutions. This shortens the life of conflicts and helps avoid damage to relationships.

CONTINUUM EAP THANKS YOU!

As we continue to celebrate 50 years of service, we want to extend our gratitude to all our EAP members. Your trust has been the cornerstone of our success. Over the years, we've had the privilege of supporting many of you, and your families, through various challenges and triumphs, and it's your confidence in our services that drives us to excel every day. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your journey!



CHECK YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

Eleven million people in the U.S. have hypertension (high blood pressure) and don't know it. Are you one of them? Monitor your blood pressure if you haven't done so before or if it's been a while since your last check. High blood pressure is often called the "silent killer" because it has virtually no noticeable symptoms until its effects suddenly create a hypertensive crisis, which could be a heart attack or stroke. Contrary to popular belief, experiencing a headache does not necessarily indicate high blood pressure!

Scary fact: One-third of stroke victims experience vision loss — some permanently and in both eyes.

Source: millionhearts.hhs.gov (search "hypertension")

HOW TO FIX YOUR DAY

Experiencing a negative event can disrupt your day, try these actions to restore your positive mindset:

- Admit things have been thrown out of whack and your feelings are normal.
- Attempt a short "geographic" change (like a walk outside to change visuals away from the scene of the event).
- Identify negative thoughts reverberating from the event.
- Challenge the negative thoughts to disrupt their effects, and try to identify positive ones instead.
- Focus on what you can control — reaction, perspective, prevention, improvements, boundaries, self-care, etc. This gives you a constructive outlet to match your need to respond.
- Plan a good thing or two — events, experiences and treats — to re-balance the day.
- Need support? Reach out to a friend to vent.
- Find the lesson. Discover or consider what positive outcome exists indirectly or directly because of the event.



MENTAL DECLUTTERING: A DIFFERENT WAY TO CLEAN

Mental clutter is overpowering stress created by the daily demands of modern life, our multiple roles, to-do lists, thoughts, emotions, responsibilities and the constant influx of information. Enter the self-help concept of decluttering to reduce stress, improve concentration, enhance creativity and cultivate a greater sense of well-being.

Mental decluttering is about creating space for what truly matters and letting go of what no longer serves us mentally and emotionally. Signs indicating the need for mental decluttering include difficulty concentrating, experiencing a lack of creativity, and feeling disconnected from a positive sense of well-being. The practice of mental decluttering may involve various techniques, such as mindfulness meditation, journaling, prioritizing tasks, setting boundaries and letting go of negative thoughts or emotions.

New resource: "Declutter Your Mind and Stop Overthinking" (2023)