

City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Quarterly Newsletter: September 2013



Back to School Talk

If your child is like most, having him/her talk about school can be frustrating. Questions about school are usually answered with the “fine” and “nothing” response that leave parents in the dark.

Getting them to open up can be tricky. The trick is to ask about things that are specific, but still open-ended. Another idea is to start the conversation by sharing something about your own day. Try one of these conversation-starters:

1. Tell me about the best part of your day.
2. What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
3. Did any of your classmates do anything funny?
4. Tell me about what you read in class.
5. Who did you play/socialize with?
6. Do you think math [or any subject] is too easy or too hard?

7. What's the biggest difference between this year and last year?
8. What rules are different at school than our rules at home? Do you think they're fair?
9. Who did you sit with at lunch?
10. Can you show me something you learned (or did) today?

If a problem emerges from the conversation, avoid jumping in to solve it for them. Instead, help your child develop their own solution. Help your child open up further by avoiding direct face-to-face interrogations. It may be more helpful to talk over an activity like preparing a meal, walking the dog or doing a chore.

Understand that everyone needs a break, so timing is important. Allow your child to settle in from school before expecting him/her to talk about their day.

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Building Job Satisfaction

Sometimes individuals come to the Employee Assistance program with concern about their job satisfaction. They find themselves dreading coming in to work each morning and watch the clock all day, counting down the minutes until quitting time. This can go on for days, weeks, and even months.

As the EAP Coordinator, the first question I ask is, “*Why do you work?*” At first, such a question may sound silly or even patronizing. However, the answer to the question is crucial in helping someone figure out their motivation and overall approach to work. One’s approach to work is directly related to job satisfaction.

Let me explain further, there are basically three *approaches* to work.

1. **It’s a Job:** This approach is mainly financial gain. The actual job or work is not overly significant/important. What is important is the financial rewards it provides. If a job comes along with better pay/benefits, there would be little to hold you back.
2. **It’s a Career:** An employee with this approach is interested in advancement and the current job may be a stepping stone. What is important here is success in your field.
3. **It’s a Calling:** If you approach your job as a calling, your focus is on the actual work you do. What is less important is the financial gains or opportunities for advancing your career. A big chunk of your own sense of fulfillment comes from the work itself.

It is important to stress that no one approach is better than the other. There is no right or wrong answer here. The goal is to have one give serious thought to the “*Why do you work?*” question. This may help re-evaluate your own expectations and uncover some choices

to improve your satisfaction. Understanding what motivates you is the first step.

- What if what really motivates you is outside of work? The objective then is to be mindful of how your job allows you the opportunity to engage in those meaningful activities or experiences in your personal life.
- If what motivates you is building your career, then outlining a concrete plan with realistic steps and timelines for advancement is important toward improving satisfaction. Having a plan will help you feel less “stuck.”
- If what motivates you is the actual work you do, then being mindful of those satisfying experiences when they occur, even when other parts of the job are frustrating, helps maintain satisfaction over time.

Regardless of how you approach work, there are strategies that you can initiate that help boost work satisfaction. Don’t wait for someone else to do something or for something else to happen first. Rather, take your own action.

- ◇ Create challenges: Start a project, something small at first, that interests you.
- ◇ Expand your skills: Look for cross-training opportunities, classes, workshops or other trainings.
- ◇ Learn from mistakes: Setbacks do and will happen; we are all human. Admit fault and look for ways to improve moving forward.
- ◇ Avoid “doom and gloom” thinking: Remember, feelings are triggered and maintained by thoughts. Careful what you tell



Seven Steps To Making a Decision

1. **Identify** (recognize/define) the problem.
2. **Gather information** (facts/assumptions).
3. **Develop courses of action** (solutions).
4. **Analyze** and compare courses of action (alternative solutions).
5. **Make a decision;** select the best course of action (solution).
6. **Make a plan.**
7. **Implement the plan** (assess the results).

yourself because you are listening.

- ◇ Be grateful: I don’t expect sugar coating, rather, be honest. There may have been several things that went wrong but acknowledging that one thing that didn’t keeps you honest.
- ◇ Work-life balance: Make sure you have interests, supports and engage in enjoyable activities outside of work.

Again, understanding *why you work* is the first step in evaluating job satisfaction. Identifying your choices and implementing the suggested strategies is the second part.

Trust In The Workplace

Can you work with someone you don't trust? At times, employees seek out the EAP for work problems related to either a co-worker or supervisor/manager. These problems sometimes stem from poor trust. Take a moment and think about someone at work you don't get along with. There is a good chance that the reason is due to one or more of the following trust factors:

- You don't have a strong connection with them?
- You don't fully trust their motives, values or personal integrity and discretion?
- You perceive that they have let you down or have not consistently delivered.
- Their personal style is fundamentally incompatible with yours. Perhaps they have been indiscreet on a work matter, or inappropriately brought in a personal issue into the workplace.

Steve Tappin, CEO of Xinfu and founder of WorldofCEOs.com discussed the issue of trust in an article titled "*Leadership Skill #1: Build Trust With Anyone.*" In this article, Steve Tappin provided a simple trust formula:

Trust = Personal Connection + Belief in Motives & Values + Consistent Delivery + Compatible Working Style.

Tappin argues that a serious breakdown in any one or combination of these factors leads to poor trust and subsequently poor working relations. Tappin adds that is also important to know whether you are a "*Trust Giver*" or "*Trust Builder*."

Simply put, *Trust Givers* are optimistic folks that give others the benefit of the doubt off the bat. They trust first and pull back only after some violation of that trust. *Trust Builders* hold off on trusting anyone until there is concrete

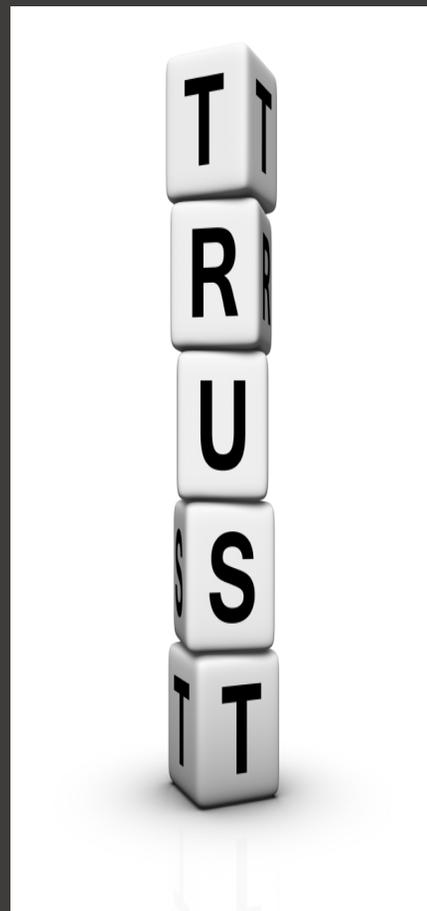
evidence to support trust. No one style is better than the other but it should be noted that **stalemates often occur between two *Trust Builders*, as each waits for the other to prove their trustworthiness.**

Understanding the factors that go into trust, what matters to you most and how you approach building trust in others is the first step. Second, know that communication is the quickest means to building trust in any relationship.

1. **Listen:** Start by not interrupting or focusing too much on the speaker/person. Instead, take in the whole message. Help the speaker feel listened to and understood by paraphrasing what was said and reflecting back (verbally) the underlying emotion.
2. **Disclosure:** Share a little about yourself and life history. This improves understanding/connection by allowing others to get a glimpse into your motives and personality style.

The challenge: Pick someone you may not have too much trust in and give some thought to any gaps in the trust formula. Develop trust by allow-

ing for a little personal connection, articulate your motives, values, and beliefs. Demonstrate your reliability by striving toward consistency in your work and behavior. Lastly, take the time to learn the personal working style (what makes them tick? What do they value?) of others.



Opiates And Pain Killers

Opiates are a group of powerful drugs derived from the poppy plant and that contain opium or a natural or synthetic derivative of opium. Opiate drugs act as depressants in the central nervous system and are typically used to alleviate pain or induce sleep. Some examples of opiates include: Codeine, Oxycodone, Hydromorphone, and Hydrocodone. Use of these powerful drugs outside of their prescribed use is dangerous. Common misuse symptoms:

- Increasingly solitary behavior.
- Behavior changes or extreme alterations in mood such as frequent expression of hostility, anger, anxiety, or agitation.
- Continued use of the opiate, even after pain has subsided.
- Frequently nodding or "doping" off in inappropriate circumstances.
- Complaint of physical symptoms.
- Neglect of personal hygiene.
- Ongoing confusion.

Remember...recovery is possible.



Healthy Rewards

The City is excited to announce the expansion of the Wellness Your Choice Milwaukee program. The second phase of the wellness initiative called “Healthy Rewards” will compliment the City’s wellness initiative by adding an outcomes based wellness incentive program. The voluntary “Healthy Rewards” program will provide employees and spouses (members) with an opportunity to earn \$150 each for reaching certain biometric and activity related goals. To be eligible to participate in “Healthy Rewards” and earn the \$150 incentive, members will need to complete the initial 3-step health assessment process in 2013, and have completed the same in 2012. Members are eligible for the “Healthy Rewards”

program whether or not they enroll in the City’s health insurance program. Since participation is voluntary, members who choose not to participate will not be subject to any additional fees.

Details are still being finalized by the Department of Employee Relations (DER) and Workforce Health (WFH), and more information will be mailed to members by October 1, 2013. Members will have until March 29, 2014 to earn their Healthy Rewards incentive. Additional information will be posted on the DER web site at www.milwaukee.gov/der as it becomes available.

Wellness Dates

It’s that time of year again...make the right choice and complete the **Health Assessment** process now to improve your health and to avoid a health assessment fee!

Important 2013 dates to remember!

- August 1, 2013: Program begins
- September 27, 2013: Special program for back-to-back employee/spouse scheduling closes.
- September 30, 2013: Deadline for early completion.
- October 31, 2013: Lab Work must be completed, Health Assessment and Tobacco Education sessions must be scheduled.

Questions?

Call: 414-777-3510

EAP Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees who develop behavioral/emotional problems that may directly affect their work performance, and to provide Key Personnel with policy and procedural guidelines for the management of these problems.



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Scan Me!

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