

When You've Been Disciplined at Work

We all have our bad days and performance difficulties from time to time. But too many of either can lead to consequences that put your job in jeopardy. Nearly all employers have a process for addressing employee problems. To manage performance, disciplinary measures (or adverse actions) exist in nearly all organizations. When discipline affects you, it's important to know what it means and how to respond constructively to it.

Discipline is not punishment. The goal of discipline is to deter a repeat of the performance problem (quality of work, attendance, availability, conduct, or attitude problem). Some offenses, such as theft or violence, are grounds for immediate termination in many companies, with no discipline or second chances—and no available recourse.



Behaviors That Result in Employee Discipline

■ All work environments have certain expectations and rules that employers expect workers to understand and honor. The violation of specific company policies are a common reason some employees get into trouble. These may include not turning in time-sheets, excessive absences and tardiness, and violating the rights of others.

After an initial warning, if the offense is repeated, then a careful sequence of documentation and steps is followed. Written warnings are discipline and are sometimes called “getting written up.” This creates a legally enforceable paper trail leading to termination if the behavior doesn't change.

Other causes for employee discipline include quality of work issues, conflict, absenteeism, a poor attitude, gossip, insubordination and disruptive behavior—and in the last few years—abuse of company computers for personal business. Most employees who find themselves in trouble are fully aware of the policies they are violating, so claiming innocence through ignorance will get you nowhere fast.

Your Employer Is Not the Bad Guy

■ There is no financial incentive for employers to remain in conflict with employees. It may feel like the employer is “out to get you,” but the good news is that your employer isn't interested in conflict. Your employer would much rather you be productive and happy on the job. Most employers have resources to help employees resolve conflict, and in many organizations, well-run organized labor representatives can help as well.

What's Behind Employee Problems?

■ Employees do not plan on being disciplined, and all employees want to avoid being disciplined. So when an employee is disciplined, it is often an indication that personal problems are making a contribution—personal problems with behavioral symptoms that are difficult to control.

A bad attitude or disruptive behavior is often a symptom of deeper issues that can be addressed and remedied through counseling. If you are experiencing conflict with your supervisor, airing your concerns confidentially with

an employee assistance professional can help. Human resources is also an option. Another option is speaking to another level of supervision with your supervisor's approval or after informing your supervisor that you intend to do so. Don't bad-mouth your supervisor to coworkers. Do not go behind your supervisor's back and don't end run. If your complaint is worthy of being heard, you risk being ignored entirely if you do these things. It is always best to address your issues with your supervisor first, and then ask permission or let your supervisor know that you will be seeking guidance from another level of management.

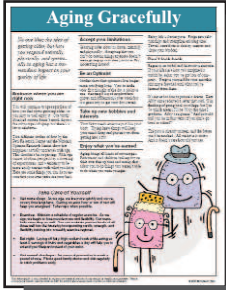
The smartest thing you can do if you are disciplined is to meet with your employee assistance program, or if one is not available, a professional counselor who can discuss your situation objectively. Ask for an assessment, and see if you can rule out a personal problem, even if you are unaware of having one.

The best response to discipline is often humility and demonstrating openness to being coached. Discover what you did that contributed to the reason you were disciplined, get past this period, learn from it, and demonstrate a commitment going forward to more than satisfactory performance.



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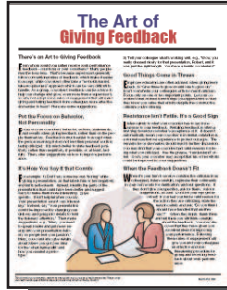
E046

Aging Gracefully

WHAT: Embracing the present; accepting limitations without elimination; moderating versus giving up on things you love; being an optimist; new hobbies; taking care of yourself; tips on

enjoying life; not looking back; much more.

WHERE TO USE: Client sessions, brown-bag luncheons.

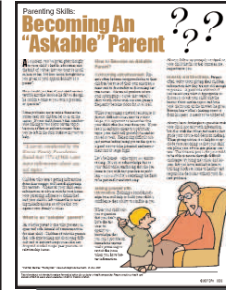


E047

The Art of Giving Feedback

WHAT: The art of giving feedback to others; focusing on behavior, not personalities; what to say, how you say it; the sandwich technique; when others resist; when feedback doesn't fit; keeping egos out of feedback.

WHEN TO USE: Team building, client sessions, off-site retreats, conflict resolution.



E048

Becoming an "Askable" Parent

WHAT: Children who aren't getting answers from their parents will go somewhere else. What is an "askable parent"? Becoming receptive. Developing skills in honesty and

directness. Arming yourself with information and understanding "TMI".

WHEN TO USE: Client counseling sessions. EAP waiting areas, health fairs.

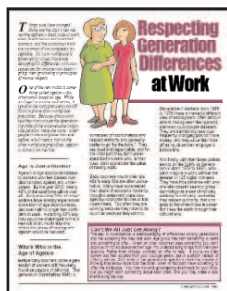


E049

Before You Quit Your Job

WHAT: Avoiding over-react to conflict; the right reasons to quit; the right reasons to quit; considering the consequences of quitting a job; being professional in letting go; not burning bridges; more.

WHERE TO USE: Counseling and individual client sessions, waiting rooms.



E050

Respecting Generational Differences

WHAT: "Ageism" and its cost; attitudes and values of different generations--boomers, X, Y and beyond; why we can't get along, and

how to start making it happen.
WHERE TO USE: Conflict resolution, individual sessions, brown-bag seminars.



E051

Compulsive Gambling is a Bad Deal

WHAT: What is compulsive gambling; why people become gamblers. Am I at risk? Self-diagnosis, signs and symptoms. Treatment and recovery of compulsive gambling addiction.

WHEN TO USE: Individual counseling, health fairs, family counseling.



E052

Effective Time Management for Supervisors

WHAT: Supervisors who manage time well win the management game. Loads of tips, "building in" time, prioritizing, delegating, setting goals, minimizing

meetings, knowing when to take a break.

WHERE TO USE: Clients sessions, training supervisors, small group work.



E053

Coming Back Home

WHAT: Managing the emotional build-up of coming home from; transitions; expectations; getting back to normal life; Ten powerful tips for families and

key issues of reuniting.
WHERE TO USE: Family sessions, group work, health fairs, waiting rooms.



E054

Coping with a Crisis

WHAT: Crisis versus trauma. Definition and "what works" in managing crises. Is it a crisis? Staying mobilized. Steps for coping. Managing disruption. Keep-

ing structure in your life. Decision making. Signs that crisis is affecting you.

WHERE TO USE: Counseling sessions. Groups.



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E055

Coping with Divorce

WHAT: Emotions and loss; legalities; avoiding unnecessary conflict; seeking support; taking care of yourself; refocusing your energy; avoiding unhealthy coping behaviors; forgiving yourself. Moving forward.

WHEN TO USE: Client sessions, counseling, waiting rooms.

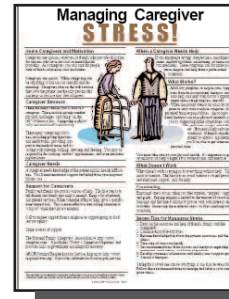


E056

When You've Been Disciplined at Work

WHAT: Discipline isn't punishment; causes of employee discipline; what to do; how to respond; seeing an opportunity for change; why the employer isn't the "bad guy."; responding with the right attitude; using the EAP.

WHEN TO USE: Individual counseling sessions

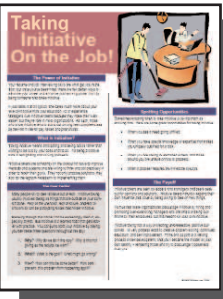


E057

Managing Caregiver Stress

WHAT: Caregivers are special, but have important needs. Types of stress; caregiver needs; avoiding denial of needs; support of caregivers; when you need help; what works!; what doesn't work!; counseling; tips.

HERE TO USE: Counseling, waiting rooms.

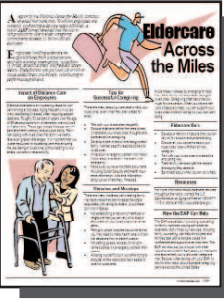


E058

Taking Initiative On the Job

WHAT: Why initiative is powerful--and it's free! What is initiative; why you don't take initiative; proactive initiative vs. initiative out of fear. Spotting opportunities

for initiative; the payoffs for everyone.
WHEN TO USE: Waiting rooms; team building.



E059

Eldercare Across the Miles

WHAT: Stressors faced by employees with long-distance eldercare responsibilities; tips for caregivers and family; mistakes and missteps of family members;

what elderly persons should do; resources.
WHEN TO USE: Counseling sessions, brown-bag presentations.



E060

Preventing Identity Theft

WHAT: Keeping personal information secure. Monitoring credit properly; shredding and protecting; guarding your SSN; responding to mail and

e-mail solicitations; password problems; credit bureaus; responding to suspicious activity.
WHEN TO USE: Waiting rooms, seminars.

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