



solutions

The quickest and best way to contact the EAP is by calling **1-800-222-0364**

Seeing Red?

Handling Anger Problems at Work

Anger is a normal and even healthy emotion—yet it can be a disruptive force in the office. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help you develop the skills to handle anger issues and reestablish a healthy work environment. This month's Solutions newsletter examines:

- The impact of anger issues on your workforce
- Indicators an employee's temper may be inhibiting productivity
- How to best deal with an employee who may need help

How to Recognize Flare-Ups

Does the following scenario sound familiar?

Melissa didn't participate much during her team's creative brainstorming meeting—aside from shooting down every idea that was offered. When she finally proposed an idea and received constructive criticism from her colleagues, Melissa raised her voice to a teammate and stormed out of the room.

As you can see, this employee's outburst was inappropriate. If left unaddressed, this behavior may continue or escalate, and therefore hamper the performance and productivity of both the employee and coworkers.

Below are a few behaviors that might signal that an employee could need help with anger or other issues:

- Strained relationships with coworkers, including hostile behavior or negativity
- Raising one's voice or cursing at colleagues
- Singling out a team member and excluding him or her from the group
- Intimidating or humiliating colleagues
- Intentionally damaging the work or belongings of other team members
- Demonstrating poor judgment or a decline in performance

While these are examples of problematic behavior that you should be documenting, your role does not include diagnosing the reasons for the behavior. Your human resources office is an important reference for concerns about an employee's conduct. Additionally, your EAP offers confidential consultations to help you strategize how to deal with an employee displaying concerning behaviors.





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Why Anger Creates a Toxic Workplace

When an already depleted workforce is asked to take on more and more responsibility, stress tends to rise. The impact of an employee's conduct can snowball into issues that directly impact business and coworkers.

Measuring the impact

An angry employee may:

- Leave coworkers feeling upset and disengaged in their work—decreasing productivity
- Become a detriment to your organization's reputation
- Upset key customers and cause expensive customer relation issues
- Leak important agency information
- Turn potential new hires away from joining the organization

- Decrease job satisfaction among recipients—and witnesses—of their anger
- Take unscheduled leave and miss work

Big-picture ramifications

In general, when employees are angry at work, they become less motivated and productive. Their behavior can be contagious and potentially reduce team morale. Likewise, an angry worker may fail to complete his or her workload, leaving coworkers to pick up the slack. The increase in assignments and hours for the rest of the team can raise levels of burnout and resentment.

Skillfully Dealing with Angry Workers

Addressing situations involving employees with anger problems may not be pleasant, but it presents an opportunity to offer them help. Here are a few strategies:

- 1. Be vigilant:** Take action as soon as you're aware of your team member's inappropriate behavior. Discussing the situation immediately shows you're concerned and invested in your employee as a person. So, prevent issues from boiling over by addressing them early and one-on-one.
- 2. Document behavior:** Document any occasions of an employee's questionable conduct and consult with your HR about steps to take for remediation.
- 3. Have a supportive discussion:** When your employee is ready to talk, be ready to listen. Express empathy and respond only to the behavior that is affecting the workplace. Use active listening to make sure you heard everything correctly (ex., "Melissa, you're said you're angry because... Is that right?").
- 4. Refer your employee to the EAP:** Explain how EAP can help and suggest that the employee make the call. Note in your discussion that the program is confidential and voluntary and won't affect his or her career path.

Remember, the EAP is here to help. Management consultation services are available over the phone and online to help you handle sensitive workplace issues in a safe, healthy, and productive manner. Don't hesitate to call your EAP any time, day or night.

EAP
24 HOURS A DAY
1-800-222-0364
(TTY: 1-888-262-7848)
FOH4You.com

Services are confidential and offered as a **FREE** benefit to you and your family members.