

NEELY EAP

Letter for Leaders

HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR EAP



WELCOME

The leadership newsletter is designed to provide EAP support to supervisors and managers. Making an informal referral (friendly referral) or formal referral can be challenging without training. In addition, the content will educate and promote program features that help leaders focus on the well-being of their employees. EAP services are free and readily accessible to the entire company and their family members.



Toll-Free, 24/7 Helpline:
866-212-6096
800-735-2989 TDD
neelyeap.com

AUGUST 2022

UPCOMING EVENTS

Quarterly Leadership Webinar Series

Inclusive Leadership

➤ September 8th @3PM

Registration Opening Soon

Monthly Wellness Seminar

Please join us for our live seminar:
"Preventing Burnout and
Finding the Balance"

➤ August 11th @3PM

REGISTER

Pets & Mental Health

By: Lisa Merritt

According to a new American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) study, nearly 20% of American households welcomed a new furry family member during COVID-19. While pet ownership is generally associated with lower anxiety and a greater sense of well-being, as workers return to the office and inflation rises, those furry friends can foster new concerns.

Benefits of pet ownership

Studies show that pet ownership is a significant factor in improving mental health across almost all areas of life. Pets fulfill basic human needs for touch and companionship, which can contribute to lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels, and increased levels of serotonin and dopamine. Dogs especially require routine, which gives your day structure, and exercise, which can increase physical health and even social interaction.



Drawbacks of pet ownership

Pet ownership is a serious commitment. Vet bills, food, and grooming, not to mention the fun stuff like toys and treats and outfits, can pile up quickly. They require daily time and attention and can even impact your social life, if you're used to spur of the moment traveling or day-long outings. It's important to take these factors into account when deciding whether or not to bring a pet into your home.

Pets & Work

For those folks who adopted a new pet while working from home during the pandemic, concerns about changes to routines, pet care, and even separation anxiety add to concerns about return to office policies. Concern over how pandemic puppies and kittens will adjust to being left alone is driving many people to reassess the amount of time they're willing to spend at the office.

Pet-friendly Workplaces?

Some offices are welcoming dogs into the workplace and some studies have shown increased satisfaction and decreased anxiety as a result. However, this can also create problems - especially in shared office spaces. Not everyone enjoys dogs (even well-behaved ones) and not everyone has trained their dog to behave in public spaces. Additional concerns about allergies and potential lack of productivity due to distraction cannot be ignored.

Walking the Line

Bring Your Dog to Work Day

Instead of a blanket policy, have a dog day afternoon as part of a bonding retreat

Pet introductions as ice-breakers

For zoom meeting, instead of 2 Truths and a Lie for your ice-breaker, have employees introduce their pet - that way it's not just dog owners participating. Employees that don't have a pet can spectate or talk about their childhood pets. Refer employees concerned about pet issues to your EAP, which can help them locate and access resources such as dog walkers, pet sitters, groomers, and training programs.



EAP that's here for you

Here are some answers to common questions supervisors and managers have regarding employee issues and making EAP referrals. If you need more assistance, feel free to email us at admin@neelyeap.com.

Q. A long-time employee has requested permission to begin bringing a service animal to the office. What questions can I legally ask and what are my obligations as an employer in this situation?

Per the ADA, you are permitted to ask if a service animal is required because of a disability and what task the animal has been trained to perform.

Technically, a request from an employee to bring a service animal to work is just that – a request. People with disabilities are entitled to ‘reasonable accommodation,’ so in practice, such a request should be the start of a larger discussion about what accommodations will allow the employee to continue to be successful at their job with the least possible disruption. This offers you the opportunity to reconsider your policy regarding animals in the workplace. If you do not have a policy and allow other employees to bring in animals, then you should allow employees with disabilities to bring in service animals without requiring any additional documentation or permissions. If your office does have a no-animal policy, you must consider modifying those policies on a case-by-case basis, unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Because these questions can be emotionally charged and are the subject of specific legal protections, your EAP program can offer additional information or mediation as necessary.

Q. My office is implementing a hybrid work policy that will eventually transition into a return full-time on-site work. I have a number of employees resisting this change because of concerns regarding pets adopted during the pandemic and full-time work-from-home. I want to support employees going through this process, but I can't allow employees to stay home indefinitely or bring their pets to the office. How can I support them through this transitional period?

A. Many people who acquired new pets during the pandemic are voicing these concerns. While many animals are fine being left alone for long-periods, dogs (and some cats) will require your employees to make arrangements for pet sitters, dog walkers, etc in order to return to the office. Your EAP program can assist employees with referrals to these services, as well as many other support services such as child care, senior care, tutors, even moving services.

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Information contained in this newsletter is for general information purposes only and is not intended to be specific guidance for any particular supervisor or human resource management concern. Some of it may not apply to your particular company policies and available programs. This information is proprietary and intended only for eligible EAP members. For specific guidance on handling individual employee problems, consult with specialists by calling the Helpline.



WHAT CAN MY EAP DO FOR ME?



About our logo

For decades, enslaved African Americans looked to the North Star for hope, inspiration, and freedom. Neely EAP (NEAP) provides the **hope** that your situation will improve, the **inspiration** to move you in the right direction, and the **freedom** to live your best life.

Being in a leadership role can be challenging. Having the correct tools and resources can make a difference. The **Manager Assistance Program** offers support to resolve personal or professional issues that can negatively impact the workplace. We also offer a:

- 24/7 Hotline, Access to Confidential Services
- Short-Term Counseling Couch Time Check-In (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Work-life referrals for adult care, childcare, pet care and more
- Wellness Trainings & Online Employee Training Vault
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

