

NEELY EAP NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2025



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Turning Stressful Situations into Collaborative Solutions

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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.

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Turning Stressful Situations into Collaborative Solutions: A Guide for Supervisors and Managers

By: Courtney G Echeverria

Stressful situations are inevitable in the workplace—tight deadlines, conflicting priorities, interpersonal tensions, and unexpected setbacks can create pressure for teams and leaders alike. As a supervisor or manager, your ability to navigate these moments with composure and transform stress into opportunities for collaboration is essential for maintaining team morale and performance.



The Power of Calm, Constructive Leadership

Stressful situations often trigger reactive behaviors—defensiveness, blame, or avoidance. Leaders set the tone in these moments. According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013), emotionally intelligent leaders who demonstrate calm, empathy, and clear communication under pressure are better able to guide teams through turbulence. By staying solution-focused and emotionally grounded, managers can reduce tension and create psychological safety. When team members feel heard and supported, they're more likely to engage in problem-solving rather than conflict. Even during high-stakes moments, a calm leader can turn anxiety into alignment.

Collaborative Problem-Solving Strategies

- 1. Acknowledge the Stress:** Start by validating the reality of the stressor. Ignoring or minimizing it can lead to disengagement. A simple acknowledgment—"I know this situation is challenging"—shows empathy and builds trust.
- 2. Shift from Blame to Shared Goals:** Focus conversations on shared outcomes rather than assigning fault. Encourage input from all involved parties by asking, "What's one thing we can do differently right now?" This opens the door to collective ownership and creativity.
- 3. Break the Problem Down:** Large, complex issues can feel overwhelming. Help the team break the situation into manageable parts and assign clear, actionable next steps.
- 4. Model Transparency and Accountability:** Be open about what you know, what you don't, and what steps you're taking. This transparency builds credibility and fosters a culture of openness and learning.

Long-Term Impact

According to Whetten and Cameron (2016), leaders who consistently turn pressure into collaborative engagement enhance not only productivity but also employee loyalty and team cohesion. Over time, teams become more resilient, adaptable, and proactive—qualities that are essential in today's fast-paced work environments.

Conclusion

Stress doesn't have to fracture your team—it can be a catalyst for stronger collaboration when approached with empathy, clarity, and purpose. As a supervisor or manager, your ability to lead constructively during tense situations sets the foundation for a more agile and empowered team. For more information on performance, please tune into our monthly seminar, "Thriving at Work: Strategies for Effective Performance Management" on June 19th.



References:

- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2013). *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Whetten, D. A., & Cameron, K. S. (2016). *Developing Management Skills* (9th ed.). Pearson.

Insights: Leveraging EAP for Leadership Success

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.



Q1: What should I do if my team is resistant to collaboration during a stressful situation?

A1: Resistance is often rooted in fear, uncertainty, or a lack of trust. Start by creating a safe environment for open dialogue. Acknowledge the team's concerns, listen actively, and involve them in the solution process. Emphasize shared goals and small, achievable actions to rebuild momentum. Modeling calm, transparent leadership helps reduce resistance and fosters a more cooperative mindset over time.

Q2: How can I maintain emotional control as a manager when I'm also feeling stressed?

A2: Self-awareness is key. Take a moment to pause and regulate your response before addressing the team. Techniques like deep breathing, reframing the situation, or briefly stepping away to gather your thoughts can help. Regular practices such as mindfulness, journaling, or seeking support from peers can also strengthen your emotional resilience. Remember, demonstrating emotional intelligence under stress sets a powerful example for your team.



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:

- 24/7 Hotline, Access to Confidential Services
- Free Short-Term Counseling and 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

