Recognize and address negativity

One of the more damaging workplace trends is the spread of interpersonal negativity. Pervasive pessimism can make workplaces toxic—undermining teamwork, driving higher turnover rates and sapping energy from previously productive employees. Leaders need to recognize and address negativity’s early warning signs.

• Try to identify the root cause of negativity when you spot it. Talk with employees so you can understand the issues and the ways in which they’re impacting your workplace.
• Provide opportunities for people to express opinions about workplace procedures and make decisions about their jobs. Workplace negativity often results when employees feel they don’t have a voice.
• When hiring, ask applicants what they think about their previous employers; if the feedback is overly harsh, these applicants may be potential sources of workplace negativity.

Tips for curbing negativity at work

1. Strive to directly address negative behavior via one-on-one meetings with employees. Calmly explain why the negative behavior is not helpful, and try to keep things relaxed in order to de-escalate tensions.
2. Pay attention to opinions and ideas your employees express. Observe employee interactions and discern their perceptions of the organization. Promote an open-door policy, encourage employee feedback, and truly listen to employees’ concerns.
3. Avoid any perception of favoritism by applying the same standard of accountability to all employees. Conversely, don’t impose harsh rules for all employees when just a few people are violating norms.

Mind Your Mental Health

December is Stress-Free Family Holidays Month

For many, the winter holidays can be the most stressful time of the year. The pressures to keep up with social occasions and make others happy can lead to physical and mental exhaustion. Here are some simple ideas for cutting holiday stress.

1. **Don’t seek perfection.** People often maintain an idealized image of how the holidays should be. However, everything about your holiday season doesn’t have to be perfect or just like last year.

2. **Simplify wherever possible.** Be realistic about what you can do during the holidays. Eliminate some tasks or social functions so that you have more time to enjoy the people you value most.

3. **Avoid social media.** Others posting images of lavish dinners and perfect parties can lead us to feel we’re not measuring up.

4. **Continue your workout routines.** Exercise helps bust stress and burn off calories that accumulate so quickly at this time of year.

Visit [www.MagellanHealth.com/MYMH](http://www.MagellanHealth.com/MYMH) or contact your program for resources to help yourself or someone you care about.

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Working on Wellness

**Staying holiday-healthy**

- Follow an eating and fitness plan. Amidst all the holiday treats, strive to track your food intake and activity levels. This way you’ll be more aware of calories as they accumulate.

- Beware the beverages. Although your favorite holiday adult beverages don’t have nutrition labels, they’re probably quite calorie-laden. Limit yourself to one or two drinks, and alternate with drinks of water.

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Daily Diligence

**Sharing positivity at work**

- Although there will always be aspects of your job that cause you discomfort, choose your reaction to them ahead of time. If you know they routinely upset you, decide beforehand that you’ll stay positive.

- Provide appropriate rewards and recognition so people feel their contribution is valued. Say “thank you” to people who work for you. A few words of praise and acknowledgement can make a real difference.

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In organizations with more than 500 employees surveyed:

- **53%** said management had unrealistic expectations.
- **51%** said leadership micromanaged workers.
- **48%** said management played favorites.

*Source: Paychex survey*