

How to Cure Workplace Gossip

Workplace gossip is a very common and a serious issue for companies. While many of participate in gossip without really thinking about it, workplace gossip can be damaging both to individuals and the company in general. Here are just a few examples of the cost of workplace gossip:



- Lost productivity and wasted time.
- Increased anxiety among employees as rumors circulate without any clear information as to what is fact and what isn't.
- Severe erosion of trust of others in the workplace and loss of staff morale.
- Hurt feelings and the possibility of reprisals.
- Good employees may leave due to the unhealthy work atmosphere.

Gossip can and should be dealt with from at least two angles. Management staff can play a role in stopping workplace gossip, as can individual employees. When both management and employees actively try to cut down the gossip, the results can be surprisingly positive.

The first thing managers can do when people approach them with gossip, is to make it clear that they aren't interested in hearing it. Second, they can make it clear to staff that gossip is not appropriate in their department. This can be done at a staff meeting and they can explain the damage that can be done through gossip. Third, it is important to improve communication about workplace issues. Gossip tends to occur when there is a vacuum of information. By keeping staff better in-

formed and being more open about workplace issues, they can revoke the need to create false information to fill the information gap. Finally, managers can identify one or two people who are at the forefront of the gossip mill and talk to them individually and privately. Explain that while spreading gossip seems harmless, eventually the gossips themselves will become victims of it.

Employees can also exert a strong anti-gossip force in the workplace. Gossip can be reduced if even a small number of employees decide to face it down. First it takes a decision to not participate in the workplace rumor and gossip mill. Then it requires discipline to stick to your guns and take a stand. If coworkers attempt to draw you into their gossip, let them know directly that you aren't interested in participating in this type of conversation. You don't have to be critical or judgmental, but just clear about your own feelings of discomfort talking about things or someone when you don't have all the facts, and excuse yourself from the conversation. This will serve several purposes. It will send a message to the gossipers that what they are doing is not acceptable. Others who feel the same way you do will be more likely to follow suit and not become involved with the gossip, thus taking away the audience. And lastly, you will feel good that you have said "no" to something that wastes time and could cause harm.

In conclusion, ridding the workplace of gossip is a surprisingly straightforward process, and it's an area where individuals can accomplish a great deal on their own. Remember that even people who engage in gossip, perhaps out of habit, know it's a bad thing. They may respond positively to a reminder, whether it comes from a manager or an employee. Just remember that in high gossip workplaces, eventually, everyone will be the subject of gossip. (Source: Robert Bascal and Kit Hennessy)

In House Modified Duty Program

HealthFirst In House Modified Duty Program was established in 2001 as an idea that we felt could benefit our employers. It has taken many years of hard work to develop the program to what it is today. More and more employers are finding that there is a true financial benefit in using the program instead of having a lost time injury.

Our program consists of a supervised 8 hour shift in our expanded rehabilitation center. During each of these shifts, the injured worker is educated on their injury, proper body mechanics, and safety and preventative measures in the workplace. This is accomplished through a series of educational tools, including videos, injury and safety brochures, books and individualized work assignments.

If the injured worker has been prescribed physical therapy he or she will be seen in our fully staffed physical therapy department. They will also perform their prescribed home exercises/stretches. If specific capabilities must be achieved for the injured worker to return to regular duty, a program to reach these goals can be designed and monitored for a speedy return to work.

As you can see, the In-House Modified Duty Program is not a “vacation” for the injured worker, but a place to actively rehabilitate. The benefits of this program include:

- Reporting to “work” instead of staying at home.
- Constant supervision.
- Isolation of injured workers from non-injured workers.
- An education source.
- A rehabilitation source.
- A controlled environment designed to encourage and prepare the injured worker to return to regular duty.
- A positive strategy to decrease the recovery time and cost of your injury claims.

There are other clinics in the area who are now trying to copy our program. Don't be fooled into thinking that all such programs are alike. **THEY ARE NOT!**

Why do Return to Work Physicals

What is a return to work physical? It is a physical performed to ensure that an employee who has been off work due to a medical condition or as a result of a work injury is capable of returning to their full duties. If an employee has a physically demanding job, it is essential to make sure that the employee is capable of performing his or her job duties before returning to their job.

In order to properly evaluate a patient our physician would need a job description for the employee along with the patient's medical records. A general physical along with a physical capacity evaluation would be performed to ensure that the employee can return to full duty. By having a return to work physical performed, the employer can better protect himself from the future workers comp injuries.

If you are interested in doing a return to work physical please contact our marketing department at 562-926-3440.

Summer Sun Protection

As summer approaches it time once again to remind your workers to take precautions to avoid sunburns, which can increase their risk of skin cancer.

To help prevent skin cancer while working outdoors, regularly use sun protective practices such as:

- Seek shade, especially during midday hours (10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.), when UV rays are strongest and do the most damage.
- Cover up with clothing to protect exposed skin.
- Get a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears, and neck.
- Grab shades that wrap around and block as close to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays.
- Put on sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher and both UVA and UVB protection

(Source: Center for Disease Control)