

Q. I think most employees don't like hearing negative feedback, even if they are sitting calmly and listening to it. This awareness, in my opinion, causes supervisors to avoid giving feedback or even avoid annual reviews. This is not fair to employees. Any tips for this problem?



A. Few employees enjoy negative feedback, but your goal as a supervisor is not to make negative feedback painless but to make it understood and effectively communicated so it is useful. Follow these steps. 1) Be sure your employees know the goals and objectives of their position. A complaint commonly heard by EAPs is "I don't know what my boss wants me to do." 2) Make corrective feedback tangible and measurable so employees can gauge their progress. 3) Don't lecture or criticize employees personally. 4) Give feedback soon and often so your employees never "wonder" what you are thinking about their performance. 5) Always mention the positive aspects of an employee's performance. Doing so will not undermine the corrective feedback. Just the opposite. It will increase your employee's receptivity to the negative feedback. 6) Discuss what change and success will look like if the feedback is acted on. This gives the employee a specific goal to work toward.

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Q. I am the manager of a library in a large city. Periodically, people living on the street wander in and may behave in disturbing ways. One threw a book on the floor recently. It was upsetting, and one employee took a sick day later because of it. Can the EAP help us manage this sort of stress?

A. Although most people think of libraries as quiet and serene job settings, they are public places. Many have security staff, but they can't prevent all incidents. Support for staff can manage stress and reduce turnover. For employees who are upset, suggest seeing the EAP, or refer employees whose performance has been negatively affected in the aftermath of a "patron incident." Ask the EAP to visit with your staff and educate them about mental illness. This can demystify and educate employees about mental illness in general and boost their resilience. It can be scary facing someone experiencing psychosis. They may become agitated, or have unpredictable behaviors. The EAP can offer suggestions for interacting with problem patrons, or you can discuss these incidents as a group to generate a set of protocols if such a plan does not currently exist. EAPs are versatile. Call on their ability to help you in creative ways.

Q. Is there research that points to marijuana's adverse effect on productivity in the workplace? Most people know about the impact of alcoholic workers and the high costs associated with alcohol abuse. Cannabis does not seem to have the same amount or degree of information.

A. Research on the adverse impact and cost of cannabis use in the workplace exists, but it is not as plentiful or as widely shared as research on alcoholism and alcohol abuse. This is explained in part by the large difference in research funding related to alcohol abuse and alcoholism and the length of time such funding has been available. Additionally, there is no "alcohol lobby" with a substantive goal of discrediting alcohol research, unlike the marijuana lobby, which actively seeks to discredit unfavorable research on cannabis. A 2020 research study on the adverse effects of marijuana use in the workplace showed that cannabis use before and during work negatively relates to task performance and organization-aimed "citizenship behaviors" (willingness to help others), and it contributes to counterproductive work behaviors. The study was [published](#) in "Group and Organization Management Journal" May 2020.