

CONNECTIONS INC

Employee & Family Solutions | Employee Assistance Programs

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A Message from Matt

Rough Patch

55% of self-referrals are made because someone at work reminded employees of EAP services. When an employee shares that they are going through a rough patch, take the time to listen. Saying something as simple as “I can see why that’s difficult” validates their experience and may be just the support they need at that moment. If they continue, remember to keep proper boundaries, and avoid playing the role of a therapist. If you’re not equipped to address their situation, refer them to the EAP by asking “have you thought about contacting the EAP? They might have some resources for you.”.



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“The word listen contains the same letters as the word silent.”

–Alfred Brendel



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SUPERVISOR, CAN YOU HEAR ME? (7 Things Fabulous Listeners Do Differently)

Feedback, instructions, deadlines, etc. require leadership staff to talk. Then there’s effective listening. “Do I listen in a way that shapes cooperative and productive behavior?” Effective listening can absolutely be learned. . . Ambitious leaders do well to practice the 7 characteristics of attentive listening:

- 1. Focus.** What ‘I’ want to say next or how the topic is going to affect ME is an undisciplined but natural focus. Am I ready to check my defensiveness at the door? Own my errors? Drop planning my argument and instead focus on ‘their’ words?
- 2. Put away your phone.** It’s impossible to listen well and monitor your phone at the same time. It creates an immediate ‘distance.’ Conversations are effective and build interpersonal ‘connection’ when you’re fully attentive.
- 3. Ask good questions.** You are listening well when you ask clarification questions. Respect, appreciation, useful information and mutual ‘valuing,’ are all benefits of good questions. Begin questions with “What? When? Where? & How?” Avoid questions that can be answered ‘yes’ or ‘no.’
- 4. Practice reflective listening.** Psychologist Carl Rogers used the term “reflective listening” to describe the listening strategy of paraphrasing what was just said. Feedback in your own words demonstrates that you’ve absorbed the information. . . and invites the speaker to clarify further.
- 5. Use positive body language.** Your positive gestures, expressions, and tone of voice will draw people in. Use an enthusiastic tone, uncross your arms, maintain eye contact, and lean towards the speaker. Research indicates that 55% of the meaning in dialogue is non-verbal!
- 6. Don’t pass judgment.** A good listener is open-minded, approachable, and interesting to others. Preconceived opinions shout “*I am not willing to listen.*” You needn’t share the speaker’s beliefs nor condone objectionable behavior; just don’t express pre-judgment on the topic. Useful ideas will surface if the speaker observes you are genuinely wishing to understand.
- 7. Keep your mouth shut.** Check for understanding? Yes. Ask a probing question? Yes. Then QUIET! A shy person may even invite you to hijack the conversation! Resist! You interrupt and the opportunity to *learn* and gain *good information* is lost.

Active, effective listening requires conscious effort. When listening well, serious personal dilemmas may surface. If no immediate danger to self or others is evident, wait a day, then inquire again. Maybe suggesting EAP support is appropriate. Redirecting personal stress away from work multiplies the workplace value of good listening !

Travis Bradberry <https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/7-things-fabulous-listeners-do-differently>

Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program’s mission is to provide holistic assistance products and services that support optimum productivity, team work and healthy community in the workplace.

Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program mission statement since 1988

NOTEWORTHY:

FEEDBACK: “How am I doing?” “Did that go well?” “What could I do differently next time?”

Employees are hungry for feedback especially from leaders. They want to gain insights that advance their abilities and potential. And more than ever, feedback is pivotal for engaging employees: Gallup data shows that when employees ‘strongly agree’ that they have received “meaningful feedback” in the past week, they are almost four times more likely than peers to be engaged. Engaged employees are 4 to 6 times more productive than non-engaged employees.

<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/357764/fast-feedback-fuels-performance.aspx>

EMPLOYEE RETENTION: 10 Talent Retention Strategies You Should Implement Today

#1 — Invest in Your Employees Growth. Employees will overlook a relatively lower pay in a job that gives them room to grow. Emphasize the importance of skills certification and training opportunities.

#2 — Offer a Competitive Base Salary and Benefits. Workers work to improve their financial situation. Offer a salary with benefits that’s hard to match and you’ve done more than half of the work needed in wooing your top talent to stay.

#3 — Provide Flexible Work Arrangements. Post Covid-19, there has been a tremendous upward shift in the worth employees are placing on job flexibility, especially regarding working from home.

#4 — Construct Ladders for Your Team Members to Climb. Employees would generally opt out of a job that pegs their income and professional status at a spot. Be deliberate about constructing ladders for your employees to ascend. Progression boosts employee morale a great deal.

#5 — Study Relevant Data to Note Patterns. Protecting your workforce demands that you be well-informed about key HR statistics. Measurables to track are employee turnover rate, voluntary turnover rate, and employee turnover cost and employee tenure.

#6 — Make Employees Feel Valued. Do not undermine your employee’s contributions. Make meaningful promotions. Praise rather than belittle. A mere 3 out of 10 employees “strongly agree that in the last seven days they have received recognition or praise for doing good work.” (Gallup)

#7 — Promote a Healthy Work-Life Balance. Healthy employees are better contributors to a company’s success; even more true when you think in light of their performance long-term. Don’t call or email staff outside work hours. Make provisions for remote work options. Be a burnout detective – LISTEN WELL.

#8 — Create a Conducive Company Culture. Company culture encompasses the color of your office walls to the vocal tone used to interact with others. Participative company culture favors employee input. Give employees some form of autonomy making them feel valued. Focus on results rather than a routine. Chat and get to know members of your team.

#9 — Create a Mentorship Program for New Hires. Team up an older employee with a new one. This saves everyone’s time and increases the efficiency of your staff.

#10 — Transparency in Leadership. Transparency is a key driver of employee engagement. Coming out with significant changes ‘out of the blue’ can lead to a team effort disconnect? Avoid favoritism and share news across all levels of the organizational ladder. <https://quantic.edu/blog/2021/06/16/the-10-best-employee-retention-strategies-for-2021/>

Maynard's Corner

What sets Connections Inc. apart from the competition? The answer is **SERVICE!** Followed by HR SUPPORT, NATIONWIDE PROVIDER NETWORK and COMPREHENSIVE BENEFITS in no order.

While checking out my purchases the cashier asked, “did you find everything you needed?” My reply, “no, I have not.” His response was “that’s good!” He obviously did not listen to my comment. That’s poor customer service!

We listen and would be honored to have you enjoy the highest level of Customer Service provided by Connections Inc. Please contact me for a no-obligation Proposal of Services.



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NEXT ISSUE: Pandemic Fueled Alcohol Issues, Successful Intervention, Lasting Recovery



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