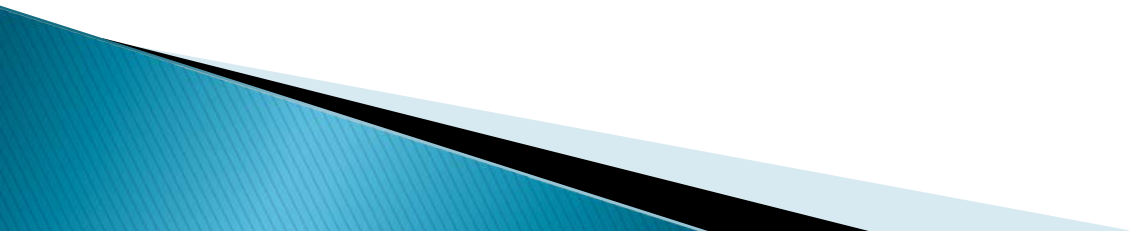


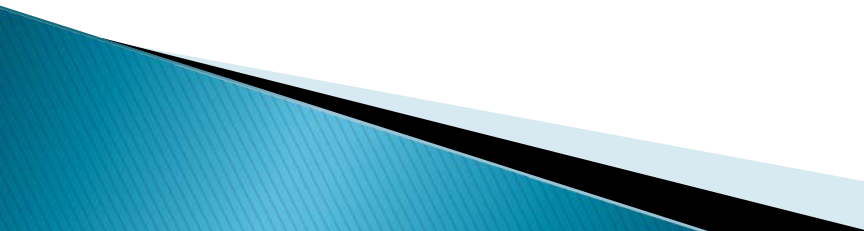
Dealing with the Problem Employee

Lisa Z. Goatley
MS, LPC
New River Valley Community Services
Blacksburg, VA

**Distinguishing between an
employee with a problem and a
problem employee**



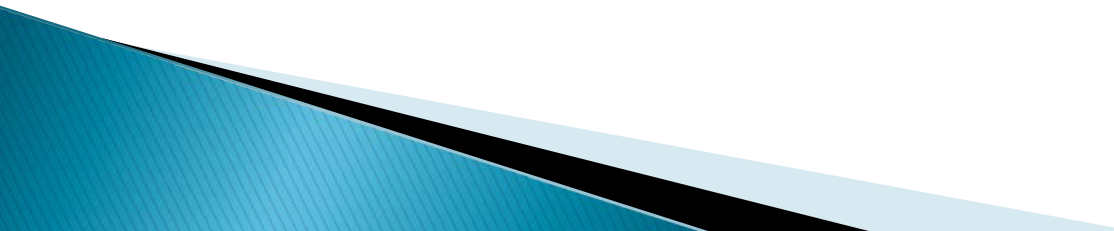
Reasons to address problem behavior

- ▶ Negative impact on team morale
 - “One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch”
 - Other employees will come to dislike the negative work environment
 - Other employees will come to resent having to pick up the slack
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Reasons to address problem behavior

- ▶ Negative impact on productivity
 - High quality employees will become frustrated and lose confidence in your ability to manage
 - They may stop working at their highest levels and may even look for other jobs

Reasons to address problem behavior

- ▶ Negative impact on customers/clientele
 - Customers/clients talk
 - A negative experience with one employee can be a disaster
 - Word will spread and your company may get a bad reputation
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Reasons to address problem behavior

- ▶ Changing a problem employee is less expensive than recruiting, hiring, and training a replacement
 - A company's most valuable resource is their employees
 - A “rehabilitated” employee can often become one of your better performers and an asset to the company

Types of Problem Employees

- ▶ The Grumbler
 - ▶ The Underperformer
 - ▶ The Conflict Creator
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The Grumbler



▶ Characteristics

- Generally negative
- Never smile
- Never laugh
- Always in a bad mood
- While competent in their jobs, they make negative comments about you, their coworkers, their customers, and the company
- Not open to new technology or new procedures
- Always shoot down new ideas and point out all the problems with new ideas
- See themselves as victims

The Grumbler



▶ How to respond

- Never let negativity take hold
- Respond quickly and privately
- Discussions should be private to reduce the impact on other employees

The Underperformer



▶ Characteristics

- Have the capability but not the desire to do a good job
- Tend to be slackers
- Do the bare minimum
- Go through the motions but never put any real effort into their work
- Tend not to respond to change unless forced to do so
- Punch the clock and do what is required but no more
- May spend long hours on meaningless activities (such as cleaning out the storage closet)

The Underperformer



▶ How to respond

- Respond immediately to complaints of someone slacking off
- Respond in private and with tact
- Offer training if the issue is the employee not having the skills or being fearful of change
- Be supportive and understanding but communicate clearly that the behavior will not be rewarded in the long run and could jeopardize their job

The Conflict Creator



▶ Characteristics

- These people thrive on creating conflict
- Might be the result of a personality clash
- These employees cause anxiety, anger, intimidation, resentment, and morale problems
- They intensify problems, challenge decisions, are territorial, and engage in power plays
- If managers, they display favoritism, micromanage, yell, and talk down

The Conflict Creator



- ▶ How to respond
- ▶ Try to turn these people around. Other employees will appreciate your efforts
- ▶ Try to find what motivates them
- ▶ Address the issue immediately and in private

Insubordinate Employees



▶ Definition of insubordination

- “An unwillingness to submit to authority either through an active refusal to obey an order or through failure to carry one out.”
- Actively challenging or criticizing a supervisor’s orders
- Interfering with management
- Showing open disrespect
- Making threats, using coercion, physical violence
- Using abusive language or malicious statements
- Ignoring instructions

Insubordinate Employees



- ▶ Company policies on insubordination
 - Generally, employees cannot decide for themselves what instructions they will or will not obey
 - Your employee handbook or personnel manual should state that insubordination is against company policy and that violations will be addressed with disciplinary action up to and including termination
 - The policy should also state that if an employee has a complaint about management they should follow the employee grievance process

Insubordinate Employees



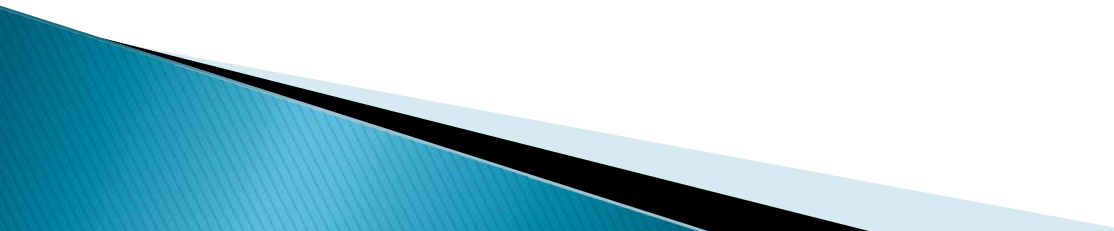
- ▶ How to deal with insubordination
 - Evaluate whether the order was clear and direct
 - Decide if the employee recognized that they were breaking a rule or policy
 - Evaluate whether the rule is the problem
 - Consider the employee's record

Insubordinate Employees




- ▶ How to deal with insubordination
 - Inform the employee that they have violated a rule or engaged in conduct that is unacceptable
 - Explain that the improper conduct must stop
 - Identify the negative consequences of failure to change and the positive consequences of changing
 - Identify the reasons for the unacceptable behavior
 - Develop an action plan that you both agree on
 - Address problem behavior only; never allow personal feelings to come into play
 - Do not make idle threats; follow policies

Ten ways to help problem employees

- ▶ Take action
 - ▶ Maintain privacy
 - ▶ Identify the problem
 - ▶ Describe expected standards of performance
 - ▶ Determine the cause
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Ten ways to help problem employees

- ▶ Request solutions from the employee
 - ▶ Offer solutions
 - ▶ Agree on specific actions and a timeframe to implement
 - ▶ Arrange follow-up meetings
 - ▶ Document, document, document
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Progressive discipline policies

- ▶ Be familiar with your company's policy and procedure manual
- ▶ Utilize Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- ▶ Determining when termination is necessary
- ▶ Steps to avoid a lawsuit