

Keeping Negativity In the Workplace At Bay

If you think office politics and gossip don't exist in your practice, think again. It is natural human behavior to have a tendency to communicate indirectly or posture for attention in order to make one's opinion heard. That's not to say you have to accept the behavior, but you may be able to do some troubleshooting and learn how to avoid or minimize it, if you learn to recognize its underlying meaning of it.

A common complaint that I hear frequently from office managers and other office staff members is that not all employees pull their weight in the office and there is too much non-productive chitchat and gossip keeping everyone from getting their work done.

First, know that not everyone is out there stirring the pot or dishing it out. Some might be listeners and/or stewers. They listen and then stew over it. All these behaviors have the potential for negatively impacting morale and work habits. Identifying the source and reasons for the behavior may be the first step toward keeping it at bay.

Confront the problem head on. If you find negatively brewing, call a meeting to discuss the situation openly. You may find that people don't have a lot to say when called to the table in public. Let the entire staff know that negative statements and gossip are inappropriate. This exposes the problem, even if not everyone is participating and it becomes stigmatized as a negative behavior in and of itself.

Don't allow yourself to get caught up in the day-to-day disruption. Here are some tips and rules of thumb for anyone working in an office environment to help keep gossip or office politics at bay.

- Be pleasant and businesslike with all that you deal with. Co-workers as well as patients. Remember you spend more waking hours with your co-workers than you do with your family. You may like some more than others but when at work, treat everyone the same. It does not matter if you are the office manager, coder, or file clerk.
- Find a mentor, seek out those qualities that you admire and try to instill that into your professional self. But, don't become a "teacher's pet" or honey up to them. That will cause problems among others and you will become a target of gossip.
- Do not participate in negative conversations regarding co-workers or patients.
- Don't bite the hand that feeds you. Don't talk negatively about the boss, the doctors, the administration, etc. Your words can and will be repeated, twisted and/or used against you. Just being present during those types of conversations can be held as evidence of your participation and agreement of the conversation.
- Do not discuss or get into other people's personal lives. Sharing gossip, true information or not is not fair, it is mean and cruel. It has no place in the workplace. Don't be a part of it. It could constitute a hostile work environment for that individual.
- If you have information provided to you in confidence or even by accident, do not share it with others. It does not matter if it is about the business, a patient, or a co-worker. Better to be known as a trustworthy person than someone who lives to spread juicy gossip.
- Don't become part of a clique that excludes others. You must look at yourself as a team. You work together to be 100%. You may have heard of:

T- Together

E- Everyone

A- Accomplishes

M- More

- Live an authentic life. Be professional, know your boundaries, and keep your standards high. This will insure that you receive the respect that is due to everyone. Treat everyone as you want to be treated. Yes, I am talking about the Golden Rule. Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you!

Source: www.pmimd.com

Publications related to this topic on website www.practicesupport.com include:

[Managing Medical Office Personnel](#)

[Employee Management Tools for the Physician Office](#)

[222 Secrets of Hiring, Managing, and Retaining Great Employees in Healthcare Practices](#)