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5 Signs of a Dysfunctional Workplace

Career Corner

By Keisha Stoute

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Dysfunctional workplaces are filled with colorful personalities who play by their own set of distorted rules, those who utilize poor and tactless communication, and manipulative behaviors. These atmospheres can be described as a circus of award winning performances that range from back stabbing stunts, chaos to sophisticated games of trickery. Unfortunately everyone is a victim with a bulls eye their back! These behaviors often cause physical and emotional stress as well as broken and damaged relationships, mistrust, loss in productivity and anguish.

Stop running around in mayhem and know the signs



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1. Poor Leadership.

When dysfunction occurs one must first consider the practices of management. If your leader is toxic, than the environment will be the same. There is a huge difference between a manager and a leader. A true leader is able to take dysfunction and it into productivity. Everyone in a leadership position may not have the qualities that they need to be successful. In some cases, people may lack personable skills, empathy and compassion. Weaknesses can also come in the form of not being tactful and or assertive when addressing conflict and managing others. Common factors may include; playing favoritism towards certain people, genders or groups coupled with an ineffective leadership style. Having a dictatorship mentality (my way or the highway) forces people to feel powerless and inferior. When this occurs conflict is usually brewing high.

2. High Turnover Rate and Low Morale.

When employees are leaving and management is having a difficult time keeping people in positions, it shows major signs of dysfunction. People come and go all the time but when you have high turnover rates on a consistent basis something is definitely wrong. A red flag is flying high. In most instances the pay may be low and the workload is very demanding, which equal high stress and very little support. On the other hand the pay may be decent, but the craziness, unstructured and disorderly work environment turns employees away to seek jobs elsewhere. As a result of high turnover rate and low morale employees will complain about the company to others, write bad reviews and will spread the word.

3. Lack of Confidentiality and Trust.

When personal and professional information gets out to the public then there is a major breach of confidentiality and trust. Many work environments have grammy award winning news reporter (gossipers) and WPIs (work place investigators) who love to spread lies, information and foolishness. This is an issue that must be corrected immediately as it can cause legal ramifications. In-addition to confidentiality issues many employees do not trust their coworkers or managers and do not believe in their ability to get the job done. In order to have a successful and cohesive team you must have faith in each other and know one another's strengths and weaknesses. If people are incompetent and unmotivated, it will show through dysfunctional behavior.

4. Ineffective Communication.

Good communication is the key to having any successful relationship. Poor communication affects the workplace when policies and procedures are lacking and need an updated. Often time decisions are made in the absences of key personnel that cause resentment, frustration and feelings of betrayal. In other examples important information is not relayed properly which causes misguidance and poor decisions. If your communication style is not effective, it will not only show in your work but also in how people respond to you.